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**LABOUR  
MONTHLY**

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 3

JULY, 1922

Number 1

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

THE EDINBURGH CONFERENCE

Communism and the Labour  
Party

R. PAGE ARNOT

After the Retreat, What ?

J. T. MURPHY

The Transport Workers' Next  
Step

ROBERT WILLIAMS

THE LABOUR PUBLISHING COMPANY, LTD.

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# NOTES of the MONTH

*The Labour Party and the Workers—Inner Conflicts—What is the Labour Party?—Chaining the Tide—The Workers and the Labour Party—Splits of the Future—And Coalitions of the Future*

**A**MID the ruins of the engineers' defeat the conference of the Labour Party meets at Edinburgh, just as last year its meeting was the very scene of the final surrender of the miners. The contrast is too deep and too arresting to be ignored. On the one hand the broken ranks, the denial of the common struggle, the humiliating defeat after defeat, the silent suffering and misery of section after section of the workers: on the other hand the buoyant hopes, the busy electoral calculations, the parliamentary manœuvring, and the sense of coming triumph of the principal representative body of the organised workers of this country. What is the explanation of this divorce? Is it that the self-same workers think of themselves as different beings in the daily realities of their economic struggle and in the Sunday garb of their parliamentary hopes? Or is it that a real divorce is beginning to take place, full of menacing significance for the future, and that the Parliamentary Labour Party, as it is approaching closer and closer to governmental power, is receding further and further away from actual contact with the workers? This is the real issue which the Edinburgh Conference of the Labour Party will have to decide. Is the Labour Party simply a group of politicians in the House approaching ministerial power, or is it the leading body of the organised workers of this country, the leader and the organiser of the struggle of the working class? If it is the latter, if it is the leader of the workers, then it must face its responsibility to lead: if it fails to give a lead, and confines itself to "safe" resolutions for election purposes, then the success of its parliamentary future may be assured, but it will have registered its failure as the party of the working class. Just as in the pre-war resolutions of the German Social Democratic Party the turn of a phrase may now in the light of events reveal to us the germ of the coming debacle or even of the future butcheries of a Noske, just as in the pre-war resolutions of the International the studied ambiguity furnished the sure presage of future treachery, so the decisions of the Edinburgh Conference will have a significance, the full effect of which

will only be understood when they are translated into flesh-and-blood realities by the events of the coming years.

THE resolutions on the agenda of the Edinburgh Conference bear out the contention that the present problem of the Labour Party is an internal problem. The resolutions have practically no bearing on the general situation, at home and abroad, amid which the Conference takes place. Ireland, with its menace of present war, is left untouched—presumably for an urgency resolution to deal with; South Africa, with its exhibition of savage repression of the Labour Movement, is left untouched; India is only brought in by the Textile Workers for obvious reasons; imperialism in general is left out; the capitalist offensive and the need for working-class solidarity receive no attention. The contentious resolutions all deal with internal issues within the Labour Party. Anxiety is felt as to a possible political alliance with capitalist parties. The Miners endeavour to secure that nationalisation shall not be left out of the programme. Executive resolutions propose to exclude Communists; rank-and-file resolutions propose to exclude Privy Councillors. Local Labour Parties express discontent with the present financial preponderance of the trade unions, and endeavour to secure for themselves the right of election of their own representatives. All through these miscellaneous resolutions there is visible, like a running thread, a deep-lying half-expressed conflict of forces within the Labour Party. In general controversy this conflict has been taken to be expressed in the question of Communist Party affiliation to the Labour Party. Popular instinct is undoubtedly right in fastening on this question as of symbolic significance. But it is only a symbol of a larger issue, which will come increasingly to the front in future years.

WHAT is this larger issue? It is the issue of the relation of the individual worker to the Labour Party, and of the control the workers will be able to exercise over the Labour Party. If the Labour Party were an ordinary political party the question of Communist affiliation would not arouse controversy. A political party has every right to exclude dissident opinion and ensure its own homogeneity. But the Labour Party is not a political party, despite all the attempts to make it masquerade as such: it is the trade unions in politics. The Labour Party is commonly spoken of as a Socialist creation, and even as if it were an

embodiment of Socialist theory. It is nothing of the kind. The Labour Party is simply the continuation of a process which was going on for a generation before the Labour Representation Committee—the process of trade union representation in Parliament for the protection of special trade union interests. Outside the special trade union questions with which they were concerned, these representatives—old and respected trade union officials for the most part, with years of service behind them, and stepping up the rungs of the social ladder with a J.P.-ship or a Royal Commissionship—had no general political outlook; they took their lead from any dominant influence. Forty years ago they called themselves “Liberal” and followed Mr. Gladstone; to-day they call themselves “Labour” and follow Mr. Webb. The development of this process has been very gradual: it was not till 1910, as Mr. Arnot reminds us in his article in the current issue, that the last of the “Lib.-Labs.” became “Labour” without undergoing any very startling transformation in doing so. The real rise of the Labour Party derives from a pure trade union issue—the Taff Vale case; the actual achievements of the Labour Party are entirely in the trade union sphere—the Trades Disputes Act and the Trade Union Act; and in general politics the Labour Party in Parliament still shows a complete lack of political outlook which is the despair of their ardent theoretical supporters in the country. Upon this solid basis there has been the attempt of a clever group of manipulators to build the façade of a political party with programme and all complete: but while the trade unions have unconcernedly allowed their intellectual friends to act as publicity agents for them and create the myth of a great party, they have retained the reality of power for themselves: the power rests where the purse-strings lie—with the unions.

**I**T is this actual character of the Labour Party which makes a little ridiculous its attempt to pontificate towards the Communist Party as if it were itself a homogeneous political party. The action of the Labour Party towards the Communist Party is based in practice on a simple calculation of votes: there is no question of principle involved. The same men who will indignantly repudiate the suggestions of revolutionary action to-day professed themselves upholders of it in 1920, when the tide of events moved in that direction: and this, not from any conscious insincerity, but simply because they have no political outlook and reflect



only the circumstances of the moment. When the surge of the underlying forces of the Labour Movement moves again in a revolutionary direction, they will be forced again to change their tone or be swept aside: and it is the knowledge of this on the part of the small group that is at present attempting to control the Labour Party and convert it into a political party which is the explanation of their frantic eagerness to set up barriers against the flowing tide beforehand by exacting the exclusion of all Communist elements. But, because the movement they are trying to control is not a political movement, but an economic movement whose complexion changes with events, all their shibboleths will be in vain; they are trying to build their barriers upon the shifting sands.

**A** POLITICAL party is based upon the support of its adherents and the enactment of their will. This is not the case with the Labour Party. If the Labour Party were based upon the local Labour Parties, and these were representative bodies of the workers in their locality, the Labour Party could claim to be the political party of the workers and could claim the right to exclude dissident elements hostile to the will of the working class. But in actual fact the local Labour Parties are the Cinderellas of the Movement: they have the drudgery without the power. The local Labour Party may yearn after a candidate from their midst; they have to accept the candidate who comes down to them with the financial backing of a great trade union. A pathetic resolution on the present agenda calls for the pooling of funds to ensure a fair field and the best choice of candidates. If the Labour Party were a political party bent on the most effective use of its resources, material and human, for a united campaign, it is obvious that it would centralise its funds. But the resolution, one may confidently predict, will receive no more consideration than the equally pathetic resolution to do away with the block vote of the trade unions which dominate the Conferences. The Labour Party is built, not on any political basis, but on exclusive economic corporations which will not yield one jot of their privileges and their power. To give power to the local Labour Parties would be to give power to bodies responsive in some degree to the moods and feelings of the workers. It is not an accident that the support of the Communists is to be found among the local Labour Parties, that local Labour Parties continue to work with the Communists in their midst in the face of the lightning and the thunderbolts of the Labour headquarters; that the open support

of the Communists at conferences of local Labour Parties, as at London and at Glasgow, compelled the National Executive to make a show of taking the matter into consideration. The stand of the local Labour Parties and of the Communists is so close together because their immediate struggle is at bottom the same: it is not the struggle of a sect or "point of view"; it is simply the striving of ordinary workers to have the right through organisations of their own choosing to have some say in the machine that is the Labour Party. And it is this striving which the machine has set out ruthlessly to suppress by the exclusion of the Communists. It only remains to exclude the local Labour Parties (as has already been done in the corresponding case of the Trades Councils from the Trades Union Congress, and will now already be effected in many cases from the Labour Party, if the Executive resolutions are carried, by the exclusion of Communist delegates).

**W**HAT will be the effect of this policy of exclusion? The first effect will be to widen and to make rigid the gulf between the Parliamentary Labour Party and the workers—the gulf already visible at Labour meetings when the police have to be called in to protect official Labour speakers from the unemployed. But this is only the first effect. The next and immediately predictable effect will be to make splits within the Movement. That exclusion means splits would seem to be a simple truism. Just because the trade unions are economic, and not political, associations it is impossible to superimpose on them a rigid political system to reflect permanently the ascendancy of a particular movement. The present group in control may endeavour to take advantage of the political unconsciousness of the unions in order to make permanent this ascendancy, but as soon as the unions grow to consciousness the bonds will be shattered. The Communists exist within the movement and no edict can get rid of them: as their influence grows what is to happen? To-day their influence extends to particular local Labour Parties; to-morrow it may extend to particular unions. Where are these sections to go, since they will be excluded from the Labour Party? Are they to be forced to form a rival association? Directly a union goes "red" it will be automatically excluded. Thus do the present leaders prepare for the crisis ahead before it comes. In the name of unifying the working-class movement they are preparing splits. It is the same story as at Berlin and the breakdown of the United Front.

The old leadership is endeavouring to maintain its weakening position at the expense of the solidarity of the working class in the face of the capitalist attack.

**N**OT only is it possible to deduce from the present policy the certainty of future splits, but it is possible to lay down the lines along which the splits must come. The lines along which the splitting of the Labour Party is bound to come at some point or other will follow the policy of the Labour Party with regard to the formation of a Government. The abundance of resolutions against all political alliances reveals a widespread fear which would not exist without a cause. The appearance of such resolutions is the sure sign of the approach of such alliances: the Labour Party is going through the familiar stages of kindred parties in other countries. Uncompromising resolutions will be passed against any alliance, but then uncompromising resolutions were passed against war until the war came. These resolutions are never proof against an "extraordinary" situation. A fierce independence will be maintained up to and through the election. And then perhaps an "extraordinary" situation may arise. There may be no absolute majority, but the possibility that a combination of Labour and Liberal forces would defeat the Government. Would it be possible to resist the opportunity of defeating the most reactionary Government of modern times just for the sake of a negative and doctrinaire purism? Some understanding would clearly be needed. Perhaps individual members might enter the Government without committing the Party. The form of the arrangement would matter little. What makes the future arrangement certain at some point is the nature of the decisions now being reached. For the Labour Party is in effect having to choose between the Right and the Left. The choice is symbolised in the resolutions for the exclusion of Privy Councillors and for the exclusion of Communists. Whatever the decision in theory in the first case, it is certain that the present Privy Councillors will not in point of fact be excluded; whatever the decision in the second, it is certain that the Communists will be excluded. But the effect of these two decisions will combine to point in one direction; the choice of unity with Privy Councillordom in preference to unity with Communism points in one direction and one direction only—the direction of an alliance with the forces of capitalism. This is the logical working out of the policy which is now being placed before the Edinburgh Conference.



# COMMUNISM AND THE LABOUR PARTY

By R. PAGE ARNOT

**T**HE proposal of the Labour Party Executive (or a majority of it) to exclude the Communist Party is of fundamental importance, because it raises the question of the whole movement of the working class and the success or failure of the various parties that have claimed to represent that movement.

This actual question was practically decided last year, but the form in which the vote was finally taken left open to doubt the exact strength of opinion on the subject. This year the endeavour is made to have the matter cleared up once and for all and settled beyond dispute. Further, the proposal to prevent a union from choosing as its delegate anyone who does not unquestioningly accept the Labour Party constitution for the time being will also prevent this particular matter being raised again in the next decade.

While the attempt is being made to deal with the matter thus finally, it seems a good thing for it to be considered not from the particular points of view of the Labour Party and the Communist Party, but in relation to the working-class movement looked at as a whole and viewed over a period of years. Nevertheless the party point of view must be borne in mind. Nor is it disposed of by the fact that the working-class movement can be conceived of as a single entity. As against those who simply urge the keeping of all working-class organisations under one banner, the leaders of the Labour Party, skilled politicians and wary in parliamentary warfare, are acutely conscious of the consequences which attach to such a course. To argue Communist affiliation on the abstract grounds of something called "unity" must appear to them quite sentimental. In fact, Mr. Henderson, speaking on this subject last year, said: "There must be unity of purpose, unity of principle, unity of conception, and unity of method." There is little doubt that if the argument depends on a cry of unity on the one side, and on the severely practical considerations put forward by Mr. Henderson on the other, the advocates of unity will receive short shrift.

The main practical consideration is of course electoral. The Labour Party has a certain task before it. To carry out that task requires a majority at the next General Election; and to gain that majority a combination of working-class and non-working-class votes is essential. Already an appreciable amount of middle-class votes have been secured, as witness the development of the Labour Party vote in such residential constituencies as Bromley. The Liberals, thoroughly alarmed by these successes, have issued a leaflet in which it is stated that "the Labour Party is a class party," the obvious intention being to stampede the middle-class electors back into the Liberal ranks. Mr. Philip Snowden castigates this leaflet in the June *Labour Magazine*, and has no difficulty in showing that the insinuation is false. Clearly, from the point of view of the Executive, the winning of a large section of the middle classes must not be jeopardised. Now the admission of the Communist Party would spoil all this. Its loud insistence on the abolition of capitalism would scare away many professional men and small traders who, as things are at present, would be willing to vote for a Labour Party but not to vote for a revolution. The Communists might even wreck the election if the Prime Minister catches the middle classes in a panicky mood and if at the same time the incalculable Russians were to do something that gave the P.M. his chance. Decidedly, from the point of view of this calculation on the middle-class electorate, association with the Communist Party would be a hindrance.

This electoral consideration, however, is not the sole consideration: and any reckoning based on its being the only reason (such as the calculation that, once the General Election is safely past, it might be possible to reconsider the affiliation question) would be a profound mistake. Another of almost equal importance is grounded on the international situation. There is hardly any doubt that the leading minds of the Labour Party have been deeply affected by what has been happening to the political movement of the working classes in other countries. The parties of the Second International have been forced by the movement of opinion to take up a defensive attitude in one country after another. And while in the case of Great Britain their public attitude has been to treat the Communist Party as negligible, in reality their attitude is in conformity with the policy of the Second International, which is to suppress Communist tendencies as a real danger. Even when their actual membership is not large, it is recognised that they can get a following in

a moment of crisis: and moments of crisis cannot always be so successfully surmounted as in the case of the Council of Action. Here we have a consideration which compels a definite and final repudiation of Communism, and as soon as possible. For the rapid growth of Communist principles amongst the workers in other countries conveys a warning. Formerly it used to be thought that these ideas could not survive on English soil—but not now. There is nothing specific in the British air that kills the bacillus of Communism.

That the expulsion of the Communists (and not their mere non-affiliation) was felt to be necessary, and so necessary as to make it a major consideration, is fairly clear. No other meaning can possibly be attached to the amendment to the constitution newly put forward by the Executive (Rule 42. Persons over a mile high to leave the court) by which unions and union branches are restricted from choosing Communists to fill a representative position. And though it contrasts a little oddly with some of Mr. Snowden's reply already quoted,<sup>1</sup> it was probably felt to be the only way of settling the question.

The electoral consideration and the consideration recently at work in all the parties of the Second International are the main reasons for the official attitude taken up to the Communist Party. Personal bitterness could only play a minor part to these weightier considerations. The more these arguments are dwelt upon, the more cogent they must seem to their authors to be. Indeed, if one takes the parliamentarian's point of view, it would seem remarkable that the question should ever have caused more than ten minutes' consideration.

Yet, in spite of what must have seemed obvious arguments, it is not so easy to expel a working-class body from the Labour Party. Certain prejudices, or if not prejudices at any rate habits of mind, on the part of the delegates have to be treated tenderly. At this Edinburgh Conference there will be present some whose outlook will not be bounded by the General Election, but who will prefer to look still further ahead. And it need not be surprising if there were a certain division of feeling—because of a division of experience—between parliamentarians concen-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Snowden, in reply to the Liberal leaflet's allegation that "the Labour Party is a mass of contradictions," first taunts the Liberal Party with possessing the same infirmity. Then he says: "But we do not regard differences of opinion in a democratic party as something to be deplored. On the contrary, differences of opinion are a sign of health and vigour. We hope the Labour Party will always have its differences. It is out of free discussion that the truth emerges."



trated on day to day politics and situated in a metropolitan atmosphere, and those from the localities or from unions like the Miners' whose members are not caught up in the city bustle, or from those like the Engineers' whose angle of vision may have been slightly altered by their experience of the extent to which the Communists were a help or a hindrance in the lockout. Those delegates, though disagreeing with the Communists, recognise in them the same people as themselves, with fundamentally the same interest. To them in their localities the Communist Party represents a real working-class element, which exists and which is therefore to be reckoned with, if not to be counted upon. Again, amongst some of the rank-and-file I.L.P.-ers there may be the recollection of the earlier trade union attitude towards the I.L.P. Perhaps it is only a coincidence, but there is just sufficient resemblance between the attitude to Keir Hardie and those who were with him in the early days and the attitude to the Communists now to make some of those who can look back a little uncomfortable.

These arguments and counter-arguments will carry their weight in the settlement of this matter at the Conference. But none of them directly arise from a consideration of the working-class movement looked at as a whole and viewed over a period. Yet it is precisely by such a method of consideration that the full significance of this question is discovered. Its significance lies not so much in what is happening or is soon about to happen, but in what has happened; not so much in the size to which the party has grown, as in the way that growth has been related to the working class as a whole. There is much history behind this rejection of the Communist Party.

The Labour Representation Committee that met in the Memorial Hall in February, 1900, stood for a definite thing: "the better representation of Labour," as the Trades Union Congress resolution of 1899 had phrased it. It was essentially the same idea that had brought together the founders of the I.L.P. seven years before. To read the reports of the early meetings of the Labour Representation Committee makes it clear that the object was to stand for the working class as against the employing class, and that the interests of Labour were conceived of as something distinct from the combined interests of the separate unions and sections.

The numbers in those days were very few: the whole aggregate membership was only 469,311 in 1902. Looking at these figures only it seems

clear that the struggle for independent working-class representation will be long and arduous. Then quite suddenly the figures began to mount up. In 1903 they were 861,150, in 1904 969,800, and by 1908 1,072,413. What had happened? The Taff Vale judgment of 1903 had forced the unions into politics in order to protect their funds. That legal decision could only be remedied by legislation, and in the young L.R.C. was found the legislative instrument the unions required.

But the Lib.-Lab. members of Parliament and the Lib.-Lab. officials of unions who swelled the ranks as a result of Taff Vale could hardly be thought to have changed their ideas and to have suddenly become eager followers of Keir Hardie. What the Labour Party gained by this all-too-sudden accession of numbers it had perforce to lose in strength of purpose. The original possibility of working-class representation was swamped by this inrush of unions fleeing from the Taff Vale judgment. The reinforced Labour Representation Committee gained its victories in 1906, returned twenty-nine members, and was sufficient of a portent for the trembling Liberal Party to pass the Trade Disputes Act. Again, as in 1876, the intervention in politics of these non-political bodies had been singularly successful. The success was recognised, and, two years later, the eleven Miners' members joined the Labour Party. They had been good Lib.-Labs.: that is, they had faithfully represented the sectional interest of their particular trade union and had acted on the policy that adherence to the Liberal Party was the best means of advancing that sectional interest. That alone, and not any personal adherence to the views of John Stuart Mill or any lasting bondage to the eloquence of Mr. Gladstone was what made a Lib.-Lab. Consequently, when the Miners' members joined the Labour Party at that time they brought with them nothing more than a decision that the sectional interests of their unions could henceforward be better represented by the Labour Party. Or perhaps in some minds it was thought that the Liberal Party would be still more strongly influenced if the representatives of trade unions were not safely within its fold, but just outside the fold. "There is more anxiety about a sheep that is lost——"

It has been the habit to accept the Taff Vale decision as a notable instance of how the enemies of the working class can over-reach themselves: and it is often regarded as a blessing in disguise. It does not seem to have been realised that Taff Vale politics meant the triumph of sectional interests at a time when these things were hovering in the

balance, when the annual report for 1902 could remind the constituents of the L.R.C.

There is some danger in action which makes the Labour member representative of one trade union rather than of the general interests of wage earners. It is the wage earner and not only the miner, the engineer, or the railway servant who needs representation. . . . Only in this way (by the establishment of an extra-union fund) can our movement be one for *Labour* representation, and not merely for *trade* representation.

Naturally the life and vigour that come from representatives of working-class interests as a whole could not be expected from men who were sent to Parliament primarily as miners or carpenters or engineers. Amongst the miners there was only one Keir Hardie. The others were mining members of Parliament. The result of this was twofold. On the one hand the Labour Party, now heavily overweighted with those who but yesterday were the representatives of sectional interests, found that it could not rise to the great expectations that had been formed of it. The unemployment crisis of 1908-9, and the depression of trade, calling for an outlook beyond the resources of each particular craft, had proved a severe trial to its prestige amongst the workers. When the first shock of its arrival in the House of Commons was over both friends and enemies began to speak openly of the impotence of the Labour Party. Out of this slack tide it began to drift more and more into a sort of tacit alliance with the Liberals. There began to grow up a statesmanship which could not foresee the future of Labour and only thought of effective parliamentary bargains of the passing hour. So far was this carried that we had the famous Bradford resolution of the I.L.P. passed in 1914 and intended as a check to any further entanglements with the Liberal Party. But how far and to what extent the original spirit of representation for the working class had been vitiated by the habit of representing sectional interests was difficult to discover.

On the other hand, the active elements amongst the workers passed through a period of disillusionment. They had had great expectations of the Labour Party. In their disappointment they concluded that politics as such must be avoided: or, at any rate, that the emancipation of the working class must be sought along other ways. Then there began that artificial division of Labour activities into political and industrial; and, the relative positions of God and the Devil thus clearly mapped out, the exclusive devotion to one and religious abhorrence of the other. This concentration on industrialism was spoken of by the political ones as



“the swing of the pendulum.” It was estimated that in a few years the swing would turn back again. Further, it was calculated that the pendulum swung to and fro about exactly five times in the course of a century. This cant phrase was hugged as if it were an explanation.

The war revealed that there was no political Labour Movement. The resolution of the International Socialist Congress of 1907, confirmed at Copenhagen in 1910 and at Basle in 1912, had laid down with unmistakable clearness the duty of political working-class parties. It is worth while to quote the actual wording:—

If war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working class in the countries concerned, and of their Parliamentary representatives, with the help of the International Socialist Bureau as a means of co-ordinating their action, to use every effort to prevent war by all the means that seem to them most appropriate, having regard to the sharpness of the class struggle and to the general political situation.

Should war, none the less, break out, their duty is to intervene to bring it promptly to an end, and with all their energies to use the political and economic crisis created by the war to rouse the populace from its slumbers, and to hasten the fall of capitalist domination.

Now this resolution was clearly based on the assumption that the Labour Party was a political party, in the true sense that it represented the workers in the class struggle. Alas for them! that class struggle basis did not exist. Not class interests but sectional interests found their advocate in the Labour Party. There was never any chance of the International resolution being made operative. That lightning flash on August 4, 1914, revealed the political contours: and the contours of the Labour Party were not to be distinguished from those of the Liberals or Conservatives. The trade union leaders were eloquent about “a scrap of paper”: but it was not the scrap of paper on which the representatives of a subject class had inscribed the Resolution of 1907.

Moreover, had there been a true political Labour Movement in this country it would have split along political lines. Even its fragments would have attested the existence of political working-class organisation. But the various outlooks in this country can be readily divided into three, viz., patriotic, pacifist, and industrialist. Not one of them was political. Not one of them had a clear meaning from the point of view of class struggle. If anything could have divided a *party*, it was the war. Those who saw hundreds of thousands of workers sent to their death for the sake of oil and rubber and gold and steel, drafted to Mesopotamia and

Palestine in order to make the Holy Land a safe and happy hunting ground for concessionaires, or flung to the machine guns in Flanders that French ironmasters should gain the iron of the Saar Valley and smelt it with cheap coal from the Ruhr—those who saw these things then (as most of us see them now—a little late) could not possibly have remained in the same party with the war-mongers, had it been a Party in any real sense of that word. It may be thought of as a benefit that there should have been no deep and rending schism then, and on that issue, but only a difference of opinion; and that the split should come now, and on this issue. But those who think that are themselves bemused by the notion of a party that is no party: and their thought is simply another evidence of the strength of sectionalism. For a sectional interest, such as the economic interests of the trade unions, cannot think or feel for the interests of the whole. Nothing, not the most terrible catastrophe, seems to dissolve these lesser bonds. Such is the curious tenacity of life of a sectional interest, like that of a lower organism.

Yet never had the need for the higher organism been greater, the organism of a real party. Not all the various bodies and organs that had grown up in the movement from ten years before could make up for that lack, not even the pre-war *Daily Herald* with its Dyson cartoons. But if the *Daily Herald* was unable to take the place of a party, it had served (even with its queer belief in industrial action only) to reveal the need of the workers for such a party. The discrepancies and discordances of the movement began to cause serious anxiety. Well-meaning attempts to set it right sprang up in profusion. Many special bodies came into existence, both before and after the beginning of the war, some with a mission to revise the theory of the movement, some to alter its practice, others to co-ordinate. But it was not till 1917-8 that anything was done. In 1917 the trumpets of the Russian revolution rang out over the world: and everywhere amongst the masses came a sense of movement. To that there were in this country two responses.

The first of these was the Leeds Convention of May, 1917, which was to have set up Councils of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and had about as much political after-effect as Robert Burns's present of cannon to the French National Assembly. It was not out of these short-lived enthusiasms that a real Labour Party could be born. It was a voice and nothing more. But the second response, the new constitution of the Labour Party, was not even a voice. It was a document handed down

from above. Hitherto in spite of all the societies and people-with-schemes the Labour Party had remained amorphous, something not fixed or fused, but subsisting in a sort of mechanical mixture of its various natural elements. Now, suddenly, there was a definite move, originating from the Executive, to introduce definiteness and direction. It was not an easy move. It had been attempted before and had been bungled before. This time there were to be no mistakes. The individual psychology of those who would be most closely concerned was well judged, the public attitude was neatly calculated, the political timing was nearly perfect. To say this will not appear too much to those who remember the excitement caused by the new Labour Programme, the New Constitution, the new constituencies, and the new candidates. The doors were opened to those who were neither Socialist nor working class. Radicals and others prominent in politics began to join and to leave the Wee Frees. The star of Asquith waned. For a time the Labour Party was more than respectable: it was the fashion.

The middle classes were visibly impressed. They had not thought it possible for the Labour Party to assume so much of the technique of the older parties, to master the art of making an appeal to all classes, and generally to have learned so well the lessons of political behaviour as understood and practised from of old in this country. And, insensibly, as they felt the Labour Party to be something more like the parties to which they had been accustomed, their fear of it dropped away; while with a natural reciprocity the speeches and books of the leaders were toned to catch the ear of the new audience. The Labour Party had ceased to cater only for trade union interests. It was now concerned for the good of the whole community, and neither Liberal nor Conservative could say more than that.

The reconstitution then seemed to have succeeded beyond what everybody had dared to hope. And yet, brilliant reconstruction though it was, it was not quite everything. One thing was lacking: the movement of a real creative spirit amongst the workers themselves. But that one thing was essential. Without it the reconstruction of the Labour Party in 1917 was no less futile than the Leeds Convention of the same year. Many will remember how the Office of Works was stung into activity by Bernard Shaw's disparaging reference to Buckingham Palace (in the stage directions of *Cæsar and Cleopatra*), and set to work to alter, if not its structure, its appearance, by the addition of a new façade. The case

was similar. There was no rebuilding of the Labour Party. There was only a new façade.

A real political party was not created, the sectional interests were not fused.

The year 1918 turns it into a party on a level with the other parties, approximating to them more and more, like the uncouth heir of an old house who has been discovered in Australia and is now learning how to behave like his predecessors. But the young heir has still a lesson to learn. He must cut his old connections. And so, like Napoleon Buonaparte aspiring to enter the circle of legitimate sovereigns and divorcing Josephine therefor, the Labour Party legitimises its expected rise to power by the expulsion of the Communist Party.

But something departs with the Communist Party which some would be fain to keep.

The traditions of a revolutionary working class enrolled in the Socialist ranks becomes a little hollow. It becomes a little difficult to quote William Morris or to use his arguments: for William Morris was a Communist. But the "Red Flag" will still be sung. For to cast away that symbol would be to betray the fact that the reality had also been abandoned.

# AFTER THE RETREAT, WHAT?

J. T. MURPHY

**W**ITH the defeat of the Engineers, the controversy arising out of the retreat of the unions before the capitalist offensive enters on a new stage. Immediately after the Black Friday fiasco all attention was centred upon the failure and weaknesses of organisations. A call was made at once for some big simple plan of reorganisation. The General Council of the Trades Union Congress entered the arena as Labour's General Staff and became the centre of attention in the place of the Triple Alliance. Several big plans were forthcoming only for the months to make clear the limitations of every plan of union reorganisation and the immense difficulties to be overcome.

When the Engineers' lock-out began in March of this year all the defects of the unions and their leaders were again brazenly paraded before the masses. Black Friday of 1921 was followed by Black Tuesday of 1922. The elementary principles of solidarity were betrayed, even by the engineering unions amongst themselves. The General Council received requests and demands from all directions to take a leading part. The Council crept in between the conferences as a mediator. It retired without honour even amongst its friends. But the idea of a General Staff remains, and to this the old trade union leaders turn as they rise from the confession of their futilities and demand on its behalf greater powers to cope with the future struggles.

It is at this stage that the change in the direction of the controversy takes its most interesting turn. The call for power is answered by the call for a purpose. "What is needed is not simply power, but power for an objective. What is that objective? There can only be one answer to that question. If the central direction of Labour is needed to confront the central direction of capital in the modern State, it can only be for one purpose and that is to defeat it." Thus the Editor in the May issue of the **LABOUR MONTHLY**.

It is not often that a call is so quickly answered. It is a simple answer and a bold one. But, does it focus correctly the principal weakness of the

movement or the complexity of the problem to be tackled? The implication, nay, more, the premise from which the answer is thundered forth, is that the movement has no objective. Now, it may be that most of the Labour leaders of the day would acclaim the objective as declared by Mr. Dutt, but have different notions concerning the path towards the conquest of power and what is meant by the defeat of capital. Indeed, the same writer went on to show how politics had become confused with parliamentarism, and how this very parliamentarism had become the one hope of the leaders. The fundamental weakness of the movement to-day lies, therefore, not in the fact that it has no aim, but that it is confused about its aim and tied down to specific forms of progress.

It is notorious how the Labour Movement, as if on the horns of a dilemma, has swung backwards and forwards on the issues of parliamentarism and direct action. The apparent practicability of democracy has appealed to many and is the strength of parliamentary labourism. The resentment against political careerism harnessed to economic trades unionism has been the basis of the other, giving rise to industrialism and syndicalism. The one has produced a policy which directs the movement to something external to itself from which to derive its principal strength. The other has concentrated upon industrial organisation and power whilst failing to appreciate the limitations of the industrial organisations in the political struggle which demands a proletarian State in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

The revolutions and upheavals in Europe have shattered the notion that the instruments of political authority are alike for each class as it rises to power. Each class requires the instrument of authority which operates and responds the most readily to its class interests and needs. The struggle of the classes (surely no one in the Labour Movement will deny the class struggle to-day) has produced the organisations most responsive and adaptable to their every-day needs. Most certainly the parliamentary institutions did not arise out of the needs of the labouring masses or we should not have to conquer them. Nor have the unions, co-operatives, and workers' parties grown out of the interests and needs of the landlords and capitalists. These organisations of Labour are the foundation of Labour's strength, the instruments responding to and thriving upon the development of the interests of Labour. That they are perfect none will agree. But we do know that as they grow in power, and use it, Labour is on the way to becoming the dominant class. It

follows, therefore, that any policy which detracts attention from and weakens the basic organisations of Labour is a policy of reaction strengthening the hands of the enemies of Labour. Is not this the effect of Labour parliamentarism to-day? Has it not made Parliament the aim and measured every crisis and every struggle in terms of their effect upon the voting machine of capitalism?

It does not follow that Labour ought not to penetrate or capture the capitalist institutions. But it does follow that the rôle of Labour within these institutions is not to perpetuate them at the expense of Labour's organisations. It must be to strengthen the latter at the expense of the former. When once parliamentarism has become synonymous with politics, and the political goal of the working class has become a parliamentary goal, social pacificism is the natural philosophy of the leaders. Strikes are deplored. Lockouts are brutal and indecent. Mass action becomes mob action to be avoided at all costs. Upon the premise of reformist parliamentarism is founded the mechanical, formal, respectable means of progress and a sentimental idealism which ignores the realities of the daily struggles of the masses. In practice it perverts the rôle of the workers in the capitalist Parliament and stifles the elemental movements of the masses upon which the working class depends for its conquest of capitalism. It is because life has repeatedly contradicted this unreal idealism that the Labour Movement has continuously been involved in strikes and lockouts in spite of the will of the leaders of Labour, and thus made possible the growth of the opposition policy.

Whatever the defects of the industrialists and the syndicalists they had faith in the masses and the unions. Their defects were not errors of faith, but of vision. They failed to see the political implications of the fight for the control of industry. Concentrating upon industry they thought in terms of industry, and missed the fact that in the war to wrest industry from the present owners we have to deal with forces other than industrial headed by an authority which can only be answered by the dictatorship of the proletariat exercised by a State of Labour's own creation. Never has this fact been made so clear as in the uprising of the Italian workers, who seized the factories and ignored the State. Neither State nor factories are theirs to-day. Nor even the conditions agreed upon in the final compromise. Ignoring the task of conquering the Capitalist State power in the hour of open conflict, the State waited and defeated them.

The failure to recognise this limitation of their programme has had



its effect upon even their positive contributions to the movement. They have believed in mass action and persistently developed the industrial organisations. But in the process they have set limitations to the movement and developed an industrial Utopia, which has played a similar rôle to its antithesis—parliamentary Labourism. When not making the errors of the Italian unions, they have been developing formal schemes of perfect industrial organisation which when completed would squeeze out capitalism and become the industrial administrative machinery of society. These in turn have given rise to the competitive policies of amalgamation *versus* the building of new unions. Again life has defeated the formalists of both extremes. The revolutionary experiences and upheavals in Europe, and indeed the struggles within this country, have demonstrated that the revolutionary challenge for power becomes a fact of life long before any of their formal schemes can possibly come to fruition.

Plans and schemes of general Labour organisation play a rôle both in the development of Labour organisation and the movements of the masses. But that rôle is not a formal one mechanically ushering in the perfect organisation before action. The character of the every-day struggle of the workers, their general lack of political training, the increasing rapidity of the economic and political changes which characterise modern capitalism, prohibit such a possibility. Their value lies in the degree to which they assist in the marshalling of ever larger forces for action; the breaking down of the narrow sectional prejudices, the giving of confidence to the masses, and the simplification of the problems of leadership. Their danger lies mainly in their misdirection. Once they are looked upon as ends in themselves or are allowed to fetter the movements of the workers, the source of their strength becomes the ally of their enemies.

The working-class movement needs the aim already indicated. But it needs also a policy freed from the fetters of formalism, a policy based upon a profound faith in the masses and their capacity to use their own organisations, not to produce an equilibrium or balance of power between their organisations and the institutions of capitalism, but to supplant the institutions by those of their own creation. Only a movement freed from the mechanical formulæ of industrialists and parliamentarians alike can hope to be capable of developing a leadership and a capacity to respond readily to the demands of the life-and-death struggle between Capital and Labour.

It is one thing, however, to clarify the aim and define what we think should be the character of the policy to be pursued. It is another to say how these things shall be. The aim is a political aim, and we have to face the fact that the Labour unions are not built upon a political programme although they are compelled to play an ever-increasing part in the political struggle of the workers for power. They are broad based upon the economic conditions of a class and unlimited in the variety of the political views which may exist within them. Liberals, Tories, Labourists, Communists, have equal rights as trade unionists. A candidate for office is not asked as to his political views. Deeper still in these organisations are large numbers of workers who are not even politically conscious. It is true that all these elements move into action from time to time under given conditions. But this fact does not clear the way or simplify the problem of electing new leaders. It only serves to show more clearly the obligations of leadership in contrast to the inevitably confused leadership which such heterogeneous elements are bound to throw up without some effort is made to alter the character of the elections within the unions.

Every one of these mass movements which arise are of political importance, and if they are handled by people who neither understand their significance nor desire to use them, what wonder can there be that solidarity is so slow in developing or that Labour's subjective condition is so far behind the objective demands of history. These are the occasions when the will of the masses is harnessed to an idea and the confusion of opinions is subordinated in the mass. These are the occasions when much depends upon the leadership as to whether they become the means of developing political consciousness and purpose or are demoralised by failure to ring true to the inherent demands of the struggle. These hours of crisis, however, are not the hours of election to office. The leaders are elected during the times of "normalcy" when inertia and the political confusion of the workers are uppermost in the unions.

The problem, therefore, is not simply that of converting the General Council, if that were possible. The central organ of the movement must have behind it the will and purpose of the masses, and that will and purpose is divided in a thousand ways. Recollect for a moment the cross-currents which operate even on such a question as the amalgamation of the unions. It is a popular demand in the engineering industry to-day, but immediately the lockout is over it will need a long and

persistent struggle in the unions to effect amalgamation. The returns sent in to the General Council in response to their request for greater powers show how great are the obstacles to even a more elementary proposal than that of amalgamation. The three leading organisations affiliated to the Trades Union Congress—the M.F.G.B., the Transport Federation, and the N.U.R.—holding the strategic positions in the Labour struggle against capitalism, either do not reply or refuse. Still more vividly are the difficulties brought home to us by the lockout of engineering and shipbuilding workers. Here on the simple question of the solidarity of the workers in a single industry when every union within it was subject to the onslaught of the Employers' Federation, the confusion and discord is amazing. Mr. Bell, speaking on behalf of the General Workers, could not see why his organisation should be brought into the trouble at all. His members were quite happy prior to the intrusion and would be glad to resume normal relations. Other leaders speaking on behalf of their particular unions echoed these sentiments. Yet whilst they were speaking the rank and file of these organisations in various important centres were attempting to create a greater solidarity in spite of their leaders. But even those who agree on the aim set before us do not act unitedly. They are pursuing an individualistic striving for a revolutionary social idea, and are lost amidst the welter of confusion.

To throw our aim into the midst of this confusion as a new idea to be casually considered would simply add one more to the many whirling around the movement to-day. All the circumstances we have traversed emphatically demand that the idea must be organised, and that this organisation must harness the will of the masses to achieve its purpose. To organise on the basis of a political idea and policy is to create a political party. *That is the need of the day.* A party which shall organise all those in the working-class movement, with its variety of organisations, who are prepared to pursue a common policy within and through these organisations for the conquest of power by whatever means life may offer. Without it any definite advance on the chaos of to-day is an impossibility.

But again let me call a halt. We want a party of a totally different character to any which have yet figured in the history of this country. Every party, from the Labour Party to the most revolutionary, has suffered, and suffers to-day, from the same deadening formal features

which have characterised the unions. True it may be that they have had a political objective before them which has distinguished them from the unions. But they have the same formal membership, the same formal voting, the same bureaucratic obsessions. They have not been organs of struggle. They have simply been registers of opinion and propaganda associations either deploring the actions of the masses or preaching revolt without the means to determine the actions of a single union. The greatest moments of their existence when their influence was enormous were thrust upon them and not achieved through their living contact and conscious leadership of the workers' organisations in their daily struggles. When the Labour Party found itself at the head of a mighty movement at the time of the threatened war on Soviet Russia it threw into silhouette the power of organised Labour and its challenge to the institutions of capitalism. That was an accident of history for the Labour Party, not to be repeated, disclosing for all time the futilities of their formalism. But for the party of revolution it was a peremptory warning and foreshadowing of the crises yet to come in the struggles of the classes, crises which show that struggle for political power to be not merely a registration but a war of living forces in which every organisation counts. The party we need, therefore, is a party of struggle, a party without sleeping members, a party participating in the every-day struggles of the masses because it recognises that it is the accumulation of the forces operating in these everyday affairs which produces the crises which determine the future of the workers for long years ahead. It must be a party functioning in the everyday life and work of the unions, not as a mediator between the employers and the workers, but as a warrior helping the workers to conquer.

That this will mean sharply raising political issues in the unions is true. It cannot be escaped. And every attempt to escape is disastrous, encouraging political ignorance, smothering the real issues, and handing the workers over to the forces of reaction. It has become hackneyed to say that it is impossible to state where the industrial ends and the political begins. What then becomes of the objection to politics playing a decisive rôle in the election of leaders? Economic unionism is dead. Political confusion reigns. Only by putting issues more clearly and sharply before the masses in every phase of their activities is it possible for them to emerge from political darkness to light and produce the leadership necessary for the tasks before the workers of to-day.

# THE TRANSPORT WORKERS' NEXT STEP

By ROBERT WILLIAMS

**T**HE present is a time for serious stock-taking. We have reports from all quarters of declining membership in all sections of the Trade Union movement. Real wages are being reduced below the pre-war standard and the worker's condition of life is falling to unendurable levels. Much of our trouble can be directly traced to the international chaos, for which the workers are only partly responsible, but a good deal is due to faulty methods of industrial organisation.

In what direction can we look for material improvement? Are we to remain in a spirit of oriental fatalism until by the blind operations of economic factors British trade-union conditions are reduced to the "coolie" level now obtaining in Germany, Poland, Austria, &c.? It seems pretty clear that with our present policy, or shall I say lack of policy, we shall all discover that after the Allied financiers, militarists, and capitalists have utilised the efforts and energies of the workers in their respective countries to destroy Germany and her allies in the field by the Reparations Clauses of the Peace Treaties the slave conditions produced in the countries of the vanquished nations are being used to destroy the trade-union wages and conditions in the Allied countries, which were built up by generations of working-class organisation.

We must, therefore, rouse ourselves more from our muddle-headedness than from our apathy. It is idle to cry, "Workers, Unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains," when we know full well that the highly-skilled craft unionist considers he is so much superior to the lesser-skilled machine minder or the "unskilled" labourer.

Even though the pace be frightfully slow we must work towards the establishment of powerful industrial groupings.

Having been asked by the Editor to write about the new development of the Transport Workers' Federation, I do so willingly on the lines of the writer of the "Notes of the Month" for the June issue,

"to throw a light upon the immediate problems of the working-class struggle."

Immediately upon the establishment of the Transport and General Workers' Union, merging twelve of the organisations previously separately affiliated to the Federation and now including the overwhelming majority of the Federation membership, the Executive Council took the necessary steps to consult the three organisations of railway workers with a view to bringing them within the scope of an enlarged transport federation. Two years ago I submitted a memorandum to the Annual General Council of the Federation suggesting that the scope of the Federation should be extended to include the whole of the transport, railway, and distributive workers of the country. The processes of transport and distribution are part of a chain of functions starting, in the case of a commodity like bread, from the granaries of Canada, America, and the Argentine and terminating with the delivery of the bread itself at our very doors. It is impossible to define or trace any clear line of demarcation between the shop assistant who attends to the sales and the warehouseman at the docks or at the warehouses of the great multiple stores or co-operative societies. Nor can a clear line of division be determined between the transport worker by rail and the transport worker by road, and this difficulty will remain whatever may be the result of the struggle now going on between the private interests in the commercial road transport industry and the semi-controlled monopolists of the various Scottish and English great railway companies, in which the latter are claiming powers to run motor vehicles in competition with the former.

The development of the Federation in the direction of the memorandum referred to has, however, been retarded because the workers in what are called the distributive trades are not yet ready and willing to take part in a great federation such as I have outlined. With the railway workers, however, the position is more clarified. The Federation first sought consultation early this year with the National Union of Railwaymen, between which body and the Federation there has existed a joint committee for some time to deal with matters concerning waterside labour and questions of overlapping where the memberships of the two bodies worked in conjunction. The N.U.R. Executive Committee, while hesitant to discuss complete amalgamation between themselves and the Transport and General Workers' Union and other unions affiliated

to the Federation, displayed a keen anxiety to proceed almost immediately with a scheme of federation with the transport workers, and if possible to include the other railway unions. It was decided to invite the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Railway Clerks' Association to act with the Federation and the N.U.R., and subsequently conferences of the four bodies took place for the purpose of considering the old constitution of the Federation and drafting such alterations as were necessary to bring the rules and objects more in compliance with the needs of an extended federation permitting the entry of the railwaymen's unions. Agreement on these matters was reached without much difficulty, and a draft of the revised rules and constitution was submitted to a further conference of the four bodies, and each of the parties agreed to recommend the principle of a railway and transport federation and the revisions of rules necessary therefor to the governing bodies of the four organisations.

The governing body of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen is the Annual Assembly of Delegates, which was the first to meet after the recommendations had been passed, and it accepted the recommendations and will await the inaugural conference of the reconstituted federation.

The annual conference of the Railway Clerks' Association met later in May, but the conference was unwilling to accept the recommendations of the Executive and referred the matter back to the branches. This fact may prove a fitting reply to those who are never tired of claiming that it is the leaders who stand in the way of amalgamation or even more effective co-operation through federation. I have received at the time of writing no official report of the debate upon the proposal, but I have watched with interest the reports appearing in the *Daily Herald*, as well as those of the capitalist-owned Press. It appears to me that the two arguments which received the greatest prominence were mutually destructive. In the first place, one of the delegates offered resistance to a scheme of federation because, as he alleged, the dockers in his town—Barry—struck as regularly as the town clock. He asked furthermore why an organisation like the R.C.A. should join up with unions which included lascars, coolies, and other orientals amongst its membership. The second argument was that the Federation was a showy superstructure without any firmly established basis in reality. I would point out to the representative from Barry that it ill becomes a member of the working



class to condemn other members of that class by using only the travesty of an argument, the weakness of which ought to be evident from the avidity with which it was seized upon by the capitalist Press. It is true that in many of our ports we have periodical stoppages which are necessary for the enforcement of our various agreements, and that are absolutely essential to maintain the existing tariffs, which otherwise might be whittled down until our members would be earning half their present wages. It is not fair to assume that because our members may stop a ship here and there to enforce a tariff, it would be necessary to ask the booking clerks on the Barry Railway to refuse to issue tickets to—amongst others—our own members who were following their ordinary occupations.

The arguments of the second delegate have only to be restated to answer themselves. The Transport Workers' Federation, with all its defects upon its head—and I realise those faults as well as most people—has done as much for its affiliated membership as any other organisation in the country. Were I concerned with scoring mere debating points I could offer six criticisms of the R.C.A. for every one that the delegates referred to offered against the Federation.

There remain now the Annual General Council of the Federation and the Annual Delegate Meeting of the National Union of Railwaymen to consider the proposal. The Federation Council will meet in June before these lines appear in print, and the N.U.R. is meeting in the early part of July. We have every reason for assuming that these two meetings will agree to the main lines of the recommendations, and then the inaugural conference of the newly-constituted Federation will be held formally to ratify the establishment of the new body and adopt the rules and constitution, as well as to elect officers and Executive and perform other consequential business.

In my opinion it is absolutely essential at the present time to have a comprehensive organisation representing all sections of transport work: rail, road, water, and—by no means insignificant—air. In the near future tens of thousands of the Federation membership will be railway workers, especially in South Wales, where, under the Grouping Scheme, the Great Western Railway becomes the owner of a chain of docks and harbours reaching from Newport down to Fishguard. Amalgamation of all transport interests on the trade union side may to-day appear somewhat remote, but it must be remembered that a good deal of resistance was

offered to the formation of the Federation some twelve years ago, and all the facts and circumstances which have accelerated the formation of the Transport and General Workers' Union are acting, together with the quickened consciousness of the workers themselves, to promote an amalgamation of all the varied transport interests throughout the country.

At the time of writing the Executive of the Federation are organising means of resistance to the latest demands of the shipowners and port labour employers for reductions of wages. Some of these employers, as indicated, are railway companies, and there are, moreover, attempts being made to interfere with the basic wage which the railway workers established as the result of the 1919 strike. It seems clear that the Federation of British Industries and the astute gentlemen who direct the policy of the employers regarding wages and working conditions have determined to make their attack first of all upon the productive side of industry. Having got substantial wages cuts and established factory and workshop "discipline" over the workpeople in productive industry, they are now making an effort to repeat on the transport and distributive side of industry what they have accomplished—for the process is practically complete with the failure of the engineers—on the productive side. In that side of industry the workers' labour has been so resourceful that the overlords of industry can eke out the product of last month's labour and use it this month and next month and thereby starve the workers into submissive conditions. It is so with coal, with constructional and building work, with textiles. But the employers understand only too well that they cannot use yesterday's transport to-day or reserve to-day's transport for to-morrow. Transport must be continuous to be effective. In the old pre-war days transport workers were the only trade union combination which had to make allowance for the existence and maintenance of professional strike-breakers: the Free Labour Association, which was a wing of the Shipping Federation. In the railway strike of 1919 White Guards, volunteers, and "loyal" workers were used to set up a skeleton service for the purpose of contesting the resistance of the National Union of Railwaymen and the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. It was the same during the Triple Alliance crisis. Kensington Gardens and Regent's Park were like the base behind the front line in France or Flanders during the war. Tens of thousands of motor vehicles were requisitioned to form an alternative means of transport, "backed by all the resources of the State"; all this, not to take the place of a single

miner, but of the transport workers and railwaymen who were preparing to take action in support of the miners. The measure of our power to hamper and embarrass the organised capitalists is the measure of the opposition which will confront us as soon as action is forced upon us.

If I am asked to state with precision and exactitude what the extended federation of transport and railway workers is going to do, I say frankly, "I don't know." It will depend upon the set of circumstances obtaining at a given time. I welcome the development of the trade union movement on frankly industrial lines. One of the most humiliating spectacles we have seen for some time is the friction we know has gone on between the A.E.U. and the forty-seven unions, all of whom ought to be standing and negotiating solidly together. The workers will have to learn to consider organisation not only on clearly defined industrial lines, but on a class or revolutionary basis. Some of us had hopes that the General Council of the Trades Union Congress would be able to contribute something in reintegrating the working-class movement on the industrial field, but, alas! the General Council is only the Parliamentary Committee with a new name. We must not, however, be unduly perturbed or dismayed by the lack of foresight of the leaders. The leaders are but the reflex of the apathy and indifference of the majority of the membership. One can only hope that the extended Federation of Transport and Railway Workers will do as much for its affiliated membership as the present Federation has been able to since its formation in 1910.

# THE DEBACLE OF GANDHISM

By EVELYN ROY

**W**HAT is the meaning of the present situation in India? Has the national movement collapsed, or is it only Gandhism that has collapsed, to give way to newer and deeper forces of the future? The answer to this question is only to be found in the study of Gandhism and its fall: and this study is the more important because Gandhism is a factor of international significance, and its counterpart is to be found in every revolution.

Gandhism as a political force reached its climax in the Ahmedabad session of the Indian National Congress, held in the last week of December, 1921. The 6,000 delegates, representative of India's outraged nationalism—outraged by the policy of deliberate repression launched upon by the Government of India—conferred upon the Working Committee, and upon Mr. Gandhi as its head, supreme dictatorial powers to guide the national destinies during the ensuing year. Non-violent Non-co-operation and mass civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, were adopted as the means to attain the goal of a still-undefined Swaraj.

Few leaders can ask for more than this: the sense of power that emanates from a nation's mandate, backed up by the popular will. The field was clear for Mr. Gandhi to exercise his qualities of leadership and to match steel with his powerful opponent, British imperialism. If at first blush the contest looked unequal between the slender David and the giant Goliath, it must be remembered that the odds were not all in favour of the latter. Three hundred and twenty million people, united under the single command of an adored and trusted leader, who has cleverly put his bristling opponent at a disadvantage from the outset by proclaiming non-violence as his chief weapon—such a force, if properly manœuvred, could be made to wring more than one concession from the irritated and nonplussed adversary whose moral position in the eyes of the world is a bad one and whose cowardly hypocrisy smarts under the knowledge of this fact. And concessions were all that Mr. Gandhi asked for. He is not, and has never been, an avowed revolutionary who puts the

issue squarely to the enemy: "Either you or I must go." His unsubstantial, transubstantiated Swaraj, when pieced together from reluctant definitions, means only "Home rule within the British Empire," as the defeat of Hazrat Mohani's resolution for "Complete independence outside the British Empire" proved at the Ahmedabad Congress.

( If, instead of winning concessions for at least a section of the Indian people, Mr. Gandhi won for himself a six-year gaol sentence and a martyr's crown at the hands of the British Government, he has only himself to blame. Great positions carry with them great responsibilities, and Gandhi the Dictator, who played a lone hand against his powerful protagonist, must acknowledge that his tactics brought him to a catastrophic defeat. The situation at the close of the Ahmedabad Congress was a delicate one, and success for either side hung in the balance. It is in such moments that leadership turns the scale, and, judging by the *dénouement*, the palm must go to Lord Reading and not to Mr. Gandhi.

A moment's retrospect will make clear the position as it stood. The visit of the Prince of Wales to India served its purpose by showing the Government there was real force behind the non-co-operators—the force of the striking masses. Stung by this demonstration of power, the bureaucracy adopted a policy of such wide repression that to-day, in addition to all the prominent leaders, 25,000 Indian patriots lie in gaol upon very vague and unproven charges of "sedition," "disaffection," and of "waging war against the king." But in its eagerness to stamp the movement out the Government overshot the mark. The Moderates, that tiny section of upper-class Indians, whose "loyalty" gave a show of legality to the wholesale arrests and prosecutions of their fellow-countrymen—these same Moderates rebelled against their leading-strings and demanded a change of policy. Members of the new councils resigned, others protested, lawyers and landowners and capitalists banded themselves together in a sort of unity to tell the Government it must cease its rampant repression. The suggestion of Pundit Malaviya to hold a round table conference of all shades of opinion for the solution of the crisis was responded to by all the political parties. This was the crucial moment, and the wary tactics of the Viceroy in this crisis prove that he was fumbling in the dark.

In a speech made in Calcutta on December 21, 1921, just before the Ahmedabad Congress opened, the Viceroy himself stated that he was in favour of a genuine attempt to solve the problems of unrest by means of

discussion and consideration at a conference, and that meanwhile there should be a cessation of activities on both sides, both Non-co-operators and Government. His words had not fallen on deaf ears, and we find the idea of a conference being toyed with by Mr. Gandhi. In the conference of all parties held in Bombay on January 15 definite terms were laid down for the calling of a round table conference in conformity with the Viceroy's speech—that the Government cease its arrests and release all prisoners, and that the Non-co-operators cease all activities pending the negotiations. Mr. Gandhi, meanwhile, as Congress Dictator, suspended civil disobedience until the end of January in order to assist the arbitration.

In this desire of Mr. Gandhi to arbitrate lay the secret of his defeat. Lord Reading discovered that Mr. Gandhi was no less unwilling than himself to call into action the sanguinary forces of the Indian masses. This was amply demonstrated by his ever-growing insistence upon the creed of non-violence at the expense of its concomitant, non-co-operation; by his sharp rebuke to every manifestation of force on the part of the masses, such as his "Manifesto to the Hooligans of Bombay" after the events of November 17-20, and Madras, in which he declared, "It is better to have no hartal and no hooliganism"; above all, by his shrinking from embarking upon the final step that he himself declared must lead to Swaraj, namely, mass civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes. This latter step was thrice postponed after its formal adoption in the Ahmedabad Congress—postponed for no reason whatever that one may find except in Mr. Gandhi's own timid horror of the inevitable conflicts between police and people that must follow its inauguration. It did not need much acumen for Lord Reading to discover this weakness of Mr. Gandhi—the latter proclaimed it from the housetops for the benefit alike of Government and Non-co-operators. On January 25, he wrote in *Young India* at the very moment when the round table negotiations were under way and he was supposed to declare mass civil disobedience in operation within five days if the overtures for peace fell through:—

I don't know what is the best course. At this moment I am positively shaking with fear. If a settlement were to be made, then where are we to go? After coming to know the strength of India, I am afraid of a settlement. If a settlement is to be made before we have been thoroughly tested, our condition will be like that of a child prematurely born which will perish in a short time.

‘ In the face of this naive avowal of indecision, helplessness, and terror, is it any wonder that the Viceroy, afflicted by no such qualms and very conscious of his end in view, should bring the negotiations for a round table conference to an abrupt conclusion and pursue his serene course of “ lawless repression ” undeterred by the voice of his own or Mr. Gandhi’s conscience? Lord Reading’s decision was communicated to the Bombay Conference in a telegram sent by his secretary at the end of January, which stated that His Excellency was unable to discover in the proposals put forward by the conference the basis for a profitable discussion on a round table conference, and no useful purpose would therefore be served by entering into any detailed examination of their terms.

Mr. Gandhi’s much-advertised letter to the Viceroy of February 4, and the Government communiqué issued in reply on February 6, are merely by-plays of the main decision arrived at full ten days earlier. The Viceroy had begun to advance from the very first step of retreat taken by Mr. Gandhi in postponing the application of mass civil disobedience until the outcome of the round table arbitrations. If instead of this amiable postponement Mr. Gandhi had issued an edict to the waiting peasantry to cease payment of taxes immediately at the close of the Congress, the whole outcome might have been different. The response of the peasants cannot be doubted. Wherever tried its effect was instantaneous and overwhelming. Lord Reading, confronted by a show of force and firmness, backed by mass action on a large scale, might have wavered and accepted negotiations with the Non-co-operators. But Mr. Gandhi merely threatened, and then postponed for two weeks that which constituted his only weapon. On February 4, when the Viceroy had already declared the road to negotiations closed, Mr. Gandhi addressed him a letter, once more offering to delay the inauguration of mass civil disobedience pending the conference if the Viceroy would revise his policy of lawless repression.

—The reply, on February 6, was a Government communiqué which declared that “ mass civil disobedience is fraught with such danger to the State that it must be met with sternness and severity,” while Mr. Gandhi’s overtures for peace were completely ignored. In the language of the great American game of poker, matters had come to a showdown. The Government had called Mr. Gandhi’s bluff and all cards were laid on the table.



Mass civil disobedience, already declared at Bardoli on January 29, but suspended pending the Gandhi-Reading negotiations, was formally launched through the medium of a mass meeting held at Bardoli, and a manifesto issued February 7 by Mr. Gandhi, in which he declared:—

The choice before the people then is mass civil disobedience, with all its undoubted dangers, and lawless repression of the lawful activities of the people.

Although mass civil disobedience was not formally sanctioned by Mr. Gandhi until all hope of a compromise with the Government had been given up, that is, until the first week in February, in reality it had begun spontaneously in various districts since January in the form of non-payment of taxes and was approved by the various local congress committees. For example, in the Panchmahal district of Gujerat, in Guntur district and Andhara, Madras, in parts of Assam and Bengal, the peasants had refused to pay chaukidari (police) and ryot taxes since the beginning of January. The rumour spread from village to village that the Gandhi-Raj had come and it was no longer necessary to pay taxes. That the movement was spreading rapidly is proved by the fact that local officials began to resign in large numbers because of their inability to collect the revenue, as well as by the official reports, which show large sums outstanding which the officials were unable to collect from the peasantry. District magistrates complained of incitement among the people not to pay taxes, of popular resistance to rent warrants, of insults offered by prisoners under trial to their judges, and a general subversion of gaol discipline.

The prompt and energetic measures taken by the Government to arrest the non-payment of taxes movement prove how seriously it was regarded. Already on January 10 a communiqué from the Punjab warned the people against the consequences of civil disobedience, which the Government threatened would be dealt with by more rigorous and systematic measures than any yet adopted. On January 20, the Madras Government issued a similar notice, stating that the resignation of village officials would not be accepted, and that officers refusing to carry out their duties would be dismissed and deprived of their hereditary rights. The land of persons refusing to pay taxes would be seized and put up for sale. Extra police were being recruited at the expense of the population, but those paying taxes before the prescribed date would be exempt from this liability.

Conflicts between the police and the people became of daily occurrence, but a strict censorship was maintained to conceal the extent of the unrest. Only the reports of the revenue officers form a gauge of the strength of the movement. In Guntur district, Madras, collections amounted to one hundredth part of the money due, the Government loss being several lakhs of rupees. The revenue member stated that "there was proof that village officers not only refused to do their duty, but threatened and intimidated law-abiding people. There had been a large number of resignations among village officers, who used their power and prestige against the very Government it was their duty to secure."

Non-payment of taxes was not the only disturbing feature of Indian unrest during the months of January and February. Widespread disturbances throughout India, from the Punjab to Madras, from Bombay to Burma, arose from the attempts to enforce the various measures of the Non-co-operation programme, such as boycott of cloth and liquor shops, resulting in encounters between police and people and mob risings, with loss of life and many arrests, which tended to increase the general disquiet.

A report in the Legislative Assembly showed that in Assam, up to the end of January, eighty-four people had been killed and 400 wounded in affrays between the police and people. In Burma, a Committee on Unrest was appointed. In Bihar, the very grave condition of affairs led to a discussion in the Legislative Council, in the course of which Mr. Sifton, in a speech on the budget, stated that the revenue for this year was expected to be nearly forty-two lakhs less than anticipated, deficit being due to the Non-co-operation movement, especially the boycott of liquor shops. Five thousand arrests were made in Bengal alone by the beginning of January, and several cases of mob assaults on the police, resulting in loss of life on both sides, were reported. In Madras, where non-payment of taxes had been adopted in the Guntur district early in January, Gurkhas were quartered on the population to enforce collections and maintain order. Several cases of assaults by the people upon the police were reported in different parts of the province, resulting in loss of life. In the Punjab Non-co-operation meetings and picketing of cloth and liquor shops were especially numerous, usually ending in violent affrays. On February 8, State troops were called out to suppress riots at Ferozepur Jhirka (Punjab), in response to an urgent appeal for help from the ex-Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Superintendent of Police, who were besieged in the police station until the arrival of troops

from Delhi next day. The most serious sign of unrest was the mutiny of several Sikh regiments, who, in sympathy with their brother Sikhs in the Kisan and Gurdwara movements, refused to obey their officers' orders, mutinied in gaol, deserted in large numbers, and accepted discharge from their regiments rather than serve the Government longer.

Altogether, the whole country at this juncture may be best described as a seething volcano of popular unrest, upon which Mr. Gandhi's benedictions of non-violence dropped with very little effect, and which merely awaited the word of command to boil up in a general demonstration of discontent that might have very well led to insurrection, if not revolution. The Government was well aware of this danger—far more so than Mr. Gandhi—and while the round table negotiations were fruitlessly ending a warrant had been quietly issued for Mr. Gandhi's arrest, to be used if the volcano of mass-energy overflowed on the declaration of civil disobedience.

At this critical moment an unexpected pin-prick exploded Mr. Gandhi's faltering resolution and sent him scurrying back to the protection of law and order. On February 4 a riot occurred in Chauri Chaura, a village of the United Provinces, in which a procession of volunteers was fired on by the police and the infuriated mob charged the police station, captured the building, killed twenty-three policemen, and then set fire to the police station, cut the telegraph wires, and tore up the railway. The news of this untoward but by no means unusual event, whose counterparts were being enacted all over India in every province, leaked through the official censorship on February 6, just in the moment when Mr. Gandhi and the Viceroy were exchanging their famous notes, and full details reached the Mahatma on the very day on which he announced the formal inauguration of mass civil disobedience.

The gruesome details of burned policemen and dismantled telegraph wires were more than Mr. Gandhi's sensitive conscience could bear. By some extraordinary mental process he held himself and his declaration of civil disobedience to be responsible for the whole occurrence, and with a loud wail of dismay and despair announced a five days' fast (reduced to two days on the supplications of his followers) as penance and punishment for the tragedy of Chauri Chaura. In an article published on February 10 in *Young India* Mr. Gandhi declares:—

I regard the Chauri Chaura tragedy as a third warning from God against the hasty embarkation on mass civil disobedience, and it is my bitterest cup

of humiliation ; but I deem such humiliation, ostracism, or even death preferable to any countenancing of untruth or violence.

Without loss of time, on February 11, a conference was hastily convoked at Bardoli, wherein the working committee of the congress revoked not only mass civil disobedience, but all picketing, processions, and public meetings as well. The peasants were ordered to pay land revenue and all other taxes due to the Government, and to suspend every activity of an offensive nature. The most significant feature of this right-about-face is in Resolutions 6 and 7, which instruct the local congress committees to inform the ryots that withholding of rent payment to the zemindars (landlords) is contrary to the congress resolutions and injurious to the best interests of the country, and which assure the zemindars that the congress movement in no way attacks their legal rights, and that even where the ryots have grievances, these should be redressed by mutual consultation and arbitration with the landlords. The organisation of a social service department is advocated to render help to all in case of illness or accident.

Mr. Gandhi's hearkening to his conscience did him the good service of delaying the order for his own arrest, a fact of which he was unaware at the time. The Government at Simla, a little amazed at this temperamental outburst and sudden change of heart, stayed its hand temporarily to permit Mr. Gandhi to lead the movement into confusion worse confounded. The national uprising which they had feared and prepared against during the last three months was checked and thrown into rout by the good offices of Mr. Gandhi himself, whose incorrigible pacifism and dread of the popular energy could be counted upon to prevent the explosion. What Governmental repression in all its varied forms had failed to accomplish, the agonised appeal of the Mahatma was able to effectuate. The national volcano at his urgent behest boiled down until it ceased to bubble, became a gentle simmer, and submitted itself to the forces of law and order. Truly, as a pacifist reformer, Mr. Gandhi may well congratulate himself on his success in soothing the just anger of the populace, even though he may have to admit his utter failure to melt the heart of the Government. That which arrests, tortures, floggings, imprisonments, massacres, fines, and police zoolans could not quell—the blind struggles of a starving nation to save itself from utter annihilation—Mr. Gandhi, by the simple magic of love and non-violence, reduced to impotence and inactivity, which insured its temporary defeat.

The Bardoli resolutions were received throughout the country with mingled feelings of triumph, relief, and alarm—triumph on the part of the Government and its supporters, relief to the feelings of those moderates and secret sympathisers with the victims of Government repression, and alarm on the part of those Non-co-operators whose ideas of strategy and tactics differed widely from those of Mr. Gandhi.

The real measure of the dissatisfaction that existed in the extremist camp over the retreat of Bardoli may be judged from the bitter discussion that raged for two days behind closed doors in the Congress Committee, which met at Delhi on February 24 to confirm the Bardoli resolutions. An angry section of earnest extremists, realising the disastrous effect upon the movement of the abandonment of all aggressive tactics, and smarting under the Government's ill-concealed triumph, urged repudiation of Bardoli and the renewal of Non-co-operation, including civil disobedience. Mr. Gandhi himself, caught in the unpleasant predicament of being "let off" by the Government for good behaviour, felt himself stung to self-defence by a return to his abandoned position. Accordingly, a compromise was struck, and the Delhi session of the Congress Committee sanctioned all forms of Non-co-operation, including individual civil disobedience, both defensive and aggressive, and picketing. The resolution affirmed that "civil disobedience is the right and duty of a people whenever a State opposes the declared will of the people."

The Delhi decision was a complete reversal of Bardoli, and as such constituted a direct challenge to the Government. According to the correspondent of *The Times*, writing from Bombay on March 5 :—

Delhi placed the seal on withdrawal from Mr. Gandhi's nominal dictatorship, for the provincial congress committees are free to embark on individual civil disobedience when and where they will.

The arrest of Mr. Gandhi, already once postponed, could be henceforth merely a matter of time and place. Scarce twelve days after the Delhi decisions Mr. Gandhi was arrested on the charge of "tending to promote disaffection against the existing system of Government" by certain speeches and articles, and a few days later was brought to trial. True to his gospel of Non-co-operation, Mr. Gandhi pleaded guilty and offered no defence, urged the judge to find him guilty and to give him the maximum sentence, and, in the course of a long written statement which he read out before the court, he reaffirmed his doctrine of non-violent Non-co-operation with the existing system of government in

straightforward, eloquent words.' It is in such supreme moments, when Gandhi the man and the patriot is able to speak, as distinguished from Gandhi the political leader, that we see him at his best.

I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government as established by law in India . . . . I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection has made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically . . . . Little do the town dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that the profits and brokerage are sucked from the blood of the masses. Little do they realise that the Government established by law in India is carried on for the exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no juggling in figures, can explain away the evidence the skeletons in many villages present to the wayfarer's eye. I have no doubt whatever that both the English and town dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity, which is perhaps unequalled in history.

The judge who sat personifying British justice and honesty must have felt some inward qualms of conscience in the face of this ringing indictment, which fell upon the courtroom like the voice of suffering India itself. With a few words, half-explanatory and almost apologetic, he pronounced sentence—six years' simple imprisonment—and the farce was over. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, apostle of non-resistance, leader of Non-co-operation, and beloved Mahatma of India's struggling millions, was led off to gaol. >

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Let neither Mr. Lloyd George nor Lord Reading nor the thinking public be deceived by the startled calm that fell upon India's millions at the news of Mr. Gandhi's incarceration. The non-co-operators, those who intoxicate themselves with the opiate of non-violence, may attribute it to soul-force; the Government may deem it the justification of its policy of repression; but for those who know India to-day this unearthly calm presages a storm more violent than any which has yet shaken the political horizon. That which is lacking is leadership in the Indian movement to-day, but without disrespect let us say frankly that no leadership for a time is preferable to Mr. Gandhi's misleadership. He performed gallant service in the last three years in leading the Indian people out of their age-long hopelessness and stagnation on to the path of agitation and organisation which attained a nation-wide response and scope. His own mental confusion was but a reflection of the confused and chaotic state of the movement itself, just staggering upon its weak

legs and learning to walk. All honour to Mr. Gandhi that he found a way for his people out of the barbed-wire entanglements of Government censorship and repression; that by his slogans of non-violent Non-co-operation, boycott, and civil disobedience he was able to draw the wide masses into the folds of the congress party and make the Indian movement for the first time truly national.

But the movement had outgrown its leader; the time had come when the masses were ready to surge ahead in the struggle, and Mr. Gandhi vainly sought to hold them back; they strained and struggled in the leading-strings of soul-force, transcendental love, and non-violence, torn between their crying earthly needs and their real love for this saintly man whose purity gripped their imagination and claimed their loyalty. Mr. Gandhi had become an unconscious agent of reaction in the face of a growing revolutionary situation. The few leaders of the Congress Party who realised this and sought a way out were rendered desperate, almost despairing at the dilemma. Mr. Gandhi had become a problem to his own movement, and lo! the British Government, in its infinite wisdom, relieved them of the problem. Mr. Gandhi out of gaol was an acknowledged force for peace, a sure enemy of violence in all its forms. Mr. Gandhi in gaol is a powerful factor for unrest, a symbol of national martyrdom, a constant stimulation to the national cause to fight its way to freedom.

New leaders are surging to the front ready to learn by past mistakes and to build a new programme for the future. Upon their understanding of the present Indian situation depends their present success or failure. The mass movement among the workers and peasants is still strong and powerful; the Aika peasant movement in the United Provinces, the outbreak of unrest among the Bhils in Central India, the three months' strike of the workers on the East India Railroad, prove where the real strength of the Indian movement lies. Reformist trade union and co-operative workers are already in the field to capture the allegiance of the Indian masses. It remains for the Congress leaders to anticipate them by formulating such a programme as will bring the workers and peasants of India to their side. In the dynamic struggle of mass-action under wise political leadership lies the true and only solution of the Indian struggle for freedom.



# AN INQUIRY INTO DICTATORSHIP—II

By MAX BEER

## III

### THE BEGINNING OF COMMUNIST AGITATION

#### § 1.—*Social Criticism in France*

IN the second half of the eighteenth century France witnessed an outburst of social criticism which, taking the natural rights philosophy for its guide, probed into the economic arrangements of society and found them wanting. Many were the critics, but only one or two went beyond criticism and arrived at positive communist or social reform conclusions. To mention only the most important of them, we may say that Morelly was a communist, Mably a social reformer, while Rousseau, Linguet, and Necker stopped short of any serious proposals for a social transformation.

Morelly published in 1753 the *Naufrage des îles flottantes*, a poem in fourteen cantos, in which he depicted a society firmly based on Communism, in contrast to the various States which, resting on private property, were like unstable islands soon to be wrecked. In 1755 he published the *Code de la Nature*, in which, analysing the dispositions and capacities of man, he argued that it was only by neglecting and perverting the work of Nature that moral philosophers and politicians created private property and brought discord, opposing interests, strife, and misery into the world. The only remedy was to live according to the laws and precepts of Nature and to make everything common.

Gabriel B. Mably (1709-1785), a high official at the French Foreign Office, a theologian and historian, pleaded in his *Doutes proposés aux philosophes économistes* (1768) in favour of Communist natural rights, eulogised Plato's *Republic*, contrasting it with the societies based on private property and inequality, showing the blessings of the former and the evils of the latter. In his treatise *De la législation* (1776) he exclaimed, "I have great difficulty in explaining how people came to establish private property. I have my conjectures on the subject, but they fail to satisfy me. Did I not fear to be wanting in respect for my forefathers, what reproaches would I not level at them for having committed a mistake which was nearly impossible to commit. For Nature intended to establish equality of goods and conditions, while they established private property.



. . . Inequality is the source of all vices to which man succumbs." (Book I, chapters 2 and 3.) Still, Mably did not advocate Communism; since man had been so corrupted by private property that it would take a long time to eradicate selfishness and avarice, he proposed dictatorial government, limitation of the law of inheritance, progressive taxation of the rich, and equalisation of the payment of officials.

In the year of the publication of Morelly's *Naufrage*, J. J. Rousseau brought out his *Discours sur l'inégalité*, in which he stigmatised the first man who enclosed a piece of land and said that it was his own as the real founder of civil society and the creator of all those crimes, wars, murders, and miseries which have perverted man.

Simon N. H. Linguet (1736-1794), a conservative jurist, characterised the laws of civil society as dictated by the rich in favour of the rich; the laws were merely fortresses to protect the rich against the poor. The whose essence of civil society was to free the rich from labour. (*Théorie des lois civiles*, 1767, Vol. 1, pp. 171-200.) Yet Linguet proposed no remedy; if one desired to live in society, one must bear up with its flagrant inequalities and evils.

Jacques Necker, the popular Finance Minister of Louis XVI, concluded his treatise *Sur le commerce des grains* (1775) with the following remarkable utterances, "One is horrified, in opening the codes of laws, to find on all their pages the proofs of the truth that all institutions have been created for the benefit of the property owners. One might say that a small number of people have shared out the earth among themselves and then created laws in order to keep together and to protect themselves against the masses, just as one encloses the forests in order to get protection against wild beasts."

## § 2.—*The Constitutions of the French Revolution*

In the midst of these questionings and controversies came 1789 and ushered in the revolution. The Third Estate, or the middle class, entered the political arena, pushed its superiors rudely aside, converted the Estates General into a Constituent Assembly, and finally brought in the Constitution of September 3, 1791, the famous *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*. By virtue of it, the estates, corporations, guilds, and associations were declared dissolved into individuals, all free and equal, aggregated into a sovereign nation, wherein only talents and virtues might claim and would gain distinction. But, as a matter of fact, property was sacred, imprescriptible, and inviolate; moreover, only the possession of it would give the right of voting. The free and equal individuals were divided into active and passive citizens. And monarchy, manorial rights, and the army, with its royalist officers, remained. Suspicion and conflict rent the middle class in twain, into Gironde and Mountain, the line of cleavage being middle class and lower middle class. Meanwhile the

proletariat armed itself and, made increasingly familiar with republican ideals and vague communist and social reform schemes, rose on August 10, 1792, swept away the National Assembly with its Constitution, put the king and his family into custody, and demanded an equalitarian constitution. By the adult manhood suffrage of the whole nation the Convention was elected and opened on September 21, 1792. Republican principles gradually gained the upper hand; the king was sentenced to death; the armies were victorious; but famine, the collapse of the assignats, high prices, and usurious speculations of the war profiteers harassed and starved the people and made them feel the imperious necessity for social reform measures, for some effective and systematic interference with property. The first twelve months of the Convention witnessed a remarkable ferment of social ideas,<sup>1</sup> to which the revolution on March 18, 1793, gave the following characteristic reply:—

*“La Convention Nationale décrète la peine de mort contre quiconque proposera une loi agraire ou toute autre, subversive des propriétés territoriales, commerciales et industrielles.”*<sup>2</sup>

Capital punishment for agrarian reformers and socialists. That means that the elemental forces which produce a revolution cannot be over-ridden; if they are generated by middle-class interests, they will only result in a political, governmental transformation; the utmost that can be done under such circumstances is to press forward to the utmost limit of their sphere of operation. And this the Jacobins did. On June 24, 1793, they presented to the Convention a Constitution which offered complete political democracy (universal suffrage, &c.), but with the sacredness of property for its heart. The Jacobins had produced a Radical Constitution, but not a Socialist one. It bore the impress of the lower middle class, virtuous and well-meaning, desirous of equality, but only with the classes above it.<sup>3</sup> Robespierre, more susceptible than the other Jacobins to the Socialist or Communist ferment among the working classes, drafted a Constitution the most noteworthy articles of which are the following:—

ART. 6.—Property is a right which each citizen has to the free enjoyment and disposition of that portion of goods which are secured to him by law.

ART. 10.—It is the duty of society to care for the subsistence of all its members, be it by procuring them work, or by supplying the means of existence to those who are unable to work.

<sup>1</sup> A full account of the movement of social ideas of the time is given in Jean Jaurès' *Histoire Socialiste*, Vol. IV, *La Convention*, Part II, pp. 999-1076, 1465-1575.

<sup>2</sup> The National Convention decrees the penalty of death against anyone proposing an agrarian or other law subversive of landed, commercial, and industrial property.

<sup>3</sup> “The Constitution of 1793, drafted by the Mountain, did not completely respond to the wishes of the friends of mankind. One regretted to find in it the old, exasperating ideas concerning property. . . . The revolutionists saw the main weakness of that Constitution in the provision which concerned property.” (Buonarroti, *Conspiration pour l'égalité*, Brussels, 1828, pp. 28-29, 91, 119.)

ART. 12.—Society should do all it can to promote the progress of the public intellect, and put instruction within the reach of all.

ART. 35.—All men of all countries are brothers, and the various peoples ought to assist one another according to their ability, like citizens of the same State.

ART. 36.—He who oppresses one single nation declares himself an enemy of all.

This draft was acceptable to the advanced social reformers, but Robespierre never made any serious attempt of having it adopted by the Convention. He was the real representative of the lower middle classes; with generous social views in speech, middle class in action; he could not advance any further, since, as Hegel said, no one can jump over his own shadow.

The democratic Constitution of 1793 was suspended until peace would allow its application. The Mountain turned into a revolutionary Government or dictatorship, but no amount of dictatorial energy, positive achievements in home and foreign affairs, in education, law, and national defence, could relieve the failure in the domain of social economics.

The Ninth Thermidor followed: Jacobinism was guillotined; the Gironde returned; the Directory took the reins of the Convention, passed the Constitution of August 22, 1795, which restored the property qualification suffrage. The masses who were fighting for France on all the battlefields of Europe were disenfranchised.

This act of the Directory had a double effect: on the one hand, it roused the social reformers to activity; on the other hand, it caused some of the remnants of Jacobinism to approach the democratic social reformers for the purpose of joint action against the counter-revolution and for the restoration of the Constitution of 1793 *plus* social reform. The result was a social-reform-democratic coalition; the men who led it were Babeuf and Darthé, but the mind who inspired it was Buonarrotti.

#### IV

### THE CONSPIRACY OF THE EQUALITARIANS AND DICTATORSHIP

#### § 1.—*Causes and Doctrines of the Conspiracy*

The insurrectionary organisation which became known to history as the Conspiracy of the Equalitarians (1795-97) comprised several members of great talent and republican virtues, whose main object was to restore the Constitution of 1793 and to supplement it by economic reforms. They by no means ignored the faults of that Constitution, they found them "particularly in the provision which declared property sacred," but they believed political democracy to be the best way towards

social equality.<sup>4</sup> Their ideal of government was complete democracy, which would take all possible measures to spread education and to prevent extremes of riches and poverty arising in society. Their authorities were Rousseau, Morelly, and Mably, whose teachings they summarised as follows:—

(1) Nature has given to every man the equal right to the enjoyment of all goods. (2) The object of society is to protect this equality, which in the state of nature was so often violated by the strong and cunning, and to increase all social enjoyments through co-operative work. (3) Nature has imposed upon everyone the duty of working; no one can neglect this duty without committing a crime. (4) Labour and enjoyments must be common. (5) There is oppression wherever the one spends himself in labour and is deprived of all enjoyment, while the other is wallowing in superfluities without labouring at all. (6) No one could have appropriated the products of the soil and of industry without criminal deeds. (7) In true society there must be neither rich nor poor. (8) The rich who do not forgo their superfluities in favour of the needy are enemies of the people. (9) No one is allowed, by the accumulation of all means, to deprive others of the necessary instruction; education must be common. (10) The object of the revolution is to abolish inequality and to establish common happiness. (11) The revolution is not at an end, for the rich are appropriating all the goods and have all the power, while the poor are worked like real slaves, are pining away in misery, and have no voice in the affairs of the State. (12) The Constitution of 1793 is the true organic law of the French, because the people have solemnly adopted it; because the Convention (under the Directory) had no right to alter it; because, in order to do so, it ordered the people to be shot down; because the deputies who dutifully defended it were driven out and murdered; because of the distrust of the people and the influence of the emigrant nobles who presided at the drafting of the Constitution of 1795. . . . (13) Every citizen is bound to defend and restore, restore and defend, the Constitution of 1793 as the will and happiness of the people. (14) All authority founded on the Constitution of 1795 is illegal and counter-revolutionary. (15) All who violated the Constitution of 1793 are guilty of lese-majesty of the people.

The publicist of the organisation, but by no means its greatest leader, was Francois Noel Babeuf (1762-1797), who, from his agrarian agitation, called himself Gracchus. Other known members were Augustin Alexandre Darthé, a jurist and revolutionist who had taken part in the storming of the Bastille, and Buonarrotti, who, as the originator of the idea of socialist dictatorship, deserves a separate chapter.

## § 2.—*Filippo Michele Buonarrotti*

In the annals of pre-Marxian revolutionary Communism the foremost place must be assigned to Filippo Michele Buonarrotti (also spelled Buonarroti). A man whom young Buonaparte loved, Robespierre and Marat venerated, the National Convention made a citizen of France,

<sup>4</sup> Buonarrotti, *Conspiration*, p. 91.

Gracchus Babeuf chose as his collaborator, and the advanced minds of the July Revolution (1830), like Godefroy Cavaignac and Louis Auguste Blanqui, revered as their master—a man who, despite his long revolutionary career, had no enemy or detractor—must have been of unique greatness of character. His book, *Conspiration pour l'égalité*, the Bible of the revolutionary elements from 1828 to 1848, is of singular charm, which, far from decreasing through reiterated reading, grows upon us and enchants our mind the more often we study it, the more carefully we analyse its thoughts and sentences. It is like reading Tacitus and Plutarch.

Buonarotti, in body and mind, was of the noblest Italian stamp, combining heroism with complete self-abnegation. This is the unanimous impression which he left upon his contemporaries. Louis Blanc, the historian of the *Dix ans* (1830-1840), who had seen him in the last years of his life, describes him as grave of demeanour, of great authority of speech, of a countenance ennobled by meditation and austere living, with a large forehead, pensive eyes, proudly arched lips used to discretion. No amount of disappointment and suffering disturbed the serenity of his mind, which was grounded on a pure conscience and spotless character; death had no terror for him; the energy of his soul raised him above the anxieties and miseries of a life spent on the stormy death-dealing seas of revolution."<sup>8</sup> He loved the people and was ever ready to die for its welfare and happiness; and yet he never surrendered to its prejudices and vacillations, he never flattered it; on the contrary, well knowing its weaknesses and vices, he desired to see a dictatorship of the virtuous and wise as the preliminary and preparatory stage to full democracy.

He was born at Pisa on November 11, 1761, of the family of the Buonarottis who had given to the world the great Michel Angelo. From an early age he distinguished himself by great literary talents, audacity, and energy of character, and was appointed to a high office by the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Leopold I. Immediately on the outbreak of the French Revolution (1789) he embraced its cause, in consequence of which he was persecuted and had to leave his country. He settled at first in Corsica, where he published *l'Amico della libertà italiana*. Napoleon Buonaparte, who at that time (1791-1792) served as an officer on the island and was an ardent revolutionist, supported him and became his close friend. On the proclamation of the French Republic (September, 1792) Buonarotti hastened to Paris, entered into relations with the most advanced leaders of the revolution, undertook political missions on their behalf, for which the National Convention conferred upon him the citizenship of France. While Buonaparte, following his martial instincts and imperatorial ambitions, turned into the most formidable enemy of the revolutionary forces, Buonarotti became one of the most trusted

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Louis Blanc, *Histoire de dix ans*, fourth edition, Brussels, 1846, Vol. IV, pp. 129-130.

friends of Robespierre and, outstripping him in questions of social doctrine and practice, embraced social democracy. After the fall of Robespierre and the rise of the Directory, Buonarotti organised secret societies for the purpose of overthrowing the usurpers and re-establishing the Constitution of 1793 as one of the means to the political and communist education and organisation of the masses.

Buonarotti was the first social democrat who grasped the importance of capturing political power and of instituting a temporary dictatorship as the most effective means towards a socialist reorganisation of society.

One of the most fateful events of the French Revolution was the estrangement and enmity between the social reformers and communists and the political, democratic revolutionists. Men like Leclerc and Roux or Hébert and his followers, who were ardent social reformers and communists, misunderstood and deprecated political democracy and dictatorship, while the adherents of the latter, like Robespierre, Marat, Saint-Just, never arrived at a clear and sincere appreciation of social reform and communism. This estrangement between the most advanced elements of the revolution was one of the main causes of its downfall.

Buonarotti, with his comprehensive intellect, grasped the meaning and import of both movements. He appreciated Robespierre as well as Roux—the political revolutionist as well as the communist revolutionist. He, therefore, joined the Babeuf conspiracy, which had both political and social reform objects in view. And he lived long enough to transmit his experience and the results of his meditations to the generation which was to act in the years from 1830 to 1848. His *Conspiration pour l'égalité* is at once the best commentary on the most vital problems of the French Revolution in the years 1792-1794 and the best introduction to modern communist tactics.

From Buonarotti the line of democracy, dictatorship, and communism leads in the directest manner to Louis Auguste Blanqui, Karl Marx, and Vladimir N. Oulianoff. The dates are 1793-95, 1848, 1917.

The continuation of the life story of Buonarotti is interwoven with the history of socialism and communism till his death in 1837.

### § 3.—Development of the Conspiracy

The nucleus of the organisation was the *Société du Panthéon*, which took its name from its headquarters at the hill of Sainte-Geneviève near the Pantheon. Its chairman was Buonarotti. The organisation grew by leaps and bounds; in May, 1796, its membership numbered about 17,000 in Paris, besides its branches in the provinces. It had many friends in the Paris garrison.

Any attempt at restoring the Constitution of 1793 implied the forcible overthrow of the Directory, since the suffrage was restricted to the propertied classes, the staunch supporters of the Directory. Secret



committees were therefore formed to prepare the insurrection. The question then arose, assuming the Directory was overthrown, what government was to take its place? The discussion of this question is the most relevant to our subject. Buonarroti relates:—

After having resolved that they must direct the action of the people against the Directory and towards the re-establishment of the Constitution of 1793, the secret committee had to solve a problem which bristled with difficulties. It was a matter of deciding upon the form of authority which should suddenly replace that which was going to be overthrown. The committee were convinced that it was impossible as well as dangerous to appeal at once to the people to elect a legislature and a government according to the Constitution of 1793. From all the events and circumstances of the last years the committee concluded that a people so strangely at variance with the natural order was hardly capable of making a useful choice, and therefore stood in need of some extraordinary means which could put it in a position of effectively, and not fictitiously, exercising the full powers of its sovereignty. From this mode of thinking arose the idea of replacing the existing Government by a revolutionary and provisional authority, which should be so constituted as to withdraw the people for ever from the influence of the natural enemies of equality and imbue it with the unity of will which was necessary to the adoption of republican institutions. As to the question of the prospective authority, three propositions were brought forward. One was to reinstate those members of the Convention who had remained true to the people; the second was to create a dictatorship of one man, after the ancient Roman example; the third was to establish a new body which should bring the revolution to its happy termination. The first proposition was soon abandoned, since the worthiest members of the Convention had been killed or deported or imprisoned, while the others, though they remained true to the republic, had acquiesced in the murder of the true democrats or in the return of the Girondists to the Convention. After this proposition had been negatived, the secret committee discussed the question of having the insurgents of Paris nominate a provisional authority which should be entrusted with the government of the nation. It was then a question of deciding upon the form of this provisional revolutionary authority. Some members of the secret committee argued in favour of a magistracy of a single person; others preferred a new body, composed of a small number of tried democrats. The views of the latter prevailed.

The result of this grave deliberation was the following provision:—

#### *Revolutionary Government*

The care for carrying on the revolution to its termination, and securing to the republic liberty, equality, and the Constitution of 1793, will be entrusted to a national assembly composed of one democrat for each department, nominated by the insurgent people on the recommendation of the insurrectionary committee.\*

\* Buonarroti, *Conspirations*, II, p. 253.

This form of revolutionary authority would have meant a soviet, elected by the revolutionary elements of Paris, with the secret committee at the head.

Buonarotti himself comments on the question of dictatorship:—

"The experience of the French Revolution and particularly of the troubles and vicissitudes of the National Convention have, as it seems to me, sufficiently demonstrated that a people whose opinions have been formed under a system of inequality and despotism is hardly capable, at the beginning of a regenerative revolution, of choosing by its suffrage the men who should direct and consummate that revolution. Such a delicate task can only be entrusted to wise and courageous citizens . . . who have freed themselves from the common prejudices and vices, who have left the lights of their contemporaries behind, and, despising riches and vulgar honours, have consecrated their lives to the immortal cause of securing the triumph of equality. At the beginning of a political revolution it is perhaps necessary, even from pure deference to the real sovereignty of the people, not to care so much about getting ballot papers counted, as for letting fall with the least possible arbitrariness the supreme authority into the hands of wise and strong revolutionaries."<sup>7</sup>

Buonarotti's view had, as we shall see, a far-reaching effect on the communist movement, and indirectly on German communist theories.

## § 4.—*Revolutionary Policy*

Concerning this question Buonarotti reproduces the following fragment of a draft:—

§ 1.—The individuals who do nothing for the fatherland cannot exercise any political rights; they are aliens to whom the republic grants hospitality.

§ 2.—Doing nothing for the fatherland means not to perform any useful labour.

§ 3.—The law considers as useful labour: Agriculture, shepherd life, fishing, and navigation; mechanical and manual arts; retail shopkeeping; transport of passengers and goods; war; education and scientific pursuits.

§ 4.—Nevertheless, the work of instruction and science will not be regarded as useful unless those who pursue it will get a certificate of citizenship. . . .

§ 6.—Aliens are not admitted to the public assemblies.

§ 7.—The aliens are under the direct supervision of the supreme administration, who can arrest them. . . .

§ 10.—All citizens are armed.

§ 11.—The aliens must, under the penalty of death, surrender their arms to the revolutionary committees.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Buonarotti, *Conspiration*, pp. 132-140.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* II, pp. 301-3.

**§ 5.—End of the Conspiracy**

Let us now briefly relate the final act of the conspiracy. Among the members of the secret committees there was a certain Captain Grisel, who betrayed the movement by informing the Directory of the plans and the date of the prospective insurrection. Lazare Carnot, the War Minister, instructed General Buonaparte to dissolve the Société du Panthéon and to arrest the leaders of the secret committees. In May, 1796, the arrests took place, and in March, April, and May, 1797, the trials took place at Vendôme, a provincial town, for the Directory feared to have the court sitting in Paris where there were still enough revolutionists to rouse the people. On May 26, 1797, Babeuf and Darthé were sentenced to death, while Buonarotti and others were sentenced to deportation. On the pronouncement of the death sentence by the presiding judge, Babeuf and Darthé drew their daggers and attempted to commit suicide. The warders interfered, and the condemned men were dragged out bleeding from the court of justice. On the following morning they suffered supreme punishment under the guillotine. Several years after Captain Grisel was killed by Camille Babeuf, the eldest son of Gracchus.

Buonarotti was not deported, but imprisoned at Cherbourg; in 1801, Buonaparte, then First Consul, offered him a high position in the Government, which Buonarotti scornfully rejected. Liberated in 1807, he lived partly in the south of France, partly in Switzerland, always in close touch with the revolutionary movements. Banished from Switzerland, he found refuge in Belgium, where he published the history of the conspiracy of the equalitarians.

*(To be continued)*



# The World of Labour

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## INTERNATIONAL

### How the United Front Broke Down

ON May 23, the Commission of Nine, representing the executives of the Three Internationals, met to arrange a World Labour Conference. On May 25, the Commission broke up in disagreement.

How this happened is best explained in the words of the participants, given below. The Second International was not satisfied that the Third was fulfilling the conditions they had laid down as preliminaries, declared that the professed desire of the Third for unity was a tactical manoeuvre, and therefore refused to proceed further with any arrangements. In view of this refusal, the representatives of the Third International withdrew from the Commission of Nine.

### Declaration of the Second International

The Second International agreed to the decisions of the Berlin Conference of April 2 to 5, 1922, and at the same time laid down general conditions under which alone an International Conference could be successful. We desire a united front against capitalism, but we wished first to convince ourselves that the Communists were in earnest about it. Of our conditions, that concerning the trial of the Social Revolutionaries has been partially accepted. Lenin, however, is demanding the death punishment for the accused, and the *Pravda* is abusing their defenders as "social traitors" and "lackeys of the bourgeoisie," and the accused as "incendiaries" and "murderers." Georgia is more than ever under the heel of oppression, and has been dealt with at Genoa by Soviet Russia from a purely capitalist point of view, as if it were merely a particular oil well. But our general stipulation was goodwill and good faith for the united front. We have to report the contrary. The work of splitting the trade unions is being continued under the express direction of Moscow, especially in France and Norway. Even in Horthy's Hungary the Communists are making impossible the indispensable unity of the working-class movement.

The joint demonstrations of April 20, decided upon at the Berlin Conference, have been broken up in Georgia by force of arms. In Germany the Communists have broken up innumerable Labour meetings by sheer force, even the Building Workers' Congress in Leipzig. Abuse of the Social Democrats rages more than ever; Wels and Scheidemann have been reviled as the inspirers of the murder of Karl Liebknecht, and on May 1 demonstrations were held in Moscow, with banners bearing the inscription, "Death to the bourgeoisie and to the Social Democrats!"

An official decision of the Communist Party of Germany (the K.P.D.) declares that the united front is solely "a preparatory stage in the struggle for the dictatorship of the working class, for the Soviet power, and the Communist goal."

The Second International cannot participate in any undertaking which would deceive the proletariat with a mere appearance of unity, while in reality this unity is only deception and a tactical manoeuvre in order to continue more successfully the process of rupture and cell formation. As long as no change occurs in the behaviour of the Communists, any general conference would be directly harmful. The present position forces the Second International to emphasise as forcibly as possible the purely imperialist and capitalist attitude of the Soviet Government at Genoa, and the fundamental differences which exist between the Second and Third Internationals in their conceptions of what is meant by freedom and Socialism.

#### Declaration of the Vienna International

We affirm that the Executive of the International Working Union of Socialist Parties, from whom had come the initiative in summoning a General International Conference, has remained always united and firm in the determination to exert all its efforts in order to overcome the obstacles which stand in the way of a general conference. We are further of the opinion that the task of the I.W.U.S.P. is in no way exhausted, and that we should rather continue our efforts according to the situation, in order to bring about a General International Labour Conference and international unity of action.

But however united the Executive of the I.W.U.S.P. in this work, we have, unfortunately, to state that such unity is not present in the framework of either of the other two executives, and that the internal differences in the executives of the Second and Third Internationals make the solution of the problems more difficult, and increase the obstacles which stand in the way of a general international conference.

These obstacles come, in the first place, from the Right Wing Socialists in Germany and from the Communists in France. The utterances of *Vorwärts*, the central organ of the Socialist Party in Germany, are in open opposition to the meeting of a world Labour congress. But even within the Third International there are undoubtedly tendencies observable which aim at preventing for the moment the continuance of the preparatory work for the International Labour Congress. We are reminded that Lenin openly expressed his disapproval of the attitude of the Communist delegation on the Commission of Nine with respect to the Berlin Conference, and this vote of censure was officially made public. The article which Zinoviev, the president of the Communist International, wrote as early as May 17, *i.e.*, before the opening session of the Commission of Nine, and which the *Rote Fahne* has published, goes even further. Zinoviev, in this article, declares "the breakdown of the Commission of Nine will not weaken, but rather strengthen, the struggle of the Communist International for the united front." This is an unambiguous declaration that the suspension of the activity of the Commission of Nine at the present moment will be utilised by the Communists as a favourable outcome for them. . . .

With regard to these tendencies, we are of the opinion that the Berlin Conference has extended too widely the limits of activity of the Commission of Nine. According to the Berlin decision of April 5, the duty of the Commission is "to organise preparations for further conferences of the three executives, as well as for conferences on an extended scale, with the inclusion of parties which are not affiliated to any of the three international organisations." With this we arrive at the point of rupture inside the Third International. The French Communists have opposed the idea that the Commission of Nine should fulfil any lasting function. It is on account of these difficulties within the Third International that their representatives have declared that either the World Congress must take place at once or the Commission of Nine will be broken up.

The representatives of the I.W.U.S.P. are, on the contrary, of the opinion that it is in the interests of the assembling of a World Labour Congress that the work of the Commission of Nine should be continued with energy and perseverance, because only in this way can the difficulties be overcome that stand in the way of united international action. We consider the Commission of Nine to be a modest but indispensable organ for carrying out the preparatory work for the World Labour Congress. We believe, therefore, that it is our duty earnestly

to take up the work of the Commission, and to overcome the difficulties and misunderstandings which still exist between the separate delegations, by a natural continuance of the negotiations. The Communist delegation is, fundamentally, also of the opinion that the Commission of Nine is indispensable for a World Congress, for it declares, "should the non-Communist masses of workers succeed in bringing about this change in the attitude of their leaders, the Executive of the Communist International will always be ready to send their representatives anew to a common meeting of the three executives."

Notwithstanding unity exists on the principle that a World Labour Congress can only be brought about through the agency of an organising committee from all three executives, we recognise that, on the basis of the declarations of the Second and Third Internationals, it is impossible at the present moment to continue the negotiations. We have no means of exercising pressure on the representatives of the Second and Third Internationals. We can only bring their unfortunate declarations to the knowledge of our Executive, but we will find the way, on the part of the I.W.U.S.P., to help forward the idea of an international Labour congress and of common international action.

A series of amendments were appended to the declarations of the representatives of the three delegations. Since neither the representatives of the Second nor of the Third International were ready to modify their declarations, the president, Adler, could only ask the delegations to report back to their executives. Thereupon, Radek declared that the Communist representatives had instructions from the Moscow centre to lay down their mandates in the Commission. Thus, the activity of the Commission of Nine, for the time being, came to an end.

We invite the Executive of the I.W.U.S.P. to examine the situation created by the behaviour of the Second and Third Internationals, and we propose that, as soon as possible, an international conference of parties affiliated to the I.W.U.S.P. should take place. This international conference would place itself at the service of the international proletarian front. From that a new impetus would arise for the realisation of the aims which the I.W.U.S.P. has placed before itself.

(Signed) ADLER, BRACKE, CRISPIEN  
(I.W.U.S.P. Delegation, Commission of Nine)

## Declaration of the Third International

The conference of representatives of the three executives has determined that, in view of the attitude of the Second International, the World Labour Congress cannot be held at the end of April. At the same time, however, it decided to form the Commission of Nine, with a view to the quickest possible summoning of the congress, which is indispensable for defence against the capitalist attack on the proletariat in all spheres of social and political life all over the world. Eight weeks have elapsed since the conference of the three executives. Not only has the congress not been held, but it was not even found possible to summon the Commission of Nine. The sole reason for this impossibility is to be found in the attitude of the Second International, which desired to prevent at all costs the work of the capitalist diplomats in Genoa being disturbed by the intrusion of the proletariat. That this is the case is proven in the clearest possible manner by the behaviour of the Second International during the Genoa Conference.

After the conference of the representatives of the three executives had laid it down as the duty of all Socialist parties to support Soviet Russia, the chairman of the German Social Democratic Party, who was himself a member of the delegation of the Second International at the Berlin Conference, opened the campaign with a speech at the session of the Berlin representatives of his party. He accused the Communist International of carrying out the policy of the Soviet Government, which was itself an imperialist policy. Throughout the whole period of the bitter struggles at Genoa, the German Social Democratic Press has represented the policy of the Soviet Government as a capitalist policy. The Social Democratic

Labour Party of Belgium proclaimed its neutrality in the struggle of the Belgian Government for the unconditional reintroduction of private property in Russia. The Swedish Social Democratic Party, a member of the Second International, and a part of the Government in Sweden, has not given a word of support to the struggle of the Soviet delegation for the maintenance of industry in the hands of the Russian proletarian State, although Branting, a member of the Second International Executive, was present at the head of the Swedish delegation in Genoa. Unfortunately, it must also be reported that the Vienna Working Union, although they defended the Russian revolution in words, denied even the most elementary support in their Press to the struggle of Soviet Russia against capitalist restoration, but even directly attacked them in the rear. . . .

The delegation of the Communist International has regretfully to affirm that the Vienna Working Union, instead of giving the most energetic resistance to these attempts at sabotage, has continually sought to explain them away by means of minor technical circumstances. The present declaration of the Second International has laid down new conditions for the summoning of a World Labour Congress. . . . The delegation of the Communist International declares: The Berlin Conference refused to make any stipulations as a condition for the summoning of a World Labour Congress. . . .

The Second and Two and a Half Internationals have attacked the Soviet Government and the Communist International as the alleged instruments of the foreign policy of Soviet Russia. . . . By this propaganda, the Second International desires to justify its persistent sabotage of the policy of the united front, and to counter the direct accusation that they are shirking the elementary socialist duty of consolidating the working-class position against the ever more shameless attacks of capital.

In view of this circumstance, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Russia declares itself ready—if this would satisfy the Second International—to strike out from their common declaration all the phrases that relate to the defence of the Soviet power. The Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party considers working-class unity in the struggle against capitalist reaction as the most pressing need of the present time. For this reason, it does not wish to give to the Second International any opportunity of sabotaging the formation of a united front of the proletariat. The Central Committee requests the Communist International Executive to bring this to the notice of the Second International, and to make the proposal that it should support not only by words, but by deeds, the united front of the proletariat in the struggle against the capitalist offensive.

The Communist International Executive has acknowledged this point of view to be completely correct. The working class in all countries will support Soviet Russia in its struggle, because it knows that Soviet Russia is one of the most important positions of the international proletariat in its defensive struggle against capitalism. It is the pressure of this working-class mass that has compelled the leaders of the Second International, and partly also of the Vienna International, to issue a call to the proletariat for the defence of Soviet Russia. Even if these leaders and their parties wish to tell their adherents that they are against supporting Soviet Russia, the Communist International will all the same be for the united front, if only the parties of the Second and Two and a Half Internationals are ready to fight alongside of the Communist Parties for at least the most immediate pressing interests of the working class in Western Europe and America. The Communist International is ready to do without the support for Soviet Russia on the part of the Second and Two and a Half Internationals if these organisations are prepared, at least, not to hinder the coming together of all the proletarian masses in the struggle against lengthening of the hours of labour, against lowering of wages, against the supremacy of reaction, and against the increased taxation in the Western capitalist countries. As a point of departure for the coming together of the proletarian forces against the capitalist offensive, we consider the summoning of a World Labour Congress in the near future to be indispensable. . . .

When the Second International deplores that the Communists in Sweden, although they



loyally support the Social Democratic Government behind which stands the majority of the working class, still carry on an agitation in the country against the Social Democrats that only proves that the Second International is only for the united front if this united front would denote a protection for the Social Democratic Parties and a form of suicide for the Communist Parties. . . . The Communists have the duty of extending their influence among the masses, because they are convinced that only Communism will be able to rescue the working class from misery and suffering, and they do not deny the right of the Social Democrats, within the limits of the united front of the proletariat, to struggle for the soul of the working class. The united front does not signify a fusion of the three Labour internationals, but a bloc for the struggle for the concrete needs of the working class.

With regard to the complaint of splitting the trade union movement in France, and the alleged splitting of the trade unions in Norway, the delegation of the Communist International affirms: The French trade union organisations were disrupted by Jouhaux and his colleagues, who, in the war, were fighting on the side of French capital, and now, after they have become a minority, have, to the joy of the capitalists, broken the unity of the trade unions. In Norway, no split of the trade unions is threatened; on the other hand, we can witness that the whole Norwegian trade union movement stands on the ground of the industrial ideas of the Red Trade Union International. If it should come to a rupture there, it will be the fault of those who, unlike the Communists, in spite of differences of opinion on principle in the trade unions, refuse to subordinate themselves to the will of the majority. The unfortunate collisions in Germany, as, for instance, at the Building Workers' Congress, are the result of brutal terrorism on the part of the trade union bureaucracy who have treated the Communist members as helots without rights and have tried to drive them out of the trade unions before they should obtain a majority in them. In the conviction that this rupture in the trade unions represents a weakening of the power of the whole working class, we already, at the Berlin Conference of the three executives, moved for an immediate summoning of a conference of the Amsterdam and the Red Trade Union Internationals. The Berlin Conference recommended to the Commission of Nine that it should summon this conference. Consequently, we propose that this decision be immediately carried out, in order to ascertain the fundamental differences of opinion of the two trade union centres and to secure the trade union united front and, if possible, the unity of organisation of the trade union groups.

The delegation of the Communist International affirms that the Communist International has carried out all the engagements undertaken at the April conference, and that, further, it is prepared to remove every obstacle in the way of setting up the united front. . . . The Communist International delegation is ready to discuss all trade union questions with the Amsterdam International, with the addition of representatives of the Red Trade Union International who have already given their assent. If, nevertheless, the representatives of the Second International consider the summoning of a World Labour Conference in the near future to be impossible, then the Communist International delegation declares that thereby the Commission of Nine, as at present composed, has outlived the justification for its existence. . . .

Should the Second International refuse to summon the World Labour Congress in the near future, the representatives of the Communist International Executive will resign from the Commission of Nine. The Communist International will then, with redoubled force, carry on the struggle for the idea of the united front, and do everything in its power to convince the widest masses, even of the non-Communist workers, of the necessity of the united front, and force their leaders to break the united front with the bourgeoisie and to unite their ranks for the struggle for the common interests of the proletariat. Should the non-Communist masses of workers succeed in bringing about this change in the attitude of their leaders, then the Communist International Executive will always be ready to send its representatives anew to a common meeting of the three executives. . . .

*The Delegation of the Executive of the Communist International on the Commission of Nine*

# BOOK REVIEWS

## BESIDE THE BATTLE

*Conscription and Conscience.* By John W. Graham, M.A.; with a preface by Clifford Allen. Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d. net.

THE recording of facts must be a tedious job ; but, like crossing sweeping, probably someone would have to do it even under Socialism. The author of this work sweeps his crossing with meritorious zeal, bringing the surplus matter together in tidy heaps, each containing all that anyone could want to have recorded about the Conscription Acts, the tribunals, the persecution of the conscientious objectors, their organisations, &c. And his sweeping done, he stands aside, resting upon his besom, while Mr. Clifford Allen steps forward to explain what is the nature and purpose of the crossing itself.

Mr. Allen's preface professes to deal with "the social and political significance of the struggle." The reader therefore turns to the preface expectantly ; for it was a great fight, and one would like to know what good came of it at last. But after a dogmatic statement that—

it is chiefly by the expression of religious impulses through political effort that we may hope to change men's hearts and practice,

Mr. Allen passes on to what he considers a more important question—what shall the C.O.'s do in the next war ?

Mr. Allen answers this very resolutely ; but it is not the question he set out to answer. Throughout his subsequent remarks, which range over a wide field, he gives the impression that he believes the individual religious objection to conscription to be inadequate, and that the resistance only acquires significance if it is animated by a desire to reconstruct society. The conscientious objector was, or at any rate should have been, as much opposed to workshop tyranny or industrial conscription as to military conscription. Why ? Because the workers are entitled to initiative, which the present system denies. Mr. Allen then rapidly enunciates the leading principles of Guild Socialism, and dexterously shows the underlying unity between the Guild Socialist and the C.O. in the sentence :—

It is one and the same philosophy which denies to the individual the right to be asked his opinion in industrial affairs, or the right to be consulted upon the terrible responsibility of killing his neighbour or giving his own life.

At this point the reader expects Mr. Allen to demonstrate that the philosophy in question is the philosophy of capitalism, and that the resistance to conscription is a form of attack on capitalism. But Mr. Allen has too great a regard for the truth. Apart from the purely religious opposition, the rest of the resistance was against conscription as such, *i.e.*, the claim of the State to direct men's actions. There were Socialist objectors, but their resistance was not intended as an attack on capitalism. Mr. Allen makes it quite clear that this is his own position by his references to Russia. He would oppose military and industrial conscription in a Socialist State. Why ?

The cat jumps nimbly from its enveloping sack. The philosophy that Mr. Allen is up against is not capitalism, but State interference with men's activities. One feels that the reconstructed society which Mr. Allen is after is closely akin to the Young Liberals' paradise. Mr. Allen, in short, and in common with a number of other well affected citizens, challenges the theory of the all-powerful State; and, losing control of his libertarian mount, or just because he has tasted blood, he tilts at most of the other windmills in the land of philosophic Liberalism.

But, after all, had the resistance to conscription, with all the persecution and suffering it involved, no other "social and political significance" than a tilt at a theory of the State, an attempt to maintain the old Liberal principles against bureaucracy? This is the most that Mr. Allen can say for it, and he ought to know. And really, the reader, surveying the whole series of events detailed by Principal Graham, is inclined to agree with this verdict.

Yet the reader will be making a great mistake if he leaves it at that. Take, for instance, the parliamentary and propagandist opposition to conscription. Mr. Graham tells the story of the titanic struggles of the heroic parliamentary group and of the anti-conscription organisations; the Labour bodies which passed anti-conscription resolutions also receive honourable mention. Did they achieve the defeat of conscription? They did not. But, nevertheless, Principal Graham shows that their efforts did have considerable social and political significance, for they achieved slight modifications, slight reforms, slight privileges, so that the machine was enabled to run more smoothly, and any danger of a serious outbreak was removed. This is a point which Mr. Allen does not make.

It is a good thing that this book should have been written. The resistance to conscription was widely advertised; so was the resultant persecution; and most liberal-minded people had come to believe that it all had immense significance. This book makes it clear that such significance as the movement possessed was in the history of liberal conceptions and religious persecution; it does not belong to the history of the struggle between Capital and Labour.

Why is it that, in Great Britain, the Socialist resistance to conscription never found organised expression? Why were liberal and religious motives dominant? Why did the anti-conscription movement never produce a Clyde strike, or anything even approaching mass action? Mr. Allen does not worry about these matters, for he and his followers want to change men's hearts, and mass action doesn't have that sort of effect.

But the answers to these questions are of fundamental importance. There was a Socialist organisation, the I.L.P., in the forefront of the battle against conscription and the war generally. But its official propaganda could not be distinguished from that of the Young Liberal organisations, such as the Union of Democratic Control, or the religious organisations, such as the Society of Friends. Its watchwords were Peace—when there should have been no peace for capitalism; Liberty for the individual—when the masses were in the grip of the capitalists; and Reform of the methods of conducting foreign policy between capitalist States. There was no hint of the class struggle, and the only considerable Socialist organisation in this

country became more and more closely involved with the newest Liberal thought. By the end of the war, the I.L.P. had established a new reputation, and attracted large numbers of Young Liberals who found in it their spiritual home.

It was this alliance that throughout prevented any determined leadership, made the fight against conscription a fight of solitary men, and, at a later stage, divided Socialist opinion in Great Britain on the question of the Bolshevik revolution. This alliance was, in fact, far and away the most important social and political outcome of the fight against conscription. From that time on, the largest Socialist organisation in this country has been more concerned with personal liberty than with Socialism; with freedom for the individual than with freedom for the masses.

The whole story of the fight against conscription, so faithfully presented in this book, illustrates once more the usefulness of Liberal shibboleths to the capitalist system. British Socialism should have been against the war because it is against capitalism. Had it kept that motive in sight it would not have frittered away its efforts in resistance to conscription, to the persecution of conscientious objectors, to the censorship, and to the thousand and one other items in the capitalist obstacle race. Had it kept that motive in sight it would not have looked askance at the Russian revolution, or joined its humble protests at the goings-on in Russia to those of international capitalism.

But British Socialism could not lightly throw off its Liberal parentage; and having married again into the family, it had to resume the worship of the family gods. The god of personal liberty took the place of Socialism.

And so it came about that the fight against conscription led the British Socialist movement away from the battlefields, not only of the great war, but also of the class struggle.

E.B.

### GEORGIA—AND SOME OTHERS

*Between Red and White.* By L. Trotsky. Communist Party. 2s.

**T**HE why and the wherefore of the outcry about Georgia is an interesting study. The more enlightened and ennobling sentiment there is uttered about any cause in international politics the better guarantee is there of interesting things behind the scenes, and interesting reflections while one is discovering them. For example, the British Press suddenly begins to cry aloud that those murderous Turks are once again engaged in massacring the Armenians, who have no national home and no one to protect them. A torrent of one's better feelings carries one away, and finally leaves one stranded high and dry upon two remarkable facts—one, that there is an Armenian Soviet Republic, which the Entente has not recognised, and the other that, out of Greece's foreign loans of 900,000,000 francs, Great Britain holds her I O U for 45 per cent.

There are many interesting surprises of this kind in the case of Georgia. Georgia was one of a number of small States which broke off from the territory of the former Russian Empire after the Russian revolution. They all proclaimed themselves independent democratic republics—Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Georgia. They all accepted help impartially from all countries against their own Communists.

If only in Latvia we had the touching spectacle of a joint British and German force operating harmoniously several weeks *before* the armistice, this was entirely due to the unfortunate circumstance that British troops were not available when they were required in the other countries. In all four of them Communists were shot by Social Democrats in hundreds. In all four the Social Democrats were driven from power by a third military party. The curious circumstance is that, while in the case of the first three the Social Democrats were overthrown by bourgeois White Guards, and no word of lament over a pleasant oasis of Social Democracy was heard in Western Europe, in the case of the last, the success of the Russian worker and peasant army sent the whole of the Second International preaching a "Counter Communist Crusade" through the length and breadth of the earth.

During the war an Irish Social Democrat who attempted to proclaim a democratic republic in the territory of the British Empire was specially tended in hospital for a few days after his capture in order that he might be able to stand upright against a prison wall to be shot. The representative of the British section of the Second International was not withdrawn from the Privy Council. In 1918 and 1919 hundreds of unarmed Cingalese and Egyptians were shot down by British troops, in their own country, for attempting to assert the claim of their little people to national self-determination. The Second International did not send a commission of inquiry. In 1919 and 1920 the Belgian Government, of which one of the leaders of the Second International, M. Vandervelde, was a member, shot and sentenced to hard labour dozens of so-called "Activists" for proclaiming an independent Flemish republic in the territory evacuated by the retreating German troops, just as had been happening on the borders of Russia. The Second International did not issue any manifesto. In 1920 and 1921 the Polish Government, which was supported by the Polish Socialist Party, at that time a pillar of the Second International, invaded Russia and tore away several hundreds of thousands of inhabitants of the White Russian Soviet Republic which had recently been constituted in Western Russia. The Second International lay low, "reserving judgment."

The Georgian Social Democratic Party, as early as 1918, promised the Entente "that our republic will co-operate with the Allied countries in their fight against the Bolsheviks with all the means at its disposal." It informed Denikin that "the struggle with Bolshevism within our frontiers is relentless. We are using every means possible to stamp out Bolshevism . . ." After assisting Denikin by refusing the retreating Bolsheviks refuge in their country, it "interned" his troops when they were defeated by the Red Army and gave them facilities for returning to the Crimea when Wrangel had established a new White citadel there. Finally, after agreeing with the Soviet Government to legalise the Georgian Communist Party, in a few months it held in its prisons even more than had been delivered from gaol when the Red armies first approached the Georgian frontier. At the beginning of 1921, the Georgian Social Democratic Party added to its many "strictly neutral" provocations of Soviet Russia by an attack on Azerbaidjan, but it bit off more than it could chew. A peasant rising in the rural districts, led by Communists, called

in to its aid the Russian Red Army. The Georgian Social Democracy fell. The Second International has ever since been watering the earth with its tears.

It is to contrast the Second International's stoic fortitude at the spectacle of the sufferings of Ireland, Egypt, India, Algeria, Haiti, &c., and its eager response to the appeal of "little Georgia"; to compare the stern, Roman indifference with which it witnessed Communists being massacred by White Guards in Finland, Esthonia, and Latvia with the horror that it felt when it saw the Red Army command giving the Georgian Social Democrats a safe conduct out of the country, that Comrade Trotsky has written his book. The contrast is well pointed, as the greatest pamphleteer in history knows how to point it, by such characteristic maxims as: "When we shoot our enemies we do not say it is the sound of the *Æolian* harps of democracy," or "Kautsky will find it impossible to extricate himself, for his dressing gown is too tightly caught." He leaves nothing to be added to the picture when he says of the Menshevik leaders: "Their democratic chastity, which was violated by Russian, Turkish, Prussian, and British officers, is to be rehabilitated by MacDonald, Kautsky, Mrs. Snowden, and the other learned accoucheurs and midwives of the Second International."

On the topic of *why* the Second International has bestowed its affections and its tears so exclusively upon the Georgian Mensheviks, Trotsky says little. He speaks of oil occasionally, and mentions the well known fact that Batoum is at the other end of a pipeline which begins at the Baku oil wells. He is probably relying upon the British workers to go through the archives of the British Foreign Office, when the time comes, as carefully as he has examined those of the Russian White Guards and the Georgian Mensheviks for an explanation of the mystery. It would be too early as yet to say that he will be disappointed. C. M. R.

### LIGHT ON THE LOCKOUT

*Labour and Capital in the Engineering Trades.* Labour Research Department. Studies in Labour and Capital: Vol. I. Labour Publishing Company. 1s.

**I**T is unfortunate that this book was not published immediately before the lockout notices expired. If it had been, and if its contents had been mastered by the members of the engineering unions, we are convinced that the whole course of negotiations would have been altered, and the misunderstandings and splits which have characterised the lockout avoided.

During the protracted negotiations, many of the trade union officials could not understand the significance of the lockout (many of them admitted this in private). They could not see why it was unavoidable; why the engineering employers were so adamant, even on what appeared to be small points. We do know that many of the workmen involved were at a loss to know the *why* and the *wherefore* of it all.

This book would have clarified the issues involved. It is written simply and lucidly, and the problems which the average workman thinks are beyond his grasp are here explained in such a way that everyone can see and understand the significance of the lockout, and also the immediate need for reorganisation of the unions in the

engineering industry, not from a sentimental point of view of solidarity, but as a hard practical necessity.

The book deals first with the organisation and tendencies of capitalism in the engineering industry, and the facts recorded as to its development will prove astounding to many readers. It has become a commonplace to speak of the ramifications of "Big Business" without quite realising how widespread they are. In this section we see where these ramifications extend to, both at home and abroad.

In addition to a clear statement on the general position of the industry, there is an analysis of the activities and financial status of four of the big firms—Vickers, The General Electric, Armstrong Whitworth's, and the B.S.A. Co. The huge aggregation of capital represented by these firms, and the rate of profits which must be earned on this capital, point at once to a solution of the question as to why the lockout was enforced. To maintain so heavy a rate in times of depression compels the replacement of skilled labour by unskilled; and hence arises the insistence on the machine question, which was the cause of the lockout. Then when we learn that "the voting power of members of the Federation is on the basis of their wages bill" we see at once the working of a dictatorship more complete and exacting than is possible in any other industry. We imagine that Sir Allan Smith will be far from pleased at this exposure of the Federation.

The second section of the book deals with the organisation of the engineering unions, and also what have been the special questions involved in the lockout. These questions of overtime, wages, manning of machines, &c., and their relationship to the issue of "managerial functions," are the clearest expositions we have yet. The trade unionist who can read this section without wanting to turn to and help in the reconstruction of the engineering unions is a hopeless case.

We feel that the weakness of the book is in not emphasising the futility of the sectional differences between the skilled unions and the unskilled unions having been allowed to develop to a point of what will now be internal warfare arising out of the present settlement. With such an array of facts and figures this would have been easy, and would have carried far greater influence than if the same point were made by the A.E.U. or the Workers' Union.

H. P.

#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*Memorandum on Trade Board Rates and Standard Rates of Wages.* By J. Hallsworth. National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers.

*Die Krise der Kapitalistischen Weltwirtschaft.* Prof. Varga. Carl Hoym.

*More Production—and More Poverty.* By J. P. M. Millar. National Council of Labour Colleges. 2d.

*Some Problems of Education.* By Barbara Drake. Fabian Society. 6d.

*Literature and Labour.* An Anthology of Effort. J. M. Dent & Sons. 1s. 9d.

*Every Man His Own Minister of Health.* (American title: *In Cooks We Trust.*) By Alex. Clement. Quality Press Co. 2s. 6d.

*Wm. Lovett, 1800-1877.* By Mrs. L. Barbara Hammond. Fabian Society. 3d.

*Unemployment.* By F. W. Pethick Lawrence. H. Milford. 2s. 6d.

*The Wheel of Fortune* (Clothed in Khaddar). By Mahatma Gandhi. Ganesh & Co.

*The Drink and Drug Evil in India.* By Badrul Hassan. Foreword by Mahatma Gandhi.

Ganesh & Co. Rs 2. Foreign, 5s.

*The Aryan Ideal.* By Prof. T. L. Vaswani. Ganesh & Co. Re 1.

*Apostles of Freedom.* By Prof. T. L. Vaswani. Ganesh & Co. Re 1.

*10 Tage die die Welt Erschütterten.* J. Reed. C. Hoym.

*Der Kampf in Genoa.* G. Tschitscherin. C. Hoym. 2 marks.

*Die Partei der Menschewiki in der Russischen Revolution.* I. Wardin. C. Hoym. 2 marks.

*The Second and Third Internationals and the Vienna Union.* Labour Publishing Co. 1s.

*The Real Enemy.* By Dan Griffiths. Foreword by Ramsay MacDonald. International

Bookshops. 1s. 3d.

[NOTE.—Messrs. Allen & Unwin write to say that they are the English publishers of the book, *Full Up and Fed Up*, by Whiting Williams, reviewed in our last issue under the name of the American publisher, Messrs. Charles Scribners' Sons.]



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# NOTES of the MONTH

*An Industrial Truce—The Supreme Issue—The Silence of Edinburgh—  
Cant on a Political Truce—Candour on a Political Truce—  
Labour in the State—The New Social Order*

A NEW portent is now beginning to loom on the horizon—the proposal of an Industrial Truce. Proposals of this kind have long fluttered on the outskirts of the movement, and they were particularly rife at the period of the close of the war; but they vanished with the other post-war illusions and were never seriously taken up. To-day the position is different. It is not in a period of mirage that the proposals are being made, nor by spokesmen of doubtful credentials; it is at a moment when the outlines of the class struggle are sharp and hard, and the sponsors are the official leaders of the movement. In their various organs, Mr. Henderson, in the *Labour Magazine*, and Mr. Frank Hodges, in the *Manchester Daily Dispatch*, have given utterance to the suggestion in measured terms. So comes the culminating betrayal of a long history. The entry into the imperialist war in 1914, the participation in a jingo Cabinet, the denial of the Russian revolution, the breaking of the pledges to the International and the consequent shattering of the International, the sharing in a victors' peace, the refusal and renunciation of the decisive struggle after the war, the consequent driving of the workers to the depths of degradation and despair, the sanctimonious expulsion of the rebel element, the handing over of the organised political movement of the workers tied and bound to the service of the capitalist State, and now the attempt to deliver up the last weapon of the workers—this is the history of those eight years since that fair day in July, just eight years back, when Henderson stood upon the plinth in Trafalgar Square to vow his service to the Workers' International. It is no chapter of accidents, nor series of isolated incidents; it is the process, step by step, downwards along the slippery slope on which the organised movement entered in 1914. To some the expulsion of the communists at Edinburgh might seem a small thing. But even to those it might come as a shock to see with what dramatic suddenness it has been followed by the official proposal of an Industrial Truce.

**W**HAT is an Industrial Truce? It is the final betrayal of the workers. Compared with it, all the betrayals of international socialism are small, because international socialism is a far away and difficult thing which has to be learnt and understood; but the struggle of the workers and the employers is a near and immediate thing which is plain at hand to every man. An Industrial Truce means that the workers are summoned to give up their only weapon against the massed power of capitalist industry and the State. It means that they are to deliver themselves over as captives to the mercy of the enemy without defence. It means that they are to build up the wealth and power of the enemy without complaint, in order that that wealth and power shall be used against them. It means that they are to register their servitude in time of depression, in order that they shall be bound when the time of prosperity comes. The worker who has lost the power to strike has lost all that is left to him in the present State. It cannot happen; and all the official wire-pulling and machine control of those on top cannot make it happen. Rather we would echo the words of Jowett, as chairman of the Labour Party Conference, when, in a speech that was aptly fastened upon by the capitalist Press for attack as the one discordant note in an otherwise admirable conference, he declared: "It is not to be expected that these conflicts between Labour and Capital will be the last of the series. The relentless depression of the standard of life of the workers goes on. It may be argued that it is useless to stand up against the encroachments of Capital on the life and liberty, the leisure and status, of the worker, but the degradation must end somewhere. How far it would go if not resisted Heaven only knows. *And those who say that resistance is useless, and blame Labour when it fights a losing battle, should remember that even losing fights in the industrial field shield the workers from the worst, and make the capitalist think twice before imposing a new oppression.*" In those words the chairman of the Labour Party Conference gave a true expression of the feelings of the workers, which found little or no echo in the remainder of the conference.

**F**OR the most conspicuous thing about the Edinburgh Conference was not what was said, but what was not said. In all the plethora of resolutions, from Communism to Privy Councillors, from India to Japan, and from Nationalisation to the Canadian Cattle Embargo,

the one subject that was not considered was the struggle that was going on outside the very doors of the conference, the struggle of the workers here and now to maintain themselves against the attack of the whole capitalist class. Even those issues that might have borne upon it were not considered in relation to it: unemployment was treated as a special problem, and not as part of a single battle; the economic crisis was relegated to the sphere of foreign affairs and Government diplomacy, and not to the Workers' International. But if there was silence in the conference, it was the silence that serves as a cloak. Within the conference, Arthur Henderson and Frank Hodges might be swearing their abhorrence of any alliance with capitalism: outside they were publicly advocating it. The article of Henderson's in favour of an Industrial Truce appeared on the very day of the conference. Under cover of other issues the change in policy was prepared; the machine control was strengthened, and the dissident elements excluded, to pave the way for the future new direction. Silently, without discussion, the Labour Party was attached to the vessel of social peace under the pilotage of Sidney Webb.

THE debate on a future political alliance with capitalism throws a vivid light upon the situation. The delegates were suspicious and ill at ease, and their suspicions were not easily allayed. On the very day on which they had assembled they had had before them the statement of the well-informed correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* to the effect that "important members of the Party" had given expression to the view that "the Party will commit itself to independence, but that is not to say that its view may not have to be revised if it finds its Parliamentary representation increased at the next election." To quieten these suspicions, the Executive representatives vied with one another in proclaiming their devotion to independence. But the manner of their expression was still not found quite satisfactory. Sidney Webb was unhesitating in denouncing any form of electoral alliance or electoral understanding; but, said he, "the testing time will come not now, but after the election," and for that he expressed the "hope" that Labour would not enter into any Government other than its own. Councillor Shinwell averred that Sidney Webb

had "given the whole thing away" by stating that the matter was not one for immediate discussion, but for after the election. A resounding resolution was carried for "complete independence," and Sidney Webb had subsequently to placate the still remaining suspicions by a special interview to the *Daily Herald*, in which he denounced the idea of the Labour Party's departing "by a hairsbreadth" from the policy of "absolute independence."

**D**OES anyone suppose that all this is going to make the slightest difference to the question of a future political alliance? It will not, and those best acquainted with the situation know that it will not. It is quite true that the Labour Party will probably not be strong enough after the next election to enter into a Government alliance, but the issue is merely a question of time. To anyone who may doubt this, it is sufficient to refer to the very unequivocal statement on the subject by the *New Statesman*, commonly supposed to be the organ of Sidney Webb. "The virtual unanimity of the decision," it declared, "does not surprise us in the least, despite the fact that many Labour men are fully prepared, in private conversation, to discuss the pros and cons of a Liberal alliance. If the question is openly raised in the Party Conference, there can be only one answer. Even those who would be among the first, in appropriate circumstances, to advocate an arrangement with the Liberals, must needs rise and assert their Party's utter and unmitigable independence. A resolution carried under these conditions is not therefore of importance; it would not affect the actions to be taken by the Party in different circumstances." The writer continues, after enunciating the advantages of independence during the period of "adolescence," to declare: "We are, nevertheless, of opinion that the declaration of independence adopted by last week's conference means nothing at all. We can easily imagine circumstances arising, as they have arisen in Germany, which would force the collaboration of the Labour Party in a Government not entirely composed of its own followers, and if they were to arise, we do not doubt that last week's decision would be reversed as emphatically as it appears to have been made. The decisions of political parties must always be interpreted in relation to the circumstances which call them into being."

**T**HUS the future intended course for the Labour Party is already marked out. The decisions of the Edinburgh Conference have provided the coping stone to the great transformation which was begun in 1918, when the Labour Party was taken up to cease to be the organ of a class and become the organ of the "community." By the disciplinary exclusions, by the tacit renunciation of the class struggle, by the proclamation of devotion to king and country, by the shouldering of the imperial burden, the Labour Party is to become part and parcel of the great machinery of the capitalist State. As if to symbolise the completion of the transformation, Sidney Webb, his handiwork completed, comes out into the open as not merely the head, but the figure-head of the Party. The views of Sidney Webb, his loyalty to the State and his imperial patriotism, have never been in doubt. In that great final chapter to his revised version of the *History of Trade Unionism*, entitled "The Place of Trade Unionism in the State," he gives profession to the faith that is in him as he sings the pæan of the accomplishment in which he had had so notable a share. "Trade Union representatives have won an equal entrance to local bodies from Quarter Sessions and the elected Councils down to Pensions and Food and Profiteering Act Committees; an influential Labour Party has been established in Parliament; and most remarkable of all, the Trade Union itself has been tacitly accepted as a part of the administrative machinery of the State." *A part of the administrative machinery of the State*—the whole issue could not be expressed more tersely. This, then, is the outcome in which the fighting struggles and sacrifices of the generations of workers are to find their issue, and the eternal battles of the working class to find the peace of the prison; here trade unionism and the Labour Party are each to receive their niche in the temple of Mammon, and the very symbols of the workers' revolt are to become the machinery of their oppression. The significance of the transformation is no less appreciated by *The Times*. "We believe," declares *The Times*, as it welcomes the entry of the Labour Party into the fold, "that the will of the British people is unalterable on the foundations of our economic order and of our constitutional practice. The nation will not tolerate the subversion of our system of individual liberty and opportunity, or of the hardly won guarantees of the constitutional monarchy. The Labour Party was wise to set itself right with public opinion on these the first principles of British polity."

Private property and constitutional monarchy: on these, "the first principles of British polity," the Labour Party has, in the opinion of *The Times*, "set itself right."

**T**O accomplish this transformation, the machinery of discipline has had to be imposed upon the movement and the expulsion of the working-class elements to be begun. It is still believed by many that the change which has taken place in the Labour Party is a change to a socialist basis. The nature of the discipline that has been imposed should soon undeceive them. The discipline that has been imposed has been imposed against socialists of long standing and of known records in the working-class movement. It has been imposed in favour of open and avowed enemies to Socialism and of ruling class elements wholly alien to the working class. Mr. J. H. Thomas declares that he is not a socialist. The new exclusion rule declares that no individual shall take part who does not accept the principles of the Labour Party. The principles of the Labour Party are, according to the chairman of the Labour Party, socialist. Does the rule then apply to Mr. J. H. Thomas, who swears in court that he is no socialist? It does not, because it was never intended to apply to him, because it was only intended to apply to just those socialist and working-class elements who are most likely to lead a revolt against the new orientation. The new discipline is imposed, not in the interests of working-class solidarity and socialism, but against them. It is imposed against a Tom Mann in favour of a Haldane or a Noel Buxton. The case for communist affiliation was argued by a boilermaker and an engineer. The case against was put by a civil servant and a student for the bar. Is it not clear between whom the battle is being fought over the body of the Labour Party? Is it not clear why, the political body being bound, the next step should be a proposal for an industrial truce to bind the remaining weapon of the workers? The workers will make no greater mistake than to ignore the importance of what is happening because of the smallness of the numbers involved in the immediate controversy. For it is the whole future of the working class in this country that is at stake. The capitalist offensive is being conducted, not only on the open battlefield, but through the workers' own organisations. And the name of the new subjection which the capitalists are preparing will be called the New Social Order.



# A DRAMA OF THE FRENCH WORKING CLASS<sup>1</sup>

By L. TROTSKY

THE French poet, Marcel Martinet, has written a play which fully deserves to be called a drama of the French working class. This alone assures it the right to our attention. Martinet is a Communist who has passed through the syndicalist school of *La Vie Ouvrière*—that is to say a good school. As an artist, Martinet studied in the worthy school of Romain Rolland; consequently one need neither expect nor fear from him purely propagandist productivity—for politics are only rarely to be found in a dramatic setting or poetic nature. Martinet is deeply psychological. All the problems of our great epoch pass through his individual consciousness and emerge fired with the light of his own personality, or, more correctly, he finds his way to the general and universal only through the medium of his own personal individuality. It is this that makes him an artist. Martinet is a product of the school of Rolland, but spiritually he has outgrown it. It is this that makes it possible for him to be a Communist.

During the war, Rolland, having raised himself "above the battle," inspired loyal respect for his personal courage in a period when mass heroism was covering the plains and villages of Europe with corpses, but when personal courage even in a modest measure was very scarce, especially amongst the "spiritual aristocracy." Rolland, refusing to "howl with the wolves" of his own country, lifted himself "above the battle," or, to be more precise, stepped aside from it and entrenched himself in a neutral country.

He continued during the thunder of war (true this was but faintly heard in Switzerland) to prize German science and German art, and to propagate co-operation between both countries. This programme of activity was not, after all, so courageous; but in that period of raging chauvinism to carry it out needed at least a modicum of personal independence. And this he had. However, even then the limitations

<sup>1</sup> Marcel Martinet, *La Nuit*. Paris, 1922.

of his philosophy were clearly discernible as also, if one may term it so, the egoistic character of his humanitarianism.

Rolland entrenched himself in neutral Switzerland, but what of the others? The people could not be "above the battle," because they themselves were its cannon fodder. The French proletariat could not go to Switzerland, and Rolland did not give it any plan of action. Rolland's banner was designed exclusively for his personal use—it was the banner of a great artist brought up on French and German literature, above military age, and assured of the necessary means for passing from one country to another. The limitations of the Rolland type of humanitarianism were plainly revealed later, when the problems of war, peace, and cultural co-operation became the problem of revolution.

Here also Rolland decided to be "above the battle." He recognises neither dictatorship nor violence, whether from the right or from the left. It is true that historical events do not depend upon recognition or non-recognition, and that he as a great poet retains the right to give his moral and æsthetic criticisms. For him, a humanitarian egoist, this was sufficient. But what of the masses? As long as the people slavishly suffer the dictatorship of capital, Rolland poetically and æsthetically condemns the bourgeoisie, but should the working class endeavour to burst the yoke of their exploiters by the only means in their power, by the force of revolution, they in their turn encounter the ethical and æsthetic condemnation of Rolland. After all, the history of mankind is only material upon which to base artistic production or moral valuations! Rolland, the pretentious individualist, belongs to the past.

Martinet, in his relation to human history, is much broader, more realistic, and more human. He does not place himself "above the battle," but attacks the problems of war and peace, the liberation of human culture and co-operation between nations, not as a problem of personal values, but as problems of mass activity. He has dramatised the revolutionary activity of the oppressed in his last production, called "The Night." It is written in blank verse. It is written so finely that the verse is not a constraint on language, but a means of raising it above the ordinary, endowing it with a significance of form corresponding with the deeply historical significance of events. And so, at least on reading, one feels its necessity.

Is the drama realistic? Yes, fundamentally as a whole it is, as is also each individual figure in particular. The characters are alive.

But through their personal existence in every stage of the drama is delineated the life of their class, their country, and of our present-day humanity. Above their heads flock unseen social forces, thus giving a symbolic meaning to the play.

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The central figure is old Mariette, a peasant woman seventy years old. Round her are grouped peasants, men and women, from the northern parts of the country which have been devastated by artillery. With her wise courage, with her tender kindness, Mariette governs her little world completely. This is a French mother! This is a mother of the French people! She has ingrained peasant ideas, but she has already lived through an age of new history, through a series of revolutions, known many hopes and disappointments, and much suffering for her children. However, despair she did not know, and even now, in the years of the Great War, she does not want to know it. Her heart remains an inexhaustible source of tireless kindness.

Mariette's eldest son is at the front. With her remains her little, silent, heroic daughter-in-law, Anna Maria, whom the old woman in a tragic moment of tender confidence calls "a quiet little grey kitten." With them is the grandson, Louison, twelve years old, whose soul has become awakened and strong beyond his years in the awful strain of war.

All the neighbours meet in the only remaining hut—that of Mariette. Homeless people, old men who have lost their sons, mothers whom the artillery of their own or a strange country has robbed of their children, flock there. They are surrounded by cold, snow, devastation, war. People who for four years have lived under the fire and thunder of war, tired of hoping, tired even of despairing, huddle to their common mother, Mariette, who, though with greater wisdom and greater goodness, lives and suffers just as they do.

But something has happened! The sound of the artillery has ceased. The people are enveloped in a sudden hush. What does this portend?

The astounding rumour that the war has ended pierces the cold and the storm. The enemy's soldiers have refused to fight! They have said: "We do not want to fight any more." They have arrested their officers, even—is it believable?—their emperor. He is in their hands, and the soldiers opposing them, after communication with the others, have also ceased fighting. Why *should* they fight? This is the cause of the sudden silence.

More and more soldiers, half drunk with fatigue, hope, and anxiety, appear at the hut and corroborate the news. It was the end.

Now begins something that has never happened before. The enemy soldiers have seized their emperor, and actually wish to hand him over to the opposing armies "for safe keeping." Isn't it wonderful, eh? But the chief thing is that *it* has stopped. At last the end.

But now comes the Generalissimo Bourbousse. He is an old soldier with a natural, but partly affected roughness, and with an affected, though perhaps partly natural good naturedness. He is an insignificant figure, but in his very insignificance dangerous. Bourbousse intends temporarily to instal himself and his staff in Mariette's little abode, and he asks his hosts to leave their house. But where should they go to? Around them is a ploughed-up desert, covered with debris, with still unburied corpses, and steeped in cold and snow. Mariette protests, "for the war has ended," she cries. Bourbousse explains that it is from here that he intends to complete the victory, but finally he gives Mariette and her family permission to remain in the attic.

The vanquished emperor suddenly appears on the scene. Some enemy soldiers have accompanied him here. Bourbousse welcomes the monarch, who has been beaten in more senses than one, for his body is covered with bruises. Having entered the enemies' headquarters, the emperor immediately regains courage. He is no more among his own soldiers. He explains to Bourbousse that his, the emperor's, downfall deprives Bourbousse of the fruits of victory. With whom can the victor treat now? "Who," he asks, "will sign the treaty?" Surely not the revolution! Bourbousse becomes anxious, and rightly so. Thus they discover common interests. Will not, for instance, the example of the revolution be followed by the victors? "In any case," continues Bourbousse, "his Highness can . . . hm . . . hm . . . make himself quite at home."

Mariette's hut is given over to his highness, and the Generalissimo and staff climb to the attic. The old woman, her daughter-in-law, and grandson are thrust out of the house—out into the darkness, the cold, and the snow.

But the infection is already beginning to spread. There is unrest among the soldiery of Bourbousse. They seem to be waiting for something. They talk excitedly, and apparently, by accident, hundreds of them gather under the roof of a partly demolished café. They

want to understand what has happened. They shout for reasons, ideas, slogans, leaders. They nominate those who gained their confidence in the trenches. There is the honest old peasant, Goutodiet; the open-hearted, well-spoken Favrol ; there is the young Ledru, with the eagle's glance, but without power. And this is where the real drama of the beginning of the rising of the suppressed class is unfolded—without banners, without proper organisation, under inexperienced and untried leadership.

Goutodiet was, with all his soul, for the solidarity of the working people, for the end of the war, for coming to terms with the enemy. He was an honest narrow pacifist, and the speech of this aged peasant in soldier's uniform was much better and more agreeable than the conglomeration of pacifist jokes delivered by Victor Méric. The mass welcomes Goutodiet, but is not satisfied, because the goal is not defined and the methods are not clear. Pacifism is passive; the substance of it is patience; it has hopes and fears, but no definite plan of action. It is the latter which is at present of most importance, because the masses have risen.

Favrol steps forward. His emptiness, his noisy irresponsibility, are hidden under definite suggestions. He tries immediately to formulate a suggestion which he must have discussed more than once with the frequenters of the anarchist café, viz., to kill the officers, including Bourbousse, and *then* to think of what else to do. The soldiers become attentive; some agree, but the majority are frightened. The split causes the majority to lose their heads, and that leads to a demoralising feeling of weakness.

Then young Ledru steps forward. He is not afraid of revolutionary force. He recognises that it is unavoidable, but the country would not at once understand the summary execution of the officers. Extreme measures which are not at first prepared for by evolutionary methods, which have no psychological motive, would cause a split among the soldiers. Premature use of revolutionary terrorism would isolate the people who took part in it. Ledru suggests that a representative organ of the revolutionary army be created first, that every hundred soldiers send a representative to the Soviet, and . . . here the curtain falls.

The revolution spreads in the army and the country. Everywhere Soviets are being formed. In the capital a temporary Government has already been set up of active men from the extreme left reserve of the

bourgeoisie. Their task is to break up and paralyse the revolution—to control it themselves. For this they utilise the customary methods of democracy, the weighty authority of official statesmanship, the artistic web of lies, the distrust of the masses in themselves, the wait-and-see pacifism of Goutodiet, and the bloody adventurism of Favrol. Ordinary people, not geniuses, sit in the temporary Government. Their task, however, is not to create anything new, but to preserve the old order of things. They have the experience and help of the ruling class to back them up. In this lies their power. Their first problem was to keep their feet when the first wave of the revolution passed over them, and to discover its weak, unguarded points—to plunder, weaken, and exploit the revolution, and to destroy the faith and morale of the masses before the second, more deadly, wave could arise.

The critical moment!

In the army, in the workers' districts, the movement is spreading; Soviets have been chosen, local conflicts with the authorities are going in favour of the revolutionaries, but the real enemy, the ruling class, is not done away with. The latter manœuvres expectantly. It has a comfortable intelligence department in the capital; it has a well-known centralised mechanism; it has a very rich experience in deceit; and it is convinced of its right to victory.

After the partial success of the first attack against the old regime, it is necessary to place the movement on a higher level—to give it more of a national character—in order to assure an internal agreement, a common aim, and a common method of realising that aim. Otherwise, of course, disaster is inevitable.

The local leaders, men brought out by circumstance—improvised revolutionaries, who have never before thought of the problems of mass movement—are buffeted like small pieces of wood on the waves of that movement, hoping against hope that circumstances according to their own logic would assure success for them in the future as in the past. For the solution of every difficulty, the dilettanti of the revolution can only put forward clichés instead of ideas. "The people who have risen are invincible"; "You cannot stop conscience with bayonets!"; and so on. But the revolution demands not general phrases, but regulations corresponding to internal necessities and to the various stages of the movement. This is lacking. A fatal delay occurs in the development of events. Ledru, with political instinct,

comprehends the logic of the revolution. Quite recently he resisted the empty boasting of Favrol, rejecting his proposal to shoot the officers. In the past they have limited themselves to the arrest of Bourbousse. To-day, Ledru feels that a fateful crisis is approaching. The masses do not realise that the chief difficulties are still to come. The enemy seizes, without a struggle, any unfortified position, and immediately afterwards pushes its tentacles further forward. To-morrow, the "good natured" Bourbousse will again be leader of the armed forces of reaction and will crush the movement in its infancy. Ledru comes to the conclusion that there is needed a cry of danger, thunderous warnings, encouragement to ruthlessness. Now he is for decisive measures, the shooting of Bourbousse, but the logic of the revolution, which the young leader, with his finger on the troubled pulse of the masses, has already mastered, finds only a belated reflection in the minds of its semi-leaders.

At the head of the mass there is no organisation which can reason collectively, which can consider in common the relation of events to one another, and thus to intervene at the right moment. There is no revolutionary party. Unanimity only occurs in a movement as long as it meets no obstacles. As soon as the position becomes complicated, improvised leaders without experience, without a programme, always begin to fight amongst themselves. Each one has his own course, his own method. There is neither discipline of thought nor of action. Difficulties, inadequacies, deficiencies—the consequences of war and of the revolution itself—stand out more sharply. Hesitation appears. Then follows loss of morale. Those who before kept their doubts secret now shout at the tops of their voices. There is nothing easier than to oppose the present difficulties with the problems of to-morrow. Those who have not lost faith endeavour to shout above the sceptics—but each in his own way. The masses grope about amid the growing difficulties and try to follow their leaders, but the dissension frightens and weakens them.

Here there appears on the scene a member of the temporary Government, Bordiet Dupatois. An experienced demagogue, with a political knowledge not of a very high calibre, but with a practically flawless instinct for the division and demoralisation of the mass and the corruption of its leaders. All the art of the French Revolution is at the disposal of Dupatois, who is fat, who pretends to be simple and

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a humorist, and who wears a coachman's cape inside out. He makes his way slowly through the crowd of soldiers, spies, and listens, chatters, flatters the revolutionaries, praises the leaders, makes promises, reproaches in a friendly fashion, and shakes hands with everybody. From the moment when he appears at the entrance of the revolutionary headquarters of Ledru, large numbers of soldiers, tired of waiting and uncertainty, already put their hopes in him, as if he were a harbour of safety. The uninvited guest, Dupatois, welcomes them to the revolutionary headquarters in the tone of a benevolent host, and praises Ledru in such a sly fashion as must inevitably shatter the young leader's authority. Favrol is already on the side of the temporary government. The honest Goutodiet is not heard of because events have become too complicated for him. He has become muddled and has melted into the "muddled crowd." Ledru understands the trend of events, but he now stands before the crowd, not as a leader of the revolution, but as a hero of tragedy. With him and around him there is no organisation but a few of his hardened followers who are used to think and fight together. There is no Revolutionary Party. The energy of the masses, which has been wrongly directed, has become an irritant poison directed against the parent growth itself, gradually weakening it. Dupatois is already firmly established. He transforms doubts, uneasiness, worry, fatigue, uncertainty, into political flattery. Amongst the crowd he has his paid and voluntary agents. They interrupt Ledru, protest, grumble, curse, thus creating the necessary atmosphere for Dupatois.

In the chaos of the stormy meeting a sudden shot is heard and Ledru falls dead.

The greatest moment for Dupatois approaches. He says a few complimentary words over the grave of his fallen "young friend," in which, admitting the latter's faults and foolhardiness, he pays compliment to the altruism of ideals destined to bear no fruit.

With this secretly insincere eulogy he succeeds in winning over even the most revolutionary of his opponents. The revolution is broken. The power of the provisional Government is assured. Is not this an historical drama of the French proletariat?

The same peasants forgather at old Mariette's. With all her heart she was on the side of the revolutionaries. How could it be otherwise? Mariette—a mother of the French people—is France itself. She is a peasant, with mind and memory loaded and enriched by age

after ages of struggle and suffering. She remembers her sons fallen in the battles of the great revolution, which ended with a Cæsarist dictatorship. She has witnessed the return of the Bourbons, the new revolution, new treacheries, internal strife amidst the working class itself, the hopes and disappointments of the Commune, its terrible downfall, the monstrous, cowardly, and crafty militarism of the third republic, the Great War, in which the best of their generation had been wiped out and the very existence of the French people threatened. . . . All this has old Mariette, a mother of the French people, lived through, felt, and thought over in her own way. She was a common peasant, who, by her experience and mother's instinct, had raised herself to the level of the working class, its hopes and struggles.

Absolutely on the side of the revolutionaries, Mariette gave them a mother's blessing, awaited their victory, and hoped for the return of her eldest son from the trenches. But the revolution was shattered, and all the sacrifices had been in vain. Bourbousse is again head of the army. The delusion of brotherhood with those who deposed their emperor is dispersed like smoke.

The enemy is retreating, and the enemy must pay in full for the devastation he has caused!

Forward! To arms!! Bourbousse is in command, and after a considerable lapse in the development of events, after the internal strife, this persecution of the retreating enemy, this "forward" movement, seems to the people who are being hoodwinked like a way of surmounting the crisis—a way out of the cul-de-sac. The peasants, both men and women, turn from Mariette, though she had upheld their spirits during the blackest months of the war. She had raised their hopes in the revolutionary days to an unaccustomed degree, and so doing had deceived them, and they revenge themselves mercilessly upon her for their shattered dreams. One after another leaves the house of the old peasant woman with words of bitter reproach upon his lips.

Mariette is alone. Her grandson, Louison, is sleeping restlessly upon his bed. Her daughter-in-law, Anna Maria, breaks her heroic silence to tell old Mariette that she (Anna Maria) is on her side. She has been with her during the war, during the times when revolutionary hopes ran high, and she is with her now in the bitter days of defeat and isolation. Mariette clasps her quiet, grey kitten to her heart. Anna Maria goes up the steps to her room, and Mariette sits

near the bed where her grandson, the future France, lies under the oppression of a nightmare—the new France, which is growing under the thunder and lightning of this most terrible epoch.

And there, on the floor above, is Anna Maria—the new French mother who will relieve the old, tired Mariette.

A knock on the door is heard. Three men enter carrying a fourth—the corpse of the first born son. He had perished during the strife of the last few days, during the persecution of the revolutionary army of the enemy, after the destruction of his own revolution.

The last shred of hope is shattered about the poor old head. The three men who have just entered place that which had once been her son by the side of the bed where the grandson lies asleep. But no—the grandson is not asleep. On the contrary, he has heard all. Beautiful is the tragic dialogue between himself and his grandmother. They both (the past and the future) bow at the bedside where the “present” lies dead.

Louison again lies dreaming.

Mariette feels that she has no more strength to bear her sufferings. She has nothing to expect—nothing to live for; and she feels that it is now time to quit the old life and to go forward into the night which lies brooding outside her window. But in that inexhaustible bourne of hope and kindness, the mother’s heart, the old woman again finds herself. She has a daughter-in-law and a grandson, and a new life is built up upon the ruins of the old. It *must* be, it *shall* be, better than the past life is the watchword.

The night passes. . . .

The old woman climbs heavily up the stairs to her daughter-in-law, and calls: “Anna Maria, it is time to get up—it is already dawn!”

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With this the play ends. It is a veritable drama of revolution; a political tragedy of the working class; a tragedy of all its past and a warning for the future. No other proletariat but the French is so rich in historical memories, for no other but the French has had such a dramatic destiny. But this very past weighs down upon it like a terrible threat for the future. The dead are like a chain fettering the living. Each stage has left behind it not only its experiences, but also its prejudices, its formulæ deprived of content, and its sects who refuse to die.

Goutodiet? We have all met him. He is a worker with the instincts of the petty bourgeois, or a petty bourgeois attracted to the workers' cause—the democrat, the pacifist, always for half measures, always for going half the way. He is Bourderon, the father of the people, whose honest limitations have in the past proved more than once a brake on the revolution.

And we all know Favrol, knight of the phrase, who to-day preaches a bloody settlement in order to-morrow to show himself in the camp of the victorious bourgeoisie. Favrol is the most widespread, the most multifarious, and in all its variety the most uniform type in the French working-class movement. He is Hervé, the shouter, the vulgar reviler, the anti-militarist, "without a fatherland," the preacher of sabotage and direct action—and then the patriotic oracle of the concierges, the journalistic tool of the drunken chauvinism of a petty bourgeois clique. He is Sebastian Faure, the libertine, the pedagogue, the Malthusian, the smooth-tongued orator, the anti-militarist, always furnished with a programme full of promises freeing him from the necessity of undertaking any practical step, and always ready for a shameful deal with the "prefect," if the latter only knows how to flatter him.

Verbal radicalism, a policy of irreconcilable formulæ which in no way lead to action, and consequently sanction inaction under the cloak of extremism, have been and remain the most corrosive element in the French working-class movement. Orators who begin their first phrase and do not know what they are going to say next; adept bureaucrats of journalism whose writings bear no relation to actual events; "leaders" who never reflect on the consequences of their own actions; individualists who, under the banner of "autonomy"—whether of provinces, towns, trade unions, organisations, newspapers, or what not—guard inviolate their own petty bourgeois individualism from control, responsibility, and discipline; syndicalists who not only have no sense of what is needed, but who are instinctively afraid to say what exists, to call a mistake a mistake, and to demand from themselves and from others a definite answer to any question, and who mask their helplessness under the accustomed wrappings of revolutionary ritual; great-souled poets who wish to deluge the working class with their reservoirs of magnanimity and confusion of ideas; stage artists and improvisors who are too lazy to think, and who feel hurt that people exist in the world who are able and accustomed to think; chatterers, players with words, village

oracles, petty revolutionary priests of churches struggling one against the other—it is here that is to be found the terrible poison in the French working-class movement; here is the menace, here the danger!

Martinet's drama speaks out on this in bold language, making the highest truth of life, *historical truth*, correspond with artistic truth. Speaking through the medium of artistic creation, the drama is a call to the proletarian vanguard for internal purification, increased unity, and discipline.

The last act takes place in an atmosphere heavy with tragedy; the play as a whole is called "The Night." Superficially it may appear to be imbued with pessimism—almost with despair. It is in fact inspired by a deep uneasiness, by a natural anxiety. France has been drained of blood. The best of her generation lie buried. Mariette's first-born son did not return from the war to set up the new order. But there is the grandson, twelve years old at the end of the war and now, therefore, sixteen.

In such a time months appear as years. Louison personifies the future. About his young head, waking with feverish energy, is breaking the dawn of to-morrow, and it is this that is meant by that last exclamation of Mariette's, bespeaking peace and hope. But it is essential that Louison should not repeat the history of Ledru. Remember this, you the best workers of France! Martinet's drama is not a gloomy prophecy, but a stern forewarning.

# THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT— A RETROSPECT

By G. D. H. COLE

**T**HE Labour Movement in Great Britain has a continuous history extending over something like one hundred years. Its origins, of course, go back further—to the numerous small trade clubs and societies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to the first attempts at working-class political organisation made (under the inspiration of the revolution in France) by the Corresponding Societies in the years after 1791, to the strikes and ephemeral organisations of the factory operatives under the first stress of the Industrial Revolution—efforts hampered by the Combination Acts, which made trade unionism illegal between 1800 and 1824—and to the part played by the workers in the struggle which preceded the Reform Bill.

The period following the French Revolution, which was also the period of the great economic changes which we call the Industrial Revolution, saw the creation of the modern working class of Great Britain and its first struggles to assert itself against the oppressions and barbarities of the new factory system. But the strikes and political demonstrations of this time were largely uprisings of despair and had behind them, as a rule, only the vaguest (if any) plans for the redress of economic grievances. They were protests rather than demands, or, if they took the form of demands, the only claim was for relief from an intolerable burden of oppression. It is possible, indeed, to cull from the writings and speeches of the time many anticipations of later working-class policy and principle. The fullest measures of political reform were already urged by the Corresponding Societies in the seventeen nineties, and the consciousness of exploitation was certainly not absent from the manifestos of the miners or the textile workers in the first decades of the nineteenth century. But the inchoate development of working-class thought is clearly marked in the frequency with which the leaders hark back to the "good old times," and mix their "Jacobinism" derived from France with a desire to return to the manners and productive

systems of a simpler bygone age. The Luddite troubles of 1811 and 1812 were, doubtless, in the main the product of immediate economic grievances, and the machine breaking and factory burning which accompanied them were, first and foremost, instinctive hittings back at the immediately obvious source of misery and degradation; but, in a wider sense, machine breaking was a phenomenon natural to the times and given a philosophic justification by those who saw in the new factories forces destructive of the "Merrie England" of the past.

It was, indeed, always difficult enough for these early victims of industrialism, half starved and subjected to constant police repression, to organise in face of the Combination Acts and other laws designed to prevent working-class action. Their situation was, moreover, novel; they were congregated in horrible and insanitary new towns erected for their reception, and they had behind them no tradition of organisation or action. They had to learn by experience how to combine, and it was not until the factory system had become firmly established that the chance of stable organisation presented itself.

Working-class radicalism, based on principles largely adapted from French originals, developed mainly, not among the new factory operatives, but among the members of the old established crafts of skilled workers, who had behind them some tradition of organisation and common action. At first their Radicalism was largely political. They wanted reform in the State and the establishment of adult suffrage and more representative institutions as a guarantee of democracy. Politically, they formed no more than a working-class auxiliary to the middle-class Radicals. Economically, they remained within the borders of their small local trade clubs and fraternities, striking here or negotiating there, far less severely persecuted by the law than the textile operatives or the miners, because their activities were supposed to be far less dangerous and revolutionary. Nominally, their clubs were as illegal under the Combination Acts as the ephemeral unions of the miners and the spinners; actually, they were, as a rule, let alone unless some particular group of employers had a special reason for proceeding against them.

But the old-established crafts could not long remain unaffected by the economic changes which were proceeding around them. Although the main brunt of the Industrial Revolution fell upon the new industrial districts of the North and Midlands, every trade soon felt the effect of the new economic conditions. The scale of commercial enterprise



expanded; money and credit became more vital factors in governing the course of production; the small master began to feel his position threatened. Among the building workers, for example, one of the principal grievances of the early trade unions was the growth of the contract system, under which a contractor with money power behind him undertook the larger jobs and reduced the small master builder to the status of a sub-contractor subordinate to his will. This, in two ways, affected the position of the building operative. It restricted his opportunity to become a small master working on his own, and it compelled the smaller masters, squeezed themselves by the contractors, to squeeze the workers in their turn. By 1820 the skilled operatives of the older towns were developing a vivid practical consciousness of exploitation, and were ready for a body of doctrine and a policy based upon the recognition of economic exploitation as a fundamental characteristic of the new industrial system.

The support and conviction of the skilled artisans of the older crafts was needed before the new factory workers could become organised in any coherent fashion. Alone, they were capable of vigorous and, at times, savage protest, but not of stable combination or of creating a doctrine to fit their new position as a class of labour nominally free, but actually in bondage. The skilled men of the older crafts assumed the rôle of leadership, and with their serious entry into the field of working-class agitation the modern British Labour Movement had its birth.

The formative years for working-class opinion were undoubtedly the years from 1820 to 1830. Already, in 1818, a premature plan for a "One Big Union" had been launched in Manchester and taken up enthusiastically by the London operatives. But this body, curiously named the "Philanthropic Hercules," died almost before it was born. The outcome of the Lancashire strikes of 1818, it found no soil prepared for it in working-class consciousness. But the very mooted of the idea of general combination is sign enough of the progress that was being made. Between 1820 and 1830 the soil was prepared for a more practical advance.

I call these years the formative years for British Labour because they witnessed a decisive change, not only in the forms, but also in the spirit and articulateness of working-class organisation. In 1820 there were working-class groups in alliance with the political Radicals, local

trade clubs, bargaining each on its own behalf with various groups of employers, struggling and evanescent organisations among the miners and textile operatives, but there was nothing that could properly be called a Labour movement. By 1830 there was a Labour movement, and by 1834 that movement had assumed a definite shape and character, the effects of which were by no means destroyed by its subsequent defeat.

How did this change come about? Not as the result of any single factor, but certainly not by a mere accident. During the decade in question, at least four great formative influences were brought to bear. First, there was the experience of the political agitation for reform, revealing, as the day of achievement drew nearer, a growing gulf between the working-class claim for adult suffrage and short parliaments and the Whig plans for moderate reforms which would enfranchise the middle classes while leaving the propertyless workers unenfranchised. Whig and working-class Radical could join in execrating the corruption and unrepresentative character of the unreformed Parliament; they could not join in framing a measure which would satisfy both, for the Whig plan was a plan for government by the Whigs with the support of the rising capitalist class.

Secondly, there was the successful repeal of the Combination Acts in 1824, and the further success by which repeal was maintained against attempts to re-enact these laws in 1825. Engineered by men who did not believe in the powers of trade union action, and held that legal restrictions only served to encourage the workers to place false hopes upon it, repeal served immensely to facilitate working-class combination, not only by making easier the formation of unions, but still more by enabling the various unions to enter openly into mutual relations. Repeal was carried, thanks to Francis Place and Joseph Hume, owing to the negligence of the governing classes, whose representatives failed to notice what was occurring; but it was maintained in face of the attacks of 1825 partly at least by the vigilance of the unions themselves, which were quick to take advantage of the liberty accorded to them in the previous year.

Thirdly—and this cause is closely related to the last—the decade witnessed the development, not merely of a consciousness, but of a philosophy of economic exploitation. Ricardo published in 1817 his *Principles of Political Economy*, and his book became at once the standard

textbook of the rising capitalist class. Ricardo, working in the light of more recent economic developments on the foundations laid by Adam Smith and Malthus, equipped capitalism with a philosophy of distribution. But while Ricardo's book formed the basis of the classical economics of capitalism, it also served the working-class opponents of capitalism as a means of making precise, and raising to the status of an economic theory, their consciousness of exploitation. Ricardo, in common with Adam Smith and the whole of the economists who preceded him, recognised "labour" as the "source of value," and based the claim of "capital" to a share in the fruits of industry (a share determined by economic laws) on the conception of capital as "stored" or "accumulated" labour. The economists on the working-class side, notably Thomas Hodgskin and William Thompson, hastened to retort upon him that his very statement that labour was the source of value constituted an admission of the fact of exploitation. Capital might be "stored labour," or rather the stored fruit of labour; but value was created not by the mere storage of labour's fruits, but in the very act of labour, and to this act, and this act alone, could value be attributed. The creation of value called for the labour of both hand and brain, but the reward of industry was due solely to present labour—to labour in the act of creation.

The doctrine that all created wealth is properly due to the labourers who create it, and to them alone, is not, of course, found for the first time in Hodgskin and Thompson. In general terms it is found often enough in earlier writings of Cobbett and other Radical advocates. But it needed the work of Ricardo and the consolidation of capitalist economic theory to give to it the precision of an economic doctrine which it acquired in Thompson's *Principles of the Distribution of Wealth* (1824) and in Hodgskin's lectures of 1823, the essence of which was printed in 1825 under the title *Labour Defended*. These were the writings which took hold of the imagination of the more advanced sections among the workers, and equipped them, long before the days of Karl Marx, with a theory of economic exploitation practically identical with this part of the Marxian system. Hodgskin and Thompson appeared to justify scientifically the rebellion of Labour, and to throw the sanction of a philosophy of society round the instinctive beliefs of the workers, who found themselves exposed to the chill blasts of the new industrialism. Francis Place and other Radical working-class

leaders stuck to Bentham and Ricardo; the more active among the working men, for the most part, followed after the more attractive gospel of Thompson and Hodgskin.

Fourthly, during the decade between 1820 and 1830, the British workers were learning, not only their new or newly formulated theory of exploitation, but also the lessons of Robert Owen. Owen, without relaxing his efforts for factory reform, had by this time begun to think and speak in terms of a sudden and radical transformation of the social system. Advocacy of the foundation of co-operative communities, and attempts to put precept on this question into practice, formed one part of his enlarged activity, but the lesson which the workers were mainly learning from Owen was that of self-help through organisation and co-operative action. Owen distrusted politics, and visualised the necessary social change in terms primarily of economic transformation. The problem presented itself to his mind as that of substituting throughout society a co-operative regime for the system of competition and exploitation. Owenite societies sprung up in most of the larger towns, and for the next generation the great mass of the active working-class leaders graduated from the Owenite school. Owen, indeed, made his appeal, not to one class, but to all, and based it on the idea, not of the class struggle, but of rational and ethical principles applied to the ordering of the social system. But Owen's advocacy of co-operation—a co-operation which has little in common with the actual Co-operative Movements of to-day—was readily susceptible of interpretation in terms of class action. His insistence on the need to substitute for capitalist competition and exploitation a system of co-operative production, under which the fruits of labour would belong to the "industrious classes," was at once interpreted by working men as an invitation to their trade unions to assume the control of production, and to replace the dualism of master and man by a system in which all workers by hand and brain would seek unity in the pursuit of a common aim, the production of wealth for use and its distribution on a principle of equitable and mutual exchange. Nor did Owen at all repudiate this interpretation of his theory. He embraced it, and urged the trade unions to supplant capitalism by the institution of a system of co-operative production. It was under Owen's direct guidance that the Builders' Union framed the rules of its Grand National Guild of Builders and set to work to erect its own Guildhall. And it was under his influence

that union after union adopted the object of stimulating co-operative action by its members in the production of wealth.

If Hodgskin and Thompson furnished the workers with their theoretical case against capitalism, the justification by the theory of economic exploitation of their claim to a full participation in the fruits of industry, Owen equipped them with an ideal and a plan of "national regeneration." Owen, Thompson, and Hodgskin, and the host of lesser writers of their schools, together furnished the working class both with a philosophy and with a programme of action, and, in some degree at least, of united action in pursuit of a common purpose. It does not matter that the men who made this movement differed profoundly on certain points—that Hodgskin was an anarchist individualist and a disciple of Godwin, while Owen and Thompson were the pioneers of Co-operative Socialism. The active spirits among the workers selected from their doctrines what they wanted and left the rest.

It would not, however, be true to represent the working-class leaders in 1832 as wholly united on questions of policy and method. I have mentioned the importance of the struggle for political reform in moulding the consciousness of the workers. Hodgskin, Owen, and Thompson were alike in thinking of the social problem in categories rather of economic than of political change; but the reform agitation left behind it a considerable body of working-class opinion intent on the further pursuit of the political method. The Whig Reform Act of 1832 completed the cleavage between the middle-class and the working-class politicians, but the cleavage had already become apparent in 1830, when the National Union of the Working Classes began its distinctively proletarian agitation for complete political democracy. The National Union was the direct forerunner of the London Working Men's Association of 1836, out of which the Charter and the Chartist Movement developed. There were, in 1830 and 1832, men who urged the impossibility of changing the economic system without political power, and regarded the working-class conquest of political power, through adult suffrage, as the necessary condition of economic revolution. Swept to some extent into the great industrial movement of 1832-34, they maintained, in *The Poor Man's Guardian* and in other journals, their thesis in support of the preponderance of the political factor.

But, for the time, working-class Owenism was at the helm, and the

first great attempt of the British proletariat to achieve emancipation was made in the field of industry. The Spinners' Union from 1829, the short-lived National Association for the Protection of Labour in 1830, the Potters' Union in 1831, the Builders' Union from 1832, the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union in 1833 and 1834, were the first to mobilise the forces of the workers for independent action. Their assault was broken, and the next great assault was made by Chartism in the political field. It too failed, and in the 'forties the British workers settled down to the slow process of consolidating their forces and building up, through the trade union and co-operative movements, stable forms of organisation which might at least afford some immediate protection and succour, at the cost of jettisoning wider and more constructive aims. The story of these developments cannot be told here, for I am concerned in this article to explain only how the foundations of the working-class movement were laid and not to describe either its limited successes or the grander failures of its most ambitious attacks. These demand separate treatment; it is enough now to point the underlying conditions which required to be satisfied before there could be, in any real sense, a working-class movement at all. There were needed, first and foremost, the Industrial Revolution, the adoption of large-scale production and the factory system, by which, with the aid of the enclosure movement in agriculture, the proletariat itself was called into being; secondly, the training which the workers gained in their joint struggle with the rising middle class against the dormant power of the old governing class, the hereditary possessors of land. The repeal of the Combination Acts and the concession of a limited freedom of working-class organisation may not have been essential, for the workers might have succeeded in mobilising their forces even in face of complete legal prohibition. But the legalisation of trade unionism undoubtedly helped, and was an important factor in determining the direction and method which working-class action assumed in the eighteen thirties. Fourthly, there was needed absolutely a proletarian philosophy and an ideal. The sense of exploitation had to be developed into a theory of exploitation; and on the basis afforded by the realisation of the evils of capitalism had to be erected the faith in an alternative system of economic democracy and co-operative organisation. The theory of exploitation and the ideal of co-operation arose, no doubt, directly out of the material conditions of the productive system, and

could not have arisen unless these conditions had been present. For the *a priori* reasonings of Paine and Godwin, the positive experience of industrialism substituted doctrines based on the facts of capitalism, the antitheses to the theses of the classical economists. But the clear statement of these antitheses, the response of working-class theory to the practice of capitalism, was essential to the creation of the working-class movement. For if no living movement is created save on the basis of material conditions to which it is an appropriate response, equally none is created until the material stimulus has been answered in men's minds with an appropriate diagnosis and an appropriate call to action. In this case industrialism supplied the material stimulus, and between 1820 and 1830 came the diagnosis of the proletarian economists and the call to action of Robert Owen and his fellow pioneers of the gospel of Socialism and Co-operation.

# LABOUR SPIES INC. (MADE IN U.S.A.)

By HEBER BLANKENHORN

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**I**NDUSTRIAL espionage, begotten by unrestricted capital out of restricted labour organisation, has grown so in America that it ought soon to be promoted to a place among our special boasts. The world knows we have the biggest trees, the biggest trusts; lately we began to realise that we have, too, the biggest labour spy system or habit. Indeed, no international comparisons are possible. Espionage in Europe seems to be a prerogative of government. Ours is privately owned, pays taxes, does business like any other bright flower of individual initiative and private enterprise.

The tendency of American unions (not without parallels abroad) toward being craft cliques bore its part in begetting espionage. Not only did this leave outside the unions masses of workers to be the battenning ground of disorganising spies, but, within the unions, cliques, with their undemocratic practices, invited spying. When "getting" the official clique meant getting the union, employers were likely to avail themselves of the opportunity.

Spying, however, takes after its sire. Its manners are those of its paymaster. Like our trusts, the spy corporations have "branch offices in the most important cities." Their development is that of large-scale business enterprise. Their ethics are not derived from their victim—labour. Perhaps they reflect the true nature of unrestricted capitalism. The American beneficiaries of great capital have put hundreds of millions into "foundations" for popular education, scientific research, building schools and hospitals in China and elsewhere. Great capital (helped by small) also maintains a network of spies, of spy companies, of means for widely circulating spies' reports—the partners of "armed guards" (or private armies) and of professional strike-busters. The system or habit interlocks with arms of the Government. The black-list, evictions, abrogated civil rights, disrupted unions, wholesale repression, and casual murders are at the other end of hiring spies.



A reference should be interpolated to our geography—the 3,000 miles of America, the dis-united States, where a thing can spring to great size before millions of the people are even aware of its existence. You can get away with murder in a forty-eight room house easier than in a right little, tight little four-room cottage. To-day, in New York, I received two letters, one from our Pacific coast, one from England, both posted the same day, and each had come as fast as it could travel. The workers in our mines and mills are often from two to four days' journey away from the financial offices which control them and from allied groups of workers. Millions of the workers, moreover, are separated from each other by language, immigrant labour speaking forty-nine tongues.<sup>1</sup> Such conditions make for the dominance of whoever controls intercommunications. Special intelligence, including that from spies, may seem unusually necessary and be surprisingly useful. In such a country, new and developing, capitalist organisation of course gets the jump of labour organisation, and if the capitalists are like ours, very alert and very scarey, they can deal unbelievably ruthless blows. One of the weapons for bleeding or, if need be, disembowelling unions has been the spy companies.

Two studies, one intensive, the other extensive, have been made and they seem to be the merest beginning of unearthing the espionage. The first was by the Commission of Inquiry of the Inter-Church Movement, published in two volumes, *The Steel Strike of 1919* (1920) and *Public Opinion and the Steel Strike* (1921). The second was under the auspices of the Cabot Foundation, published<sup>2</sup> (1921) in a pamphlet, *The Labour Spy*, by Sidney Howard, and to be expanded in a forthcoming book. A little additional light came from the Senate investigation of the coal-mine strike in West Virginia and from an "expose" or two by the unions. The business of spying, like thieving or infanticide, seems to be really imperilled by mere publicity, but the spy concerns and their employers have successfully weathered this gale, keeping strict silence and quietly staving off Governmental investigation.

The salient facts are:—

Spies or "under cover men" (frequently strike breakers and gunmen as well) are used persistently by large non-union concerns, by smaller

<sup>1</sup> Actual classification in one steel mill.

<sup>2</sup> Also serially in *The New Republic*.

businesses trying to disrupt unions, and frequently by "union" employers trying to control (corrupt) the unions.

Two forms of organisation are characteristic: (1) Large industrial concerns maintain a spy system as part of the plant organisation; (2) Spy corporations, generally called "labour detective agencies," offer spies for hire. The latter are often called in by the trustified industries to help out their own espionage during strikes.

Spies among unorganised or newly organised workers aim to demoralise, break morale, blacklist leaders, start stampedes, or provoke violence; among established unions they aim to obtain office and mismanage or bankrupt the organisation.

The principal labour spy companies are Corporations Auxiliary Company, Sherman Service Inc., Mooney & Boland, Thiel, Pinkerton, Bergoff & Waddell, Burns, Baldwin-Felts, "R. J. Coach & Co., engineers, commercial, industrial, and financial." Under their own or disguised names, each of these concerns has many offices. Some of them detect crime also, but now they consider "there's more money in industry than there ever was in crime."

The size of their operations is shown by such facts as that Sherman Service paid a Federal income tax for 1918 of a quarter of a million dollars; the annual retainer to one agency, paid by a clothing corporation, was \$125,000; one spy broker bought a newspaper in a State capital (in order to maintain a strike which he had been hired to break); another bought newspaper space at \$1,000 a page, in a dozen papers simultaneously, to advertise "industrial harmonisation"; their clients include trusts like the American Woollen Company, with a hundred mills to be spied on. Howard's study says:—

The Pinkerton National Detective Agency carries on the industrial work of its founder through thirty-five branch offices. The machine guns of Baldwin-Felts fight the unions of Colorado and of West Virginia alternately. The Corporations Auxiliary Company, masquerading under a dozen different names, specialises at electing its agents to union office (as in Akron) and issues to its clients a bi-weekly bulletin of labour information gathered by under-cover methods in every State in the country. The Thiel Detective Service Company, very old and very well established, furnishes spies to factories from the smallest Paterson silk plant to the immense producing organisation of the Pierce Arrow Motor Car Company. William J. Burns maintains thirty-five branch offices, industrial and radical departments, and collects numerous thousands. Mr. R. J. Coach, of Cleveland, who "owns

every union in his town," will not admit that he has ever failed to crush a union, and has, in at least one case, put 10,000 strike-breakers into a single strike. Bergoff Brothers and Waddell, of New York, claim that they can raise the same number in seventy-two hours.

All this is outside the "secret service" departments of the great railroads, the U.S. Steel Corporation, the Western Union Telegraph, the copper and coal companies, &c., &c., and the employers' associations, such as the National Manufacturers' Association, the National Founders' Association, the National Erectors' Association, &c., &c. The spy system works through Chambers of Commerce, banking associations, and even through employers' research organisations behind a scientific camouflage, such as the National Industrial Conference Board.

It comes natural; our capitalist organisations take to spying like ducks to water; big business men take in spy reports as you would a newspaper. Their integrity of soul must be made of different stuff from the run of humanity. During the shallow senatorial investigation of the steel strike, one question on espionage was put to Judge Gary, the venerable head of the steel trust:—

SENATOR WALSH: Have you a secret-service organisation among your employees at any of the subsidiary plants of the Steel Corporation?

MR. GARY: Well, Senator, I cannot be very specific about that; but I am quite sure that at times some of our people have used secret-service men to ascertain facts and conditions. That is intended to be at least a frank answer, and perhaps it is over frank.

In those very weeks, labour spy reports were going through Mr. Gary's hands and being transmitted by him to other capitalists.

The latter fact was brought out in the investigation by the Inter-church Commission. That body, composed of representatives of the principal Protestant denominations, and headed by the fearless and scholarly Bishop Francis J. McConnell, had not intended<sup>3</sup> to include espionage in its inquiry into the steel strike. An investigator, while aiding the commission in its investigation of charges of violence and radicalism among the strikers, requested evidence on these matters from an "independent" steel concern, the ——— Company, at Monessen, Pa., near Pittsburgh. The general manager and the superintendent of the concern professed to have plenty of such evidence, and, pushing a button, ordered, "Bring in the labour file." The file, the repository of this concern's labour intelligence and the basis of

<sup>3</sup> The writer was secretary to the Commission.

its labour policy, freely offered into the investigator's hands, turned out to contain some 600 reports by under-cover men (spies), together with black-lists, letters to and from other strike-bound steel companies in Monessen and to the Federal Government, and contracts with "labour detective agencies." The steel company heads freely discussed the file's contents with the somewhat surprised investigator, told him to take it along and copy what he desired, and later introduced him to the officers of one of the detective agencies which furnished the spies.

The investigator therefore was assigned to the study of espionage, not because it was sensational, but because steel companies regarded it as customary.

The Monessen file was analysed, the investigation was extended to other towns in the Pittsburgh region, and then to the Chicago-Gary district; ramifications leading to Ohio, Washington, and New York were followed, and data collected, including original documents from the spy-strike-breaking companies, interviews with the managers of two spy firms, affidavits, and court documents.

The Commission's second volume says:—

These are not "revelations"; these are the facts thinly hid in steel towns. Steel workmen in scores of towns know the spying exists, but are too accustomed to it to try hard to find who the spies are.

Collating these data with others in its possession the Commission in its *Report on the Steel Strike* (pp. 18, 22-29, 120, 209, 211-235) published its findings: that the existence of widespread well-financed privately incorporated spy concerns constitutes an integral part of industrial corporations' policy of "not dealing with Labour unions"; that their "operatives," inside the plants or inside the unions or outside both, during that strike, spied, secretly denounced, engineered raids and arrests, and incited to riot. "It was a customary inevitable part of the anti-union alternative." The labour detectives "bled both sides; and the Federal Government files contained their patriotic reports." The Commission examined the relations between espionage and the suppression of civil liberties and Federal Governmental action; noted how even bishops were dogged by spies.

The Commission deemed the facts on spying to be "a typical spadeful out of the subsoil of business enterprise."<sup>4</sup>

The spy network enveloped the Commission and got badly torn in the process. The church investigation was a new phenomenon to the steel magnates in the east, and "steps were taken" of a familiar

<sup>4</sup> *Public Opinion and the Steel Strike*, p. 4.

sort to feather-bed its impact—quiet warnings, social influences, professed willingness to supply facts coupled with “inability” to produce them. The Commission, however, marched right ahead into the distant steel towns. Soon business men, who were friendly to the Commission and sick of the spy business, began showing to the clergymen copies of a spy report on them—allegations that the clergymen were really “reds” and their investigators were “Bolsheviks.” This anonymous production was shortly circulating everywhere. The Commission records that when attempting to mediate the strike in conference with Mr. Gary, that gentleman insisted first on cross-examining them relative to the secret document:—

While he rang for his copy, one of the members of the Commission supplied another from his own coat pocket. No one at the conference offered any suggestion as to the origin of the report. Mr. Gary’s secretary said that their copy had been received in a plain envelope without signature. About the same date the interchurch investigator of under-cover men was sitting in the office of a steel company in Monessen, and at the request of the manager of the concern was opening recently mailed plain envelopes and taking out unsigned spy reports. The manager explained that this was an operative’s usual method of reporting.

Later, in reply to a letter from the interchurch officials asking for information concerning the origin of the report, Mr. Gary wrote that he knew nothing about it, and was surprised that inquiries should be addressed to him concerning a document which he had shown to the commission “in confidence.” The report was dated November 12, two days after the Commission’s first interview with Mr. Gary.

Then the false document began appearing in privately circulated official bulletins of manufacturers’ associations. The Interchurch forced apologies from some of the publishers, but the good work went on.

Document No. 2, by another spy, with new (and equally absurd) allegations about the Commission, began coursing the country. This time the spy worked under the cloak of the National Civic Federation, an institution which includes in its membership men like Judge A. B. Parker (once presidential candidate) and Samuel Gompers. The Federation’s secretary, Ralph M. Easley, first sent the document to Mr. Gary with a letter advising that such clergymen be “kicked out of their positions,” and reminding him that the Interchurch Movement was collecting millions of dollars for church work, including industrial investigations. Easley denied the letter for weeks, but finally owned up.

Document No. 3, from the same system and circulated the same

way, rehashing the same falsehoods, came to light some months later. But the purpose had been accomplished. The co-operative financing of the churches managed by the Interchurch Movement, under which \$176,000,000 had been subscribed, was wrecked. The meeting of the Interchurch executive which finally adopted the voluminous steel report also passed the resolution that the movement be disbanded.

Three documents emanating from an industrial spy system or habit, therefore, were circulated with the objects of damaging the Steel Report and the Interchurch Movement. Others were heard of, but only these documents and their histories were furnished to the Interchurch. In addition the files of a high official in the Interchurch offices were ransacked.

The methods used against the church were methods used in opposition to working men. The sweep of the industrial spy system was simply extended to cover the "intruding" church. The same sort of documents were used—and in one case apparently the same man—to report on clergymen as on labour in steel towns.<sup>5</sup>

A year afterwards the documents were used by steel manufacturers at a Senate hearing to block distribution of the Interchurch reports; a last appearance, as they were laughed out of court. "Manufacturers were caught in that plight because their industrial spy system got out of their control."

A college professor or two has been known to have worked for the labour detectives, perhaps in some cases actually taken in by their impressive propaganda as "industrial harmonisers" and "production efficiency experts." The world war developed propaganda to a new status, and the intelligence departments of industrial warfare rely on propaganda, sometimes by leaflets, oftener by rumour or whisper. The great bulk of the spies, of course, act like workmen, dress like workmen, take plant jobs alongside workmen, and strive, if there is a union involved, to win the union offices. Spies are Anglo-Saxon, Polish, Italian, Russian, Serb, Lithuanian, &c., according to the bulk of workers they are set to influence. They are radical or conservative at will or at order. I have read hundreds of their reports, a few accurate and crafty, the most illiterate and banal, and as a "literature" so empty both of fact and of significance that one continually wonders how a sensible employer can pay good money for such results.

But there are results. The spy managers have a certain energy. Their tools are part of a repressive system too often quite successful.

<sup>5</sup> *Public Opinion and the Steel Strike*, pp. 81-82.

The spy reports during the steel strike advised, not so much sluggers, as "influence" to break up union meetings. "Why do the local authorities permit these regular meetings to be held in Charleroi?" reports a spy in Monessen, concerning the only town in the Monongahela district where rights of assembly had not been abrogated. The wholesale suppression of civil rights rested on the spy army; arresting, raiding, and deporting on faked charges was wholesale. In one case in Chicago where a Sherman Service manager specifically instructed his spies to "stir up as much bad feeling as you can between the Serbians and Italians" the Government at last stepped in, arrested the spy managers, and indicted them for inciting to riot and murder. But in another quarter we traced some of the plant spy documents straight through the steel companies into the Department of Justice of the Federal Government. The alliance persists. The recently appointed head of the Government secret service is also head of a labour detective agency.

Confessions of spies are unreliable documents. But occasionally they can be checked up, and some reveal years of activity inside the unions, often as officers, some as high as president of a State labour federation. Stalling and misguiding the union, inciting factional fights, looting the treasuries—these are the spy officer's work. The spy companies' boasts of their control over unions frequently are false advertisements for the benefit of a prospective client, but recently several local explosions have left groups of spies naked. In Wheeling, West Va., one of the most trusted lieutenants of the steel strike organising committee died suddenly and his desk revealed his ten years' record as a hireling of the Corporations Auxiliary Company. People recalled then how the steel strike broke suddenly and mysteriously in Wheeling. His desk also named a number of other labour officers; they left home and family with speed.

In the autumn of 1919 the Corporations Auxiliary manager in Pittsburgh told the Interchurch investigator that "when the American Federation of Labour organiser goes to Akron, Ohio, he reports to our man." In November of 1920 (before this part of our report was published) the suspicious rank and file in Akron trapped ten in their unions as spies. "A 201," "M 205," "K 63," "W 47"—so these men were recorded in the books of the Corporations Auxiliary in Cleveland, while in Akron they were secretaries and business agents

of the unions. Two were the highest officers in the city's Central Labour Union, and one had been a candidate for Councilman in the city government.

A sickening business. In a land of milk and honey, if capital keeps the kine and bees, there will be drippings for spies. System does it. Men can be found willing to make a business of debauching labour. Given the cash, they will make it a large-scale business. It's part of the big game, the game of big business. Pull a wire here and get a court to act; pull one there and get a police order; telephone to a bishop or dine an editor—it's results we want. Hire the right fellow and the union bolts on strike when *you* want it, and goes back to work when you are ready. In a wide land many employers and unions know no experience of spies and are sceptical of their existence; so much the easier for espionage to flourish in many other businesses. It's like the hook-worm disease; no one knows its actual extent or how great sections of the labouring population are lethargic or anæmic because of it.

Only one thing seems clear. Where capital gets the upper hand securely enough, its arrogance shows in perversions revolting to human nature, but not to its own.



# THE CO-OPERATIVE COMMISSARIAT OF LABOUR

By JOHN JAGGER

IT was startling to note how completely the Co-operative Congress of 1922 adopted the Sinn Fein motto, "Ourselves Alone." Miss Llewellyn Davies, in her presidential address, made the comprehensive claim that co-operation could secure the transition from capitalism to the socialist commonwealth. Speaking of the discovery of dividend on purchase and control by the purchasers, she said: "These two ideas mark out co-operation as nothing less than a revolution, so fundamental, vital, and transforming is the change it is effecting in the economic struggle of society. . . . The rallying cry for the whole Labour world is the replacement of capitalism by a democracy producing for use. It is such a non-capitalist society that co-operators are actually creating."

The delegates to the Congress underlined this claim by voting emphatically in favour of a co-operative education, with a separate co-operative college; a co-operative press, with a daily newspaper; and an independent co-operative political party. A large cartoon in the *Co-operative News* announced that "Brighton Congress decides that the Co-operative Movement must pull down this veil (*i.e.* before Truth) in its own way, that the world may see what is behind."

This separate movement is evidently increasing its hold. The resolution for joint working with the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress to establish a powerful people's press, representative of all sections of the Labour and Co-operative Movements, was rejected by a majority of 788, although at the 1921 Congress a motion for an alliance between the Co-operative and Labour Parties was only lost by four votes. No question of such an alliance was raised by the Co-operative Party this year.

The validity and implications of the claim of the Co-operative Movement to be the sole vehicle of the Social Revolution is worth consideration. Can co-operation replace the capitalist system by peaceful evolution?

The Co-operative Movement has achieved remarkable success in a comparatively short time. With more than four million members, mostly heads of families, it supplies the needs of twelve million people, or nearly one-third of the population of the United Kingdom. At the close of 1920 the organisations affiliated to the Co-operative Union (including retail and wholesale societies and various supply associations) possessed in loan and share capital over £114,000,000, and had an annual trade turnover of about £400,000,000, with a yearly surplus of £27,000,000. Although these figures have been somewhat reduced by the slump, they represent a vast organisation and very solid achievement.

This success has been attained in a limited and well-defined sphere. The Co-operative Movement in Britain is predominantly a distributing agency. Where it has ventured into production it has been in those industries which have grown out of the home and the shop—the making of biscuits, jam, sweets, soap, clothing, boots, margarine, butter, &c.

The movement has only one small colliery, always a millstone, which managed to lose 10d. per pound of invested capital even in 1918, and 3s. 3d. in the pound in 1920.

Now, in the distributive trade very small capital is needed to start. There are large stores in existence whose proprietors boast that they started as pedlars and built up their business in the space of a single lifetime.

In its productive activities the Co-operative Movement has been most successful in the “sweated” trades. Superior organisation, more capital, better wages, and more up-to-date factories have enabled it to compete successfully with the firms in these “domestic” industries.

In the better organised industries co-operators had most success where they started earliest. The C.W.S. bought its first boot factories in 1873-4, and started manufacture before the great recent developments. Because it was able to obtain control of raw material, the C.W.S. is now the only serious rival to Lever Brothers left in the British soap trade.

When co-operation tries to enter the main industries it finds capitalism everywhere firmly entrenched at the source of supply. The C.W.S. experiment in coal-getting has failed, not because it is co-operative, but because it is so pathetically small. For engineering and shipbuilding, where co-operation has hardly ventured, coal and iron are needed, but the interlocking directorates form an impregnable monopoly of capitalist interests.

How does the Co-operative Movement propose to secure control of the staple industries—iron and coal, railways, woollen, and cotton? Will it buy them out? In 1914 the total paid-up capital of the registered companies of the United Kingdom was forty times the total co-operative capital. This lead has been greatly increased, because the non-profit-making co-operative societies distributed their surplus while capitalism was building huge reserves. As a consequence, most co-operative concerns have been badly hit by the slump and are drawing dangerously on their capital.

Even if, by any miracle, the Co-operative Movement could secure sufficient capital to buy up any of these main industries, or even to secure a controlling interest, would the capitalists sell to the non-profiters? Capitalism is fully alive to the danger of co-operative growth, and uses every means at its disposal to check that progress.

To dislodge capitalism from these great seats of economic power, stronger forces than the peaceful commercial penetration of the Co-operative Movement will be needed. The securing of the communal ownership of the great national resources is a task that will test every ounce of the strength of the working class. Before success can be thought of, all the organisations of that class, political, industrial, and co-operative, the workers organised as citizens, as producers, and as consumers, will have to learn to act together under a general staff, with a common policy.

In such a joint organisation, the rôle of the Co-operative Movement would be that of commissariat to the Labour forces, for the main weapon of the employer is his power to starve the strikers and their families into surrender. Considering how vital is this factor in every labour dispute, it is surprising to find how little thought seems to have been given to the possibilities of such joint relationship. Some years ago Mr. Fred Bramley outlined a scheme which suggested certain lines of common action when the trade unions were engaged in a big fight, but nothing further was done. In various strikes individual societies have supplied their members with goods under guarantee of repayment by the union concerned, though the stores have not had a monopoly in this respect, similar arrangements having been made with local dealers. The co-operative loans and credits to the miners in this year's dispute amounted to £605,719.

The first organised effort on any considerable scale was the sending of the food ships to Dublin by the C.W.S., to aid the Irish Transport Workers' Union in their great fight with the Dublin United Tramways Company in 1911. A new field of joint activity was revealed during the railway strike of 1920. The interruption of the postal services made it impossible to get the strike pay through to the various districts, and so arrangements were made between the N.U.R. and the C.W.S. Bank for the money to be paid to the local secretaries through the retail societies.

Joint action between the two national movements was first attempted at the time of the threatened Triple Alliance Strike in 1921. This dispute was big enough to force the question of the food supply of the workers upon the serious attention of their leaders. As a result, a sub-committee consisting of the three partners to the alliance, with the Co-operative Union and the N.U.D.A.W. (late Amalgamated Union of Co-operative Employees), drew up a scheme by which the food resources of the Co-operative Movement, as well as what additional supplies could be secured in the various localities, would be held in trust for the workers and co-operative members, and distributed by the local strike committees through the agency of the Co-operative Society.

This very hurriedly improvised machinery was not, of course, tested, and with the passing of the crisis the scheme was dropped. Presumably, should a similar situation arise, there would be another attempt to meet the need that would be at once felt for the control of available food supplies, when the earlier plans might prove useful.

The possibility of a united front against the continued attacks on the standard of life of the workers is being again discussed. A widespread fight would now have to take place under much less favourable conditions as regards the resources of the workers, and so the supply of food would be an urgent matter. The whole question of the practical assistance that could be rendered by the Co-operative Movement ought to be carefully worked out, not in the heat of a conflict, but well beforehand, so that there would be time to consider the available resources and the best means of mobilising them.

The population of the United Kingdom is about forty-six million souls. Figures compiled by the Ministry of Food for the rationing schemes showed that twelve millions of these get their food supplies from 5,000 co-operative shops, seven millions from 10,000 multiple

shops, five millions are supplied by ordinary grocers, and twenty-two millions (including the very poorest of the population) by 70,000 small general shops. The average number of persons supplied by each co-operative store is 2,400. How far could the resources of these 5,000 shops maintain the strikers in a big fight which paralysed food transport? What are the wholesale supplies behind them? How many motors would be available? What are the supplies of co-operative petrol? How could these resources be augmented previous to such a strike taking place?

These are the kind of inquiries that the Government made to private businesses previous to the Triple Alliance dispute. They could thus work with some light, while the labour staff was hastily improvising in the dark. Could the most conservative labour leader object to his side having knowledge of its own resources before a fight commenced?

The questions that would at once arise would be: "Can you carry the co-operators with you? Would the men in control of the Co-operative Movement be willing to assist in schemes of this nature?" As 90 per cent. of co-operators are drawn from the working class, the rank and file of the two movements are largely co-extensive. The co-operative leaders are a different set of much the same type of people as are in control of the Labour Movement. But gods are always jealous gods, and prefer separate altars.

The growing separation of the two movements manifested at the Co-operative Congress is not a temporary or a chance thing. Of late years the Co-operative Movement has given undue weight to the non-Labour elements in its ranks, a small but increasingly influential and articulate section. As employers, co-operative committees are adopting a definitely anti-Labour policy. They continually express their conviction that the Co-operative Movement is a consumers' movement, and that the workers therein can only receive the advantages of co-operation in so far as they are purchasers. As producers they are to be treated exactly as the employees of capitalism.

The movement is fighting hard for its right to pay only such rates as can be enforced on its competitors. On Trade Boards its representatives have voted steadily with capitalist employers against rates proposed by the workers' side, even when those rates have been less than the movement has been forced by trade union action to pay. In spite of a few employees on one or two boards of management,

co-operative employers have set their faces firmly against the modern ideals of industrial democracy. The general tendency is well expressed by the following extract from a letter sent by the C.W.S. to a union which had requested an interview to discuss certain grievances:—

My directors, who have carefully considered the various complaints as per your letter, direct me to inform you that they will not, under any consideration, entertain or invite any form of discussion which might suggest to the workers that they could in any way dictate or interfere with the control and management of the works.

If co-operative directors take this attitude in their own society, it is obvious that those delegates to Congress who are committee men will vote against alliances with the Labour Movement.

It will be argued that these directors are democratically elected. That is partly true. In so far as it is true there lies the hope of change. The local committees are elected by the rank and file. Many trade unionists sit thereon, and many more could be elected if keen unionists paid as much attention to the quarterly meetings of the society as they do to the meetings of their trade union or local Labour Party. There has been the tradition among advanced union men that the co-operative committee was not worth the time it required. As that is being broken down by events, more of this type are seeking election. But under present conditions none but the most moderate men, generally of advanced middle age, stand the slightest chance of being elected either to the C.W.S. Board or to the scarcely less important United Board of the Co-operative Union, because these are not nominated or elected directly by the rank and file.


If the Labour and Co-operative Movements are to work together successfully, men and women must be elected to the co-operative boards who realise the necessity for this interaction. Further, a Labour policy must be elaborated by which the co-operative employees can be educated to realise that they are co-workers in a great cause, and that at a time of crisis it will be their duty to serve those who are fighting the battle.

It was to remove the co-operator as employer from the maelstrom of the labour war that a separate union for co-operative employees was formed in 1891. Pressure from co-operative committees forced this union to bring the co-operative worker into line with the employee of private capitalism, with the odd result that co-operators are penalised

when only capitalists are being fought, instead of deriving benefit from such struggles. At a crisis, if there were attempts on the part of some reactionary committee men to sabotage plans that had been jointly agreed to by the national movements, the organised co-operative employees could quietly take control of supplies and work under the direction of the local Councils of Action.

In the long run, however, everything depends on the public opinion in favour of joint working that can be created within the working class. We speak of Labour and Co-operation as two movements. Actually they are two expressions of the same people. The "woman with the basket" cannot be divorced from the man with the spade. Miss Llewellyn Davies herself indicated this in her presidential address, even while stressing so emphatically the all-importance of co-operation for the emancipation of the workers, when she said:—

If trade unionists and co-operators would together definitely consider this whole question in all its bearings, including the machinery for a partnership and the methods of increasing efficiency so as to hasten the conquest of capitalism by co-operation, we should do much to secure the right mental atmosphere for a rational solution.







# AN INQUIRY INTO DICTATORSHIP—III

By MAX BEER

*[In the preceding sections of this Inquiry, the germs of the conception of social or proletarian dictatorship have been traced in the first French revolutionary period. In the succeeding section, Max Beer comes to the formulation of the theory of proletarian dictatorship by Karl Marx. An intervening section dealing with the development of the revolutionary secret societies in France up to 1848, and particularly with Blanqui and his ideas, has been omitted in the present serial publication, but will be included in full in the book version of the Inquiry which will subsequently be issued. The present section brings together in review Marx's various statements on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat; the longest and most important of these, his address to the Communist League in 1850, which is still little known in this country, is held over for reprinting in full in the next issue.—ED.]*

## V

### KARL MARX AND THE PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP

#### § 1.—*French Influences*

MARX came to Paris late in the autumn of 1843. He brought with him a well-trained intellect, philosophical and literary knowledge, and a strong desire to study socialism, of which he had heard during his journalistic career at Cologne in 1842-43. The best place to study it was, at that time, Paris. For, since 1830, France was teeming with social criticism, and in 1843 the Socialist Movement had many writers and several periodicals. "For some time," observes a contemporary French author who wrote in the years 1840-43, "there has arisen a concert of recriminations and anathemas against society. Every day a new champion appears in the arena to challenge the existing order; now in the name of literature, now in the name of science. The detractors of our social system abound, and they raise such a noise that few writers dare to defend it."<sup>1</sup>

This movement of social criticism had, theoretically, the following sources: Saint Simonism, Fourierism, the writings of Simonde de Sismondi and Pierre Proudhon, besides the Bible and primitive Christianity, Plato, and Sir Thomas More. It was indeed a large

<sup>1</sup> Louis Reybaud, *Etudes sur les réformateurs ou socialistes modernes*, Vol. II, p. 1. Paris, 1843.

literary movement, but mainly of intellectuals; and it drew into its vortex even John Stuart Mill.

The Fourierists, with their chief literary man, Victor Considérant, dealt particularly with the antagonisms and dispersal of interests of the various social strata, the ruinous effects of free competition upon the lower middle classes and working people, the scientific achievements of this stage of society, the concentration of properties, and the imminent rise of a feudalism of capital.<sup>2</sup> The Saint Simonians dealt with the historical development, the critical and organic stages of human society, the changes of the rights of property, the transitory nature of property. They demanded an organisation of labour to be effected by a centralised association of bankers for the benefit of all who took part in the production, according to their capacity and the work done.<sup>3</sup> Saint Simon himself, a few moments before his death (1825), expressed the hope that a Labour Party would soon be founded.<sup>4</sup>

Simonde de Sismondi, a Swiss writer, and a younger contemporary of David Ricardo, with whom he had some intercourse, published a severe examination of the factory system, showing that Liberal economics, while they resulted in an augmentation of wealth, totally neglected distribution, and this neglect gave rise to pauperism and commercial crises, which threatened to divide society into a handful of magnates and multitudes of hungry slaves. The mechanical inventions might even lead to a concentration of the means of production, which would allow a few people to produce goods for a whole nation deprived of any effective demand.<sup>5</sup>

Proudhon, in 1840, made a great stir by his "*Qu'est-ce que la propriété?*" criticising the whole institution of property and demonstrating that its root was robbery. *La propriété, c'est le vol.* The possessors of the land could not have got it by virtue of the social compact, since that compact was entered into for the purpose of protecting equality, while we now saw great inequalities; neither could it rest on labour, since the soil was a free gift of nature. The same argument applied to movable wealth, which could not be the result of the labour of the owners, since the labourers were poor. Property was therefore the result of force, violence, and injustice.

Into this atmosphere came Marx in 1843. He eagerly studied all those movements. Their traces are distinct enough in the Communist

<sup>2</sup> Victor Considérant, *Destinée sociale*, Paris, 1837, Vol. I, pp. 189-221.

<sup>3</sup> Saint-Amand Bazard, *Exposition de la doctrine Saint-Simonienne*, pp. 228-281. Vol. 41 of *Œuvres de Saint-Simon et d'Enfantin*. Paris, 1877.

<sup>4</sup> Louis Reybaud, *Études sur les réformateurs*, Vol. I, p. 63, Paris, 1840; also Charles Pécqueur, *Théorie nouvelle d'économie sociale*, p. v, Paris, 1842.

<sup>5</sup> S. de Sismondi, *Nouveaux principes d'économie politique*, 1919; *Études sur l'économie politique*, 1837.

Manifesto. But none of their leaders was able to offer any way out to a better future. Indeed, the social critics like Sismondi offered no remedy whatever; the Fourierists deplored the class division, civil wars, and revolutionary upheavals, feared revolutionary upheavals, and regarded the proletariat as the helpless victims of a stage of society, the inner forces of which would act through the industrial magnates and make them pass from competition to association. Considérant dedicated his *Destinée sociale* to King Louis Philippe, "the chief of the Government and the largest proprietor of France." The Saint Simonians saw in the financiers the regenerators of society. Proudhon kept his measures of salvation a secret to himself; he had not yet come out with his free credit bank. All those writers, to whom may be added Louis Blanc, who in 1839 and 1841 published his *Organisation du travail*, abhorred revolution, and regarded themselves as advocates of "pacific evolution"—the very term is theirs.

Besides the theorists, Marx studied the practical movement of the proletariat: the traditions of the National Convention, of Robespierre and Babeuf, the recent experiences of the Blanquist organisations, which kept alive the embers of the revolutionary communist fire among the *élite* of the Parisian proletariat. Marx, in the Communist Manifesto, mentions the Babeuf conspiracy, paying honour to its memory. And in another place he speaks very highly of the *société des saisons*.<sup>6</sup> He regards it as a thoroughly proletarian and communist secret organisation which ought not to be confused with those middle-class republican conspiracies that occurred after 1820, the latter having been directed by professional conspirators, the alchemists of revolution, whose business it was to overthrow the Government by a *coup-de-main*, while the "saisons" had for their mission the organisation and education of the revolutionary elements of the proletariat, to imbue them with communism, and enable them to act as leaders of the masses in times of revolution. Marx even puts the *société des saisons* on the same level as his own Communist League, maintaining that both were the natural growth of the soil of capitalism.<sup>7</sup>

In the work of Buonarotti and Blanqui, as well as among the revolutionary proletariat and their organisations, Marx found revolutionary communism and the forces of negation which were to destroy the old and to build the new. He then went to work to sift his material and to lay the foundation of his system.

How did he do it? How did he reconcile the elements of evolution and revolution?

<sup>6</sup> *Literarischer Nachlass von Marx und Engels*, edited by Mehring, Vol. II, pp. 428, 432, Stuttgart, 1902.

<sup>7</sup> *Neue Zeit* (periodical edited by Kautsky, Stuttgart), *Ergänzungsheft* 12, Letters to Freilegrath.

## § 2.—*Evolution and Revolution*

Marx sifted, co-ordinated, and systematised his evolutionary and revolutionary material by means of a philosophical generalisation learnt at the school of Hegel. The evolutionary material he found in the economics of Western Europe and in Saint Simonism, Fourierism, &c.; the revolutionary forces he found among the proletariat and their leaders, from the French Revolution to 1844. By virtue of his philosophical generalisations, social history proceeded by the three stages of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, or by the struggle of the antagonistic forces, in which the old positive is dissolved by the negative, the whole process resulting in a lifting of civilisation to a higher plane.

The conflict of the antagonistic elements must be developed and brought to a head by critical reason. This is the mission of the revolutionary intellect and volition. The negative personal forces must be inspired with consciousness of their struggle, of their object, of their aims and ends. This task implies, on the one hand, research, knowledge of the essentials of social life, of its forces, operations, and tendencies; and on the other hand, education and organisation of those elements which form the negation, finally bringing them into action.

Knowledge and action. Scientific research into the evolutionary process; mobilisation of the forces antagonistic to the old positive-revolutionary action.

This was the method of Marx, forged in the years after his arrival in Paris. It was later strengthened by his studies of the English industrial revolution, Chartism, and general politics. The method is evolution through revolution. Social progression by means of the class struggle. Without revolutionary action the evolutionary process of the economic foundation of society might result in a deadlock, leading to stagnation and decay.

Whenever we read a book of Marx we must first find out whether it is devoted to scientific research, to economic development, analysis of capitalism, production and exchange, or whether it deals with the action of the proletariat. The economic process is the evolutionary material; the socialist action of the proletariat and its communist leaders is revolutionary transformation.

In the Communist Manifesto the proletariat is the main subject. Therefore revolutionary factors prevail. Marx appears there as the philosopher of revolution.

In *Capital* it is modern industry which forms the main subject. The evolutionary factors are in the forefront of his disquisitions. Marx appears there as the analyst of the economic development.

In retracing our steps from the Communist Manifesto back to the Fourierists and Saint Simonians, to whom Marx is undoubtedly

indebted, we perceive at once the distance which socialism had traversed in those four or five years from 1843 to 1847-48. It has progressed from the Saint Simonian financiers and the Fourierist proprietors and woe-begone revolutionary croakers to the theories concerning the class struggle, the economic interpretation of history, and the mission of the proletariat as the revolutionary and socialist class.

### § 3.—*The Communist League*

Like the French secret societies, the German secret societies in Paris progressed from purely political and national to communist aims. German workmen and democrats who, from about 1830 onwards, were struggling for a free Germany, had to leave their native country and to carry on their propaganda either from Switzerland or Paris. In the latter town, which had gained particular attraction for revolutionists since the July revolution of 1830, the German refugees formed at first "Societies of the Friends of Germany," after the model of the "Amis du peuple"; then a "Society of the Banished," from which issued the "Society of the Just" (1836). This society was gradually turned into a communist organisation, some members of which belonged also to the *société des familles* and, later, to Blanqui's *société des saisons*. Here they learned the technique of the revolutionary dictatorship, and became familiar with Buonarroti's book. After the defeat of Blanqui in 1839, the German communists settled in London, where they joined the physical force wing of the Chartist Movement, or carried on their propaganda among the German workmen in London, and, through correspondence and missionaries, among the German refugees in Brussels, Paris, Hamburg, Berlin, Breslau, &c. At the end of 1846 they were advanced enough to learn of the work of Marx in Paris and Brussels, and they sent a delegation asking him to take the lead of the movement and attend their congress which was to take place in the summer of 1847. Marx could not come to London at that time, but a few months later (on November 21, 1847) he arrived in London, spoke at a public meeting of the Fraternal Democrats (Chartists), and then repaired to the Second Congress of the German League of the Just, which at that time was already known as the Communist League. At that congress he was commissioned to write a communist programme, and he wrote the Communist Manifesto. Marx is also the author of the preamble to the rules of the Communist League, which run as follows:—

#### THE RULES OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE, DECEMBER 8, 1847

##### *Proletarians of all Countries, Unite!*

(1) The object of the League is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the proletariat, the abolition of the old bourgeois society which is based

on class antagonisms, and the establishment of a new society without classes and without private property.

(2) The conditions of membership are:—

- (a) Revolutionary energy and zeal in propaganda;
- (b) Adherence to communism;
- (c) Non-participation in anti-communist, political, or national societies, and notice to the proper Party authority of participation in any other society.

Then followed the usual provisions concerning the enrolment of members, payment of dues, organisation, &c.

After the revolution of 1848, the Communist League removed its headquarters to Cologne and adopted the following revised rules (December, 1850):—

(1) The object of the Communist League is the destruction of the old society by means of propaganda and the political struggle, in order to effect the mental, political, and economic emancipation of the proletariat and to carry through the communist revolution. The League represents in the various stages of development through which the proletarian struggle has to pass the interests of the whole movement. It always seeks to rally round itself and to organise all revolutionary forces of the proletariat. It is secret and indissoluble until the proletarian revolution has achieved its object.

(2) The conditions of membership are:—

- (a) Freedom from all religious ties; withdrawal from ecclesiastical associations.
- (b) Insight into the conditions, development, and ulterior aims of the proletarian movement.
- (c) Abstention from all associations and partial movements whose objects are inimical or destructive to the object of the League.
- (d) Capacity and zeal in propaganda, unflinching fidelity to our convictions, revolutionary energy.
- (e) Strict secrecy in all League matters . . .

Up to the middle of 1850, George Julian Harney and Ernest Jones, the Chartist leaders, were members of the Communist League.

## § 4.—*The Revolution of 1848 and Dictatorship*

Less than a month after the outbreak of the February revolution in Paris, the various German States rose against their emperor, kings, and princes, at first in Vienna, then in Berlin, and in the smaller principalities. As we know, Marx was at that time in Paris; there he organised the German workmen in the Communist League and sent them over the frontier to take part in the German revolution. By the end of April, after having come into contact with the leaders of the French Socialist Movement, he and Engels left for Cologne, where the advanced elements of the population were on the point of publishing a democratic daily paper. They had collected some funds and soon handed over the paper to Marx. It was the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which became the most advanced banner of the German revolution.

In Berlin the revolution had broken out on March 18, whereupon

the leaders of the middle class entered the Government of Prussia, while the German professors, scholars, writers, and Liberal leaders were elected by the people to the Constituent Assembly at Frankfort-on-the-Main to draft a free constitution for the empire. All went well until the French proletariat was crushed—about the end of June. With this defeat, the revolution in France and Germany was defeated. The militarists, royalists, and, generally, all reactionary classes recovered from the surprise of February and March and gradually gained the upper hand. By the middle of 1849 all the achievements of 1848 were lost. The organs of the revolution were suppressed, among them the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Marx, after having undergone two Press trials before the Cologne courts, was sent by the League to Paris, where he was threatened with banishment to Morbihan; he then left for London, where he settled in the autumn of 1849.

In London he founded the *Neue Rheinische Revue*, a monthly paper, in which he attempted to take stock of the revolutionary events in France, and published, in 1850, a series of essays in which he attempted to explain in the light of the economic conception of history the defeat of June, 1848.<sup>8</sup> Simultaneously, he wrote an address to the members of the Communist League (March, 1850). All those essays are eminently revolutionary, and they contain the first public expression of opinion by Marx on proletarian dictatorship and revolutionary tactics. Up to the middle of 1850, Marx, encouraged by the revival of the agitation in Germany and of the Socialist Movement in France, was hopeful that the failures of 1848-49 could still be retrieved. He thought it therefore advisable to instruct the Leaguers as to their tactical movements in Germany.

We shall first give the commentary of Marx on the French events, and then the instructions to the German Leaguers as far as they are relevant to our subject. The commentary on the June defeat is as follows:—

The Paris proletariat was provoked and lured into the June insurrection. This fact alone is a sufficient condemnation of it. The proletariat itself did not feel the immediate need for the forcible overthrow of the bourgeoisie, nor was it equal to such a task. The *Moniteur* declared plainly enough that the time was passed when the republic could be induced to pay honour to the illusions of the workers; and it needed the June defeat to convince them of the truth that it was Utopian to expect even the slightest improvement of their condition within bourgeois society, a Utopian expectation which was branded and punished as a crime as soon as any attempt was made to bring it to fruition. In the place of the reform demands, which in rhetorical language looked big enough, but in essence were insignificant and of a bourgeois character, and which they tried to extract from the February Republic—in

<sup>8</sup> These essays were republished under the title *Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich, 1848*, by the Berlin *Vorwärts* in 1895

the place, I say, of such demands, the bold revolutionary battle-cry was heard:  
*Overthrow of the bourgeoisie ! Dictatorship of the Proletariat !*<sup>9</sup>

In Chapter III of the same work, which is the most powerful indictment of the social democrats of that period, Marx holds up all sorts of petty bourgeois socialism to ridicule and scorn, attacking particularly those social reforms which, instead of promoting the revolutionary movement of the working class, are recommending special panaceas for the ills of society, and declares:—

While the Utopian or doctrinaire socialism, which subordinates the whole movement to one of its moments, which in place of common social production puts the brain contortions of particular pedants and, before all, by petty jugglery and swollen sentiment seeks to spirit away the revolutionary war of the classes and its necessary concomitants—while this doctrinaire socialism which at bottom is but idealising present society, making a shadowless picture of it and then trying to pit this ideal against its own reality—while this sort of socialism is being made a present of by the proletariat to the petty bourgeoisie—while the rivalry between the various socialist chiefs is going on with regard to the excellence of their so-called systems as transition stages to social reconstruction—the proletariat is rallying more and more round the revolutionary socialism, round communism, for which the bourgeoisie has invented the name of Blanquism. This socialism is the *declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat*, as the necessary transition stage to the abolition of all class distinctions, the abolition of all conditions of production on which they are based, the abolition of all relations of production which correspond to those conditions of production, to the revolutionising of all ideas which spring from those social relations. The space of this essay does not permit of enlarging upon this subject.<sup>10</sup>

## § 5.—Of Universal Suffrage

The successful by-elections of the French socialists in 1850 inspired them with the democratic idea that socialism could, after all, be realised by the ballot. Marx, commenting on this, declares:—

The new electoral victory of April 28, 1850, imbued the *montagnards* (the democrats) and the petty bourgeoisie with wanton optimism. They exulted in the thought that they would arrive at the goal of their desire without a new revolution in which they might have again to push the proletariat into the forefront: they calculated that at the general elections of 1852 they would have the majority in Parliament and make their hero, Ledru-Rollin, President of the French Republic. What happened then? The Party of Order replied to the electoral successes of the petty bourgeoisie by the abolition of the universal suffrage! . . . On May 8, the new Electoral Bill was brought in. The whole social democratic Press rose as one man in order to preach to the people the necessity of dignified behaviour, *calme majestueux*, passivity, and complete confidence in its representatives. Every article of those journals was

<sup>9</sup> Karl Marx, *Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, Berlin, 1895, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.



a confession that a revolutionary upheaval would destroy the "revolutionary" Press, and that it was now a question of life and death of the people's Press. The alleged revolutionary Press betrayed its secret. It signed its own death sentence.

On May 21, the *Montagne* initiated a debate and demanded the rejection of the Bill, arguing that it represented a flagrant violation of the Constitution. The Party of Order replied that, if necessary, the Constitution would be violated, but meanwhile such a necessity did not arise, since the Constitution admitted of various interpretations, and that the majority of the Chamber was the competent authority to decide on the proper interpretation. Against the unbridled and wild attacks of the leaders of the Right, the *Montagne* appealed to the principles of equality and humanity, they took their stand on the ground of legality. The leaders of the Right likewise planted their feet on the ground on which legality grows and flourishes, namely, on the soil of bourgeois property. On May 31, 1850, the Bill was passed into law. . . . An army of 150,000 men in Paris, the dilatory debates, the appeasement by the Press, the pusillanimity of the *Montagne* and of the newly elected representatives, the majestic calm of the lower middle class, and, above all, the commercial and industrial prosperity prevented any revolutionary attempt on the part of the proletariat.

The universal suffrage had served its historic purpose. The majority of the people had passed through an instructive stage of development, to which the suffrage, in a revolutionary epoch, had supplied the materials. It had to be ended, either by revolution or reaction.

The ending of universal suffrage by revolution could only mean the establishment of the dictatorship. Marx particularly points out that universal suffrage "weakened the energy of the French people by habituating them to legal triumphs instead of revolutionary ones."

#### § 6.—*Tactical Problems of the Communists*

Simultaneously with the publication of the first essays on the February revolution, Marx sent a general circular to the branches of the League. This circular constitutes the clearest general statement of Marx's view of the relation of the revolutionary working-class movement to democracy.<sup>11</sup>

In a second address, London, June, 1850, Marx deals with the conditions of the Communist League, and informs the members that the central authority has come into close touch with the revolutionary elements of England and France. "Of the revolutionists, the real proletarian party, whose chief is Blanqui, has joined our organisation. The delegates of the Blanquist secret societies are in regular and official communication with the delegates of our League, whom they entrusted with important preliminary work for the next French revolution. The leaders of the Chartist Movement are likewise in intimate com-

<sup>11</sup> The text of this circular is held over for reproduction in full in the next issue.—Ed.

munication with the delegates of our executive. Their papers are at our disposal. The break between this revolutionary independent workers' party and those elements under O'Connor, who are disposed towards a conciliation with the bourgeoisie, has been accelerated by the delegates of the League."<sup>12</sup>

Two years later, Marx had again occasion to refer to the proletarian dictatorship. A friend of his, Herr Weydomeyer (a Westphalian gentleman and former artillery officer), was a member of the Communist League and had taken part in the German revolution, just escaped being made prisoner, and went to America, where he published a periodical, *Die Revolution*, for which Marx wrote "The Eighteenth Brumaire." Marx, having been informed that the German democrats in America were attacking him for his class-war theories, wrote to Weydomeyer on March 12, 1852, that he was quite innocent of the discovery of the class antagonisms of society, since that discovery had been made long ago by various French and English historians and economists, particularly by Aug. Thierry, Guizot, and Ricardo; and that, during the whole free-trade agitation in England, the leaders knew well that behind the struggle for a new trade policy there was concealed the class struggle between the manufacturers and the landowners. Mr. Disraeli, in his election address, 1852, expressly declared that the time had come "to put an end to the class war." Marx then proceeds to say:—

As far as I am concerned, I cannot arrogate to myself the honour of having discovered the existence of the classes in modern society or their struggles with one another. Middle-class historians had long before me described the historical development of this strife of the classes, and middle-class political economists stated the economic anatomy of the classes. I have but added as a new contribution (1) that the existence of classes is bound up with certain historical struggles in the development of production; (2) that the class struggle leads necessarily to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship is itself but the transition to the abolition of all classes and to the creation of a society of free and equal citizens.<sup>13</sup>

On April 12, 1871, he wrote concerning the Paris Commune to his friend, Dr. Kugelman, Hanover:—

If you look again at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire* you will find my opinion that the next French revolution will no more attempt to transfer the bureaucratic military State machinery from one hand to another, but will try to break it in pieces, and this is the preliminary condition of any revolution on the Continent. And this is the attempt of our heroic comrades in Paris. . . . If they are defeated it will be due solely to their "good

<sup>12</sup> Wermuth and Stieber, p. 265.

<sup>13</sup> Published in *Neue Zeit* (edited in Stuttgart by Karl Kautsky), 1906-1907, Vol. II, pp. 164-165.

nature." They ought to have marched against Versailles as soon as General Vinoy and the reactionary part of the National Guards had left the field. . . . Second mistake: the Central Committee relinquished their power too early into the hands of the Commune, again from "scrupulous uprightness."<sup>14</sup>

The retention of power by the Central Committee, a body that consisted of the workers' leaders and nominated by the insurgents who had risen against the Versailles Government and proclaimed the commune, would have meant a dictatorship, while the administration of the commune which issued from a municipal general election was a regular local authority. Marx was evidently of opinion that the Central Committee ought to have used their dictatorial power until peace was declared or the revolution terminated, when a normal municipal government would have become possible.

In 1873, in an article to the Italian paper *Plebe*, Marx, arguing against the anarchist and Bakuninian anti-State propaganda, asked what crime there was against the spirit of communism if, at the final victorious revolutionary struggle of the working class, "we are determined to put in the place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie the dictatorship of the working class."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, we have Marx's statement about dictatorship in his criticism of the Gotha programme, adopted in 1875 at the unification congress at Gotha between the Lassalleans and the Marxists, of which Marx thoroughly disapproved, criticising it in the severest manner as a piece of petty bourgeois democratic and social reformist work. Marx says:—

The question is, What changes will the State undergo in a Communist society? In other words, which are the social functions that will still remain there, and which are analogous to the present-day State functions? This question can only be answered by scientific research, and no amount of compositions of the words "people" and "State" brings us nearer to the solution of the problem. Between the capitalist and the communist society there intervenes a period of revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. To this transformation corresponds also a political transition period, the state of which can be nothing else than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Now, the Gotha programme has to do neither with the latter nor with the future state of the communist society. Its political demands contain nothing but the old well-known democratic litany—universal suffrage, direct legislation, popular rights, popular militia, &c. They are a mere echo of the bourgeois democracy, of the Peace and Freedom League. Even vulgar democracy, which regards the democratic republic as the millennium and has no idea that in this last form of bourgeois society the class struggle will be definitely fought out—even this democracy is far superior to that of the Gotha programme.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Published in *Neue Zeit* (edited in Stuttgart by Karl Kautsky), XX, Vol. I, pp. 709-710.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 1890, pp. 19 *et seq.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 1890-1891, pp. 561 *et seq.*



# The World of Labour

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## FRANCE

### Left Wing Trade Union Congress

**A**T St. Etienne, on June 26, the first Congress of the C.G.T.U. (Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire) met. It was a source of great interest, since both left wing and non-revolutionary papers hinted at the possibility of a new split on the question of affiliation to the Red Trade Union International. The C.G.T.U., it will be remembered, came into being in December, 1921 (see LABOUR MONTHLY, January, 1922), as a result of a conference to which all sections of the trade union world were invited by the C.S.R. (Comité Syndicale Révolutionnaire) as the Left Wing within the C.G.T. was then called. It proclaimed itself as the Majority C.G.T. and established its own bureau. The first conference now discloses its strength to be 350,000 members organised in seventy-one unions and forty-four federations; delegates present were estimated at about 600.

Heated interludes between the Communist section and the Anarchists marked the whole course of the Congress, but the majority, led by Monmousseau, of the *Vie Ouvrière* group, voted in favour of unconditional affiliation to the Red Trade Union International, thus causing the provisional Executive, with Totti as General Secretary, to resign. A new Executive was elected having Monmousseau as General Secretary, with Cazals, Richetta, and Marie Guillot as assistant secretaries.

The Monmousseau resolution for affiliation to the R.T.U.I. received 741 votes to 406, and was in substance as follows:—

This Congress condemns any attempt to create any other Trade Union International besides that of Moscow, on the condition that its statutes and resolutions respect the national autonomy of French trade unionism. Therefore it requests the Moscow Trade Union International to modify the said statutes and resolutions at the earliest opportunity, so that French trade unionism may at last be put on a regular basis. The Congress declares itself resolutely in favour of the autonomy of the Red Trade Union International in respect of the Third International, and empowers its representatives to defend this autonomy at the second Congress, and to vote against the application of Article 11 of the statutes of the Red Trade Union International.

This Congress hopes that the second Congress of the Trade Union International will be completely satisfactory in these respects, and wishes to have an opportunity of referring back to the unions before finally deciding should the International Congress decision be unfavourable to the feeling of this Congress.

In respect of federal organisation being replaced by regional councils, and on the attitude of the C.G.T.U. to the State, the provisional Executive was also defeated,

the Monmousseau bloc carrying the Congress on a national orientation motion by 779 votes to 391.

On the second day of the Congress, under the chairmanship of Frossard, all the Communist delegates assembled at the Congress met together to discuss tactics; in this way a more definite policy was mapped out. Frossard also addressed the trade union Congress.

A notable episode of the Congress was the unexpected appearance of Losovsky, secretary of the Red Trade Union International. He had come without passport, and disappeared as soon as he finished his speech. He mainly tried to point out the inexpediency of the Anarchist position and the French policy that trade unionism was in itself sufficient. His speech doubtless turned the trend of the conference in favour of affiliation to Moscow, and thus obviated the much-feared split.

## GERMANY

### *The Leipzig Trade Union Congress*

THE three-yearly meeting of the German Trade Union Congress, the largest in the world, and containing nearly eight million members, was held at Leipzig on June 19-23, and attended by 696 delegates. The statistics of membership recorded show that the German trade unions have suffered less decrease than other countries. The high-water mark of 1920, reaching 7,891,102, was nearly equalled by the latest figures which for the first quarter of 1922 showed 7,874,005 members, of whom 1,648,335 were women.

For the first time since 1919, the date of the last Congress, the conflicting policies within German trade unionism were able to join issue over the whole field. The delegates were definitely ranged in three blocs, corresponding to the three Parties, Majority Socialist, Independent, and Communist. The Majority Socialists numbered about two-thirds, while the opposition was composed of 132 Independents and ninety Communists. At the previous Congress at Nürnberg the Communist section was practically non-existent, and the result bears witness to the three years' work of the Communist Party in the trade unions. The actual Communist representation leaves out of account the number of Communist delegates excluded by the Executives of their union. The Independents were led by Dissmann, president of the German Metal Workers' Union, the largest and most powerful union in the world (with a membership of 1,629,325).

The most notable feature of the Congress was the evidence of growing opposition to the Executive policy of inactivity. On more than one issue the Independents, supported by the Communists, and with rank-and-file support from the Majority Socialists, were able to defeat the Executive.

On the Executive report the Independents secured the passing of an amendment denouncing the Compulsory Arbitration Bill before the Reichstag, affirming the eight-hour day, and passing the Ten Points which had been formulated in November of last year to meet the unemployment crisis, but had been let drop.

On the question of craft and industrial unionism the Executive proposal favoured craft unionism as more useful for organising purposes and more conducive to trade union fidelity, but at the same time was prepared to recommend that craft unions within one industry should amalgamate and form an industrial union; any sudden transformation from craft to industrial unionism was deplored. This resolution was defeated, and the Independent resolution passed by 465 votes to 163, as follows:—

That the eleventh German Trade Union Congress considers the present method of organisation in need of radical reconstruction. That the big industries, so closely intertwined as mining, metal, building, printing, transport, public services, textile, leather, wood, provision, agriculture, and vintage should organise on industrial lines. This should be brought about by the amalgamation of the existing craft unions. In view of this decision the Congress enjoins the Executive of the A.D.G.B. to prepare, at the earliest possible moment, a plan for the organic structure of industrial unions, which plan should then be submitted for further consideration to the trade unions concerned.

Another issue which sharply divided the Congress concerned the Joint Industrial Councils (*Arbeitsgemeinschaften*). Communists and Independents urged resignation from these, and secured a majority of 345 to 327. The Executive, however, refused to accept this decision, claiming that the 345 votes represented 3,582,429 members, whereas 327 votes represented 3,813,738.

Despite the sharply divided opinions thus forcibly expressed, a vote of confidence in the Executive was passed with a three-fourths majority, and the same Executive officers were re-elected.

Complete unity was reached on the emergency motion of protest against the murder of Rathenau and in favour of support of the Republic, a declaration being issued which was signed by the A.D.G.B. and all the three political parties.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## SOCIALISATION IN GERMANY

- Die Sozialisierung von Kohle und Stahl.* By Alfons Horten. Berlin. 15 marks.  
*Der Sozialismus.* By Professor Dr. Rob. Wilbrandt. Jena. (Only first edition valuable.)  
*Die Sozialisierung.* By Heinrich Ströbel. Berlin, 1922. 40 marks.  
*Was ist Sozialisierung?* By Karl Korsch. 3 marks.  
*Deutschlands Wiederaufbau.* By Professor Dr. Emil Lederer. Tübingen. 20 marks.  
*Das Sozialisierungsproblem in Deutschland.* By Spectator. Seehof Verlag, Berlin. 6 marks.  
*Revolutions-Dokumente.* By Eberhard Buchner. Berlin, 1922. Verlag für Politik und Geschichte. 400 pages. 10 marks. (Indispensable for the history of November, 1918.)

A PART from the three large volumes of the Proceedings and the two Reports of the official Socialisation Commission (published by Robert Engelmann, Berlin) a very considerable number of books, pamphlets, and papers have appeared on the socialisation movement which spontaneously set in at the outbreak of the November revolution. Only few of them deserve the attention of the social student, either from their theoretical grasp of the problem or practicability of their proposals, or, finally, from their attempting to survey and summarise the various acts, publications, and discussions concerning our subject. The publications mentioned in our list may be counted among the best.

At first a few notes on some of their authors. Herr Horten was successively for twenty years one of the most efficient directors of Prussian State mines, of private iron and steel works (Thyssen concern), of the metals department of the Imperial War Ministry, and, finally, of the Lorraine Briey works during the last war. In 1918 he embraced socialism, from the consideration as the result of his long experience that capitalism was incompatible with national welfare. Herr Wilbrandt is Professor at the Heidelberg University, lecturing on political economy and social reform. His work consists of three parts: the first two parts were composed in pre-revolutionary days and are in no way remarkable; the third part, the most important one, is the product of the apocalyptic winter months, 1918-19; it was written under the overpowering impression he received on his journeys, in 1918-19, through the Ruhr valley, where Spartacus swayed the mining population. In the second edition of the book (1922) the whole third part is missing; the Herr Professor is rewriting it in the calm atmosphere of a university town. Ströbel, a former editor of the *Vorwärts*, joined the Independents, opposed war and Bolshevism; he has now returned to the Majority Socialists, but remains Independent at heart. His work attempts to survey the Russian, Hungarian, and German socialisation movement, but its chapters read like vividly written leading articles rather than consecutive sections of an historical treatise. On the whole, there is still lacking a methodical and thoughtful narrative of the German socialisation movement, with its abundance of materials, researches, and striking sidelights on capitalism, as well as with its tragic failures and cowardly betrayals.



On November 9, 1918, the political structure of Prussia and Germany reared by Frederick the Great and Prince Bismarck was shattered. The national sovereignty, wielded for so many centuries by the German princes, fell automatically into the hands of a people whose possessing classes appeared to be hopelessly involved in the collapse of the traditional authorities. The bourgeoisie was paralysed and supinely expecting social dismissal and economic expropriation. The insurgent proletariat, manual and brain workers, seized the reins of power, and in a memorable Berlin meeting on November 10, in the unconscious exercise of national sovereignty, nominated a Provisional Government, which consisted of three Majority Socialists and three Independents. Karl Liebknecht was invited to join, but declined.

The Provisional Government was a dictatorship without dictators. Its authority was derived from a mandate of the insurgents, but the mandates failed to use it. This act accomplished, the proletariat all over the country assembled in public meetings, in which the cry for the socialisation of the means of production grew more and more distinct. Within a few days this demand became so urgent that on November 14 the Government promised socialisation and four days later set up a Socialisation Commission, which, after preliminary work *in camera*, held its first public sitting on December 4, 1918.

Meanwhile, the masses were losing all trust in the Government whose Majority Socialist members, led by Gustav Noske, called back the royalist military to kill Spartacists. Strike after strike occurred, the three Independent Socialist Ministers resigned office (December 28, 1918), and while the Berlin masses were engaged in trying to secure political power through the workmen's councils, the Ruhr valley became the focus of the socialisation movement. Similar movements were going on in Saxony, Bavaria, and Württemberg. The spirit which animated the Ruhr valley at that time is described by the Protestant minister, Rev. Mennicke:—

"I was deeply moved," he relates, "by the serious determination which fills these people. There lives among the miners, at least in the district which is in my charge, something of the primitive Christian feeling. They believe we have arrived at a turning point of history, and they have the great consciousness to be engaged in a sacred fight. And this fight, they think, is directed against exploiting capital, which cynically rides roughshod over man's life and existence." (Horten, p. 23.)

The Ruhr miners, having vainly demanded from the Government a clear pronouncement for the socialisation of the coal industry, declared on January 9, 1919, a general strike, which was to be followed by a forcible seizure of the mines. On the same day the Spartacists, the Independents, and the Majority Socialists united, formed a committee, and in the name of the miners occupied the mines the following day. In a leaflet, under the heading "Triumph of Socialism," they announced to the miners that "the centre of capitalist exploitation and the castle of the coal lords has been transferred to the people," and asked the miners to return to work in the interest of the whole community. Cheerfully they followed this advice, and with all their might they worked in the mines. The output rose by 400 waggons daily, the rest shifts diminished in one month from 255 to 155; the mining people were anxious to demonstrate that they needed no capitalist directors. Such was the magic effect of the prospect of "socialisation" in the winter 1918-19 (Wilbrandt, pp. 254-258). Likewise, the Berlin Workmen's and Soldiers' Council pledged its word for it that in case of socialisation all strikes would cease.

Urged by these demonstrations the Socialisation Commission drew up its Preliminary Report (February 15, 1919), the majority of the Commissioners declaring for the "expropriation of State and private capital in mining." Simultaneously with these events the Socialist Provisional Government, surrounded by the Noske guard, prepared for an appeal to the whole nation to send representatives to the Constituent Assembly at Weimar. The general elections took place on January 18, 1919, two days after the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, and resulted in a Coalition Government of Majority Socialists, Democrats, and Catholics. They carried, in the middle of March, two Socialisation Bills, published on March 23, 1919, one empowering the Government to socialise natural resources and the production and distribution of various industries, the second, concerning the coal industry, eschewing socialisation of the mines, and only providing for their joint management by representatives of employers, workers, consumers, and the Empire; it created an Imperial Coal Council as well as Coal Associations, and left the question of property untouched. This arrangement they call "*Gemeinwirtschaft*" (common economy). The effect of the whole "*Gemeinwirtschaft*" has been an enormous rise of coal prices and the complete trustification of the mines to the detriment of the consumers. The Coalition Government was from the outset of its career unpromisingly hostile to any practical socialisation measure. In the Economic Ministry, headed by a Majority Socialist, no industrial expert had the slightest chance of being employed there if he was favourable to socialisation (Horten, p. 19). The Socialisation Commission lost all influence on the Coalition of Social Democrats, and quietly dissolved in April, 1919, for "owing to all sorts of opposition and obstruction on the part of the Economic Ministry and, in general, the departmental chiefs" no useful work could be accomplished. The Government Social Democrats surrendered to the insidious suggestions of the Revisionist and capitalist pamphleteers (Dr. August Müller, Wichard von Möllendorf, Walther Rathenau, *Vossische Zeitung*) that Germany, the most highly developed industrial organism of Europe, was not ripe for socialisation. The socialist meetings and conferences kept on passing resolutions in favour of socialisation, but it was only after the Kapp coup in March, 1920, when the organised proletariat, having defeated the royalists, got the upper hand for a few days, that the Coalition Government was forced to reconstitute the Socialisation Commission. It sat till July, 1920, issued a Report which was disregarded by the Government, for at that time the proletariat had relapsed into inactivity owing to the massacres of its most energetic elements in the Ruhr valley during the sanguinary conflicts with the Kappist officers and soldiery in March and April, 1920.

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The socialisation episode forms one of the most tragic chapters of the story of the German revolution. Its vicissitudes are well characterised by Professor Dr. Lederer (p. 70-71): "When in November, 1918, political power fell into the hands of the proletariat the idea of socialisation soared upwards; not as a plan for saving society from decay, but as the full effect of the position of power that fell to the working class in empire and industry owing to the collapse of the ruling classes. After the first spurt, after declaration of principles and appointment of a Socialisation Commission, the whole thing fizzled out. The wild strikes, the unrest in the workshops were again and again allayed by temporary measures and high-sounding words. . . As often as the rising tide of the working class threatened the existing order, official placards glaringly announced **SOCIALISM HAS COME!** As soon as the

ebb set in, one could hear the official or semi-official view that the time for socialism had not come, that Germany was not ripe for socialisation, that one could not socialise deficits—as if socialisation consisted in despoiling industry and not in bespeaking and organising for it the common efforts of all.”

M. B.

### THE OLD BOVINE SPIRIT

*What We Want, and Why.* By J. H. Thomas, Robert Williams, Tom Mann, Noah Ablett, John Bromley, and Mrs. Philip Snowden. Collins, 7s. 6d.

IT is almost impossible to discover any reason, commercial or otherwise, which can have led Messrs. Collins to reprint these six articles, unless it be a more or less laudable desire to expose the bankruptcy of the Labour Movement both in ideals and reasoning power. In that case, however, they have even been a little unfair to the Labour Movement, for, weak as the propagandists are, they can do better than this, and a reprint of elderly articles is bound to show everyone up by the sheer lapse of time.

There is no preface, no table of contents, no nothing, to indicate when these six articles were written, in what publication or publications they first appeared, and why they are collected under one cover. From internal evidence most of them seem to have been written some time in 1921, some before, some after Black Friday; Noah Ablett's contribution (the only one worth reading on serious grounds) appears to date from 1920; Tom Mann seems alone to have been given—or to have taken—the opportunity of revision. Thus, if a clear picture of any sort is intended, it must be a picture of the mind of Labour between 1920 and 1921, when it was gradually awakening to the fact that the crowning mercy of war was past and the battles of peace beginning. What is the picture?

We may first clear out of the way Mrs. Philip Snowden, who in a competent and quite sensible, but appallingly dull article, explains the official Labour Party position with regard to women in industry. She does not forget to warn the woman worker against the “insipid bun and cup of tea” which will seriously impair her efficiency, and in other respects says all the proper things. But, O Lord, how long!

Turning now to the other five, we find that what they want is of far more interest than why they want it. There are only two main reasons why these writers (or the Labour Movement as they see it) want anything, either because it is in the public good (J. H. Thomas, Robert Williams), or because the workers ought to have it (Noah Ablett, Tom Mann)—or for no discoverable reason except a general emotional crisis (John Bromley). As to their desires, J. H. Thomas, on the whole, is modest. “I think I can honestly say that the primary thing we want is an efficient railway system,” in order to arrive at which he requires, first, peace, and secondly, “that in every station, shed, or shop there shall be full opportunities for the officials and the men to meet and talk frankly, &c., &c.,” and that, “*apart altogether from the Trades Union Movement*, there should be far closer relations between man and man.” All he wants is justice and a fair share of the proceeds, “and in this connection it is a good thing that the miners, owing to their last struggle, have established for themselves the great justice that Labour should be the first charge on industry.” Thus J. H. Thomas on his partners in the Triple Alliance. And finally he hopes “one day to see the Labour ideal (*i.e.*, the Labour programme) tested by action.”

Robert Williams has also a word to say about the miners. "Amongst the miners' leaders one does not discover that flexibility, that adaptability, that capacity for adjustment and compromise which has been created in the other organisations." This in the course of a few pages explaining Black Friday. Further, he wants, for the workers, economic security, regular employment under decent humane conditions, and increased output; provided the capitalist does not get the profit. Immediately, however, in his opinion, the worker wants "the maintenance of existing wages and the stabilisation of working conditions"—which it appears he is not getting, for in a later passage we read that the workers "are displaying a marked resentment to their officials and leaders, who have been constrained to negotiate reductions in wages."

Noah Ablett gives a good brief sketch of a left-wing industrial programme, and of the realities of the life of a left-wing propagandist in the mines, which would be worth reading in pamphlet form. Tom Mann writes a short sketch of various industrial theories, and of the engineers in 1921. What he appears to want chiefly is collective contract and communism. As to John Bromley, he is a great reader of Burns, Carlyle, and Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and it is difficult to discover what he does want. It includes nationalisation and control of railways, education for locomotive men assisted by the railway companies, a living wage, and the recognition of the worker as a "so-called part of industry," and "some little of the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount." He obviously feels his subject deeply; there is a sentence, too long to be read save in the original, which explains how the engine-driver and the tired fireman on seeing a little brown hare feel almost inclined to cry: "England, my England!" And there is one phrase which deserves at least to be rescued from this dustheap: "The days either of the bludgeon or of wordy bemusement are rapidly passing, and it is no longer possible to win the old bovine spirit of labour and sleep by these methods." The "old bovine spirit of Labour," so pleasantly illustrated in this book, should not lightly be let die.

M. I. C.

#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*Perchè il Mondo è povero.* By Gino Baldesi. Vallecchi Editore, Firenze.

*Imperialism in Practice and in Theory.* By K. M. Pannikar. Arka Publishing House, Madras.

*Will Industrial Unions Suffice?* One Big Union Bulletin, Winnipeg.

*Red Revolt.* The Rand Strike: the Workers' Story. By S. P. Bunting. With foreword by W. H. Andrews. Communist Party (South Africa), 4 Trades Hall, Johannesburg, P.D.

Box 4179. 1s. 6d. post free.

*Labour Defended.* By T. Hodgskin. With Introduction by G. D. H. Cole. Labour Publishing Company, 1s. 6d.

*The Eternal Wisdom.* By Paul Richard. Ganesh & Co.

*Creative Revolution.* By Professor T. L. Vaswani. Ganesh & Co.

*More about the Noaks and Tim Tossett.* By J. F. Horrabin. Cassell & Co. 2s.

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# NOTES of the MONTH

*The Voice of Treason—The Break Up of the Old Labour Movements—  
The Testing Time—The Collapse of the Centre—Predictions  
Fulfilled—The Expulsion of the Left—Coalition  
of the Right with Capitalism—  
The Attack on the Workers*

**I**N the darkest hour of the night evil things begin to flit. Mr. Harry Gosling has been able to declare, unchallenged, to the Transport Workers' Annual Conference that all the strikes of the past three years have been a mistake. Mr. Frank Hodges has thought the moment suitable to spit at Robert Smillie and the Russian Revolution. Mr. Arthur Henderson pursues unchecked his campaign for an industrial truce. Mr. Sidney Webb has begun to show his hand about the future Labour political alliance. What is happening here is only a symbol of what is happening generally. In Germany, Scheidemann openly disowns the revolution, while Ebert and Noske join hands with Stinnes in launching a vessel which that magnate sardonically names the "Karl Legien." The Independent Socialists throw aside their brave show of independence and prepare to unite with the Majority Socialists in a capitalist cabinet. In Italy the Confederation of Labour drops its revolutionary claims and calls for collaboration with the Government. The Workers' Control Bill, which was hailed with such acclamation by the utopians all over the world, is openly proclaimed dead. The Spanish Confederation of Labour lowers its flag and pleads for Parliamentary action. Irish Labour hushes up the memories of Larkin and Connolly and romps home at the elections on a programme of legislative social reform. The Vienna International makes up its feud with the Second and issues a joint manifesto with the social patriots on the eve of the anniversary of the war.

**W**HAT is the meaning of this process that is taking place? It is a process that is being accompanied by misery and suffering of the workers all over the world without parallel in our times. In this country standards are falling below the level of

before the war. The Trades Union Congress will assemble with a membership expected to have fallen by one million and a half since two years ago, and the loss in wages of the workers is estimated at ten million pounds a week. In America, membership has fallen by over a million ; in France by as much ; even in Germany it has fallen. There is no question that the process we are passing through is a process of defeat, and that the utterances to which we are having to listen are the utterances of demoralisation. The statements and policies that are being propounded are such as would not have received a moment's hearing in ordinary times. Open renunciation of the struggle ; proposals of unity with capitalism ; expulsion of the revolutionaries ; reviling of leaders who remain true to the struggle ; degradation of the workers' conditions ; and steady decline in organisation—these are the common symptoms on every side. What is happening is something larger than is yet realised. We are witnessing the break up of the old Labour Movements.

THE old Labour Movements as we knew them before the war, with their happy-go-lucky methods and organisation, their smallness of spirit, and their ramshackle sectionalism, survived into the harsher conditions of the world after the war, and under those harsher conditions have crumpled up in a few years. Nothing remains but the shadow of vast numbers and ballot votes without the reality of an organised and militant movement. It was necessary that this complete and open breakdown should take place, terrible as its immediate effects are and will be ; because nothing short of hard experience will drive home the utter weakness and futility of the whole old system of organisation and policy in face of the facts of the modern world. It is only out of such a breakdown, freely faced and taken to heart, that the movement of the future will arise, with the bitterness of experience to steel its purpose, ready to face the struggle to the end and to organise for victory. That future will come, as it must come, from the very impulse of the working-class struggle ; but it is in the moment in between, in the moment of breakdown, when the workers are beaten and dispirited, that the voice of treason begins to make itself heard. To-day is the hour of trial. Keen eyes and ears and good memories are needed ; for now is the testing time of men and of movements, when their real character shows through.



THE first to succumb to the test of to-day is the Centre—that large indeterminate “Left Wing” which swells up in moments of revolutionary excitement and is carried along a little way with the stream, and then subsides when the excitement is over. The leaders of the Centre are usually full of revolutionary principles and sympathies, but have always some reservation as to action in the present, and some objection to subjecting themselves to the discipline of the real revolutionary camp. The great representatives of the Centre have been the Independent Socialists of Germany and the Italian Socialists under Serrati; representatives in this country have been such men as Lansbury, Brailsford, Cole, Robert Williams, Wallhead, and the main body of the Independent Labour Party (not the extreme right, MacDonald-Snowden-Trevelyan group, but the main body represented by Wallhead, Neil Maclean, and Shinwell). The Centre played a determining part in the after-war period by absorbing into itself the revolutionary impetus of the working class during 1919 and 1920, when the discrediting of the Second International was leading to a general movement into the revolutionary camp. At a time when the Second International was discredited by the recent memory of its participation in the war and the war governments, the Centre broke away, denounced the Second International, proclaimed revolutionary principles, and secured a large following.

WHERE are they now? The Vienna International, which a year ago refused to sit in the same room as the Second, now issues joint resolutions with it on the current topics of the day. The German Independent Socialists, who refused to have anything to do with the Majority Socialists while these included Noske, Ebert, and Scheidemann among their leaders, have now entered into a formal working agreement with the Majority Socialists (including Noske, Ebert, and Scheidemann) which is officially proclaimed by them to be the prelude to complete unification. The Italian Socialists, after fiercely denouncing any form of bourgeois collaboration, now prepare to carry it out. The *Daily Herald*, once the organ of the centre, passes into the control of the right wing, and Lansbury vacates the editorial chair to write in future as a contributor to the paper he once directed. Robert Williams' clarion calls are heard no more, and, when invited to write his advice for the trade union future in a recent issue of the

LABOUR MONTHLY, reaches the conclusion, "I don't know." The I.L.P. joins with the official leaders of the Labour Party in suppressing the revolutionaries. The bubble of the Centre is pricked. The whole Vienna International Movement is revealed as only the safety valve of the Second International ; once the moment of danger is passed, it subsides again into the Second International.

**T**HE collapse of the Centre is of particular interest in relation to the policy of the Third International. The Third International pursued, in regard to the Centre, a policy which seemed to many at the time to be one of a narrow and doctrinaire opposition. The twenty-one conditions which locked and barred the door upon the Centre were regarded as a schismatic wilfulness by which the Third destroyed the opportunity in its grasp of capturing practically the whole European working-class movement. Still more did this outcry develop when the same unrelenting opposition was meted out to Centrists in its own ranks, more particularly to Levi, the leader of the German Party, and Serrati, the leader of the Italian. The cases of Levi and Serrati, and their seemingly arbitrary expulsion, became centres of international Socialist controversy. But the outcome to-day is instructive. To-day, Levi is on the extreme right of the German Independents and working for unity with the Majority Socialists. The case of Serrati is even more striking. Serrati and the Italian Socialist Party went out of the Third International because they refused to expel Turati and his small reformist group, declaring that there was no danger there and that the Party discipline could easily control these supporters of collaboration. To-day, Turati has taken the reins of power from Serrati ; the Parliamentary Socialist Group has decided in favour of entering into a coalition government. Turati has visited the King without authorisation from the Party, and the Serrati executive is impotent before the situation.

**W**HILE the Centre thus passes temporarily from the scene (until the next time it will be wanted), the Second International and the Social Democrats are conscious of renewed strength. They at least feel strong enough to press forward the campaign against the now isolated revolutionaries. It is significant that the renewed strength and energy of the Second International coincides with the victory of the capitalists. Parallel with the capitalist

offensive against the workers on the industrial field comes the social democratic offensive against the revolutionaries in the working-class organisations. It is a single campaign, and the directing centre is London. The curious weakness of the social democratic and official Labour resistance to the capitalist offensive, their hesitation and temporising, and refusal even to concert a show of common resistance, is only equalled by the vigour and combination of their offensive against the revolutionaries in the workers' ranks. From every country comes the same story. In France the official leadership of the trade unions, faced with a revolutionary majority, proceeded to expel that revolutionary majority and shattered the unity of the French trade union movement. In Czecho-Slovakia the official leadership has been busily expelling whole unions, one after another, until the majority is rapidly passing outside the official combination ; and when a group of unions still within the combination sent representatives to the Central Executive to plead for solidarity and unity of the whole trade union movement, for answer to their plea they were themselves met with expulsion. In this country, the Edinburgh Labour Conference has voted the expulsion of duly elected representatives of trade unions and local labour parties, and the extension of the expulsion policy to the trade unions may soon be expected (already the first premonition of it may be seen in the Trades Union Congress Standing Order that the secretary of the General Council must be a member of the Labour Party).

THE policy of expulsion is simply the natural concomitant of the policy of coalition with capitalism. In our last issue we reviewed this movement to a coalition with capitalism on the industrial side in the proposals for an industrial truce. To-day, on the political side, the movement towards a coalition government is becoming increasingly manifest in this country, as in Italy, Germany, and elsewhere. As the hot-air resolutions and protestations of Edinburgh pass into the background, the real scheme begins to be more clearly revealed. In last month's issue of the *Labour Magazine*, Mr. Sidney Webb, for the first time, definitely shows his hand :—

“The duty will come to the Labour Party in due course,” he writes, “to form the Government of the country. That moment will be signified by the King sending for the Labour Party leader, and entrusting him with the task. When that moment comes, the Party should, and I believe would, have no hesitation in accepting the duty, *whatever its numerical or other*

*strength, and in constituting for the carrying out of its own programme the best Government within its power."*

This statement of the chairman of the Labour Party is sufficiently definite to be worthy of study by every member of the Labour Party who may have been soothed into a sense of security by the Edinburgh resolution. The statement, which is formally published in the official journal of the Party, is perfectly explicit. When the opportunity comes, the Labour Party, even though a minority, will form "the best government within its power." The policy of coalition could not be more simply stated. But the policy of coalition inevitably means the policy of expulsion. Every step nearer the capitalists means a step away from the working class.

**I**N this situation, with the working-class movements hamstrung by the action of their own leaders, the capitalists have had their golden opportunity to press home their attack upon the disarmed and disorganised workers, and the Governments have not lost a moment to intervene and force the pace. In Italy the Government's irregulars, the Fascisti, have been set with redoubled energy to burn and loot and lynch the organised movement out of existence under the benevolent eyes of the authorities. At the Hague, the Russian workers have suddenly found the door closed upon them, as the triumphant capitalists have dropped their parleys and hesitations in view of their new-found sense of absolute power. In the United States the Government has taken the opportunity to bring all its resources, military and civil, to bear to crush the resistance of the miners, and has extended the attack to the whole trade union movement by the Coronado decision to make the union funds seizable. America is the last stage of the international capitalist offensive of the past two years. If the American miners go down, the last stronghold will have been won. The chain of capitalist victories, from Warsaw and the Italian metal workers in 1920, through the British Triple Alliance collapse and the failure of the German March action in 1921, to the British engineers and the American miners in 1922, will be complete. But the real victory of the capitalists will not be in the measure of the success of their battles or the defeats of the workers. The real victory of the capitalists will be if they have broken the spirit of the working-class movements into accepting the servitude which the leaders who have led them to defeat are now trying to impose upon them.

# ADDRESS TO THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE (1850)<sup>1</sup>

By KARL MARX

*[We are privileged to present to our readers an historical document of first-class importance in the shape of a work of Marx which has hitherto been inaccessible to the English reading public. The Address to the Communist League of Marx, in 1850, is the indispensable pendant to the Communist Manifesto of 1847, and the two together constitute the key to Marx's outlook on the fundamental problems of working-class policy. In no other work is the Marxian position on the question of revolution and democracy so clearly set out. Readers will note with interest Marx's insistence on (1) the necessity of attacking the "petty bourgeois democratic parties" which "call themselves socialist"; (2) the necessity for an independent working-class party, with an illegal as well as a legal organisation, to fight the petty bourgeois democratic influences; (3) the expectation of a petty bourgeois democratic victory, which the workers should help to bring about as a necessary stage to the revolutionary workers' struggle; (4) the necessity of forming alongside the petty bourgeois democratic government, as soon as set up, revolutionary workers' councils, to undermine its authority and force the issue; (5) the necessity of arming the proletariat and forming Workers' Guards to carry through the struggle to its conclusion.]*

## ADDRESS OF THE CENTRAL AUTHORITY TO THE LEAGUE

**B**RETHREN,—During the last two years of revolution (1848-49) the League doubly justified its existence. First, by the vigorous activity of our members; in all places and movements where they happened to be at that time they were foremost in the Press, on the barricades, and on the battlefields of the proletariat, the only revolutionary class in society. Secondly, through the League's conception of the whole upheaval, as enunciated in the circular letter of the Congresses and the Central Executive in 1847,<sup>2</sup> and particularly in the Communist Mani-

<sup>1</sup> Text taken from Max Beer's forthcoming *Inquiry into Dictatorship*.

<sup>2</sup> These circular letters are lost.

festos. This conception has been verified by the actual happenings of the last two years. Moreover, the views of the present-day social conditions, which we in former years used to propagate in secret meetings and writings, are now public property and are preached in the market-places and in the street corners.

On the other hand, the former rigid organisation of the League has considerably loosened, a great number of members who directly participated in the revolution have come to the conclusion that the time for secret organisation was passed, and that public propaganda alone would be sufficient. Various districts and communities lost contact with the Central Authority and have not resumed it. While the Democratic Party, the party of the petty bourgeoisie, enlarged and strengthened their organisation, the working-class Party lost its cohesion, or formed local organisations for local purposes, and therefore was dragged into the democratic movement and so came under the sway of the petty bourgeoisie. This state of things must be put an end to ; the independence of the working class must be restored. The Central Authority, as far back as the winter of 1848-49, saw the necessity for reorganisation and sent the missionary, Joseph Moll,<sup>8</sup> but this mission had no lasting result. After the defeat of the revolutionary movement in Germany and France in June, 1849, nearly all the members of the Central Authority reunited in London, supplemented by new revolutionary forces, and took the work of the reorganisation seriously in hand.

This reorganisation can only be accomplished by a special missionary, and the Central Authority thinks it most important that the missionary should start on his journey at this moment when a new upheaval is imminent; when therefore the working-class Party should be thoroughly organised and act unanimously and independently, if it does not wish again to be exploited and taken in tow by the bourgeoisie, as in 1848.

\* \* \* \*

We have told you, brethren, as far back as in 1848, that German Liberalism would soon come to power and would at once use it against the working class. You have seen how this has been fulfilled. It was the bourgeoisie who after the victorious movement of March, 1848, took the

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Moll, a German watchmaker, had been in London since 1840. As a Communist he also took part in the Chartist movement, in the Physical Force Wing, and had some heated discussions with Thomas Cooper, after the latter had turned a Moral Force man. Moll joined the German revolution in 1848-49 and fell in battle on July 19, 1849, at Baden.—M.B.

reins of government, and the first use they made of their power was to force back the working man, their allies in the fight against absolutism, to their former oppressed condition. They could not achieve their purpose without the assistance of the defeated aristocracy, to whom they even transferred governmental power, securing however for themselves the ultimate control of the Government through the budget. . . .

The part which the Liberals played in 1848, this treacherous rôle will at the next revolution be played by the democratic petty bourgeoisie, who, among the parties opposing the Government, are now occupying the same position which the Liberals occupied prior to the March revolution. This democratic party, which is more dangerous to the working men than the Liberal Party was, consists of the following three elements :—

- (i) The more progressive members of the upper bourgeoisie, whose object it is to sweep away all remnants of feudalism and absolutism;
- (ii) The democratic-constitutional petty bourgeoisie, whose main object it is to establish a democratic federation of the Germanic States;
- (iii) The republican petty bourgeoisie, whose ideal it is to turn Germany into a sort of Swiss republic. These republicans are calling themselves “reds” and “social democrats” because they have the pious wish to remove the pressure of large capital upon the smaller one, and of the big bourgeoisie upon the petty bourgeoisie.

All these parties, after the defeat they have suffered, are calling themselves republicans or reds, just as in France the republican petty bourgeoisie are calling themselves socialists. Where, however, they have the opportunity of pursuing their aims by constitutional methods they are using their old phraseology and are showing by deed that they have not changed at all. It is a matter of course that the changed name of that party does not alter their attitude towards the working class; it merely proves that in their struggle against the united forces of absolutism and large capitalists they require the support of the proletariat.

The petty bourgeois democratic party in Germany is very powerful. It embraces not only the great majority of the town population, the small traders and craftsmen, but also the peasantry and the agricultural labourers, in so far as the latter have not yet come into contact with the

proletariat of the towns. The revolutionary working class acts in agreement with that party as long as it is a question of fighting and overthrowing the Aristocratic-Liberal coalition; in all other things the revolutionary working class must act independently. The democratic petty bourgeoisie, far from desiring to revolutionise the whole society, are aiming only at such changes of the social conditions as would make their life in existing society more comfortable and profitable. They desire above all a reduction of national expenditure through a decrease of bureaucracy, and the imposition of the main burden of taxation on the landowners and capitalists. They demand, likewise, the establishment of State banks and laws against usury, so as to ease the pressure of the big capitalist upon the small traders and to get from the State cheap credit. They demand also the full mobilisation of the land, so as to do away with all remnants of manorial rights. For these purposes they need a democratic constitution which would give them the majority in Parliament, municipality, and parish.

With a view to checking the power and the growth of big capital the democratic party demand a reform of the laws of inheritance and legacies, likewise the transfer of the public services and as many industrial undertakings as possible to the State and municipal authorities. As to the working man—well, they should remain wage workers: for whom, however, the democratic party would procure higher wages, better labour conditions, and a secure existence. The democrats hope to achieve that partly through State and municipal management and through welfare institutions. In short, they hope to bribe the working class into quiescence, and thus to weaken their revolutionary spirit by momentary concessions and comforts.

The democratic demands can never satisfy the party of the proletariat. While the democratic petty bourgeoisie would like to bring the revolution to a close as soon as their demands are more or less complied with, it is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent, to keep it going until all the ruling and possessing classes are deprived of power, the governmental machinery occupied by the proletariat, and the organisation of the working classes of all lands is so far advanced that all rivalry and competition among themselves has ceased; until the more important forces of production are concentrated in the hands of the proletarians. With us it is not a matter of reforming private property, but of abolishing it; not of hushing up the class antagonism, but of



abolishing the classes; not of ameliorating the existing society, but of establishing a new one. There is no doubt that, with the further development of the revolution, the petty bourgeois democracy may for a time become the most influential party in Germany. The question is, therefore, what should be the attitude of the proletariat, and particularly of the League, towards it:—

(i) During the continuation of the present conditions in which the petty bourgeois democracy is also oppressed ?

(ii) In the ensuing revolutionary struggles which would give them momentary ascendancy ?

(iii) After those struggles, during the time of their ascendancy over the defeated classes and the proletariat ?

(i) At the present moment when the democratic petty bourgeoisie are everywhere oppressed, they lecture the proletariat, exhorting it to effect a unification and conciliation; they would like to join hands and form one great opposition party, embracing within its folds all shades of democracy. That is, they would like to entangle the proletariat in a party organisation in which the general social democratic phrases predominate, behind which their particular interests are concealed, and in which the particular proletarian demands should not, for the sake of peace and concord, be brought forward. Such a unification would be to the exclusive benefit of the petty bourgeois democracy and to the injury of the proletariat. The organised working class would lose its hard-won independence and would become again a mere appendage of the official bourgeois democracy. Such a unification must be resolutely opposed.

Instead of allowing themselves to form the chorus of the bourgeois democracy, the working men, and particularly the League, must strive to establish next to the official democracy an independent, a secret as well as a legal organisation of the working-class party, and to make each community the centre and nucleus of working-class societies in which the attitude and the interests of the proletariat should be discussed independently of bourgeois influences. How little the bourgeois democrats care for an alliance in which the proletarians should be regarded as co-partners with equal rights and equal standing is shown by the attitude of the Breslau democrats, who in their organ the *Oder-Zeitung* are attacking those working men who are independently organised, and whom they nick-name socialists, subjecting them to severe persecutions. The gist of the matter is this : In case of an attack

on a common adversary no special union is necessary; in the fight with such an enemy the interests of both parties, the middle-class democrats and the working-class party, coincide for the moment, and both parties will carry it on by a temporary understanding. This was so in the past, and will be so in the future. It is a matter of course that in the future sanguinary conflicts, as in all previous ones, the working men by their courage, resolution, and self-sacrifice will form the main force in the attainment of victory. As hitherto, so in the coming struggle, the petty bourgeoisie as a whole will maintain an attitude of delay, irresolution, and inactivity as long as possible, in order that, as soon as victory is assured, they may arrogate it to themselves and call upon the workers to remain quiet, return to work, avoid so-called excesses, and thus to shut off the workers from the fruits of victory. It is not in the power of the workers to prevent the petty bourgeois democrats from doing that; but it is within their power to render their ascendancy over the armed proletariat difficult, and to dictate to them such terms as shall make the rule of the bourgeois democracy carry within itself from the beginning the germ of dissolution, and its ultimate substitution by the rule of the proletariat considerably facilitated.

The workers, above all, during the conflict and immediately afterwards, must try as much as ever possible to counteract all bourgeois attempts at appeasement, and compel the democrats to carry out their present terrorist phrases. They must act in such a manner that the revolutionary excitement does not subside immediately after the victory. On the contrary, they must endeavour to maintain it as long as possible. Far from opposing so-called excesses and making examples of hated individuals or public buildings to which hateful memories are attached by sacrificing them to popular revenge, such deeds must not only be tolerated, but their direction must be taken in hand. During the fight and afterwards the workers must seize every opportunity to present their own demands beside those of the bourgeois democrats. They must demand guarantees for the workers as soon as the democrats propose to take over the reins of government. If necessary, these guarantees must be exacted, and generally to see to it that the new rulers should bind themselves to every possible concession and promise, which is the surest way to compromise them. The workers must not be swept off their feet by the general elation and enthusiasm for the new order of things which usually follow upon street battles; they must quench all ardour by a cool

and dispassionate conception of the new conditions, and must manifest open distrust of the new Government. Beside the official Government they must set up a revolutionary workers' Government, either in the form of local executives and communal councils, or workers' clubs or workers' committees, so that the bourgeois democratic Governments not only immediately lose all backing among the workers, but from the commencement find themselves under the supervision and threats of authorities, behind whom stands the entire mass of the working class. In short, from the first moment of victory we must no longer direct our distrust against the beaten reactionary enemy, but against our former allies, against the party who are now about to exploit the common victory for their own ends only.

(ii) In order that this party, whose betrayal of the workers will begin with the first hour of victory, should be frustrated in its nefarious work, it is necessary to organise and arm the proletariat. The arming of the whole proletariat with rifles, guns, and ammunition must be carried out at once; we must prevent the revival of the old bourgeois militia, which has always been directed against the workers. Where the latter measure cannot be carried out, the workers must try to organise themselves into an independent guard, with their own chiefs and general staff, to put themselves under the order, not of the Government, but of the revolutionary authorities set up by the workers. Where workers are employed in State service they must arm and organise in special corps, with chiefs chosen by themselves, or form part of the proletarian guard. Under no pretext must they give up their arms and equipment, and any attempt at disarmament must be forcibly resisted. Destruction of the influence of bourgeois democracy over the workers, immediate independent and armed organisation of the workers, and the exaction of the most irksome and compromising terms from the bourgeois democracy, whose triumph is for the moment unavoidable—these are the main points which the proletariat, and therefore also the League, has to keep in eye during and after the coming upheaval.

(iii) As soon as the new Government is established they will commence to fight the workers. In order to be able effectively to oppose the petty bourgeois democracy, it is in the first place necessary that the workers should be independently organised in clubs, which should soon be centralised. The central authority, after the overthrow of the existing Governments, will at their earliest opportunity transfer its headquarters

to Germany, immediately call together a congress, and make the necessary proposals for the centralisation of the workers' clubs under an Executive Committee, who will have their headquarters in the centre of the movement. The rapid organisation, or at least the establishment of a provincial union of the workers' clubs, is one of the most important points in our considerations for invigorating and developing the Workers' Party. The next result of the overthrow of the existing Government will be the election of a national representation. The proletariat must see to it first that no worker shall be deprived of his suffrage by the trickery of the local authorities or Government commissioners; secondly, that beside the bourgeois democratic candidates there shall be put up everywhere working-class candidates, who, as far as possible, shall be members of the League, and for whose success all must work with every possible means. Even in constituencies where there is no prospect of our candidate being elected, the workers must nevertheless put up candidates in order to maintain their independence, to steel their forces, and to bring their revolutionary attitude and party views before the public. They must not allow themselves to be diverted from this work by the stock argument that to split the vote of the democrats means assisting the reactionary parties. All such talk is but calculated to cheat the proletariat. The advance which the Proletarian Party will make through its independent political attitude is infinitely more important than the disadvantage of having a few more reactionaries in the national representation. The victorious democrats could, if they liked, even prevent the reactionary party having any successes at all, if they only used their newly won power with sufficient energy.

The first point which will bring the democrats into conflict with the proletariat is the abolition of all feudal rights. The petty bourgeois democrats, following the example of the first French Revolution, will hand over the lands as private property to the peasants; that is, they will leave the agricultural labourers as they are, and will but create a petty bourgeois peasantry, who will pass through the same cycle of material and spiritual misery in which the French peasant now finds himself.

The workers, in the interest of the agricultural proletariat as well as in their own, must oppose all such plans. They must demand that the confiscated feudal lands shall be nationalised and converted into settlements for the associated groups of the landed proletariat; all the advantages of large-scale agriculture shall be put at their disposal; these

agricultural colonies, worked on the co-operative principle, shall be put in the midst of the crumbling bourgeois property institutions. Just as the democrats have combined with the small peasantry, so we must fight shoulder to shoulder with the agricultural proletariat. Further, the democrat will either work directly for a federal republic, or at least, if they cannot avoid the republic one and indivisible, will seek to paralyse the centralisation of government by granting the greatest possible independence to the municipalities and provinces. The workers must set their face against this plan, not only to secure the one and indivisible German republic, but to concentrate as much power as possible in the hands of the Central Government. They need not be misled by democratic platitudes about freedom of the communes, self-determination, &c. In a country like Germany, where there are so many mediæval remnants to be swept away and so much local and provincial obstinacy to be overcome, under no circumstances must parishes, towns, and provinces be allowed to be made into obstacles in the way of the revolutionary activity which must emanate from the centre. That the Germans should have to fight and bleed, as they have done hitherto, for every advance over and over again in every town and in every province separately cannot be tolerated. As in France in 1793, so it is to-day the task of the revolutionary party in Germany to centralise the nation.

We have seen that the democrats will come to power in the next phase of the movement, and that they will be obliged to propose measures of a more or less socialistic nature. It will be asked what contrary measures should be proposed by the workers. Of course they cannot in the beginning propose actual communist measures, but they can (i) compel the democrats to attack the old social order from as many sides as possible, disturb their regular procedure and compromise themselves, and concentrate in the hands of the State as much as possible of the productive forces, means of transport, factories, railways, &c. (ii) The measures of the democrats, which in any case are not revolutionary but merely reformist, must be pressed to the point of turning them into direct attacks on private property; thus, for instance, if the petty bourgeoisie propose to purchase the railways and factories, the workers must demand that such railways and factories, being the property of the reactionaries, shall simply be confiscated by the State without compensation. If the democrats propose proportional taxation, the workers must demand progressive taxation; if the democrats themselves declare for a

moderate progressive tax, the workers must insist on a tax so steeply graduated as to cause the collapse of large capital; if the democrats propose the regulation of the National Debt, the workers must demand State bankruptcy. The demands of the workers will depend on the proposals and measures of the democrats.

If the German workers will only come to power and to the enforcement of their class interests after a prolonged revolutionary development, they will at least gain the certainty that the first act of this revolutionary drama will coincide with the victory of their class in France, and this will surely accelerate the movement of their own emancipation. But they themselves must accomplish the greater part of the work; they must be conscious of their class interests and take up the position of an independent party. They must not be diverted from their course of proletarian independence by the hypocrisy of the democratic petty bourgeoisie. Their battle-cry must be: "The revolution in permanence."

*London, March, 1850.*

# THE FUTURE OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

By HARRY POLLITT

**T**HE Fifty-fourth Annual Trades Union Congress will be held at Southport at a time when the workers' conditions are definitely below their pre-war status, and when the trade unions, after eighteen months' continuous struggle with the capitalists, have all been defeated. Such a situation naturally imposes on the leaders and active workers in the trade unions the duty of considering what is wrong with the existing methods of organising resistance to attacks, and how far the existing trade union organisations can be adapted to fit in with the need of the times.

Since the formation of the present General Council at Cardiff last year there has been a steady succession of lockouts and strikes. In every case the principal weakness has been the lack of a uniform policy and centralised leadership. While the present structure of the unions is undoubtedly faulty, it is certain that more could have been got out of these struggles had any attempt been made to face boldly the requirements of the situation and cut through the walls of prejudice and jealousy that characterise the present leadership of the unions.

Never has the need for this uniformity of action and policy been so great. Never have the opportunities for demonstrating the efficacy of new methods as against the old ones been so favourable. Never have the workers themselves shown, under such adverse circumstances, such a magnificent fighting spirit and such a desire for solidarity as during the last eighteen months. Despite all this, it is doubtful if there has ever existed such an absence of unity amongst the leaders of the unions as at present, the chief of whom all form the personnel of the General Council.

All of the leaders are men of influence and a great following, but not one of them has yet shown a desire to use that influence and following in an effort to win a common struggle. Why? Because in every strike or lockout no thought of a common victory for the working class enters into the plan of campaign. It is only the limited idea of "what I can get out of it for my union" that predominates.

This tendency was shown *par excellence* during the engineers' lockout. Here was a lockout that involved changes in workshop practice that must inevitably affect the whole relationship between the craft and the unskilled unions in the engineering industry. Yet during the whole of the prolonged negotiations we saw fifty-one different unions hedging and scheming, not for a common settlement, but all trying to get the best settlement for their own particular union, even when such settlement was at the expense of other unions.

Why can such a situation take place? Because, while the average trade union leader is prepared to pay lip service to solidarity, while he is prepared to call for it to be displayed here, there, and everywhere, the same man will never practise this slogan if it means interfering with his authority in his particular union. This is proved by the fact that not a single big trade union has a resolution down on the agenda for the Southport Conference indicating that it is prepared to give a lead to the Congress on this question of uniformity of policy and action.

Talk to any rank and filer, talk to any trade union official privately about what is wanted to make the trade unions more efficient, and they all admit that the chief problem is how to throw up from the movement a capable and efficient general staff that can lead and direct the unions from the class standpoint. Yet no preparatory work has been or is being done to prepare the minds of the workers for the necessity of breaking with the old ideas of sectional leadership and sectional action. The main problem at Southport is to do this. It will be a hard and difficult job, chiefly because the majority of the delegates are middle-aged men schooled and trained in the old ways and ideas. It will be harder still, because the present General Council are chiefly men who automatically were elected on the General Council because they had all been so many years on the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress.

The whole trade union movement in this country has grown up without any conception of common leadership. The very name of the only central body that existed until a year ago—the Parliamentary Committee—revealed the complete absence of any such conception. The Parliamentary Committee had no executive powers; it was formed to lobby Members of Parliament on legislation directly affecting the unions. After 1906, when the Labour Party received additions to its numbers, its functions in this direction largely ceased. From that



time until 1921 it occasionally waited upon ministers of Government Departments, calling their attention to some resolution passed at the last Congress. It was never intended to act as the leading body of the trade unions in their common struggles against the capitalists, and its worst enemies never accused it of trying to overstep its functions.

But if the unions had no conception of common leadership, the whole development of modern conditions was forcing the need of it upon them. Immediately before the war there had been a slow tendency towards amalgamation of unions catering for the same class of workers, clearly indicating the need for a common union at least. The development of industry was also accentuating this tendency towards amalgamation, and the experiences of the Movement during the early years of the war gave it a further impetus.

Owing to the peculiar condition prevailing during the war period, and the fear of Government interference should the union leaders act in any way that could be interpreted as sabotaging the production of munitions, the men in the workshops were compelled to throw up their own form of organisation that would enable them to settle their grievances, not in the branch room, but in the workshop. Thus there grew up the shop stewards' movement, which at once swept aside all theoretical arguments as to the impossibility of a common union and a common leadership and practically demonstrated what could be done.

Here was a golden opportunity for the leaders of the unions to have then taken steps to see that this new method and principle should be organised on a permanent basis and the unions overhauled to fit in with the ideas that at this time were sweeping the workers' minds.

But the opportunity was never taken. The unofficial movement remained unofficial, with all the weakness of such movements. The union leaders were being flattered and cajoled by the Government and Press, who were well aware of the danger threatening their whole structure; and in this way was deliberately created and developed the feeling of hostility between the official elements and the unofficial movement. Thus the capitalists succeeded in preventing the lessons of the Shop Stewards' Movement being hammered into a permanent form of organisation. When the end of the war came the unions went back to pre-war methods.

If the war presented opportunities to the unions that were lost, the same cannot be said of the capitalists. Every opportunity was

seized to establish closer contact with the State. It is more than a coincidence that 1916, which saw the birth of the War Cabinet with supreme power, also saw the birth of the Federation of British Industries, with supreme power as the leading body for all employers affiliated to it. By the end of the war the whole capitalist organisations had been thoroughly reorganised, and everywhere the principle aimed at was the same, viz., centralisation of policy and direction.

It was becoming obvious to the active men inside the unions that a similar policy must be aimed at for the unions, but save for an occasional speech or article nothing concrete was done to bring about the desired end. So the movement drifted along until the railway strike of 1919. This strike rudely awoke the movement to a sense of reality. It was at once seen that any strike involving masses of workers in a vital industry takes on a form that immediately involves other masses of workers and brings about a situation that compels the Government to intervene to crush the strike "with all the resources of the State."

The Cabinet was the central directing committee for the railway capitalists. The N.U.R. were unable to proceed alone. They were confronted with entirely new circumstances that had not been present in the 1911 strike. The strike had not been in progress many hours when a committee of fourteen was formed, consisting of prominent trade union leaders, representing what was called "the wider interests of the Movement."

It was not a committee of action. It could not bring to the N.U.R. the help of other unions, such as the road transport workers, by calling them out on strike. But the Cabinet could bring help to the railway companies by supplying road transport and a skeleton railway service. What the railway strike proved was that the railway capitalists had a committee of action in the Cabinet, and that the railway workers had a committee of mediators in the famous Fourteen.

The facts of the railway strike were noted, and the agitation was then definitely taken up to build up a general staff that can act as effectively for labour as the Cabinet acts for the capitalist. The agitation went on until, at the Cardiff Congress, the Parliamentary Committee was abolished and the present General Council of Trade Unions formed. The value of the formation of the General Council can be judged from the original powers given it.

That sentiment loomed larger than practical proposals in the

founding of the General Council is shown by a consideration of "The Duties of the General Council," as laid down at Cardiff:—

The General Council shall keep a watch on all industrial movements, and shall, where possible, co-ordinate industrial action.

It shall promote common action by the Trade Union Movement on general questions, such as wages and hours of labour, and any matter of general concern that may arise between trade unions and trade unions, and employers and trade unions, or between the Trade Union Movement and the Government, and shall have power to assist any union which is attacked on any vital question of trade union principle.

Where disputes arise, or threaten to arise, between trade unions it shall use its influence to promote a settlement.

It shall assist trade unions in the work of organisation, and shall carry on propaganda with a view to strengthening the industrial side of the Movement and for the attainment of any or all of the above objects.

It shall also enter into relations with the Trade Union and Labour Movements in other countries with a view to promoting common action and international solidarity.

In the event of a legal point arising which, in the opinion of the General Council (after consultation with counsel), should be tested in the House of Lords in the general interest of trade unionism, the Council shall be empowered to levy the affiliated societies *pro rata* to provide the necessary expenses. Any society failing to pay the levy shall be reported to Congress.

A careful examination of those duties shows at once the weakness of the present position. The General Council of Trade Unions "shall keep a watch," "where possible, co-ordinate industrial action," "promote common action," "use its influence," "carry on propaganda," "enter into relations," but nowhere in its list of duties *has the General Council any power to do anything* save go to the House of Lords (after consultation with counsel).

That is the fundamental weakness of the General Council, and that weakness is not a mechanical weakness, but is caused in many cases by the fact that many general secretaries of big trade unions who form the General Council are not prepared to give up one atom of control or leadership to anyone outside their own executive council.

Yet the struggles of the unions since the Cardiff Congress have been so continuous and severe, and the weaknesses of the existing leadership have been so exposed in those struggles, that the General Council themselves have been forced to consider the question of extending their own powers, and have placed the following resolution on the agenda of the Southport Conference:—

## (2) STANDING ORDER No. II. (DUTIES OF GENERAL COUNCIL)

Arising out of the inquiry into the Joint Defence of Trade Union Standards, the General Council submit the following additions to Standing Order No. II (Duties of General Council):—

- (a) As providing the means whereby the General Council shall be enabled to give effect to the foregoing Standing Order II it shall be an obligation upon the affiliated unions to keep the Council informed with regard to matters arising as between the unions and employers and/or between one union or another, in particular where such matters may involve directly or indirectly large bodies of workers.
- (b) That the general policy of the Council shall be that, unless requested to do so by the affiliated union or unions concerned, the Council shall not intervene so long as there is a prospect of whatever difference may exist on the matters in question being amicably settled by means of the machinery of negotiation existing in the trades affected.
- (c) In the event, however, of negotiations breaking and the deadlock being of a character as to directly or indirectly involve large bodies of workpeople affiliated to the Trades Union Congress in a stoppage of work, and or to imperil standard wages or hours and conditions of employment, the Council may take the initiative by calling representatives of the unions into consultation and use its influence to effect a just settlement of the difference. In this connection the Council, having ascertained all the facts relating to the difference, may tender its considered opinion and advice thereon to the union or unions concerned, and should the union or unions refuse the assistance or advice of the Council, the Council shall duly report to the Congress.
- (d) Where the Council intervenes, as before provided, and the union or unions concerned accept the assistance and advice of the Council, and where, despite the efforts of the Council, the policy of the employers enforces a stoppage of work by strike or lockout, the Council shall forthwith take steps to organise on behalf of the union or unions concerned all such moral and material support as the circumstances of the dispute may appear to justify. For this purpose the General Council shall if it deem necessary raise funds by a call upon the affiliated unions, proportionate to membership, to meet the expenditure of the Council in relation to the dispute.
- (e) Where a difference is one between one or more affiliated unions, failing a settlement, the General Council may require the parties to submit their case to the Disputes Committee of the Council, and in the event of the request of the General Council to the parties to so submit being refused, the Council shall duly report thereon to the Trades Union Congress. (*Trades Union Congress General Council.*)

The above proposals are totally inadequate to meet the existing need and situation. Nowhere in the resolution is there any indication that the General Council are to be given power to do anything in the way of action to help any union in a strike or lockout other than by moral and financial assistance.

This is the old method of approach, and indicates at once how tenaciously even the members of the Council are prepared to fight against any suggestion of control passing from their individual unions to the General Council.

If the General Council's powers are to be confined to imposing a levy on other unions not involved in the strike or lockout it just means turning the Council into a competing friendly society with the

General Federation of Trade Unions, which for years has rendered financial assistance to its constituents, and which was founded with the express purpose of enabling the unions to build up huge accumulations of funds that would enable the unions to win strikes and lockouts by preventing the capitalists from starving the workers into submission.

Have the unions affiliated to the General Federation any superior position? If this is the case, then why duplicate the work? If it is not, then something more than financial help must come within the purview of the General Council. There is no need to underrate the importance of financial assistance. Anyone who has been in a dispute knows the psychological effect of strike pay on the workers, even when it is only a trifling amount.

But the General Council stands (or should) for more than that. It is the leading body of the Trade Union Movement. Its members have the power and influence and following to make of it the most efficient body for organising resistance to the attacks of the capitalists. At the moment its present personnel may not be desirous of using that power, but the General Council must become the central fighting organ of the Trade Union Movement. To do this it will have to have power to take any action necessary to win strikes or lockouts.

That power to take action must not be confined to giving financial help, but must be extended to having power to call unions out on strike in support of any union engaged in a struggle with the capitalists, and where necessary it must have power to call a general strike.

If it has not this power now, it is what it must get or it fails in its idea of what a general staff ought to be. Either it wants to be the central fighting organ of the unions or it wants to be the central financial organ of the unions. There is no half-way house here, and the Southport delegates must face that position.

The conception that strikes are won on strike pay is to ignore all the lessons of the disputes of the last few years. Under modern conditions no strike or lockout can take place without involving such large masses of workers, and ultimately so many industries, that it is impossible to pay sufficient strike pay to all the men involved for any period of time. If this is the case, then the General Council must aim at shortening disputes by having the power to take action of a kind that will prevent a long-drawn-out conflict, and which brings to the help of a union on dispute the active assistance of other unions, thus

preventing, what is now all too common, unions, and even sections of the same union, undermining the position of the union on dispute by remaining at work. An example will make the position clear. The strike of the ship joiners in 1920-1 lasted eight months. Many of the strikers were absorbed in the building industry. The remainder were in receipt of a higher rate of strike pay than any other section of labour has ever had. Yet the strike dragged on, and was ultimately defeated. Money was there, but other unions were still at work in the shipyards, and as the ships were completed of all but the joinery work and then taken abroad to be finished, the full effects of the strike were never felt by the shipbuilding employers.

Had steps been taken to have organised action on the part of the other trade unions, the defeat could have been averted. The same applies to many strikes since the armistice, chief of which are the moulders', miners', and the engineers'. The Southport Congress must face the realities of the situation and give the General Council power to call for action by unions as well as power to levy unions. By this we do not mean that the General Council shall have full power and control in deciding when a strike shall take place, because neither the persons likely to be elected on the General Council nor the rank and file of the unions are yet converted to seeing clearly what the General Council must ultimately become. There is also a real danger at present of giving all power to a General Council many of whose members are obsessed with the idea of an industrial truce.

As an immediate practical step to making the General Council an effective body, we would suggest to the delegates at Southport that the decision to call a strike should be the right of the unions forming the various groups that at present constitute the Council. When such a decision is taken, the Council should then have power to call out any other union whose remaining at work would weaken the position of the unions on dispute, with further power to levy other unions not at the moment affected. The aim being always to make the strike as effective as possible, so that the victory is a class victory, which would then develop enormously a practical sense of power and solidarity.

If this is not done, and the powers of the General Council limited to what is contained in the resolution, it is well to see what will happen in actual practice.

There is a railway strike (not an unlikely event). The General Council impose a levy on the other unions, including the road transport workers, who would thus be paying a levy to help the railwaymen, and who, by remaining at work, would be destroying half the effectiveness of a railway strike, as modern road transport has increased enormously since the last strike. In other words, the road transport workers could only pay a levy to help the railways by drawing wages that are the result of work that is helping to defeat the railwaymen.

A consideration of any modern dispute brings out similar problems and similar contradictions if the present scheme is adopted. Therefore, the General Council must be given power to take direct action of the kind indicated. The whole movement must be roused to the realities of the existing situation. It is not enough to have a General Council, however strong its personnel, unless it is the reflection of the conscious purpose of the rank and file.

The movement stands in need of a great campaign for an extension of the present powers of the General Council. Past traditions and ideas must be broken down. Every trade union leader believes he is the best possible leader for his own union. The members think the same. This narrow tendency obscures the issues of the present day.

We can only break through the past by example and action, and if it is good to pay lip service to solidarity, then it is good the unions should practise it. In these days of attack, it is the fashion for many prominent members of the General Council to be continually deploring sectionalism; to be always asking the workers to vote solidly for Labour. If it is correct to do this, then it is correct to ask the workers to strike solidly in any given conflict.

It is not enough to be singing the praises of solidarity at Cardiff or Southport; we must build up a General Council that has the power to practise solidarity in actual labour conflicts. If we are not prepared to do this, and thus make the General Council the leading fighting organ of the unions, we are only playing with the idea, and the question of a general staff will become a hardy annual at the Trades Union Congress like the resolutions on "no more war" or the "nationalisation of mines."

# THE LEFT WING IN THE AMERICAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

By WM. Z. FOSTER

*(Secretary of the Trade Union Educational League)*

**W**ITHIN the last year a veritable revolution has taken place in the tactics of American militant unionists, probably as profound as any that has ever occurred in the history of the world's Labour movement. Up until a year or so ago the whole genius of the left-wing tactical programme was to destroy the old conservative trade unions, and to replace them with new, ideally conceived revolutionary organisations laid out according to blue-printed patterns. This destructive, dualistic attitude dominated our radical and revolutionary unionists to an extent hardly conceivable by those outside of the United States. But now all is changed. With wonderful rapidity the revolutionary elements, to a very large extent, have become convinced that the policy of dual unionism is futile, and they are turning their attention to the organisation of revolutionary nuclei within the old trade unions for the purpose of transforming them into militant organisations. This new movement is crystallising into the Trade Union Educational League. In order to understand this tactical right-about-face, and the factors leading up to it, it will be well for us to review briefly the historical course of the left-wing movement in American Labour unionism.

Despite the glaring backwardness of the American Labour movement, the workers of this country are notably militant in their struggles with capitalism. This is particularly fitting, because American capitalism is not only the most highly developed, but also the most aggressive in the entire world, and naturally provokes a militant reaction on the part of the workers. From the earliest days our Labour struggles have been marked by the most extreme bitterness, and violent battles with large lists of dead and wounded are "normal" accompaniments of American strikes. The recent outbreak in the mining fields, notably the battle at Herrin, Illinois, just the other day, where scores were killed, is only a typical incident in our acute Labour war. Thirty or forty years ago



Socialist students, considering the sharpness of the class struggle in America, often believed that this would be the first country to declare for the revolution. And our Labour movement, as if to bear out these hopes, was the most militant in the world. During the middle 'eighties the American trade unions, for militancy and advanced tactics if not for intellectual clearness, unquestionably stood in the forefront of international organised Labour. It was here, in 1886, that the general strike first received application on a large scale, and it was out of our big Labour struggles that International Labour Day, the First of May, was born. In those days both the Knights of Labour and the trade unions were equally militant and active. All indications were that the American Labour unions would be in the vanguard of the final world struggle against capitalism.

But along in the 'nineties the situation began to change and the movement to lose much of its militancy. This condition has continued until now we find that the American Labour movement, despite the natural aggressiveness of our working class and the highly developed state of capitalism, has become perhaps the most backward Labour movement in the world. Much, if not most, of the cause for this condition is to be traced to the profound change in tactics made by the radicals at the time, in the 'nineties, when the degeneration set in. In the militant period of the movement, that is until about 1890, the policy of the revolutionary unionists was to stay in the old organisations and to function there. Although these active spirits were only a handful, they found such fertile soil in the class-embittered American workers that they had no difficulty in stirring them as a movement to aggressive and far-reaching action. But in the 'nineties a new idea developed among the radicals. This was especially advocated by Daniel De Leon, one of the most powerful figures ever produced by the American Labour movement. His position was that if Socialist unions were to be had they must be organised from the beginning with a revolutionary philosophy and structure. He repudiated entirely the old craft unions, and demanded their destruction. His programme "took" with the radical unionists, and for twenty-five years they laboured diligently to put it into effect. Practically the entire left wing became committed to it. Dual industrial unionism developed almost into a religion with American revolutionaries. Anyone who opposed it or said a good word for the old trade union was looked upon as a renegade and a traitor.

In many ways the revolutionists' policy of dual unionism has tended to destroy the militancy and hinder the development of the American Labour movement. In the first place it has caused the revolutionists to largely waste their efforts, by turning their energies to the building up of all sorts of still-born organisations. Our Labour history is littered with the bones and wreckage of scores of dual revolutionary unions, which absorbed the life work of thousands of our militants, and resulted in no tangible organisation. The Socialist Trades and Labour Alliance, the Industrial Workers of the World, the One Big Union, and the Workers' International Industrial Union are types of general dual unions calculated to replace the whole Labour movement. All of them have been the most dismal kind of dismal failures. Likewise scores, if not hundreds, of dual unions in the various individual industries. To a great extent, for the past generation, American revolutionary unionists have been chasing Utopian rainbows. By their separatist tactics they have practically cancelled themselves as a positive factor in the Labour struggle. The amount of revolutionary energy lost has been prodigious.

But much worse than the direct failure of the revolutionary organisations is the indirect effect that this dual unionism has had upon the trade unions. In them it has dried up the very sources of progress. The Labour world now knows that all life and progress in mass trade unions depends upon the activities of an exceedingly minute minority of militants. These live wires are the heart and soul of every movement. The great harm that dual unionism has done to American Labour organisations is that it has robbed them of the life-giving help of these militants, by pulling the latter out and isolating them in futile Utopian industrial unions. A case in point is the Western Federation of Miners. Twenty-five years ago this was known as one of the most aggressive trade unions in the world. Its tremendous strikes in Colorado and elsewhere, which were marked with open battles against the company, State, and National armed forces, attracted international attention. The explanation of this extreme militancy was that the organisation was dominated by a handful of fighting unionists, Haywood, St. John, and others, who occupied all its strategic points and literally compelled its membership to fight. But this militancy was lost almost overnight, and in a manner unknown to any other Labour movement but ours. It happened thus: the W.F. of M. was one of the organisations that went to form the I.W.W. in 1905, but it withdrew after a year's affiliation.

When it went into the I.W.W. it took its fortified crew of militants with it, but when it went out it left them behind in the I.W.W., as they cast in their fortunes with that organisation. The result was the robbing of the W.F. of M. of its very soul. It was devitalised, and from that day to this its degeneration has proceeded. Now, reduced almost to nothing and ashamed of its militant past, it has even abandoned the glorious name of the Western Federation of Miners and taken on the title of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers. That was the penalty paid by the W.F. of M. for the loss of its live wires through dual unionism.

For thirty years the whole trade union movement has been similarly systematically bled of its livest and best elements. The havoc wrought is enormous. The general result is that the old bureaucracies have been left in uncontested control of the trade unions, to do as they liked with them. Naturally enough, they have choked back all progress in the movement. Dual unionism, by constantly breaking up all revolutionary opposition, has been a bulwark of strength to Mr. Gompers and his crew. It has sucked the very life out of the American Labour movement. More than anything else, it is primarily responsible for America's paradoxical situation of having at once the world's most advanced capitalist class and the world's most backward Labour movement. Dual unionism has cursed and ruined American Labour.

Although the overwhelming bulk of the left wing in the American Labour movement was violently in favour of dual unionism for many years, still there was a small minority which favoured working to accomplish revolutionary organisation through the development of the old trade unions. The first tangible sign of this in later years was the organisation of the Syndicalist League of North America in 1912. At the time this organisation was founded the fortunes of the I.W.W. and other dual unions were very low and it made considerable headway. But its progress was definitely halted by the outbreak of the Lawrence strike and several other industrial upheavals led by the I.W.W. These movements rejuvenated the dual union idea and practically killed off the Syndicalist League. About the time when the Syndicalist League was most active Tom Mann visited the United States. He told American revolutionaries that their places were in the old organisations. But he was a prophet speaking in the wilderness. The bitter lessons of dual unionism were still to be learned.

The next important move to organise the revolutionary minority in the trade unions took place in 1916. The organisation was called the International Trade Union Educational League. This was comparatively short-lived. Groups were established in many industries and localities, but soon afterward the United States went into the Great War and the movement died out. The mass of the revolutionary unionists were still altogether loyal to the historic American policy of dual unionism.

The latest attempt to draw together the rebel elements in the old craft unions was launched in November, 1920, by the organisation of the Trade Union Educational League. To begin with, this body met with the same indifference as its predecessors, the S.L. of N.A. and the I.T.U.E.L. For the first year of its life it amounted to little or nothing, having only a few scattered groups here and there. But of a sudden a most remarkable change took place in the revolutionaries' minds regarding dual unionism. Almost overnight they became convinced of the folly of this policy. For this quick change of front the experience of the Russian revolution is largely responsible. That great upheaval made clear, especially through the writings of Lenin, Radek, and Losovsky, the tremendous power of the militant working among the masses, whether these masses are in the army, the industries, the trade unions, or what not. Like a flash almost, it became evident to the thinking rebels that they had been wasting their own efforts in dual unionism and thus depriving the trade unions of the very source of life. The attitude of the Third International and the Red Trade Union International on dual unionism stimulated their thought and understanding of this matter. Then the Trade Union Educational League took on remarkable vitality. As we write practically the whole revolutionary union movement, except the die-hards in the I.W.W., W.I.I.U., &c., is swinging rapidly into it. Unless all signs fail, the American revolutionaries, extremists like everything else American, will soon be as violently against dual unionism as they were in favour of it a year ago. Quite evidently our movement is going to make a determined experiment with the long-condemned tactics of working within the old trade unions.

The Trade Union Educational League is founded upon the general principle of establishing nuclei, or *ячейки*, of revolutionaries in all branches and stages of the trade union movement, starting with the

local unions and mounting upwards to the national conventions. By locality the unit of the organisation is the Local General Groups. These bodies are made up of members of all trade unions in given districts, shadowing so to speak the respective Central Labour Councils. The Local General Groups are divided into industrial sections, one for each of the principal industries, such as coal-mining, railroading, general transport, building, printing, clothing, &c. Nationally the industrial section idea also obtains. All the rebel elements in the various craft unions of a given industry are combined into a national section of that industry, which has a secretary to look after its business. The combined secretaries of the educational groups in the national industrial sections make up the Executive Board of the Trade Union Educational League. In the near future it is expected that district organisations, such as Eastern, Central, Western, and Canadian, will be set up to facilitate the co-operation of the militants in the various organisations. The official organ is the *Labour Herald*, published in Chicago, where the headquarters of the League is located. The T.U.E.L. charges no dues to its members, neither does it allow Labour unions to affiliate to it. These precautions are to protect it from the charge of being a dual union. The membership is purely upon a voluntary and individual basis. The first national conference of the League will be held in Chicago on August 26-27 of this year.

The Trade Union Educational League is organising the left bloc in the trade unions on the basis of a few general revolutionary principles. Among these, one of importance is the development of industrial unionism through the amalgamation of the existing trade unions. Another is the abolition of the prevailing trade union political policy of "rewarding Labour's friends and punishing its enemies" and the substitution therefor of a militant working-class political party and programme. In addition, it is working diligently for the affiliation of the American Labour movement to the Red Trade Union International. And finally, it aims at educating the workers to the futility of hoping for any relief through the capitalist system, and turning their energies toward the establishment of a workers' republic.

The League has branches in all large cities and districts of the United States and Canada. In every important Labour union in these two countries its workers are to be found carrying on a militant campaign for transforming the antiquated trade union movement into a virile

revolutionary organisation. Just now it is making a particularly live issue of amalgamation. Hundreds of local unions, dozens of central labour councils, and several national unions have been won over to the general plan of amalgamating the existing craft unions into industrial organisations. The League is everywhere meeting with strong resistance from the reactionaries. Mr. Gompers has denounced it time and again through the official organ of the A.F. of L. and the capitalist papers generally. The presidents of most of the national unions, together with others of their executive officers, are going up and down the country attacking the League, while their official journals teem with slanders against it and misrepresentations of its policies and purposes. Never for thirty years past has the trade union movement of the United States been so stirred by radical activities as it is at the present time.

For the Trade Union Educational League the future is full of promise. The old trade union bureaucracy is intellectually dead and spiritually bankrupt. Absolutely no progress may be looked for from that source. The dead hand of Mr. Gompers holds the old officialdom securely in an icy grasp. He will not tolerate even the mildest progressivism on their part. And as for the Socialist minority, which was very strong in recent years, it has practically disappeared, due to the havoc wrought in its ranks by the war and the left-wing split-offs from the party. What little there is left of it is sadly degenerated—at the recent convention of the A.F. of L. in Cincinnati the pitiful spectacle was seen of the so-called Socialist unions of Ladies' Garment Workers, Fur Workers, and Jewellery Workers voting for every plank in Mr. Gompers's reactionary platform, and against industrial unionism, recognition of Soviet Russia, progressive candidates for the Executive Council, &c. For this treason Mr. Schlesinger, head of the Ladies' Garment Workers, was elected fraternal delegate to the British Trades Union Congress. In the American trade union movement there is no other organised source of progress except the Trade Union Educational League. It is the sole refuge of the dynamic spirits in our Labour organisations, the one ray of hope in an otherwise dismal situation of black reaction. Beyond question it will exert a tremendous influence during the next few years in shaping the course for American Labour.

# GREEK IMPERIALISM AND SIR BASIL ZAHAROFF

By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

I do not want to mention names, but there is one name that I shall mention, because I have spoken of it at various times in the House, and I want on this occasion to get rid of it for good and all, and that is the name of a very great financier, who is reputed to be the richest man in the world—Sir Basil Zaharoff. Let me say that I do not know that gentleman, but let me give briefly the rumours I have heard about him. He is, first of all, reputed to be a very great philanthropist, a very great educationist, a great patron of the arts, and a man who spends his money generously. It is, secondly, generally said that his very great wealth is derived from this source: that he has owned munition factories in many countries of the world, and that consequently war has been an extremely profitable industry to him. There is no more profitable way of making money, I imagine, than owning munition factories in countries hostile to each other. If you own Vickers—and he is reputed to own a great number of shares in Vickers—and if you own Krupps, whether Germany be beaten or whether England be defeated, the fortunate possessor of those shares may be quite certain of making a very handsome profit. Again, it is said that Sir Basil Zaharoff helped us a great deal in the war by giving us loans. I am quite prepared to believe that, but if it were the case why not say that that was the reason for his decoration? Again, this is said about him, and this I believe to be a fact: he has been one of the strong supporters of the Greek policy. The result of that Greek policy has been that the whole of the East is in chaos, and that Great Britain has made enemies throughout the entire East. Sir Basil Zaharoff is reputed to have paid £4,000,000 sterling out of his own pocket for the upkeep of the Greek invading force in Asia Minor.—*Lieut.-Colonel Hon. Aubrey Herbert, M.P., House of Commons, July 17, 1922.*

**T**HE reports and rumours that have been current in the Press lately on the subject of the activities and aspirations of the Greek Government make an examination of the factors in the complex equation of Hellenic imperialism particularly important at this juncture.

Statements have been made on more or less accurate and adequate information as to the intention of King Constantine and his advisers to push forward their claims to Constantinople by force of arms and, by a dramatic and highly dangerous advance upon the age-long goal of Greek nationalist ambition, to present the Powers with a *fait accompli*. The British and the French Governments, with equal apparent emphasis, but with a real determination on the part of the former by no means so great as that which inspires the latter, have threatened the Greeks with pains and penalties should they take so rash a step as to assault the lines of Chatalja and try to enter the Turkish capital. The

British authorities have ordered warships to the Bosphorus, and sent up two further battalions of soldiers from Malta to strengthen the garrison in occupation at the Straits. At the same time, however, the French Press has been insinuating that the British Government, for all its verbal protests and its movements of men and ships, is not altogether ill-disposed to the gestures of the Greeks. Certainly it is ominous that, on the eve of renewed conversations between the British and French Governments on the problems of the Near East, the Greeks, who are the inveterate enemies of France's protégés and debtors, the Ottoman Turks, should have moved towards the Straits reinforcements such as the British Government, in its present mood of economy, could not have provided to strengthen the arm of its diplomacy. It is yet more ominous that Smyrna should have been proclaimed a "free state."

There is something big happening behind the veil of obscurity that is drawn across the East.

During the last few weeks there have been three interesting disclosures, two in the financial Press and the other in Parliament, concerning valuable concessions in the Near East granted to British capitalists. The first of these concerned an important concession for industrial developments in Rumania recently secured by the Paris representative of Messrs. Vickers, viz., Sir Basil Zaharoff. The second was relative to a very valuable concession granted to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to exploit petroleum wells in Greek Macedonia. The third was brought to light by Mr. C. L'E. Malone, who drew from the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Harmsworth, the admission that, some time ago, the great firm of public works contractors, Sir Robert MacAlpine & Sons, had obtained a concession to erect extensive harbour works at the Piræus. Mr. Malone was not equally successful in getting confirmation of what is, however, generally credited throughout the East, viz., that the same firm has received even more valuable favours from King Constantine's Government in and around the "free" town of Smyrna.

Now, at the present time, the Standard Oil Company is the only petroleum vending firm to have a jetty for bunkering purposes and oil tanks of any size or consequence in Near Eastern waters, and these are situated in the neighbourhood of Smyrna.

It is evident that the Anglo-Persian Company, which, in the Near East, operates, at any rate on the distributive side, in conjunction with



Sir Basil Zaharoff, is preparing to dispute with its American rival the market which the latter at present controls. Sir Robert MacAlpine & Sons have regularly been contractors on works for either the Anglo-Persian Oil Company or for the subsidiaries and associates of Vickers Ltd. These three concerns, together with the Marconi interests, form a group generally to be found acting in conjunction.

Hence what we are witnessing on the economic plane is another vigorous offensive which, appropriately, has its counterpart in the realms of Greek imperialism and of British diplomacy.

We say, advisedly, another vigorous offensive, because scarcely had the armistice become effective in the Near East than two British capitalist institutions made their way—the one to Constantinople and the other to Athens. The British Trade Corporation, a State constituted and chartered bank, took over the National Bank of Turkey and established the Levant Company to develop trade throughout the Near East. The Federation of British Industries (which had fathered the British Trade Corporation on the Government) appointed its first trade commissioner, significantly enough, to Athens, where his address was given as c/o H.M. Embassy.

The Federation of British Industries was in its initiation very largely the creation of Vickers Ltd. Now, during the war, there came more and more into the foreground a great magnate, a great *entrepreneur*, emerging mysteriously out of nowhere in particular, or, at least, from nowhere that anyone could accurately divine, viz., the Paris representative of Vickers Ltd. The world of high finance and of high politics became conscious of the all-powerful influence of Sir Basil Zaharoff.

Sir Basil Zaharoff was a Greek. There is doubt as to whether he had always been of Greek nationality. Some reports make him out to have been a Russian; others an Armenian. Finally, everyone agrees, he became a Greek, and to-day he is resident in France and holds an English title. Most people think of him as being the man behind Vickers Ltd. They think of him as the master of millions. But adventurers, like Zaharoff, however distinguished and however accomplished, do not accumulate such vast credits and such immeasurable resources as he has brought to the service of Vickers and their associates.

Zaharoff is operating with an immense fortune. It is not, however, or at any rate was not, Zaharoff's fortune. It was the fortune of a

great mercantile family of Greek extraction, for whom Zaharoff has been the nominee and the agent. Zaharoff, in this the heyday of Greek mercantile capitalist achievement, is merely the visible, but not too visible, operator on behalf of interests which through many decades have been moulding in secret the diplomacy of the Powers, with a view to their own enthronement as the unquestioned masters of the whole of the Near and Middle East.

During a whole century there has been passing through its various stages of development a nationalist movement which, beginning as an agitation for the emancipation of the Greeks from the domination of the Ottoman Empire, has now culminated in a formidable endeavour by the organised expression of the Greek bourgeoisie to bring into complete economic subjection all the peoples of the former Ottoman Empire. The problem of the Near East, which has been becoming ever more acute, has been one of reconciling the old order of the Ottoman State and the new and ever more ambitious Greek capitalist class which has, now in one way and again in another, been striving to assert its liberty of action and, in the last resort, its own absolute dominion. Through many vicissitudes and the most tortuous mazes of diplomacy and of war, the Greek capitalists have employed their ever-increasing economic power to obtain for themselves, if not under their own flag then under that of Russia, France, or Britain, the privileges which they have coveted. To-day, on the morrow of the world war, they see themselves, thanks to the collapse of Tsardom and the conflicting ambitions of Britain and France, about to enter into the fullness of their imperial heritage.

Prior to the year 1774, when, by the Treaty of Koutchouk-Kainardji, the Russians not only secured for themselves free passage of their merchandise through the Dardanelles, but also obtained for their Greek protégés the right of trading under the Russian flag, albeit they remained Ottoman subjects, the trade of Turkey was almost entirely in the hands of French and British members of the privileged Turkey and Levant companies. From that time onwards the Greeks in the islands of the Archipelago and in the ports of the Ottoman Empire made enormous progress as merchants and shipowners. Thanks to the wars between the great Powers between 1776 and 1784, and again between 1792 and 1815, the Greeks became the carriers of the Mediterranean.

"From the middle of the eighteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth centuries," says Joannes Gennadius, in *Hellenism in England*, "the commerce, enterprise, and general education of the Greek race took an extraordinary development. Greek ships, necessarily flying the Turkish flag, but owned and manned by Greeks, practically monopolised the trade of the Black Sea, the Ægean, and most of the Mediterranean. Odessa grew out of an originally humble establishment of Greek grain traders, and Trieste was brought into commercial prominence by Greek merchants."

Until the close of the Napoleonic wars, the Greeks, organised in trading and shipping associations at Chios, Psara, Odessa, and other centres, were careful to remain Turkish subjects under occasional, and when expedient, Russian patronage. When, however, they no longer required to avail themselves of Turkish neutrality, and had, moreover, accumulated immense profits in the grain and currant trades, the Greek merchants permitted the peasantry to bring the gathering revolt to a head. Before this occurred, however, the Rallis had betaken themselves to Leghorn and to London, and the Argentis to Marseilles, where, of course, they secured the protection of the Austrian, British, and French flags, and so became immune from loss by reason of the revolution or the ensuing war or wars between Greece and Turkey.

The trade and shipping of Italy was largely in Greek hands, and they had huge investments in Austrian loans. The great source of their revenues, however, increasingly was their virtual monopoly of the grain trade between the Black Sea and the growing industrial centres of Britain.

The Rallis, for instance, organised and secured complete control of the grain trade between Odessa and Liverpool. It is a noticeable fact that the greatest champion of Greek nationalism in the nineteenth century was Gladstone, himself the son of one of the greatest dealers in Baltic and Black Sea corn. Cobden, like Ricardo and others before him, frankly avowed and availed himself of the material basis of his phil-Hellenic and pro-Russian sympathies, *i.e.*, the exchange of calico for corn.

The Liberals, the cotton exporters and corn importers of the middle nineteenth century, were the staunchest champions of Greek nationalism, and never rested until they had imposed an English constitution on Greece and given her a king to govern her in the

interests of the Baltic Corn Exchange, *i.e.*, a scion of the Danish royal family.

Greece, from 1863 onwards, was ruled in the interest of the Gladstones of Liverpool, the Hambros of Copenhagen, and the Rallis of Chios—all of them in the corn trade.

During the American Civil War the Greek merchants went heavily into cotton in Egypt, and the Benachis, the Rallis, and the Rodocanachis began, and with success, to vie with the French for the mortgage, investment, and trading opportunities of the Nile Valley. Sir Ernest Cassel was a mere creature of the Greek cotton kings as Cromer was a mere tool of Cassel.

The Greek corn and cotton merchants more generally operated from London, Liverpool, Antwerp, Frankfurt, and Marseilles. They seldom appeared in the picture as financiers, but extended their enormous available credits through such firms as Bischoffsheims, the Société Générale de Paris, the Banque de Paris, Frühling & Goschen, the Oppenheims, the d'Erlangers, and, later, Sir Ernest Cassel and his National Bank of Egypt. In the "middle 'eighties" the Greek traders, as cotton merchants, were concentrating on Egypt and, to some extent, on India; as corn merchants they were extremely heavily involved in India and in the Argentine. These were also the years when Greece again secured admission to the charmed circle of the Powers who might borrow money on the Bourses. They were the years when she was represented simultaneously at London, the Hague, and Washington by J. Gennadius, who had received his financial education from, and ever retained the closest relations with, Ralli Brothers. They were the years when not only was Gennadius the most intimate friend of Edward, Prince of Wales, but when the wife of the Master of the Ceremonies at the English Court was a daughter of the Rallis. There were two great financiers, also intimates of the Prince of Wales, great friends of the Rallis, Sir Ernest Cassel and Baron Beaumont d'Erlanger. Cassel was the creditor of Egypt; d'Erlanger was the creditor of Greece.

The money power of the Greek merchants, even of those resident in and naturalised in London and Marseilles, was not, however, comparable as yet with that of the older generation of merchants and bankers who controlled the Imperial Ottoman Bank and who belonged to the great mercantile and railway oligarchies of France, Holland, and

Britain. They could not as yet come out from under the banners of those three protecting Powers (Britain, France, and Russia) who guaranteed "the independent monarchical and constitutional state" of the Hellenes and, avowedly, pursue their aims under the flag of Greece. Economically and politically they realised their limitations during the Cretan revolt and the Turkish War in the "'nineties." Greece became more than ever a vassal to the lords of West European capitalism.

For a time the Greek bourgeoisie had to content itself with making sure of the great estate of Egypt, where, under British auspices and under British guise, they became the real rulers. They helped, far more than has yet been realised, to create the Entente Cordiale. They participated to an enormous extent in the capitalisation of Russian resources and in the loans to the Tsardom which followed upon the 1905 revolution. It was they who helped to bring together Britain and Russia. It was they who were the interested parties scheming to possess and to enjoy, under one flag or another and, after new wars, under their own flag, the territories of the Ottoman Empire.

It was no coincidence, but in the nature of things, that Venizelos, the hero of Crete and the friend of Zaharoff, himself the creature of the cotton and corn kings, came to power in Greece in 1910, and thereby initiated a policy that led up to the Balkan Wars, the Great War, and to the long foreseen and eventual mutual annihilation of the "protecting Powers" in a war for the East.

Amongst the first acts of Venizelos was to create a Ministry of Agriculture, Commerce, and National Economy, and to instal therein Emmanuel Benachi, director of the National Bank of Egypt and the greatest cotton merchant in Alexandria.

Venizelos, thanks to his Balkan League, added Macedonia and a part of Thrace to the kingdom of Greece, thereby doubling its area. In 1915 and 1916 he laboured to bring Greece into the Great War, having been offered by Grey territories behind Smyrna that would again double the area of the kingdom. True, Greece would have to cede a part of Macedonia to Bulgaria, but the latter was to buy out all Greek property therein. Venizelos was dismissed by his king, to depart for Crete and to reappear at Salonika, there to be welcomed by General Sarrail.

Venezilos was the protagonist of a Greek entente and alliance with

France. He has gone. Constantine has returned. The Francophile advocate of a bourgeois republic has made way for the cousin of the King of England. Schneider-Creusot and the Banque de l'Union Parisienne have received a check. Vickers Ltd., the British Trade Corporation, and the Federation of British Industries are in the ascendant.

France, the holder of 70 per cent. of the Turkish debts, is supporting the Turks and in touch with the Government at Angora. Britain favours the Greeks in their occupation of Smyrna and their advance into the hinterland to emancipate the peoples of Asia Minor, "the granary of the Old World."

If the British come out on top, the Benachis, Rallis, and Rodocanachis in London will be none the worse off. If the French come out triumphant, the Argentis, Rodocanachis, and Rallis of Marseilles will not lament.

If the French and British mutually annihilate each other, then, indeed, may the Greek bourgeoisie come into its own!

# WHEN LABOUR RULED —IN AUSTRALIA

By AN EX-RULER

The downfall of the Labour Government can be attributed to the inability of the Parliamentary representatives of Labour to deal with labour and industrial problems and the incompetence of the Labour Government to carry its reforms into effect.—*Secretary of Australian Seamen's Union, April, 1922.*

**F**OR the last twelve years a series of Labour Governments in the States and the Commonwealth have been trying to appease the appetites of the Australian workers. They have been returned to office on high hopes and boundless promises. But their performances have fallen so far short of the expectations that they aroused that the workers have grown gradually apathetic towards them, whereupon they have been defeated at the polls or ceased to be Labour.

The latest collapse—that of the Dooley administration in New South Wales—was little less than a landslide. At the March elections, under proportional representation, they were defeated with a quite unprecedented turnover of votes after a bare two years of unfruitful rule. The most solemn of their pre-election pledges to the industrialists remained unfulfilled. All that they had to show for two years' rule was an enormous deficit, an unprecedented volume of unemployment, and a 3s. wages cut. The seamen's secretary very acutely summed up the causes of Labour's debacle. It was not, as the capitalist Press allege, the new objective adopted at Brisbane (to which the New South Wales Party had never subscribed) nor any resolutions of an industrial body hostile to the Australian Labour Party that caused that result, but simply the apathy of the disappointed wage earners which led to the break up of their solidarity. And, indeed, our opening sentence would serve as a diagnosis for the fate of most Australian Labour Governments. The defeat of Labour at the local government elections in Queensland last year tells the same tale.

The Australian workers are disillusioned of political action on the old lines. This is not surprising to those who know the facts; what needs explanation is why they were so slow to realise the futility of the old political fetishes. But the process of disillusionment is highly instructive, and we shall try here to trace its course.

§ 1.—*The Labour Programme and its Origins*

In the first place we must recall that the Australian Labour Parties—the six States were, at the time, politically distinct and unconnected—were created to defend unionism in the great industrial depression of the early 'nineties. The forces of Labour had been routed on the industrial field in the great strikes of 1890 (maritime workers and coalminers), 1891 and 1894 (shearers), and 1892 (silver miners). Those defeats seemed to have been largely attributable to the control of the State machine by the employing class through the older political parties. Strike breakers had been armed and protected by the police; savage sentences had been inflicted upon unionists; while scabs had been given *carte blanche* to shoot them down; special legislation had even been passed to suppress strike camps and disarm the bush unionists.

But if the State was under the domination of the employing class, there seemed no reason why it should remain so in countries where every man had a vote and the wage earners formed a majority of the electorate. Hence independent Labour Parties were formed to wrest the control of the governmental machinery from the hands of the propertied class. Unionism, worsted on the industrial field, was to be rehabilitated by the capture of political power. This aim has left a deep impression on the Labour platform, and has, in fact, set the key for all subsequent developments. The concrete proposals put forward at the start, and subsequently expanded, were directed mainly to the State protection of labour by statutory limitation of hours of work, factory laws, and the like. And, in addition to legislation, the administrative activities of the State were to be utilised for the benefit of the wage earners. The Governments being the largest single employers of labour were to raise the tone of the labour market by paying trade union rates, giving preference to unionists, and carrying out large developmental works to absorb the unemployed.

Finally, the success of the employers' attacks on unionism in the name of "freedom of contract"—in the pursuit of which agreements were more than once shamelessly broken—led to the acceptance of the plan of compulsory arbitration, which should give legal recognition and protection to unionism and confer upon collective agreements the sanctity of legally enforceable contracts.

Such in substance was the Labour programme that crystallised out



from the black years of depression. Local conditions certainly gave it special peculiarities. The fact, for example, that industry was actually organised on a continental basis overstepping the artificial State boundaries led unionists to desire a central government to regulate industrial conditions throughout Australia, and ranged the Labour Parties on the side of the Federationists. The threat to the standards of white workers from cheap, plentiful, and seemingly non-unionisable coloured labour attached the wage earners, for purely economic reasons, to the White Australia ideal. The desire to create employment and maintain wage standards against the products of cheap labour countries ultimately induced the Party to accept the new protection doctrine. But the guiding principle has remained the protection of Labour and its organised expression through control of the State machinery of legislation and administration.

On the other hand, Socialist doctrines, as expressed by Bellamy and the English Fabians, supplied an inspiration to the founders of the political Labour Movement. In Queensland the Party began its activity as avowedly socialistic, and in other States Socialists wielded considerable influence in its councils. Their theory was simple. The railways, waterworks, post and telegraph systems, and many other utility services were already publicly owned. Popular sentiment favoured public ownership at least of such utilities, and might well be won over to extensions of the principle. The workers would naturally support it as widening the sphere in which their expected control of Parliament could be turned directly to account. Finally, sections of primary producers, who found themselves compelled to sell their raw products to monopolistic combines—cane to the Colonial Sugar Refining Co., ores to a few groups of smelters, farm produce to a ring of middlemen—would find in State sugar mills, smelters, and agencies relief from the exactions of the growing trust. Hence, with capitalist industry imperfectly developed, the peaceable creation of a Socialist Commonwealth by the mere extension of the industrial functions already exercised by the State seemed perfectly feasible. That was the plan eventually formulated in 1905 as the objective to be prefixed to the Labour platform:—

The securing of the full results of their industry to all wealth producers by the collective ownership of monopolies and the extension of the industrial and economic functions of the State.

But the acceptance even of this mild objective was not accomplished without a struggle. J. S. T. McGowen, who had led the New South Wales Party for fifteen years, warned the conference that the proposal would not gain them a single vote, but would lose them many. Buby, one of his colleagues, besought delegates to be practicable and not give up the possibility of doing things to ally themselves with theorists.

### § 2.—*The Political Contradictions in the Labour Programme*

This incident brings us to the first of the contradictions that vitiate the theory of political Labour in Australia and that have rendered its apparent successes almost worthless. As W. M. Hughes told the 1910 Conference, their aim was "to capture the legislature." That had involved an alliance between the proletariat and other elements discontented with the old middle-class parties. The latter had been dominated by the big pastoral interests and city bankers and middlemen. Against these the small farmer, the prospector, and other small producers and shopkeepers had a standing feud. From the very first the Labour politicians had sought to win the support of these petit bourgeois elements. They had also appealed to general democratic sentiment, while their policy of a White Australia and the closer political union of the whole continent—founded, as we have said, on genuine economic needs—had won them increasing support from influential sections outside the ranks of the wage earners. It was on the votes of such classes, reinforced later by the Roman Catholics and the publicans, that Labour had to rely for the capture of the political machine and the accomplishment of its programme. From the first the Party platform had offered many baits to tempt such voters. In 1905 a nationalist clause, "The cultivation of an Australian sentiment based upon the maintenance of racial purity and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community," had been given pride of place over Socialism in the objective, to show, as J. C. Watson, the Federal leader, put it, the identification of the Party with that sentiment of Australian nationalism which was growing up without a leader or a party to rely on. (*The Australian Worker*, February 11, 1905.)

But the interests of such elements naturally clash with those of the proletariat. The last thing the farmer or prospector desires is high wages or good housing conditions for rural workers. In all the

fundamental issues of the class war these elements would, one and all, range themselves against the proletariat. They represent an extremely individualistic class to whom Socialism is abhorrent, though individual groups may be won over to support State sugar mills or smelters as a defence against their own exploitation by trusts. Again, nationalist sentiment became confused with racial prejudice, and led to the identification of the Labour Party with navalism and compulsory militarism. Hence, in attempting to conciliate such extra-proletarian elements in the electorate, the Labour platforms became patchworks of incoherent and mutually contradictory bribes.

But the embarkation of the Labour Movement on the sea of politics meant the enthronement of the politician and the subordination of the industrial to the political movement. Professional members of Parliament, with gold rail passes and comfortable salaries, and the glittering rays of office dazzling their eyes, were entrusted with the leadership of the wage earners. These gentlemen saw that the success of the Party was bound up with the conciliation of the middle-class vote above described, and devoted their energies to that end. Hence their opposition to Socialism.

So again, arbitration, accepted as a protection to unionists against victimisation and a remedy against the employers' treachery, was represented as a bulwark against strikes by the politicians. And when the workers still went on striking they found only half-hearted support from their official spokesmen—notably revealed in the betrayal of the Sydney tramwaymen by the Parliamentary Party in 1908.

Indeed, the Labour leaders throughout Australia displayed more anxiety about the bourgeois vote than about the wage earners', who, they assumed, must vote Labour anyway, the only alternative being the "Liberal" Party, into which the old parties amalgamated between 1905 and 1909 to oppose the growing political power of Labour. And, in fact, it was largely on the votes of the little farmers, cockroach capitalists, and black-coated "patriots" that Labour climbed into office in the Federal Parliament, in New South Wales, in South Australia, and in West Australia in 1910 or thereabouts.

Naturally, Governments relying on such heterogeneous elements were able to give but small satisfaction to the wage earners who formed the nucleus and backbone of the Party. In New South Wales especially, the political futility of an alliance between workers and petit bourgeoisie

became glaringly apparent. A series of acts of omission and commission—I can only mention the omission to extend to farm workers the protection of the Hut Accommodation Act by the Party in deference to the farmer vote, and the prosecution and fining of strikers, culminating in an appeal for “scabs” by Premier McGowen in the Sydney gas strike of 1912, and the subornation of a union official to declare a strike of wheat lumpers off and his subsequent protection by the Labour Attorney-General from prosecution for perjury—led to the formation of an “industrial section” within the Party. This movement had for its aim “the transference of the control of the political movement to the class it represented” (Australian Workers’ Union statement). Its occasion was, above all, the failure of the Labour Government to give the workers “whole-hearted support in their troubles.” The industrialist hoped to remedy the existing unsatisfactory state of affairs by controlling the politicians through the Party Conference and securing the selection of more unionists as candidates. The Movement actually succeeded in making Premier Holman offer his resignation to the 1916 Conference, and promise a reformation in ridding the Party of Hughes and his colleagues and freeing Australia from conscription.

### § 3.—*The Economic Contradictions of the Labour Programme*

The workers in the industrial revolt had attributed the failure of Labour Governments to improve substantially their own position to the personal foibles of Labour politicians and the undue respect shown by the latter for the middle-class vote. But, in reality, the cause lay deeper. To discover the latter we must restate, in economic terms, the Labour theory, and follow its working out from that standpoint.

The Labour Party has assumed it is possible radically to better the conditions of the wage earners, and in fact to secure them a fair return for their labour, by continuously raising wages through administrative enactment or arbitration court decisions. They have assumed, further, that for this purpose Australia can become what Fichte called a “self-contained commercial state,” maintaining its army of well paid workers behind tariff walls, and finally that the whole organism will peacefully pass into the co-operative commonwealth by a slow process of duly compensated expropriation.

Now in the first decade of the Commonwealth nothing occurred to discredit this thesis. The establishment of the first arbitration court,

for instance, in New South Wales (in 1901) was followed by a series of awards increasing wages, and gave an immense stimulus to trade unionism. But while these results seemed to the workers victories for revisionist tactics, they were in reality only symptoms of reviving prosperity. "The arbitration system," writes the New South Wales Government statistician, "commenced to operate in a period of incipient prosperity, which developed for a number of years in such a way as to favour a continual betterment of the conditions of employment" (*New South Wales Year Book*, p. 58). Wages had already begun to go up before the arbitration court was constituted, and all that can be claimed for that tribunal is that it gave the workers their increases more smoothly and evenly than direct negotiation.

And soon another secret of capitalist dominion was revealed—that increased wages costs could be passed on to the consumer. The protective tariff was, in a sense, designed for this end. The very acts which created arbitration courts professed to "promote the formation of industrial associations of employers and of employed." And what more natural than that the former associations should turn their attentions to price fixing? At any rate they did, and so got back from the worker, as consumer, what Labour legislation forced them to concede him as wage earner. From 1908 real wages began to fall, and not all the efforts of arbitration courts and wages boards working overtime could keep the price of labour on a level with the mounting cost of living. This soon led to an epidemic of strikes. At the same time the climax of the trade boom was passed, and the spectre of unemployment began to look menacing again.

Such was the position when Labour assumed the reins of office in the States and the Commonwealth. But still prices continued to rise and the real wages curve to take a still steeper downward trend. As a remedy, the Labour Party proposed price fixing, but the ministries of the day were too busy wooing the middle-class vote and trying to stop strikes to apply the plan effectively. The failure of the Labour Governments is best illustrated by an extract from the speech of Anstey, a Federal Labour M.P., in which he explained his reasons for resigning from the Ministerial Party:—

"We have," he told his constituents, "combated low wages, sweating, and slums, and carried such things as the payment of old age pensions and the like; but all these things might have developed in the slave States, because

they would increase the efficiency of the slaves. But every advantage that has been conferred with increased wages and reductions in hours has been made ineffective by a counterstroke of a vast organisation of capitalists. The increases have been made ineffective because the price of commodities has gone up. . . . The Labour Party has promised to deal with monopolies. It has failed. The Labour Party has misled the people." (*Melbourne Argus*, June 21, 1915.)

For the time being, however, the true reason of Labour's failure was obscured, as has been said, by the evident treachery of the politicians. Premier Holman's promises of reform were never tested, because he, with Hughes and nearly all the other Labour leaders of the day, seized upon the conscription issue as a pretext for deserting the workers and coalescing with their sworn foes. So inherent defects in the Labour programme were attributed to the personal baseness of its parliamentary exponents. Moreover, war conditions, by conferring an enormously inflated value upon Australia's staples—wool, wheat, meat, and metals—had created a fictitious prosperity, which hid for the time the incompatibility between the unionist ideal of the Australian standard and the continuance of the capitalist system. But these illusions have been shattered in the sequel.

In Queensland, Labour, under Ryan and Theodore, has held office for nearly seven years. That ministry has displayed commendable zeal in giving the workers just those palliatives which they had been induced to crave. Mr. Ryan's Arbitration Act is as favourable to unionism as such legislation can be made. In Mr. Justice McCawley the Government found an administrator temperamentally fitted to do justice to the workers' claims. Moreover, in addition to favourable awards from the court, the unions were free to use the strike weapon without interference from the Government. And so wages jumped up. The whole set of industrial laws was reviewed. For the first time in Australia the American system of workmen's compensation and insurance, compulsory upon all employers with a State office, was established. Railwaymen were given the eight-hour day, and other civil servants received many concessions. Finally, price fixing tribunals were set up to prevent (as far as was possible in a State largely dependent upon its more conservative neighbours) the employers passing on their wages bill to the consumer.

But these devices could not alter the fundamental facts of the

capitalist system, and could be circumvented by the exploiting class. When the boom collapsed, the masters just closed down industry from which no more surplus value could be extracted. The mines ceased to operate, the meat workers were locked out, the overseas shipping companies cut out Townsville as a port of call because unionism was in control there. This was the reserve weapon of capitalism.

Its adoption has created an unprecedented degree of unemployment. Even by the end of 1918 11.6 per cent. of the unionists of Queensland were out of work, and E. Lane, the vice-president of the Australian Workers' Union, told Theodore plainly that "if the Labour Ministry was unable to give effect to the principle of the right to work, it was a farce and a fraud." Now, the accepted Labour panacea for unemployment is a big public works programme carried out with loan moneys. So in 1920, Mr. Theodore, as Premier of Queensland, came to London in quest of a loan. And then he and the unionists of Queensland learnt what is the real power behind Governments. Theodore was plainly told that he could not get a penny unless he was prepared to throw overboard several planks of the Labour platform. So he sailed home empty handed, and the Labour Government was forced to embark upon a scheme of retrenchment among public servants that a Tory Ministry might envy. By 1921 the Queensland unions had 21.8 per cent. of their members on the unemployed register! New South Wales came next on the list with 13.5 per cent. (as against a mere 9.8 per cent. in conservative Victoria), and in New South Wales too the mild Labour Government of Mr. Storey was reducing hours and fixing prices!

Hence the illusion of the old Labour-Unionist wage theory has vanished. The efforts of Theodore and Storey to realise it have simply reduced its intended beneficiaries to starvation and the finance of their States to chaos. Within the capitalist system Labour has been proved helpless to secure the workers a fair return for their labour.

But equally has the absurdity of the wider theory of the socialistic transformation of society embodied in the Labour objective been revealed. The State enterprises which were to replace capitalist industry require loan money for their initiation. And for the destruction of industrial capitalism loan money has not been forthcoming. That fact was made plain in New South Wales as early as 1912. One of the six fighting planks on which Labour was there returned had been

"the establishment of State iron and steel works." But the McGowen Government found it advisable to lease to a private company the very site selected for the State works. Called upon to explain this action to the Party Conference, the Minister for Works confessed the futility of the old objective in these words:—

If the Government cannot get money for irrigation and other developmental works, how can we raise £3,000,000 to establish steel works? It will be five or ten years before the Government could get hold of the money to build iron works with. (*Australian Worker*, January 30, 1913.)

It has really been the same in Queensland. There, with the return of Labour to power, there was a fine crop of State butcher shops, sawmills, fisheries, and even coal mines. But their extension into anything that might threaten the grip of capitalism on industry has been checked by the shortage of loan money.

Hence, while the Labour platform can give the workers no real improvement in position under capitalism, it offers them no escape from capitalism. The imagined emancipation through the transformation of industrial capital into loan capital, to be subsequently devoured by the tax collector, is seen as a sham, firstly because the price of loan money becomes so high (as with Theodore's American loan) that a State industry can no more pay fair wages to its employees and the interest demanded than a private concern, and secondly because the supply will fail before the citadel of capitalism is endangered.

It is the realisation of this dual contradiction that has alienated the Australian workers from the old Labour Party and has induced the more intelligent to make the breakaway which has led to the adoption of the new objective at Brisbane and Melbourne last year. The new objective will not solve the situation; but it is the beginning of a movement which will have to go further, under the pressure of the same powers which brought it into being. The old chapter is closed; a new chapter of Australian Labour history is opening.



# The World of Labour

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## INTERNATIONAL

### The Triple International on Reparations

**T**HE Second and the Vienna Internationals and the Amsterdam Trade Union International have now entered into close working relations after their meeting at Amsterdam on July 19-20, when a common resolution on reparations was produced. This resolution, which based itself on Germany's "admitted obligations in regard to reparations," proposed that an immediate moratorium should be granted in view of Germany's inability to pay, and an impartial inquiry take place to establish her ability to pay or the necessity of an international loan. For the purpose of this inquiry a Joint Commission of Nine was appointed. The Commission of Nine, consisting of representatives of the Executives of each of the Three Internationals concerned, held its first meeting at Brussels on August 8. It is expected that this Commission of Nine will pave the way to closer formal relations between all those bodies. At the same time the door was closed on further relations with the Third International by a resolution on the trial of the Social Revolutionaries, to the effect that "the infliction of death sentences would destroy for a long time any possibility of the reunion of the workers of all countries for common action."

The resolution on reparations runs as follows :—

#### JOINT RESOLUTION

The Executive Committees of the International Federation of Trade Unions, Amsterdam, the Second International, London, and the International Union of Socialist Parties of Vienna at their first joint meeting, having examined the political, economic, and social situation of the whole of Europe, and of Germany in particular, endorse the manifesto adopted by the International Federation of Trade Unions in Berlin on July 8, 1922, when they drew the attention of workers and democracies throughout the entire world to the dangers which threaten the existence of the German Republic and menace the cause of peace and the restoration of Europe.

They declare that the economic pressure which is applied to the German workers lowers their standard of life, and this in turn is assisting capitalism to reduce the standard of living of the working class all over the world.

They congratulate the workers of Germany upon the splendid courage and determination

with which they have taken up the fight in defence of their liberties and for the overthrow of reaction, and pledge themselves to render all possible assistance in the struggle.

They hope that German democracy will succeed in rigorously suppressing the actions of the monarchists and militarists, which constitute a deadly menace to the peace of the world.

They again express their confidence in the willingness of the democratic Germany to ensure the restoration of the regions devastated by the war.

But Germany left to herself is powerless; the deplorable state of Germany is a menace to the other nations.

It is in the interest of the workers of all countries to encourage and assist her, for her ruin would mean ruin to the whole of Europe.

Germany is unable to comply with her admitted obligations in regard to reparations unless her economic life is restored by means of international credits.

The policy of the Entente, however, is driving her to bankruptcy and reaction.

Germany's reparation obligations are too heavy. The military occupations are strangling her without being of any real use.

The policy of brute force is futile and prepares the way for fresh wars.

It furthers the growth of reaction in Germany, hinders the development of the Republic, leads to economic chaos, and drives the despairing masses to deeds of violence.

In accordance with the resolutions passed by the trade union and socialist conferences at Amsterdam and Frankfurt, Germany's burden of debts must be reduced. To attain this object, the inter-Allied debts must be revised as being the only means by which it will be possible to raise a great international loan for the work of restoration. To attain this end, the Conference of the three Executive Committees issues an urgent appeal to public opinion throughout the world, and in particular to public opinion in America.

America, by its intervention, helped to end the war. It may therefore be reasonably expected that the United States will also help forward the cause of the peace and reconstruction, and thus put an end to the present economic dislocation which afflicts one group of countries with the miseries of unemployment, and exposes the other to the dangers of famine and pestilence. The policy of military occupations must be abandoned.

The military and economic sanctions of 1921, having become meaningless, must be repealed forthwith. Germany must be admitted to the League of Nations on an equal footing with the other nations. By such admission she gives the guarantee that she accepts international jurisdiction.

Workers of the world, the cause of economic restoration and world peace makes it incumbent upon you to struggle with all your might against reaction and for universal disarmament.

In view of the financial collapse of Germany, it is a matter of most urgent necessity that the moratorium asked for by the German Government should be granted immediately, it being understood that Germany for her part has to make adequate arrangements for the collections of all taxes due to her and prevent the flight of capital to foreign countries as being opposed to the general welfare.

Meanwhile an impartial inquiry must be held, which will either establish Germany's ability to pay or the necessity of an international loan.

In accordance with the rights of self-determination of the peoples, the Conference emphatically condemns all measures of control which would encroach upon the sovereignty of the German Republic, and would have the effect of depriving her of the right to regulate her own economic and social life.

Workers of all countries, the conference issues an urgent appeal to you, calling upon you to carry out—through the medium of your organisations, your Press, by means of mass action and parliamentary action—an intense and untiring propaganda in favour of the ideas and solutions set forth above.

Help to defend the German Republic !

Strive for the restoration of Europe !

Agitate for universal peace !

The Bureau of the International Federation of Trade Unions :

J. H. THOMAS, L. JOUHAUX, TH. LEIPART, C. MERTENS, EDO FIMMEN, JAN OUDEGEEST.

The Executive Committee of the Second International :

TOM SHAW, OTTO WELS, J. WAUTERS, H. DE MAN, P. J. TROELSTRA, F. M. WIBAUT, W. H. VliegEN.

The Executive Committee of the International Working Union of Socialist Parties :

JEAN LONGUET, BRACKE, R. C. WALLHEAD, A. CRISPIEN, GRIMM, PAUL GRABER, CARL GERMACK, S. CAPLANSKY, FRIEDRICH ADLER.

## International Syndicalist Conference

**A**N international conference of revolutionary syndicalists was held at Berlin on June 16-19 with a view to arranging a world congress of revolutionary syndicalists on November 12-19, and a provisional Executive Committee was appointed for this purpose. The conference did not, however, reveal agreement as to aims or as to relations with the Red Trade Union International. The French delegation attended only in an advisory capacity, and the subsequent French Trade Union Congress at St. Etienne (unity C.G.T.) disowned the conference, and affirmed affiliation with the Red Trade Union International by 741 to 406 votes. The Russian delegation also withdrew in view of the character of the conference. The French delegate, Bouet, at St. Etienne, pointedly asked, with regard to the Berlin move: "I ask myself, and others must also ask themselves, whether this is not the embryo of a Third Trade Union International of anarchist syndicalist workers, which is not directed against the forces of social reaction, but against the Red Trade Union International?"

The anarchist syndicalist section of the French C.G.T.U. has formed a Comité de Défense Syndicaliste.

## CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

### A Socialist Republic and Trade Union Expulsions

**W**ITH a population of thirteen million Czecho-Slovakia has to-day more unemployed than either of the bankrupt central empires. The sudden boom in prosperity during the first year or so after the declaration of peace led to the expectation that the newly established republic, under its Socialist Coalition Government, would escape the crisis of her neighbours. While the fear of revolution lasted (in view of the predominantly Socialist population of Czecho-Slovakia) every effort was made to maintain the Socialist Coalition Government in power, and American corn was poured into the country to keep the people contented, while liberal offers were made by the employers.

When all fear of revolution seemed past with the defeat of the Soviet forces at Warsaw, the tactics both of the employers and Government changed. The campaign of wage cutting began, and with it the persecution of Communists. Since 1921 the industrial crisis has grown more acute; to-day, according to official figures, 44,000 are in receipt of unemployment benefit; another 100,000 out of work receive no help; whilst the majority of the mines, metal, textile, and chemical factories are working short time about three or four days per week, and these involve another 250,000 workers in the general misery. Suicides of unemployed are a daily occurrence:

one day as many as five cases were reported. Even agricultural workers are amongst the unemployed; their condition is rendered worse by the Government action in employing Russian emigrés (ex-Wrangel soldiers) to act as strike-breakers.

Despite the comparatively steady exchange which has a rising tendency, prices increase through indirect taxation mainly in an attempt to meet the Government expenditure estimated at eighteen milliards; half of this sum goes towards the upkeep of the bureaucracy; 3,700 millions went to pay for the army this year, and 2,000 millions to meet the interest on the National Debt. A revelation of the bad conditions prevalent is to be found in the report of the Czech Red Cross that the annual number of deaths from tuberculosis is 50,000; and the statistics for 1921 show that 26 per cent. of all children died in their first year.

In these conditions it is not surprising to find a rising tide of working-class revolt, which the Social Democratic Ministers have been unable to check. To meet this, the Social Democrats, as in other countries, have had to use their control of the official machinery of the movement and expel hundreds of thousands of workers from the unions in order to maintain their position against the growing revolutionary movement.

Expulsions of complete unions from the Central Trade Union Commission have taken place in the case of the agricultural workers and the builders' unions, which number 200,000. The growing leftward tendency is not held in check by this method, as the January congress showed; 40 per cent. of the votes were cast in favour of affiliating to the Red Trade Union International, even though the agricultural workers were banned and the delegates elected from committees of officials and not from the rank and file. Congresses of various unions since that time have declared for the Red International, amongst them being the woodworkers with a membership of 40,000, who have since been expelled. The voting at the Miners' Congress showed 51 per cent. in favour of continued affiliation to the International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam.

In an attempt to check these growing expulsions ten unions, still within the Central Trade Union Commission—the leaders of which are Communists—held a conference on June 25 at Brünn in Moravia. This conference demanded the reinstatement of expelled unions; the disbanding of certain reactionary groups formed as a bulwark by the officials; the conclusion of an agreement between both sections on the understanding that the minority would always submit to the majority decisions; and finally that an extraordinary conference be called to discuss these questions. The strongest of these ten unions was the chemical workers with a membership of 70,000; this union was commissioned to put the case at the Executive meeting on July 13 of the Trade Union Commission. The result was that instead of discussing the situation thus presented, the Executive proceeded to vote the expulsion of the chemical workers.

## ITALY

### *The Policy of Collaboration*

THE attitude of the Italian trade unions towards the policy of the Parliamentary Socialists, of collaboration with the Government, was the main point at issue at the Genoa Conference of the National Council of the Italian Confederation of Labour (C.G.L.) on July 3-15. The proposal put forward by the

secretary, d'Aragona, favoured the collaboration of the Socialist Party in Parliament in the formation of a Coalition Government which would stem the Fascist reaction; this proposal received 537,251 votes, the largest number for any resolution. The situation, however, was complicated by the fact that four other motions were put by the Communist, Maximalist, Third Internationalist, and Centre Groups, for which the whole total was greater than the votes cast for the official motion: 578,348. This situation will possibly be reversed at the coming National Congress of the Italian Confederation of Labour, which this conference decided to convene at the earliest possible date.

It may be remembered that at the Socialist Congress at Milan, in October, 1921, the right wing led by Turati favoured collaboration with the Government. On the other hand, the majority resolution of Serrati, which was carried, declared with seeming definiteness against collaboration, and gave absolute power to the Executive, composed of Serratists, to control the Parliamentary Group, where Turati was predominant. The Third International prophesied that this would not prevent the Parliamentary Group working for collaboration, and this prophecy has proved correct. During the crisis following the defeat of the Facta Cabinet at the end of July, the Socialist Parliamentary Group broke away from the control of the Serratist Executive and declared in favour of collaboration in a bourgeois Cabinet; and without authorisation from the Party Turati visited the king. The diagnosis of the Third International, which had called for the expulsion of Turati, has thus been justified, and Serrati, who had rejected the Third International's demand and taken his Party out of the Third International on the ground that they could control the Turati Group, has now proved impotent in face of Turati.

## THE UNITED STATES

### *The Mines and Railroad Struggle*

**T**HE outstanding fact in the history of American Labour during the past few months is the resistance which has been maintained since April 1 by the United Mine Workers of America in face of the onslaught of the coalowners upon the miner's standard of living and his right to organise. This resistance has been reinforced by large numbers of the previously unorganised, upon whom the employers had relied for assistance in breaking the union. Attempts were made to recruit strike-breakers for the mining areas from the ranks of the unemployed in the great cities. In some instances men were engaged under false pretences and, once they had placed themselves in the coalowners' power, were set to work, against their will, under the supervision of armed guards in the private fortresses established by their employers. At Herrin, Illinois, an attempt to terrorise the locked out miners by shooting two of their number led to reprisals in which officials of the mining company and a number of blacklegs were killed. The coroner's jury brought in a verdict to the effect that the guilt for all the deaths lay upon the officials of the company. In disorders in other places, however, the workers were not so fortunate.

When at the beginning of July the situation was complicated by a strike of 400,000 railway shopmen, the employers and the Government became seriously alarmed. President Harding called a conference to deal with the coal dispute, and certain concessions were offered, the chief of which was a continuance of the "check-off" system of paying union dues, which the employers had hoped to abolish.

Arbitration on the main issues by an "impartial" tribunal was rejected, and the President thereupon invited the mineowners to reopen the mines. At the same time the assistance of Federal troops was promised to the Governors of the twenty-eight coal-producing States in case the "agencies of law and order" (*i.e.*, the State militias) at their disposal should prove inadequate. As a result of these measures an increase of 6 per cent. in coal production was achieved in the following week.

On July 14 an Associated Press message from Washington announced that the President considered himself empowered to operate the mines in an emergency. Quoting "a spokesman for the Administration," the dispatch went on to say that the Chief Executive was willing to risk impeachment, if necessary. The world was also informed that Mr. Harding was "of the opinion that in an emergency it would not abridge the liberty of any railroad worker to draft him into the service in the event the Government saw fit to take over the operation of the carriers."

Immediately upon this message, editorials appeared in the capitalist Press denouncing Government operation of either coalmines or railroads as the end of democracy and the beginning of "Sovietism." Indictments were demanded against union leaders for interfering with inter-State commerce, and the suggestion was made that the use of Federal troops and a general display of authority would secure efficient operation of the two services under private control, without setting a precedent for the nationalisation of other public utilities at the behest of Labour.

Labour, on its side, responded to the threat of industrial conscription in a statement by J. Cleve Dean, chairman of the Railway Employees' Publicity Association. Dean wrote to the President that he felt "at liberty to predict" that the "attempt to place American Labour under the gun" would result in "nothing short of a revolution."

What is known as the Coronado Decision was handed down by the Supreme Court at Washington on June 5. In this case damages were sought from the United Mine Workers for losses occasioned by a strike in Arkansas several years ago. The claim was disallowed in the particular instance, but only because of technical defects in procedure. On the other hand, the general principle was laid down that the funds of a union are liable for damages to any person or corporation who can satisfy a court that he or it suffered loss by reason of a strike. Proceedings are being started in respect of losses due to the present dispute, and the statements of employers make it clear that they intend to use the decision to bankrupt unions wherever possible.

Amidst such portents the American Federation of Labour held its convention at Cincinnati, and the "Old Guard" triumphed over the militants at every point. William Z. Foster, however, in the *Worker* of July 8, attributes this result largely to the timidity of the rebel leaders, who failed to make the most of their opportunities. A notable feature of the convention was the attitude of three "Socialist" unions—the Ladies' Garment Workers, the Fur Workers, and the Jewellery Workers. These organisations, which are largely dominated by the Socialist Party of America, voted solidly with the Gompers machine, even opposing trade relations with Soviet Russia. Schlesinger, of the Ladies' Garment Workers, was chosen as fraternal delegate to represent American Labour at the British Trades Union Congress.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## INDIA PAST AND FUTURE

*India in Transition.* By Manabendra Nath Roy. Librairie B. Target. Geneva, 1922.

*The Oppression of the Poor.* By C. F. Andrews. Ganesh & Co., Madras, 1922.

*Creative Revolution.* By Professor T. L. Vasvani. Ganesh & Co., Madras, 1922.

*The Wheel of Fortune.* By Mahatma Gandhi. Ganesh & Co., Madras, 1922.

**B**ETWEEN the first and last of these books there is a difference in outlook of at least a hundred years. While Gandhi, the religious nationalist, looks back to an ideal period long antecedent to British rule in India, Manabendra Roy, the Socialist internationalist, looks forward to a characteristically modern development of a class struggle inevitably following in the wake of capitalism. Which of them gives the better interpretation of the changes now taking place in India?

All writers agree that India is in rapid process of change, but it must be admitted that so far a satisfactory interpretation of what is happening has been lacking. Events that are still in progress are notoriously difficult to judge, and this is especially the case where the inter-relations of countries and classes are simultaneously concerned. It would be surprising if the Romans had understood the significance of the decay and break-up of the Roman Empire, and to come to our own day it is only necessary to mention the present intricate tangle of Irish affairs. The views of participants in Indian affairs reveal just as great a confusion. The most varied estimates are made of the forces at work, and the most divergent social-political theories invented to explain them. The last three books on this list are all part of this confusion.

The *Wheel of Fortune* is of course the Charka, or hand spinning-wheel, and it is sufficient to note that in the collection of Gandhi's speeches and articles on the significance of spinning and weaving, one with the bold title of "Indian Economics" contains the characteristic utterance: "I claim for the Charka the honour of being able to solve the problem of economic distress in a most natural, simple, inexpensive, and businesslike manner." This is the magnitude of his contribution to Indian economics.

Professor Vasvani is a typical disciple of the Gandhi cult. The book chosen (the title of which is borrowed, probably with complete unconsciousness, from the well-known work of Eden and Cedar Paul) is representative of his profuse outpourings on India's spiritual civilisation, and may be taken as written in a more mundane spirit than the majority of his rapturous productions. He is an Indian professor, very fluent, and very ready in his examples and quotations, which range from the Indian bureaucracy to the *Spectator* and the *Observer*, from the Council of Delhi to the Sinn Fein courts. In their political application to the problem of India, however, they lead him to appraisements such as the following:—

Indian unrest is a natural inevitable outcome of the suppression of Indian Ideals under the present Environment. India's unrest is the struggle of India's race spirit to assert itself.

He recognises that "the Indian Problem cannot be solved if we regard it as a purely political problem," but by that he means only that "our politics must be charged with the Indian Ideal." He is as insistent as Gandhi that by revolution he does not mean force or violence. It is "*not* of an anti-social character. That would involve class conflict." Heaven forbid! He even tackles the meaning of "Swaraj" and gets as far as this: "the Soul of India believes in the Doctrine of the Simple Life. That Doctrine is in the simple, single word—Swaraj." And so on for pages and pages.

Mr. C. F. Andrews is an English Christian who has come into close contact with the poorest Indian workers, and therefore, although also a disciple of Gandhi, he cannot remain at the ecstatic level of Professor Vasvani. He can have the same opinion that "Mahatma Gandhi's movement is a religious one" and that it will be non-violent because "there is an innate love of peace in India that is not present in any other country." But when he also says that "the revolution through which India is passing is not ultimately political" it is because he has caught a glimpse of a different social problem behind. "Far down below the turmoil on the surface lies the age-long problem of the sufferings of the poor." But this very expression of it is also characteristic—"The poor ye have always with you." He does not recognise the new elements in the situation, he does not understand what has been the process of historical development. He gives a curiously jumbled list of evils inherent in the present system covering untouchability, forced labour and oppression, "vices in personal character which are inherent in foreign rule," "excessive military expenditure," and an "industrial system of sweated labour." How this sort of sympathy with the poor works out in practice may be judged by his condemnation of strikes, which he says "have done an immense amount of harm," and his action in the recent strike of the East Indian railway workers, when he took it upon himself to attempt to break the strike, and succeeded in getting a section of the men to accept the terms which he had brought down from the Railway Agent.

To turn from the literature of sentimental nationalism to Mr. Manabendra Roy's *India in Transition* is to feel once more solid ground under one's feet. For once the facile emotionalism of ideals is replaced by an attempt to find out what is happening, to analyse the situation in the light of historical processes. The author has set himself the task of analysing the material forces which are pushing the various classes of the Indian people into the present struggle, and of explaining how these deep-seated social forces, which are responsible for the present unrest, are working themselves out in the growing mass movements.

The result is a notable achievement, and a very striking vindication of the Marxian method in unfamiliar surroundings. From the very first arresting sentence, that "Contrary to the general notion India is not under the feudal system," he continues to throw new light on familiar facts and to build up an historical background which reveals in admirable perspective the true relations between the different factors now influencing the development of the struggle in India.

It is a method of treatment which requires a careful attention to facts, and especially to facts of economic conditions, property relations, and class antagonisms, which are very generally slurred over or unrecorded. The detailed statistical



account of the development of a native Indian bourgeoisie, of the system of land tenure and the condition of the rural population, and of the rise of an industrial proletariat and of its present position, occupies more than half of the 240 closely printed pages of the book. Only with that knowledge of the development of the present economic structure is it possible to understand the growth and failure of the political nationalist movement.

The history of the phases through which the Indian National Congress has passed can be correlated with the stages in the development of Indian capitalism. The nationalist movement is essentially a bourgeois one resulting from the long-delayed appearance of an Indian middle class which immediately begins to contest the economic and political monopoly of imperial capitalism. Thus we get the paradox that Indian nationalism, worshipping at the shrine of liberalism and democratic institutions, is yet strongly protectionist; or still more remarkable, that even the Gandhist disciples, who base their nationalism on the superiority of India's spiritual civilisation, prove themselves, politically, ardent defenders of the material interests of Indian capitalism.

The bourgeois nationalist movement, however, is bound to fail. It is not the struggle of a youthfully vigorous middle class against a decrepit feudalism. Owing to British interference the Indian middle class were long ago deprived of its historic rôle of freeing the productive classes from the fetters of feudal bondage. Consequently a revolutionary course is not forced upon it so long as it can obtain freedom for its development by compromise with British capitalism. "Capitalist imperialism will always readjust its method of exploitation in the way of making concessions to its native partner before risking the eventual conflict." Such a readjustment occurred in 1919 with the acceptance by Indian capitalism of the Montagu-Chelmsford reform, leaving the field open to the reactionary nationalism of the lower middle-class intellectuals. But, as the author shows, Gandhism, in spite of involuntary services to the bourgeoisie, is a reactionary force which could not succeed without destroying its own basis. This power rests in the recent awakening of the masses under the stimulus of intensified economic exploitation and the attempt to use that mass energy for restoring a "spiritual civilisation," when the condition for its exercise is the destruction of all the old traditions, is manifestly impossible.

A new cross current of increasing intensity has been introduced by the development of class antagonisms side by side with the national struggle. Neither the moderates nor the non-co-operators could run the risks of exciting a genuine mass movement. At the first signs of its appearance the moderates hastened to retreat into the arms of British capitalism, while the non-co-operators also abandoned their programme as soon as they discovered they could not canalise the activity of the masses in the channels of a religious movement.

The attempt to use the power of the fast-awakening masses for the ends of Indian capitalism or reactionary nationalism is now clearly failing. That is the explanation of the lull that is at present puzzling observers in India. The struggle is now preparing to take on a new character. There is a growing discontent with the

programme of political nationalism. Strikes, Labour organisation, and the economic struggle more and more occupy the centre of attention. And so, as Roy concludes:—

The inevitable consequence of these tendencies is the eventual divorce of the mass movement from bourgeois leadership. In that case, bourgeois nationalism will end in a compromise with imperial supremacy and the liberation of India will be left to the political movement of the workers and peasants, consciously organised and fighting on the grounds of the class struggle.

C. P. D.

### A SECOND WRITING ON THE WALL

*Red Revolt: The Rand Strike. January-March, 1922.* By S. P. Bunting. Communist Party of South Africa. 1s. 6d.

**B**EFORE the war a remarkable thing happened in the British Empire. That curious political unit, with its variegated list of constitutions and forms of government, was characterised throughout, we were told, by certain uniform principles of administration. These principles were difficult to define in such a way as to mark them off clearly from the principles upon which the French or German empires were conducted: but it was always understood that the British principles were quite distinctive. For instance, it was usual to say that the British Empire was distinguished from all others by the Rule of Law, by the strict adherence of each and every authority to the traditional charters of the English race, by the jealous safeguarding of the liberty of the subject. The old Freedom of the Germanic mark, the independence that was born in the Hercynian forest, was preserved on the banks of the Limpopo, amongst the Antipodes, and generally wherever the Union Jack was flown. But above all it was in the dominions overseas that the ideals of Liberty, Democracy, and even-handed Justice were understood to have their greatest practical realisation. In this earthly paradise there happened before the war, as I have said, a remarkable thing.

On the banks of the Limpopo, in February, 1914, Magna Carta, Habeas Corpus, and many other venerable parchments were suddenly torn across. There had been a general strike. It was quelled by the arbitrary arrest of the strike leaders (Habeas Corpus torn) and, without trial of any kind (Magna Carta torn), by their expulsion from the Union of South Africa. The sailing of the steamship *Umgeni* with the deportees on board could not be countermanded by any fiat of the Colonial Office, which courteously lamented its inability in the matter in answer to the expostulations of the Labour members. The class struggle had reached an acute stage, and forthwith the class governing in South Africa jettisoned the whole bourgeois cargo of ideals. The effect was profound and immediate. Everywhere throughout the British Empire, on both sides of the class struggle, the eyes of the young men were opened.

In the face of this event in South Africa the astonished cackle about the Bolsheviks and their view that the governing class, when put to it, would behave similarly in every country is ridiculous. The lesson that the safety of the governing class over-rode all other considerations (of law, liberty, justice, &c.) could be learned,

and was learned, long before the Bolsheviks were ever heard of. How comes it, nevertheless, that the lesson was not universally learned? Was it possible that the union leaders and the chief Socialists in this country drew no conclusions whatever from this startling reversal of ordered British progress? In some cases, perhaps, this was so. But in many cases the conclusion drawn must have been that the South African affair was something isolated, something exceptional and unrelated in any way to the general trend of historical development, something (like the war afterwards) that would never happen again.

Not only did it happen again: but it happened under the regime of General Jan Smuts, for whom the Liberals had built a tabernacle, by whose wisdom and reputation for just-dealing the British Cabinet were guided in the last days of the war and the crucial moments of the peace. It was at his eminently Liberal suggestion, we were told, that the idea of an Irish Free State was born. Yet exactly the same thing has taken place under the soulful Smuts as occurred under the brutal Botha. To some this will be the second writing on the wall: but to others it will simply be another "exceptional occurrence." Even to some Labour people it will seem impossible that a nice, kind man like General Smuts could be responsible for anything detrimental to the working class: and rather than believe evil of him they will credulously swallow the Reuter lie which told of documents proving a Bolshevik plot—which documents have never been discovered. Smuts will retain his tabernacle.

Meantime the details of the second demonstration of capitalist dictatorship in South Africa can be read in this useful little booklet by S. P. Bunting.

R. P. A.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*Anarchism versus Socialism* By Wm. C. Owen. Freedom Press.

*Our Enemy the State.* By G. T. Sadler. Daniel. 3s. 6d.

*Against the Red Sky.* By H. R. Barbor. Daniel. 7s.

*Die Konstituante von Samara.* By G. Lelewitsch. Carl Hoym.

*Der Ferne Osten* (der erste Kongress der kommunistischen und revolutionären Organisationen des Fernen Ostens, Moskau, Januar, 1922). Carl Hoym.

*Health in the Factory.* Publication Department, Bournville Works.

*Substance and Shadow in War Finance.* By Carl C. Plehn. *American Economic Review.*

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# THE LABOUR MONTHLY

*A Magazine of International Labour*

VOLUME 3

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# NOTES of the MONTH

*Exit the General Council—A Confession of Impotence—The Elder  
Statesmen—The Technical Obstacles—And the Solution—  
Stage-play—Coal Realities—The Two General Councils  
—Local Solidarity—Unity not by Machinery—  
Unity by the Common Issue—  
The Rôle of a Party*

THE decision of the Southport Trades Union Congress to give no powers to the General Council is the public declaration of bankruptcy of the old trade union movement. By that decision its makers have registered the fact that the unity and solidarity which they profess on the platform is impossible in practice. There is no need for critics to point the moral: they have pointed it themselves. By their own speeches they have declared that the existing constitution of the unions makes unity impossible. They have explicitly and definitely declared that any proposal or attempt to achieve unity, however fervently desired by all of them, and although officially sponsored by the leaders themselves at their own Congress, is effectually barred and prevented by the existing structure and constitution of the unions. The declaration is a true one, though the consequences of it are probably not realised by those who made it. For with that declaration the old trade unions have passed sentence on themselves. The hopes of a peaceful reconstruction of trade unionism through the regular channels vanish into space. The notion of achieving unity through a General Council, a notion still current in many circles, should be blown sky-high once and for all by the practical demonstration of the Southport Congress. The seekers after working-class unity will have henceforth to look elsewhere for their salvation.

NO debate of recent years in the Congress has thrown such an illuminating light on the minds of the chief directors of the great trade unions in the hour of the greatest crisis in trade union history. The circumstances of the situation do not need to be recalled. Here was a Congress of what had once been the

largest trade union movement in the world, now fallen to second place, a million and a-quarter members lost in a score of months, its vast finances squandered without result, and meeting in the midst of universal depression and defeat. On every side was witness of the disastrous results of sectionalism and drift: on every side was admitted the need of unity and direction. Before this assembly there came from its own leading body, the General Council, a proposal, not for combination or common action, but for the faintest far-off echo of unity—the power for the common body to collect financial assistance for a struggling member. And in this situation, against this modest proposal, this timid shadow of a suggestion of common membership of one another, there sounded at once in quick succession all the great guns of the “key” trade unions—textiles, mining, engineering, railways, transport and general labour. Their arguments varied. They were all ardent in their passion for unity. But they all discovered some particular obstacle in the way. Some foresaw constitutional difficulties. Others feared a practical hitch. Others were so radical that they despised so feeble a scheme. No matter what the argument, the result was the same. They were keen, nay, they were anxious, that something should be done. But—unfortunately—nothing could be done.

**M**R. CROSS, with the well-known militancy of the textile unions, desired a “full-blooded” scheme. Therefore he opposed the existing one. Mr. Hodges, a little forgetful of the war record of the unions and of his own proposal to bind the unions and the employers for ten years by an industrial truce, averred that “the first characteristic of the trade union movement was the desire for autonomy.” Hence, in the name of liberty, the unions should forego their weapon of defence and choose servitude. Mr. Kaylor, for the engineers, found that the difficulty was “purely a constitutional one.” However, it was sufficient to prevent him supporting the scheme. Mr. Cramp brought forward a novel point of view, worthy of the wise men of Gotham. It was commonly assumed, he said, that the general strike (no one had proposed a general strike, but the subject provided a more dramatic opportunity of opposition than the humdrum motion on the table) was bound to succeed. “That,” he declared oracularly, “has yet to be proved.”



Mr. Cramp clearly belongs to the school of those who will not go into the water until they have learnt to swim. Mr. Tom Shaw, Secretary of the Second International, pronounced himself a believer in "effective central organisation" (so notably exemplified in the Second International). Therefore he opposed the scheme. Mr. Bevin believed in "beginning at the bottom." We await with interest news of Mr. Bevin's activities at the bottom. Meanwhile this new passion prevented him from supporting the scheme. Finally, Mr. Clynes feared the possibility of the General Council "coming into conflict with half-a-dozen bodies having similar powers in a particular trade." Mr. Clynes discerned the difficulty with his usual acumen.

**I**T is impossible not to be struck with the sense of immobility and impotence that dominated the proceedings. No stretch of the imagination could conceive that here were the serious spokesmen of a powerful movement. In all the speeches of these Elder Statesmen there was not an atom of a sign of a feeling of urgency or need. Those who wish to achieve an end do not speak in this way. They may be aware of difficulties, but it is in order to overcome them. It is ridiculous to suppose that the technical difficulties in the way could not be overcome if there were the will to overcome them. It is quite true that the constitution of the unions would not allow of delegating the control of them to an external body; and that even if the Executives were prepared to delegate their own power, that power is often circumscribed by separate and manifold rules of each society for delegate meetings or ballot votes, which would effectually prevent rapid action by any central body. But these difficulties can be easily enough overcome when there is the sense of need, as the Council of Action showed. Then there was no murmur of constitutional objection raised when the Executives of the unions combined to delegate a power they had not got to a body which had no right to it. Instead there was enthusiasm such as no Congress before or since has ever seen. In the same way to-day the difficulties could be overcome if there was the desire to do so.

**T**HE reformers, if they had been wise, would have concentrated on the Trades Union Congress instead of on the General Council. For that is where the real weakness lies. The Trades Union Congress has no power, and that is why the General Council, which is its child, can have no power. The Trades Union Congress is not the legislative body for trade unionism: and in consequence it can only set up a General Council in name, but it can give it no power because it has no power to give. But the analysis of the weakness supplies the remedy. If the Trades Union Congress has no power over its members, it has the power to determine its own terms of affiliation. It is only necessary for the Congress to determine that affiliation to it carries with it subordination to the movement as a whole and its central direction, and the trick is done. The carrying of affiliation by a union will at once have accomplished the necessary change in its constitution and make central direction possible. Some such course could have been easily discovered by the promoters of the idea of a General Staff if they had been in earnest in their intentions. But there was no sign of an attempt to meet the difficulties of the situation, which they professed to deplore. Instead they paraded the difficulties—and then sat down. The General Council, if it had been sincere in its desire to achieve a measure of power, would have thought out the means to achieve it. Instead they presented a resolution which was bound to be defeated, and then proceeded individually to defeat it. The moral is obvious. The breakdown of the General Council's proposals was not so much a defeat as a previously concerted surrender. The plea of technical difficulties is humbug, and that is why the solution of the technical difficulties will not bring us forward. The members of the General Council were not defeated in an attempt to meet the situation. They were simply confronted with the situation and refused to face it. The trade union movement has reached a point at which it is confronted with fundamental questions. It has refused to face those questions, and in consequence of that refusal the blight of unreality hangs over all its proceedings.

**I**N consequence of that refusal the whole Congress was unreal and remote from the sufferings and the problems of the workers. It was marked throughout by a sense of futility, of tired stage-play which the players did not believe in and stale heroics which took in nobody. The chairman might thunder his denunciations of capitalism. But everyone knew that he had no intention of proposing to fight it. The daily organ might tell us in flaming headlines day by day: "Leaders in Fighting Mood"; "Congress Chairman's Fighting Lead"; and Mr. Brownlie might boldly proclaim Damnation to Political Economy. But the actual records of those leaders only made their antics ridiculous. A serious leadership would have spoken in very different terms to the Congress, would have spoken of the real character of the situation and the real needs of the movement, in terms hard and cruel, but salutary, in terms of dogged determination to right the obvious weakness in the hour of trial, not of artificial enthusiasm in an imaginary struggle. There is no enthusiasm in the workers to-day: in the wider circles of the masses there is only apathy and disbelief, in the closer circles of the struggle there is a hard and bitter determination that no leader has yet expressed. In this Congress of unreality and impotence there was no decision of importance on any issue. There was not even a genuine division to give a sign of life. The only division that really divided the members (two and a-half million against one and a-half million) concerned the employment or otherwise of an old gentleman of over seventy who has long been a famous antiquarian relic of the movement. No other division of importance occurred. Some excitement was caused by the feud over Havelock Wilson. The co-operative employees scored a success against their trade unionist-co-operator employers. A long resolution on Reparations, and how to exact them, was carried, and the General Council was instructed to present it to the Prime Minister by deputation—thus revealing the instinctive outlook of the delegates towards the General Council as simply another name for the Parliamentary Committee. But there was no attempt to reach a decision on any actual issue. The resolution of the General Council was successfully referred back. On the question of war a delegate of a lesser union suggested that the Congress "ought to declare in favour of an international strike against war." The remark evoked "some cheers," but the

speaker was informed that the matter was being made the subject of inquiry by a commission of the Amsterdam International. In 1914 also the same matter was being made the subject of an "inquiry"—until something else happened.

**M**EANWHILE the fight outside the Congress was reflecting little of the "fighting mood" so beloved of the leaders in the heated atmosphere of the platform. The dominant issue of the American coal strike had thrown a vivid light on the actual position of the working-class movement at home and abroad. Mr. Bevin had written to Mr. Hodges that it would be an act of "international blacklegism" to work overtime in order to supply coal to America to break the strike. Mr. Bevin alleged that the refusal of the miners to act placed the transport workers in a difficult position, and that in some districts the miners' representatives were being used by the employers to bring pressure to bear upon the transport workers. But the appeal was in vain. The matter had been "referred to the International," and nothing more could be done. Each union and section of workers felt that it was incumbent on the others to act. Meanwhile the work went merrily on. One Miners' County Association cheerfully informed its members that prospects were better now in view of the demand for coal for America because of the strike. The *Daily Herald*, in its new rôle of official organ, blandly declared that "it is useless to clamour idly that something should be done"; "the fact is, nothing can be done"; and went on to point out that in any case the American miners did not belong to the Amsterdam International. At length, after over four months of isolated struggle by the American miners, the issue came up before the International Miners' Congress. The world representatives of the miners had to decide what course they should take. The French miners called for an international general strike, first of twenty-four hours as a warning to the capitalists of Europe and America, then for a longer period. The British representatives opposed the proposal. Their spokesman, Robson, explained that they had a different outlook in regard to the international general strike. "We demand political action, and are out to capture Parliament." In that moment the favourite catchword of the

leaders of trade unionism to-day—the virtues of the parliamentary ballot—had been let out in its true context: not as a constructive policy of advance, but as a cover for retreat and the confession of the absence of a policy. The French delegates broke out in open anger. The International, they declared, was only “a conglomeration of impotence” (*un conglomerat d'impuissances*). “Let us face the facts frankly: the International does not exist.” The Congress salved its conscience with a vote of money to the American miners. It will be a new era, indeed, when the Labour Movement hopes to fight the capitalists with money.

**I**N the face of this situation the cry for the General Council as the solution for the Labour Movement is as foolish as the cry for the League of Nations in the international field. Indeed the two cries are curiously parallel. In both the proposal has a formal simplicity which makes it attractive to those who do not wish to think. In both the proposal is wholly unreal in relation to the actual facts of the situation. In both the proposal comes mainly from on top and not from below. In both the actual realisation continually disappoints its most ardent supporters, who have all the time to live in a visionary future. The League of Nations recently met in assembly at Geneva. Lord Robert Cecil reported the work of its General Council: how it had dealt with the Aaland islands, with Upper Silesia, with Albania, with the Saar Valley. But, he went on, with a possible premonition of disappointment on the part of his hearers at this record, “the League had not been created to settle matters of secondary importance. It should also deal with primary issues.” And after Lord Robert Cecil had said this (“fighting speech by the chairman”), the League proceeded to deal with—Double Death Duties. Is not the parallel between the two General Councils curiously exact? And the parallel is so exact because the error at bottom is essentially the same: the belief that a combination of the existing forces will achieve a solution, when it is the existing forces themselves that are at fault.

**I**F we wish to combine the ranks of the working class, it is in the localities that we must begin. The vanity of the age-long glacial progress of amalgamation and federation in relation to the needs of the struggle is by now apparent. Industrial unionism

is not the primary need, because industrial unionism does not give us the solidarity of the class. It is in the localities that we can still find the living movement of the workers, coming together naturally, without theory or system, in the needs of the common struggle on the basis of an actually felt solidarity against the local domination. At present that local unity, where it is beginning to develop, is wholly confused in form: local branches, district committees, local parties, workshop organisations where they exist, the unemployed, the co-operatives come together in a local common front. But it is from the experience of the local common front that the lesson of solidarity will be learnt, which can never be taught in the jealous atmosphere of rival head offices. And when the time comes again for the movement to revive, the workshop will develop once more in its rôle of the uniting force. If we wish to look far ahead to the future of trade unionism, it is to a small country we should look that is little attended to elsewhere, the country of Norway, where trade unionism is many years in advance of other countries. The Norwegian trade union movement has recently developed its scheme of reorganisation, and the feature of it will come with a shock to many established notions still current. The scheme in its most radical form (there are rival schools) does not run either on the lines of industrial unionism or on the lines of the One Big Union with Industrial Departments, but instead recalls in many ways the characteristics of early French trade unionism. As reported, it appears to throw trade and industrial unions alike overboard, and base itself instead on the localities and the centre. The local union councils replace the national trade unions as the subordinate directing bodies under the single central authority. The local union councils are based on the workshop. Industrial representation comes in simply in a group form locally and industrially, and not as a unit of organisation. The details of this scheme need not detain us here, since it is only of value to us now as a suggestion of a still distant goal. But that way lies the path of the future.

**B**UT the problem of working-class unity is not a problem of structure. When we speak of the local movement as the training ground in solidarity we are not thinking of a form of organisation; we can even for the moment be careless of the form

of organisation, and be indifferent to the inevitable confusion that will arise from working within the sectionalist machinery of the existing movement, because we are all the time thinking of something else. If we wish to unite the workers we can only unite them as a class. No sections, and no combination of sections, can unite the workers. And that is the real secret why the General Council, not only as it is now, but as it may be in the future, can never achieve the unity of the working class. For the General Council is only a combination of sections, and those sections remain separatist, because they are organs of the separatist economic struggle. "The members of the General Council," declared Frank Hodges in the one illuminating sentence of the debate, "are still in spirit representatives of their trades." The General Council represents an attempt to unite the workers by combining their organisations. But the problem of uniting the workers is not a problem of combining their organisations. That is the old fallacy of the Triple Alliance. Though the organisations of the workers should have all the joint councils conceivable, they remain as separate as before. The problem of uniting the workers is the problem of finding the common issue that will unite them.

**B**UT the common issue that will unite the workers will not be found in the economic struggle. The economic struggle is always separatist ; it only directly affects different sections of the workers at different times, as the employers' campaign is skilfully turned, now on this section, now on that. The result is that other sections, apart from the protagonists of solidarity, are not prepared to act. The nearest approach to a common campaign has been the employers' offensive of the last two years: and even that was able to keep the sections distinct. The economic struggle can never unite the workers, and that is why the General Council, arising out of and for trade unionism and the economic struggle, can never unite the workers. The only issue which affects every worker equally and can unite them all in a common interest is the political issue, the demands of the political struggle for power of the working class as a class. Only a political issue can bring all the workers together. The one moment of fusion of the working-class movement in this

country was the brief moment of the Council of Action; and that moment arose, not from any careful construction of organisations, not from the economic struggle, but on a purely political issue.

THE consequences of this are important, and it is vital that they should be understood by the movement of this country, if it is to go forward. For since only the political struggle of the working class as a class can unite the workers, the only uniting force of the working-class movement can be a political party of the working class. The trade unions are by their nature separatist: only a political party can be the combining force. Even in the instance of the Council of Action it was the Labour Party that initiated the movement. But the Labour Party has travelled increasingly away from the working class to unity with the capitalist State. The Labour Party has lost its opportunity of becoming the combining force of the workers. The only other large socialist party, the Independent Labour Party, has travelled that route no less. The political party of the working class that can unite the workers by its leadership has still to develop. Until that party develops the working-class movement will continue to drift in sectionalism and confusion. Only when a political party of the working class can unite the workers around the common demands of the political struggle and so rally around those demands the manifold organisations of the working class, only then and by those means will the unity of the working class be achieved.



# FROM SYNDICALISM TO COMMUNISM

By TOM MANN

**T**HE holding of the British Trades Union Congress at Southport makes fitting occasion to review the position of the Trades Union Congress itself, of the Trade Union Movement, and the Labour Party.

Respecting the agenda of the Congress, as Robert Smillie declared at the Labour Demonstration at Southport on the Sunday preceding the Congress, "it was not a very revolutionary one," apparently regretting the mildness of it. At the same meeting Mr. C. W. Bowerman, M.P., Secretary to the Congress, was also a speaker. Commenting upon the 5,000,000 organised workers represented by the 800 delegates, he was reported as saying, "That was a wonderful achievement, and he hesitated to think what would have happened during the past year had it not been for the powerful trade unions with their funds to help the workers." (A voice: "Revolution !") "We want to avoid that," retorted Mr. Bowerman, "and I will make my point straight away. Practically every adult above a certain age now has the right to cast a vote, but does every workman do his duty to his own class when an opportunity to use it comes along ?" ("No !") "Let him do that, and you will avoid all talk of revolution." Thus the chief official of the Congress is calling for such action as will prevent a revolution, and expects such changes in the social system as are desirable, to be brought about by all workers recording votes for the electing of Labour members to Parliament.

Long ago the question of the nature of the change desired was thrashed out by clear thinkers, and as the years have rolled on the genuine students of sociology, viewing life from the working-class standpoint, have known and declared ten thousand times that nothing short of a revolution can correct the evils we deplore under the existing system. That is, nothing less than the overthrow of

the capitalist system based on production for profit, and the bringing in of a system of real socialism or production for use, can cure the evils that afflict the working class, and this means, in plain and clear language, the social revolution.

It was in consequence of the failure of the Labour members of Parliament to see this, or their unwillingness to endorse it and to act accordingly, plus the fact that the Labour Party tamely acquiesced in this attitude, that caused many of us fifteen years ago to strike out on Syndicalist lines. We were quite clear that to go on merely vote-recording in and out of Parliament was never likely to give the workers that actual control over their own lives and conditions of work that would enable them to escape from the domination of the exploiter, or free us from social enslavement by the plutocratic State. We looked upon the organised State under the complete domination of the capitalist plutocracy as our enemy, whilst most of the Labour politicians and Labour Party required only its modification.

The Syndicalist aimed at depriving the State of its power to tyrannise, and for the workers to secure their own freedom, by such industrial organisation as would enable the workers to refuse to produce, and therefore to refuse to carry on industry under capitalist domination, by themselves undertaking entire responsibility for managing industry.

The aim was to organise each industry, and to link up these for administration purposes on a national basis, contending that industrial solidarity, inspired by the communal or co-operative principle of common action for the common good, would admit of a complete and permanent cure for unemployment, and the progressive raising of the standard of life for all as productive capacity increased.

Some of us were anti-parliamentary, others were non-parliamentary. The vitally essential principle we held to be the complete control of all work by those who did the work, and the control of all the results of work, and thus the abolition of the wages system and therefore of the profit system and of the profit receiver.

One result of the Syndicalist propaganda was to give new life to the trade union movement, to achieve industrial changes more

drastic than had been thought possible by the mild reformist school, and generally to give a stimulus to industrial organisation, and the amalgamation of sectional unions. Thus it was as the direct outcome of the vigorous work done at this period that brought the several railwaymen's unions together, resulting in the formation of the National Union of Railwaymen in 1912, the outcome of the industrial struggles of 1911.

The Syndicalists, in their constant endeavour to organise and control industry, believing that parliamentary action was of no avail unless it was preceded by effective industrial organisation, gave very little attention to parliamentary methods, and were frequently termed the "anti-politicals" or "industrialists." This was right so far as it meant opposition to relying upon parliamentary institutions; but when it was taken to mean that the struggle was simply an industrial struggle to be waged on the industrial field, and that the State would be ignored, this was a misunderstanding of the real Syndicalist view, and this misunderstanding has led to harmful results in this country.

Now, however, the experience of the war and after the war has shown conclusively that we can no longer think simply of an industrial struggle, and industrial organisation alone is not enough. Whatever is done by industrial organisation, the organised State machine will continue to function, and will beyond question be used by the plutocracy in any and every available form against the workers. The dominant ruling capitalist class, the plutocracy, have complete control of that highly efficient machine for class purposes; the interests of the community are ever secondary to the maintenance of power by the master class, and that machine will continue to be theirs until it is wrested from them by the workers.

It is right and necessary that we should continue to organise industrially, but industrial organisation is not enough. The struggle that we are concerned with is not simply the struggle of sections of the workers against sections of the employers, but of the whole working class against the single capitalist organisation of the State, to destroy this State machine and set up our own in order to obtain economic and social freedom.

The most sanguine amongst us as believers in the power of industrial organisation are compelled by facts and experience to

realise that the State institution in the hands of the master class is not merely a danger to our success but makes our success impossible no matter how perfectly we organise in our respective industries.

We must be able to function as a class and not merely as sections; we must be directly related to each other district by district and in every occupation. We require therefore a suitable agency through which we can function, by means of which we can take concerted action; we must turn the industrial struggle into a political struggle, and our outlook must be not national only but genuinely international also.

The Communist International is the unifying force that must bring together and organise all the militant workers in their right relationship, so that each can play his part in the common struggle; and our work as individuals is to have the right outlook, to be actually identified with such organisations as will afford us best opportunities to function effectively, and at the same time to take our part in the common organisation for uniting all our forces for the common struggle, the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishing of Communism.

In the order of progress the Labour Party will be saddled with the responsibility of government; we wish them the most complete success. We can hope they will soon be able to command a decisive majority, that they will work under conditions that will give them opportunities of applying their programme. Not only are they entitled to the responsibility of government, but it is imperative that they should accept it and proceed to function and demonstrate the full value of their programme and their methods.

Those who are alive to the fact that nothing short of the complete social revolution can meet the necessities of the case, and that the capitalist class is not in the least likely to be talked out or voted out of the dominant position they occupy, will not be surprised if the Labour Party fail piteously in their attempts to cope with a class that is, in any one week, constitutional and revolutionary, democratic and plutocratic, oligarchic and despotic, according to the needs of the hour and place, for the maintenance of their domination. Meanwhile it is for the more far-seeing to prepare beforehand.

The president of the Trades Union Congress in his presidential address declared that capitalism "stands revealed in its national and international activities as the avowed and ruthless enemy of the vast masses of the people of this country." This expression was cheered, and Mr. Walker was thanked unanimously for his address by the delegates. Clear pronouncements have been made of that character any time for the past quarter of a century, and wholeheartedly endorsed, yet it is perfectly clear that class consciousness does not prevail, for the same delegates continue to pursue policies favouring the perpetuation of the capitalist system and not its overthrow. This will change, is now changing. Meantime the Trades Union Congress is also changing its machinery, more must be done and will be done to make it a fit vehicle for playing its part in the revolution. The urgent need now is the right mental concept on the part of the delegates and of those who delegate them. To use phrases declaring that capitalism is the cause of society's troubles and to continue to declare themselves hostile to clear and revolutionary effort for the realisation of the social revolution is to demonstrate repeatedly that "we don't know where we are." The trade union movement must become, and it will become, definitely and avowedly revolutionary; its objective will no longer be merely the obtaining of a decent standard of life (which is quite impossible) and at the same time actually opposing the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system. It must, and soon will have, as its chief objective the abolition of the wages system and the establishing of genuine co-operation.

As one who has been identified with the trade union movement for over forty years, and having lived and worked in many countries, and having been a constant observer and student of the social struggle, I unhesitatingly say there is no possible hope for our class short of the revolution. I have lived and worked in America, a country that was thought to hold out hope and good prospects for all who could make their way there. Experience long and bitter has taught us there is no salvation for the workers in that country as it now is, not a whit more than in this. I have lived for eight years and more in the younger countries of New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa ; every one of these is just a replica of this, with trade depressions, unemployment, Labour struggling with the

capitalists, the machinery of government used to maintain the dominancy of the master class.

The same urgent need for the social revolution exists in the countries referred to as in these older countries of Europe, but until they had been thoroughly sampled, until cities and towns and comparatively settled communities demonstrated (unconsciously) to the world that the old Adam of capitalist exploitation was exactly the same in the relatively new as in the relatively old world, hope remained in the worker's breast.

Now there is no excuse. Countries with a large and countries with a small population, countries under a monarchical and under a plutocratic republican government, all alike are subjected to the blighting influences and life and soul destroying effects of the accursed system of production for profit.

During our wanderings in the industrial wilderness we have been too prone to let the years go by tacitly as though there were no promised land to be reached. Nor is there a different geographical area to be reached, but there is a different condition of society reachable; the pioneers have already sampled these conditions, it is only necessary now for us to enter in, but the entering may not be a mere walkover. We surely have not lived in vain; some lessons we have learned, and others we are learning quickly.

The world events of the last seven years have been illuminating in an exceptional sense. Never before had it been possible for world capitalism to make so abundantly clear its grovelling sordid outlook, and its utter incapacity to enable a people to live in a condition of universal well-being. Now it is to go, having served its turn. To hasten its departure is our privilege. Whatever occupation we fill it is for us to have constantly in mind the class character of the movement. As engineers we take action not to score against an employer, but to help in the international working-class movement, to hasten the day when our ideal shall prevail. We must get out of the ruts—the trade union ruts, the parliamentary ruts, the industrial ruts, the sectarian ruts—and take a full survey of the position. Learn from America, and equally or more so from Russia. Learn from the American land of freedom how readily the authorities shoot and kill those who try to get better conditions, as in the case of the steel workers, many of them with a twelve-hour work day,

and seven such days in a week. Learn from South Africa, where the miners have recently been shot dead in considerable numbers, and ten thousand arrested, and now undergoing trial, some of whom have been sentenced to death. Learn from Italy where the reactionary Fascisti, encouraged by the Government, have killed many hundreds and burned their trade union buildings and destroyed the Communist offices. Teuton and Latin and Anglo-Saxon alike, capitalism at present dominates, but the day approaches when, like the Russians, we and others will be called upon to prove our mettle. May we be found tried and true.

# THE OUTLOOK FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

By E. B.

**I**T is a popular belief, especially among capitalist economists, that the tide of industrial activity and therefore of employment ebbs and flows periodically, and that a wave of unemployment will automatically be followed by a wave of employment. That always happened in the days before the war; so, they maintain, it must happen again now—if we will only wait, we shall see.

But a careful examination of the facts gives no ground whatever for such optimism.

It is now just about two years since unemployment in Great Britain began to assume really alarming proportions. In December, 1920, there were some 700,000 unemployed; the number increased rapidly during the spring of 1921, and the miners' lock-out caused a further jump to 1,800,000 in July; but this jump was due to special causes, and by September the number of unemployed had fallen to 1,484,000. This was loudly proclaimed as the first sign of recovery; but again there was a rapid rise to 1,925,000 in January, 1922.

Once more there has been a recovery; and at the end of July there were, according to the official figures, only 1,458,000 unemployed in the insured trades. If we can go by the experience of the last two years, this figure is likely to fall a little further until the Christmas boom passes; and then there will come another rapid increase in unemployment early in 1923.

Even on the basis of the official figures, therefore, by March next some 12 per cent. of the workers will have been unemployed for over two years. And it must be remembered that this general percentage is brought down by the inclusion of certain industries, such as railways, in which the effects of industrial stagnation cannot be very strongly marked. If we turn to the details, we find that over 20 per cent. are unemployed in the "key" industries of construction of works, shipbuilding, and engineering and ironfounding. Looking back twelve months, we find that in these industries the



position is actually worse than it was then, as the following figures show:—

PERCENTAGE UNEMPLOYED		1921	1922	
IN		JULY	JAN.	JULY
Construction of works	.. ..	17·7	29·5	21·3
Shipbuilding	.. ..	32·7	35·2	36·8
Engineering and ironfounding	.. ..	22·9	26·6	23·5

In the light of the official statistics—which are admittedly incomplete—we see therefore that there are no signs whatever of a general recovery. Fluctuations are to be expected, and in summer some increase of employment is natural; but in the coming winter we may anticipate another rapid rise in unemployment.

It is not surprising that there should be signs of some anxiety among the economic experts of capitalism. Tides normally ebb and flow; but if the sea receded 12 per cent. of the distance to America, and stayed there for two years, the compilers of the *Nautical Almanac* would begin to get a bit anxious. The economists are frankly puzzled by the intensity and long duration of the industrial stagnation; they have tried the Coué method without result, and they are beginning to wonder, not when the crisis will be over, but what will happen if it continues. And the more they think of what will happen the less they like it.

What *will* happen?

Revolution? Not in the immediate future, at any rate. Why should it? If there were any signs of a complete failure of Capitalism to keep the machine going, we might admit that a revolutionary change was possible or even likely. But in fact only about 12 per cent. of the machine is not working, and even that 12 per cent. is being kept, to some extent, in order.

However, even if nothing so dramatic happens, certain things will happen in the course of the coming winter. This is not an attempt at prophecy, for in fact these things have happened, and the coming winter, with its inevitable seasonal increase of trade stagnation and unemployment, will only increase their importance.

The effects of industrial stagnation on the workers—on the individual and on the trade unions—do not need to be stated. But too little attention has been paid to the effects on the capitalist organisations, including the State.

Let us first consider the position of the State machine, on whose efficiency the preservation of capitalist industry depends. At the present time the State budget amounts to roughly one-quarter of the national income; in pre-war years it did not exceed one-tenth. But no substantial saving can be made on the budget—that is, by any capitalist Government. Interest on war loans cannot be repudiated; nor can the military and naval expenditure be substantially reduced. The few millions that it is possible to save on some heads will be more than swallowed up by unemployment grants and, above all, the loss of revenue from the continued slump.

Up to the present the financial difficulties have been concealed—or, rather, disguised, for the facts were clear enough—by (1) arrears of excess profits duty, (2) sales of stocks accumulated during the war. But now these sources have dried up, and the State budget for next year cannot possibly balance. During the last few months there has been a steady process of throwing off from the State budget all grants to local authorities, and in other ways burdening the local finances with additional charges. This has been particularly noticeable in connection with unemployment, but it also applies to education and other public services. Now, however, with the approach of winter, it is clear that very many of the local authorities are bankrupt: their expenditure is high, and they cannot collect revenue. The transfer to local authorities of all possible charges has in fact merely spread the crisis over a number of financially weak concerns, thereby weakening the whole administrative machine. This winter is likely to see a series of local financial crises, which the State will have to liquidate.

In every possible direction, too, the State and local authorities will be reducing their staffs and their services, and this must have the effect of increasing the industrial stagnation.

The financial weakness of the State and local authorities has already had very serious results on industry. It has been pointed out that the State budget alone absorbs one-quarter of the national income; this means a burden, direct or indirect, on industry. The taxation for State purposes, and the rates for local purposes, in effect reduce the consumers' purchasing power, and therefore increase unemployment. The reduced volume of purchases means that industry has to provide taxes out of a dwindling output, and

thus it has to increase prices. This in turn further reduces consumption, and so the vicious circle continues. At every round the State is finding it more and more difficult to collect its taxes, while the demands for a reduction of taxes are becoming insistent.

There is no way out. The State cannot reduce its taxes, and by next spring the position will be acute. It is worthy of note that at the end of March, 1922—the end of the financial year—the State indebtedness was nearly £100,000,000 more than twelve months before. From March, 1922, to July, 1922, it had risen again by £30,000,000, in spite of the fact that the revenue during that period was reported to be higher than the expenditure! The State therefore is finding it constantly necessary to borrow, thus merely postponing the day of reckoning. During the winter months there will be more borrowing—in anticipation of revenue which in fact will not come in.

If we consider the industrial machine itself, we find that there are no factors which will improve the situation. On the contrary, by reducing the purchasing power of the consumers, the continued stagnation and unemployment can only perpetuate itself. In past years, when only a comparatively small percentage of unemployment existed, a correspondingly small factor might cause a revival of trade. A good crop in the grain or cotton growing countries might be such a factor, leading to lower prices and a greater purchasing power. At present not only are such factors absent: they are deliberately absent, owing directly to the working of the capitalist system. In the grain and cotton growing countries (apart from Soviet Russia) there has been a deliberate restriction of output: the area sown for this year's harvest has been reduced 20 or 30 per cent., just because the long stagnation had reduced prices and the amount consumed. Therefore the natural factor for reviving trade has been rendered useless by an intelligent capitalism.

The unnatural factors for reviving trade are wars, or enormous foreign contracts. Is there any sign of these? In spite of the perfunctory shrieks of the peacemongers at the goings-on in Europe and the Near East, no one seriously entertains the prospect of a large-scale war within the next few months. Governments are needy, and new loans and armies on a vast scale could not be raised: war is not a business proposition at this stage. As for foreign

contracts, a great deal has been made of a few small contracts. They have some influence, of course, but, like the Government's semi-relief schemes, they can only absorb an infinitesimal fraction of the unemployed. And as for other foreign business, pretty well the whole world is in the same position as this country.

There are thus no factors, in any part of the capitalist world, making for an industrial recovery, while on the other hand the sheer dead weight of the industrial crisis is dragging industry down deeper into the mire. And at the same time, a steadily decreasing production has to bear the steadily growing burden of support for the State and local government administration. It is a steadily growing burden, because although the *actual amount* of the State and local budgets has been slightly decreased, yet the industrial crisis has made a parallel but greater reduction in the taxable capacity of the people, so that the taxes are higher per unit of production.

It is clear that this process must continue at an ever-increasing pace. The fact is that the capitalist organisation of the State and industry is becoming too expensive. The State has grown into an enormous machine, responsible for education, pensions, and a host of other services. This is no new thing ; the silent but effective pressure of economic need to maintain even a moderately efficient working class had forced the capitalists to give some things for nothing, or ninepence for fourpence. That development was hurried forward by the war, forcing the capitalists to provide new services, or expand existing ones, such as housing, unemployment benefits (the extensions of the Insurance Acts), &c. ; and the war also brought its special charges of interest on war loans, military and naval pensions, &c.

There can be no going back. Already it is clear that the reduction of the public services is practically political suicide. To sweep away unemployment benefits, or education grants, or pensions, would lead to an immediate transfer of political power to Labour, which would at once restore and extend those services. Any serious retrenchment is impossible ; and in fact the cost of public services is likely to grow. For example, the inadequacy of the unemployment grants has merely resulted in the transfer of charges to the guardians ; and in the next few months the guardians

in many districts will have to put up their shutters—which will have to be taken down again by the State.

If, as has been suggested, the cost of public services and administration cannot be cut down, and on the other hand cannot be supported by industry, what follows?

At the present stage of industrial development the capitalist is already beginning to feel as if he were a bailiff, collecting money (profits) from the workers in order to hand over a part of the proceeds for the maintenance of the State. The capitalist, who pays for the State to be his servant, is beginning to find it become his master, and himself relegated to the position of a middleman, standing between the State and the worker. Bearing in mind what has been said above, we can see that the industrial stagnation is making it impossible for the middleman to collect enough money for the State. Something must go—either the middleman or the State.

In the foregoing, Great Britain has been considered in isolation; but the facts recited hold good, to a greater or less degree, for every other important country—except one. In Russia alone is there any indication of a real and permanent recovery of industry. Russia has had her own troubles, and her industries have suffered many shocks; during the last twelve months there has even been some unemployment. But the industrial difficulties (apart from actual wars) have been due to shortages of food, fuel, and raw materials—and the shortages of fuel and raw materials were in their turn due to the shortage of food. This year Russia has a good harvest—a harvest which will provide for all the needs of industry and leave a surplus for reserves—and as soon as its effects are felt industry will take a leap forward. Even before the harvest Russia was the only country in the world whose production was steadily increasing; and in the next twelve months the relative prosperity of her industry will be in marked contrast with the increasing stagnation of industry in other countries.

The reason is not far to seek. In Russia the capitalist middleman has been eliminated: and this remains true in spite of the “new economic policy” with its sanction of private trading, for 90 per cent. of industry is still in the hands of the State. The State makes its profit out of the workers direct, saving middlemen’s charges,

and thus is able to provide the needs of the workers in public services on a scale which is relatively higher than in any other country.

This is the only possible method of solving the problem presented by a growing State organisation dependent on a contracting industry, with its steadily increasing difficulty. Looking forward to the winter months, we can see that the position, both of the State and of industry, must become much worse before the usual seasonal recovery next summer. This will be reflected in further Unemployment Insurance Amendment Acts, in further "semi-relief" schemes, in further "economies" on the part of the State. As far as industry is concerned, the steady worsening of the position will be reflected in further wage reductions, in further dismissals, in rising prices, and in a great campaign for the reduction of taxes. This will come to a head in the working out of the State budget next March. That budget—whether it be introduced by a Coalitionist, a Liberal, or a Labour Government—will express the situation in a clear form; but it will not and cannot solve it. Out of that budget, on the contrary, will develop a great acceleration of the industrial decline; for every reduction of the public services will have a direct effect on unemployment, and on the other hand, if no reductions are made, taxes must be further increased. And meanwhile the workers—those in employment as well as the unemployed—will have begun to realise that, whether they like it or not, their backs are against the wall.

# THE EMPIRE AND THE REVOLUTION

By MANABENDRA NATH ROY

THE fact that in spite of its general bankruptcy Capitalism is still holding its own in the Western countries proves that as a world-dominating force it has not reached such a state of decay that its immediate collapse is inevitable. Since the period when Capitalism entered upon its last and most highly developed stage—imperialism—its stronghold was no longer confined to the industrially advanced countries of Western Europe. In imperial expansion was found a way out of the ruinous effects of over-production. Of course, it was a temporary solution bound to prove equally ineffective to save the capitalist mode of production from eventual collapse under its own contradictions. But the fact is that, until to-day, imperial expansion and exploitation do render strength to Capitalism to maintain its position in Europe.

The great imperialist war shook the very foundation of the capitalist order in European countries; had the leading members of the victorious combination not had the access to other sources of recuperation, the European bourgeoisie would have had much less success in defending the citadel of the capitalist State than is actually the case. This source of strength lies in the imperialist character of the present-day Capitalism, which holds in its hands the entire control—economic, political, and military—of the whole world, and thus finds itself in a position to put up a stiff and continued resistance against the proletariat in the home countries. The existence and power of the Western bourgeoisie do not any longer depend wholly and exclusively on its ability to wring the greatest amount of surplus value from the labour-power of the workers in the home countries. The imperial right of exploiting the vast non-European toiling masses and markets has supplied and still supplies it with an additional *modus vivendi* and a weapon to defend its position at home, in spite of the apparent precariousness and impossibility of maintaining its power there for any length of time.

As the result of the war the world finds itself divided into two great colonial empires belonging to two powerful capitalist States. The United States of America endeavours to assume the supreme and exclusive right of exploiting and ruling the entire New World; while Great Britain has annexed to her empire the greater part of the continents of Asia and Africa. A third imperialist factor, Japan, also aspires to become formidable; but in spite of her considerable local importance in Eastern Asia she has still to play second fiddle to one or the other of these two great rivals. Then Continental Europe, owing to its utter economic ruin, financial bankruptcy, and industrial dislocation, is bound to become a politico-financial dependency of either of these two great imperialist powers, which are preparing for another giant struggle for world domination. The power of the American bourgeoisie has not been very seriously affected, except in that it has to withstand the repercussion of the severe blows received by Capitalism as a social institution. On the contrary, the control of world finance, the monopoly of the British capitalist for a century and a-half, is transferred to a great extent into the hands of the American capitalist class, which cannot be said to have reached the period of decay and degeneration as yet. In order to consolidate its newly acquired world-power, the American bourgeoisie inclines towards keeping temporarily away from the infectious ruin of Europe. Thus the British bourgeoisie becomes the supreme ruler of the Old World and the backbone of the capitalist order in Europe.

Now, where does the source of strength of the British bourgeoisie lie? Judging from the industrial conditions obtaining in the British Isles during the last years, it will appear that had its resources been limited exclusively to the productivity of those islands and the consumptive power of continental Europe, the capitalist order in Britain would certainly stand on the very brink of collapse. But despite all the chronic contradictions of the order, the contradictions that put almost insuperable difficulties against reconstructing the industrial fabric of the home country on the pre-war basis, the capitalist class of Britain does not appear to be losing its grip on the State-power. It is still very firm in the political saddle, because the economic ground within its wide range of operation has not become unreliable. It still succeeds in deceiving



one section and coercing another of the proletariat. By foregoing a part of the rich fruits of colonial exploitation, the British bourgeoisie is able to corrupt the upper strata of the proletariat—to create a Labour aristocracy which not only becomes a willing protagonist of imperialism, but constitutes a bulwark of reaction in the home country. Nor is this reactionary rôle of the bought-up Labour aristocracy confined within national boundaries: the British Labour Party is the main pillar of the Second International as well as of the Amsterdam Federation of Trade Unions. The possession of a vast non-European colonial empire with unlimited resources of raw material, labour-power, and markets, on the one hand, makes British Capitalism considerably independent of continental Europe, but on the other provides it with the means to turn the latter practically into its economic dependency. British capital to-day has a very wide scope of action. The economic and industrial development of the rich and thickly populated countries of Asia would supply it with new vigour. There are great possibilities in these countries, particularly India and China, which will provide cheap labour-power and new markets not to be exhausted very soon. Let those who fondly think that the bankruptcy of Germany will destroy more than a third of Britain's industries remember the saying, "If the Chinaman's shirt-tail is lengthened by six inches the textile production of the world will have to be doubled." The consumptive power of the teeming millions of India is also immense.

The post-war readjustment of the economic relations between the various parts of the Empire show that the British bourgeoisie—at least the forward-looking section of it—has not been slow in finding the necessity of falling back on its reserve forces. By means of the projected system of imperial preference, the British Empire is to become a self-contained economic unit, whose existence will not be seriously threatened by the economic and industrial conditions in other countries. On the contrary, this self-contained economic unit will establish domination over the rest of the world, which must become more or less dependent on it. Thus the success of the scheme of imperial federation will not only stabilise the position of the British bourgeoisie, but will react upon the international situation. Entire Europe may become an economic

dependency of this federation, but Capitalism as a social institution will have its lease of life renewed. This being the case, it is of great importance that the development of the forces contributing to this scheme of capitalist reconstruction be studied with an application not less than is devoted to the problems concerning Europe.

Never has it been more necessary to remember the truism that the world transcends the boundaries of Europe and America. After turning the centre of modern civilisation into a heap of ruins Capitalism is seeking new fields of activity. If it succeeds in this attempt the European proletariat may sink into abject degeneration instead of revolution. The bourgeoisie is trying to beat a clever retreat, which should be cut off if the world revolution is to develop. In view of the fact that the power of international capital is rooted all over the globe, anything less than a world-wide revolution will not bring about the end of the present order and the triumph of the Western proletariat. The struggle of the latter, in order to be successful, must be co-ordinated with the revolutionary action of the toiling masses of the lands subjugated by capitalist imperialism. In its efforts to extricate itself from the vicious circle Capitalism entered the stage of imperial expansion and exploitation, thus bringing huge armies of colonial workers under its domination. By turning the peasants and artisans of the subject countries into mostly agricultural and partly industrial proletariat, Imperialism reinforced its position, but at the same time brought into existence another force destined to contribute largely to its ultimate destruction. This being the case, the overthrow of the bourgeois order in Europe, which order to-day is supported by colonial exploitation whose possibilities are not yet exhausted, will not be realised, as is commonly believed, alone by the advanced proletariat of Europe. It is necessary to secure the conscious co-operation of the working masses and other available revolutionary elements in those colonial and "protected countries" which afford the greatest economic and military support to Western Imperialism, and which are the most developed, economically, industrially, and politically.

India occupies the foremost place in this category of colonial countries. She has not only been a powerful pivot on which British Imperialism rested, but the scheme of developing her resources intensively and extensively with the co-operation of the national

bourgeoisie will, if realised, help British capital to stabilise itself for the time being. And this possible stabilisation of the British capitalist class will react upon the continental countries in a way which is not very encouraging. Therefore, a clear understanding of the socio-economic conditions as well as the political movement in contemporary India becomes necessary for the leaders of the Western proletariat.

The point of view that the peoples of the East, because they are not in general on the same economic and political level with Western countries, can be reckoned as one and the same social unit with identical problems to solve, is erroneous. The Eastern countries vary greatly in their political, economic, industrial, and social conditions, consequently their problem is not the same, and the movement in those countries will not develop along a uniform line. Whereas in the Mussulman countries of the Near East the religious fanaticism of the ignorant masses and the anti-foreign sentiments of the land-owning gentry can be counted upon, though only to a certain extent, as a force which can be directed against imperialist domination, these elements no longer possess the same political significance in India, where a radical economic and industrial transformation has taken place during the last quarter of a century. In the Near Eastern countries the exploitation of imperial capital has not penetrated deep enough to bring about a fundamental change in the social organism. The economic structure of these countries is still predominantly feudal, and the influence of the clergy is strong. But the same thing cannot be said about India, which since a considerable time ago has been brought fully under the extensive, if not intensive, exploitation of capital mainly imperial and partly native (the latter has been growing very fast in the last years). Feudalism has been destroyed, not by means of a violent revolution, but by its long contact with the modern political and economic institutions that are the reflex of the most highly developed capitalist State. There has come into existence in India a national bourgeoisie, which more than thirty years ago began its historical struggle for the conquest of political power from the foreign ruler; and a proletarian class, including a huge landless peasantry, which grows in number and class-consciousness in proportion to the rapid industrialisation of the country. Consequently, the revolutionary

movement in India to-day does not rest upon the religious fanaticism of the ignorant masses, which fanaticism is fast losing its potentiality owing to the economic transformation of the society, nor does it rest upon the abstract conception of nationhood, an idea reared upon the imaginary unity of interest of the entire people, and not taking into consideration the class division which is becoming more and more clearly defined as a result of the development of native capitalism. Indian capitalism promises to be an ally of imperial domination rather than a revolutionary force. The liberal bourgeoisie, which stands at the head of the National Democratic Movement, cannot be expected to play the same revolutionary rôle as was done by the European middle class in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The bourgeoisie in India becomes a revolutionary factor only if its economic development is altogether impossible under imperial rule. But post-war imperialism depends more upon finance than upon industrial capital. Since, for the interests of imperial capital, the colonial country has to be industrialised, the native bourgeoisie cannot be any longer excluded altogether from this feast of exploitation. This peculiar economic situation deprives the Indian bourgeoisie of the possibility of playing a revolutionary rôle. The conditions for a pure bourgeois revolution do not exist in India. The national struggle is not a class struggle. The national bourgeoisie is not pitted against an old order of social production. The weak native bourgeoisie finds it more profitable to ally itself with the imperialist power in return for such changes in the political and economic administration of the country as will permit it greater opportunities for developing as a class. Imperial capital, for the reasons stated above, is not averse from giving the colonial bourgeoisie such opportunities. In fact, the new policy is already introduced in India, and it has had its effects on the political movement for national liberation. The class-cleavage in the Indian society has become evident.

The object of this new colonial policy is, first, to check the movement for national liberation, and second, to draw upon the reserve forces in order that capitalism can hold its own in the home countries. The enormous extent of these reserve forces is visualised by few in the revolutionary camp, although our enemy seems to be fully cognisant of it. It is hardly understood that if Imperialism

succeeds in carrying through the new policy the Central European proletarian may be reduced to the state of a colonial coolie. While Capitalism is spreading out to the far-off corners of the earth to save itself from the ruinous effects of the imperialist war, it is a monumental mistake for the revolutionary proletariat to stake its future on its success in Middle Europe. This blunder arises out of a provincialism, from which deplorable trait the leaders of the international proletariat must free themselves ere long.

# AMERICAN CAPITAL AND BRITISH LABOUR

By W. T. COLYER

*(The writer of this article, who is of English origin, but has been resident in America for seven years, was New England Education Secretary of the Co-operative League of America, and was deported by the United States authorities in April of this year. He is the author of a forthcoming work on "Americanism: A World Menace," and his point of view, while severe in its criticism of British Labour policy, deserves the attention of workers in this country.)*

**A**MERICAN aid is unquestionably necessary if capitalism is to be set on its feet again in Europe. The British Labour Party, having definitely rejected the only alternative, is committed willy-nilly to the policy of making the best of capitalism. Inevitably, therefore, the British Labour Party will do what it can to conciliate the powers-that-be in the United States, with a view to inducing those powers to take a hand in the reconstruction of Europe. As beggars cannot be choosers, it is safe to say that the Labour Party will accommodate itself to American ideas much more than the Americans will accommodate themselves to the views of the Labour Party.

Already straws show the direction of the wind. Mr. Stewart, Labour candidate for St. Rollox, has announced through the *Daily Herald* that "wages and conditions of workers are much better in America than here," and has suggested that the Labour Party send "trained observers" to the United States with the object of finding out why Labour is so much better off over there. The *Daily Herald* has also featured a proposal to send a British Labour delegation to America "to consult with Labour there on the means to produce Real Peace."

In no long time the need for conciliating America will be overshadowed by the necessity for competing with her. To survive at all in the days immediately before us privately owned European industry will be forced to adopt American methods. In the United States, alone among the warring nations, the "captains of industry"

emerged from the war stronger and more confident than they went in. Our capitalists on this side of the Atlantic seem strong enough when compared with a Labour Movement temporarily demoralised by unemployment and bad leadership, but as against the business dictators of the Western Hemisphere they are weak indeed.

Leaving entirely out of our reckoning the growing appetite of American big business for imperialistic adventure—which may easily lead to political collisions—we cannot avoid the conclusion that the influences which are dominant in the United States to-day will play a great part in the drama of British working-class life to-morrow. It thus becomes of supreme importance to us that we should gain a clear general view of the forces which are moulding America to-day and of the kind of place they are making it.

For many years the United States had the reputation of being a country in which the workers normally enjoyed a comparatively high standard of comfort, but in which strikers and unpopular minorities ran the risk of savage mistreatment. It was also generally understood that American business and politics were corrupt beyond anything known in this country ; but the corruption was usually represented as mere good-natured swindling of communities which were well able to bear their losses and which took the whole system as a good joke.

Up to the outbreak of the war this rough picture was not unfaithful, so far as the most favoured districts and a highly skilled English-speaking labour aristocracy were concerned. It gave no idea of conditions among the ever-increasing millions of non-English-speaking, unskilled or semi-skilled "foreigners," and it disregarded local experiments in systematic terror directed against organised Labour, mainly in the West. During the last five years, however, it has become wholly out of date. We need not here discuss questions of how long the capitalists had been preparing the new regime, or of whether it would have been instituted if the war had not come. The fact confronting us is that the war provided an excellent excuse for co-ordinating the existing official and private agencies of terror, for creating new ones with almost incredible rapidity, and for publicly scrapping every principle and practice of government which in any way threatened to obstruct the operations of capitalistic enterprise.

"Invisible government"—the American name for political wirepulling by big business—had long been the target of electioneering eloquence. Woodrow Wilson himself had had a great deal to say about it in his pre-election speeches, but hardly had he been inaugurated President for a second term when it became possible for the man in the street to exclaim, with Francis Thompson—

"Oh, world invisible, we view thee!"

In the autumn of 1916 Mr. Wilson was carried to office by the slogan "He kept us out of war." Yet within a month of his second inauguration on March 4, 1917, when it appeared that in a declaration of war by the United States lay the American bankers' one hope of collecting European war debts, he was ready for hostilities. One of the election cries of his supporters had been "No conscription." Yet six weeks after war was declared he had signed the "Selective Service Act."

Perhaps it was felt that the cynicism of these betrayals rendered it unnecessary—or useless!—any longer to observe the "proprieties" which in other capitalist countries are used to mask the power behind the State. At any rate, these "proprieties" were forthwith abandoned. Legislatures, courts, and Government departments began to act in a shameless fashion, which branded them much more effectively than any radical propaganda could have done as mere agents of the business interests. The bonds were tightened between private detective agencies, such as those described by Mr. Blankenhorn under the title "Labour Spies Inc." in the August issue of the *LABOUR MONTHLY*, and the official secret service. At a slightly earlier date the Ku Klux Klan had set about reorganising itself for the task of inflicting punishment on agitators who might be crafty enough to evade the legal traps which were being laid for them at every turn.

Since 1917, in short, there has grown up in the United States a "business Government" which sometimes uses, sometimes defies, sometimes merely flouts, the official administration. This unofficial Government has already made itself dreaded and hated by the progressive elements in the population—and especially by the Labour militants—as no other ruling oligarchy outside Tsarist Russia and European Turkey has been dreaded and hated in



modern times. A brief summary of its principal achievements is necessary to show how it exercises its power.

First may be mentioned its use of the war-time Espionage Act to crush the Industrial Workers of the World. Ostensibly this legislation was directed against German spies. Probably German sympathisers here and there were prosecuted under its provisions, but its chief use was for "putting away" industrial unionists. Members of the I.W.W. were arrested, literally in hundreds, and were given punishments which caused European observers to wonder whether American judges had gone stark mad. Many less famous militants than William D. Haywood received twenty-year sentences, while others, like the writer's friend, Charles Ashleigh—of whom the Federal Department of Justice could say "There is no proof of overt act on his part"—were awarded ten years apiece on the strength of their reputations as forceful speakers and writers. In these, and hundreds of similar cases, practically all the rules of evidence and procedure on which had been based the fiction of "equality before the law" were openly brushed aside. To-day the American courts, whether Federal or State, are in "radical" cases simply the buildings to which offenders are taken to hear their punishment, when the offended business interests find it less convenient to resort to "tarring and feathering" or lynching.

Equally significant is the fact that the anti-profiteering law was successfully invoked to prohibit strikes, but was declared unconstitutional when an attempt was made to enforce it against speculators in the necessities of life. And within the past few months the Federal District Court at Pittsburg has refused to grant striking miners their final citizenship papers unless they would agree to become scabs!

Mention should also be made of the use in 1920 of official stationery and of funds, appropriated by Congress for legal purposes, in circularising the editorial offices of the country with an offer to supply, *free of charge*, plates containing cartoons, "news" stories, and other propaganda matter directed against "reds." At the same time Mr. Wilson's Attorney-General notified the editors that it would give him "much pleasure" to furnish them with "any details, either general or in specific cases," "regarding the radical movement in this country."

Two illustrations will serve to show how money power defies the official administration at will. In May, 1920, Baldwin-Felts detectives, acting on behalf of West Virginia coalowners, attempted to evict a number of miners' families from their homes at Matewan. The miners concerned had recently joined the United Mine Workers of America, and had thus rendered themselves liable to eviction under a house contract made with the coalowners before the district was unionised. The question at issue was whether private detectives were legally entitled to evict without authority from the courts. It was the opinion of the mayor and chief of police of Matewan that forcible evictions could only be effected under court orders, and accordingly they instructed the Baldwin-Felts men to desist. In a fracas which ensued, the mayor and several private citizens were slaughtered by the employees of big business. It is noteworthy, however, that the chief of police, who was able to lead a body of special constables to a belated victory over the disturbers of the peace, was subsequently indicted for murdering several of these gentry! On his way out of court after the failure of the first of the indictments against him, he was shot dead by a member of the mineowners' secret service.

The second instance—also involving miners—will be fresh in the memories of most readers. At Herrin, Illinois, on June 22, 1922, a fight occurred between locked-out miners on one side and professional strike-breakers and gunmen on the other. A goodly number of the latter were killed, and the incident has been generally treated in the Press as an aggression on the part of the miners. As a matter of fact the miners acted in self-defence against a coal company whose hirelings had already shot down three unarmed men in cold blood and were maintaining an armed camp, with sentries who were reported to the State authorities as illegally holding up traffic on public highways—and all this in face of the demand of a State officer, Colonel Hunter, of the Illinois National Guard, that the company officials cease their acts of provocation.

To prove the flouting of the official administration by the money power it would be easy to cite several lynchings of Labour organisers ; scores of floggings, "tarrings-and-featherings," and mutilations ; and thousands of exclusions, expulsions, or deportations decided upon by the dominant business interests and carried

through without a semblance of legal procedure. One notable example may represent this entire class. Over a thousand miners were forcibly deported from their homes in Bisbee by a "loyalty league" organised by their employers, and were deposited without provisions in the middle of the Arizona desert. It was subsequently held by a servile court that, although not a particle of evidence was adduced in support of the theory that the deportees contemplated any act of violence, the employers were justified in their action by a sincere belief that their lives and property were in imminent peril.

Now what is the significance of all this for American and for British Labour? It means that the American capitalists have ready to hand weapons of intimidation and coercion as terrible as any wielded by Horthy in Hungary or the masters of the Fascisti in Italy. But there is one great difference. In Hungary and Italy the master class was confronted by mass movements of the workers directed towards a proletarian dictatorship. In America a naked capitalist dictatorship has been established for purely offensive purposes against the American Federation of Labour, one of the feeblest and most docile Labour organisations in the world, and against the hosts of unorganised workers whom the Federation in its narrow selfishness has left to fend for themselves.

Even if American Labour were much stronger economically than it actually is, such a condition of affairs would be a presage of disaster for the workers in the campaign which is in progress in the United States, as everywhere else, to reduce their standards of living and to rob them of what little say they ever had in the determination of their conditions of employment. With blood and fire, if necessary, as well as with starvation, the American employers are prepared to force Labour into subjection.

What is arrayed against them? A Federation comprising something over three million workers out of a population which exceeds one hundred million—rather more than half the number affiliated to the British Trades Union Congress out of a population of less than fifty million. What kind of fighting structure does that Federation possess? It is made up mainly of craft unions the officialdoms of which are constantly engaged in bitter jurisdictional disputes. In 1919, when twenty-four of them entered a loose alliance in an attempt to compel the Steel Trust to negotiate

with them—and, incidentally, to improve conditions in an industry in which a large proportion of the employees work a twelve-hour day, and many a seven-day week—John Fitzpatrick and William Z. Foster, respectively Chairman and Secretary of the National Committee for Organising Iron and Steel Workers, had to sweat blood to maintain even the semblance of unity. In the end the strike was lost through the sabotage of some of the unions which had most at stake. And the Federation as a whole is on record as favouring a continuance of the capitalist system and rejecting affiliation with the Amsterdam International on the ground that the latter is a dangerously Bolshevistic organisation.

If they are protected only by an organisation of this character, there is no need for us to consider whether the American workers are accustomed to live well or ill. We may prophesy with confidence that they will soon be on a level with the lowest of the low. And the truth is that nothing can save them short of a complete reorganisation and rejuvenation such as that which transformed the fighting forces of Russia from Kerensky's demoralised rabble into Trotsky's invincible Red Army. There is, however, just a chance that such a transformation may occur. Rumbings of discontent have been heard among the rank and file, and the Trade Union Educational League, formed by the militants, is working like fury to undermine the power of the present leadership and to carry the gospel of revolutionary industrial unionism into every local union and every factory and workshop in the country.

The task, however, is a tremendous one, and in the race against time the captains of industry have a long start. Moreover, they realise the possibilities of the present situation and have been quick to act. The offices of the League have been raided, and Foster, its secretary, after being kidnapped in Denver, Colorado, on August 6, 1922, to prevent his addressing a mass meeting in that city, is now under legal arrest. The present charge is that he was present at a conspiratorial meeting alleged to have been held at the end of August somewhere in the State of Michigan. Foster was not, however, found with the other prisoners taken in the Michigan raid, and strenuously denies that he was in that State at the time of the raid.

And what of British Labour? There will be some who will say

that the British Labour leaders will stand firm to the end against the methods for which capitalistic Americanism stands. It is pleasant to think so, but is it safe? When we find them suggesting a ten years' industrial truce in this country at a time when even skilled workers in steady employment are on the verge of starvation, can we feel any assurance that they will put up a fight against sinister influences abroad? We know that the programme of the Trade Union Educational League would find no favour in their eyes, for it includes affiliation with the Red International of Labour Unions.

These are days in which sharp choices have to be made. Already the Labour Party, having excommunicated the Communists, is basking in the favour of the *London Times*, and there is nothing improbable in the suggestion that in the near future it may be willing to shape its policies with a view of securing the approval of the yet more reactionary *New York Times*.

# INFANTILE DISEASES OF FRENCH TRADE UNIONISM

By A. LOSOVSKY

*(The following article was written by Losovsky before the decision of the French United Confederation of Labour to affiliate with the Red International of Labour Unions. As it was Losovsky's own unexpected intervention in that Congress which contributed largely to the result, this contribution of his has a special interest. The issue which he covers is of wider than French significance : since it is the whole issue between the industrialists and those who believe in the need of a political party. The article can be read with advantage in conjunction with Tom Mann's article earlier in the present issue.)*

**T**HE French United Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.U.) arose as the outcome of the struggle against the spirit of reformism; and it embodied all the old principles of revolutionary syndicalism.

It is well known that the General Confederation of Labour, with its anti-military, anti-parliamentary, and anti-political principles, became a military-political organisation during the war; its leaders being constant visitors in the ante-rooms of the Ministers. This unheard-of *volte face* of revolutionary trade unionists caused disappointment and demoralisation in the ranks of the working masses. From year to year the opposition grew within the ranks of the organised workers, until at last, when its dimensions assumed menacing proportions, the leaders of the reformist section of the C.G.T. proceeded to expel all the revolutionary trade unions. Measures were then taken to unite all revolutionary unions, and the formation of the United Confederation of Labour was the reply to the policy of expulsion.

The newly formed organisation was faced with untold difficulties. The reformists retained possession of all trade union headquarters, all organising material, and in addition were in the good books of

the Government. The revolutionaries were empty handed, and had to build up from the very beginning. The membership, too, was in a sorry plight, having fallen from 2,000,000 to about 500,000 at the end of 1921 as a result of reformist tactics. Thus the revolutionary section of the workers was also saddled with the task of recreating the Labour movement owing to the demoralisation, disorganisation, and dismemberment brought about by Jouhaux and Dumoulin. Faced with such a situation fidelity to the old principles was not enough; it was the duty of the new leaders of the C.G.T.U. to assess the respective strength of the organisations, to examine the actual position, and put their revolutionary tactics in operation intelligently.

Unfortunately, from the very beginning our French comrades adopted wrong tactics. Scarcely had the C.G.T.U. been formed when the anarchist section demanded the acceptance of the Charter of Amiens (passed in 1905) as the chief plank in the new programme. We have, of course, no objection to discussions, differences of opinion, or to a theory; but here it is not a question of a theory which is adaptable to the daily needs of the situation, but of one which was to solve all problems that have arisen during the last decade. The Charter of Amiens was taken as a basis, regardless of the fact that it had its origin sixteen years ago, before either the world war or Russian revolution could be foreseen, at a time when the workers were faced with different problems. Any reference to these patent truths was met with denunciations of attacks on the independence of the workers, and any who made them were condemned in the name of anarcho-syndicalist principles.

History explains the origin of the charter. French socialism has always been noted for its localist and reformist tendency, and the charter signalled a healthy class-conscious protest against the policy of compromise of the French Socialist Party.

But can the bare negation of a political party constitute a programme of action? Moreover, there is the existence of the political party. If some anarchists were to be credited the origin of the political Labour movement is due to the wicked action of certain intellectuals—in short, literary folk with little to do and such like create political parties for the sake of something to do. Such a childish conception of the mechanism of the social struggle can

only be ascribed to primitive thinkers and people of narrow outlook. What does a party represent in reality? It is always a conscious reflex of a certain social class in the society of the day, an assembly of those of similar tendencies, with similar views about the basis of present-day society and the duties of that class whose interests it represents. The working class, in the process of development during the period of struggle, singles out continually political groups which in one form or another represent its interests. How is it possible to account for several workers' parties in any one State with different programmes and different tactics? That happens because the working class is not uniform and its various strata are in different stages of development. There are workers' parties representing the most backward strata, those which link the workers to the other classes. Again, there are political groupings, the bearers and revealers of the revolutionary ideal, which will destroy the society built on class. That is the Communist Party.

Therefore political parties are not due to chance, nor are they artificial constructions, but the reflex of the inmost needs of a class; built up from the conscious elements of the working class and those of other classes, and those elements sharing the same point of view, who link up together to realise the historic mission of the proletariat.

This reason alone should compel trade unions to take an interest in political parties and their formation. Is it possible for a trade union to have but one attitude towards a political party whether it be bourgeois, socialist, or communist? Can trade unions treat all political bodies in a like manner, when it must be clear to every worker that the objects of the one is to strengthen the bourgeois ascendancy, whilst others are out to undermine it? The reformist C.G.T. invokes the Charter to cloak its continual betrayal of the workers. But why do the anarchist trade unions adhere to these statutes? What do they want from the Charter of Amiens? In the face of all common sense must they declare that the "only organisation of the workers is the trade union."

Revolutionary trade unionists have woven a theory around the revolutionary outlook of trade unions, believing them to be revolutionary as a matter of course. But in this they are mistaken. The whole history of the trade union movement for a century shows that trade unions are given to conservatism, and that much



bourgeois prejudice exists. It is not necessary to go back far: the present position of the Labour Movement in the world will illustrate these points. A glance suffices to prove the conservative tendency of the German, English, American unions, and those of other countries, and the absence of the revolutionary leanings of the working class. The allegation that a trade union is by its very existence perforce revolutionary is a negation of history, a denial of fact, which the constitution of the working class in every country proves.

This illusion of the revolutionary nature of trade unions, of the self-sufficiency of the trade unions, is cherished by the C.G.T.U. and is one of the most dangerous factors in the path of the revolutionary trade union movement in France.

The consequences of this line of argument must be faced. Our French comrades, by regarding themselves as the only revolutionaries, the only opponents of the bourgeois society, the only power to oppose the capitalist system, must of necessity cause disunity within their own organisation. The C.G.T.U. was founded to unite all revolutionary workers regardless of their political tendencies or convictions. By this they demand not only recognition of the principle of the revolutionary class struggle; they demand that every one should recognise the federation as the only weapon capable of liberating the working class.

But the leaders of the C.G.T.U. went even further. Their dissenting spirit was specially noticeable in two questions, namely, affiliation to the Red International of Labour Unions, and the attitude to be adopted towards the Russian revolution. The revolutionary wing of the French trade union movement had assisted in creating the R.I.L.U.; the revolutionary minority had joined with the Russian unions in forming the provisional international council of that body. From this it would seem to follow that they would form its most important section; but when it was finally established the French trade unionists took up a hostile attitude, basing their objections to it in the famous resolution against any connection existing between the R.I.L.U. and the Communist International. The relations between the two Internationals were made the bone of contention and sufficed for the anarchist-syndicalists as a reason to reject affiliation to the R.I.L.U.

If one reads carefully all that has been written on this episode, it may safely be said that the trade unionists do not oppose the Communist International because they are not in agreement with its aims, but merely because the Communist International is a political organisation. All their protests show no objection to the revolutionary tactics of the Communist International; all their arguments are directed against the one theme that it is a political organisation. In the Charter of Amiens the policy laid down for political parties is that their activities should be carried on "without and alongside of the trade unions"; hence the French trade unionists' difficulty to agree to any mutual representation.

The demands of the C.G.T.U. leaders are as follows :

- (1) Complete autonomy in national measures, absolute independence in management, propaganda, preparation of campaigns, in the examination of the means of organisation, and in action itself.
- (2) Autonomy and independence in international measures, rejection of mutual representation between the two leading organisations, and that both internationals should keep within their own bounds without interfering with each other; this to be attained by setting up boundaries of the activities of both bodies.

Let us see what the demands and formulæ mean. What does complete autonomy and absolute independence mean? Independence in what and of whom? Imagine a situation in France in which the pressure of the bourgeois were such as to call forth the anger of the working masses and necessitate serious measures being taken. What is to happen in such circumstances? If the C.G.T.U. principles are obeyed it must take action independently of the party, and both sections prepare action of their own accord. If, however, they carry out this fight for independence to a logical conclusion, the bourgeoisie will nevertheless annihilate them regardless of that fact. What sense is there in taking separate action in these circumstances when both the unions and the party are of one mind? Would it not be better to form a united committee of action for such an eventuality, thereby securing economy of labour, a greater conservation of revolutionary energy, and a more decisive blow against the enemy?

In whose name should this "independence" be cultivated *ad absurdum*? In the name of the Charter of Amiens? In the name

of the theory that trade unions and political parties may not know one another? Evidently such a theory could not withstand the least criticism, and would lead to serious results in view of the experiences of recent years, which show that the concentration of all the power and energy of the working masses is essential. Hence there can be no doubt that where a Communist Party exists, capable of conducting the struggle and organising the masses, it would be criminal for trade unions to refuse to co-operate in action just because of the abstract and thrice-buried Charter of Amiens.

The second point in the programme is also contrary to the interests of the workers. The spheres of activity of the Communist International and Red International of Labour Unions are thereby parcelled out. Does this mean to convey that trade unions are to concentrate solely on trade union questions!

Our humble thanks for such a sectionalisation; what farcical revolutionary trade unions those would be that confined their whole attention to purely union questions. Nor do they want to do so; their object is to have a Trade Union International which is a fighting organisation; they want to combat the bourgeoisie and bring their whole strength to bear against the bourgeois State and strike it at its weakest points.

Take an actual example—the Genoa Congress. Would it be out of place for the Trade Union International to take action in this connection? Surely no revolutionary trade unionist will deny the advisability of so doing; but how would the activities of the Communist International be defined in this matter? Should the Communist International be told to stand back and take no part on this occasion, or that “our action is towards a different aim with a different purpose”? No, we could do nothing but admit that we esteem the reasons which have brought about the Genoa Conference, as well as its results, in exactly the same manner as the Communist International. Let us take other examples, such as the Washington Conference, the destruction of the trade unions in Spain and Jugo-Slavia; the fight against militarism and reaction. How could the dividing line be drawn in these matters? Or if drawn, in what would it consist? Why not act in common provided no radical difference exists as to practical suggestions and methods of procedure? What could the French trade unions suggest in

regard to the Genoa Conference that would be different from the wishes of the Communist International? If it were a new means of attack, the Communist International would be the first to adopt it. Therefore what is there to prevent the Communist International and the R.I.L.U., with a common audience and similar modes of procedure, from acting in unison? Would such an act endanger the interests of the workers? To act differently would be an injury to the Labour Movement for the sake of the dead Charter of Amiens.

Close dissection of all the objections, which have been written in France, to the Communist International does not divulge a single one worthy of serious consideration. These are learned phrases and metaphysics, not revolutionary thought or action.

The leaders of the C.G.T.U. are in a worse position when they approach international problems. Their attacks are uninterrupted against parties, sects, schools, &c., and in all these they flaunt the purely "libertaire" anarchist world policy, and in so doing begin to attack the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is their custom to write against all forms of dictatorship; but it so happens that the bourgeois dictatorship gets off lightly whilst their attack is chiefly directed against the proletarian dictatorship, against the dictatorship of the Russian proletariat.

To crystallise its rejection of all kinds of dictatorship the C.G.T.U. passed a resolution early in March reaffirming its anti-State and anti-political tendencies, and stressing the fact that it identifies itself with no State or party. The resolution is a protestation of anarchist belief, proving that the C.G.T.U. in its whole construction is against the State, Government, and dictatorship of any kind; that it is in no way interested in the struggle of parties, in a word that it is high up in the clouds and soars over everything. Its recognition of revolution is reserved and its hatred of oppression incidental. If this resolution of the C.G.T.U. were its only publication it would suffice to show that it is suffering from an acute illness and that unfortunately not a complaint of growth. For if the C.G.T.U. grew with events, if it would refrain from looking back to the Charter of Amiens and look forward instead, if it would cease to look down on the Russian revolution and

thoroughly inquire into all it has done, it would never have passed or formulated such a resolution.

In the opinion of the leaders of the C.G.T.U. the Russian revolution is guilty of many faults; as already mentioned they refuse to indentify the proletarian revolution of any country with a Government or party actually in power. Such utterances can only be ascribed to people devoid of interest in real facts. Why did the C.G.T.U. fail to read up the history of the Russian workers and their four years' struggle? Why did they not inquire why and how the Soviet power was created, and why just this form was chosen and no other? Or do the C.G.T.U. leaders imagine that the Soviet appeared by chance, and that its formation is due to this or that party? Is it possible for grown-up people to take up such an attitude to historical events? Russia is a country with 150,000,000 inhabitants and an area equal to one-sixth of the world; how can anyone be so childishly casual in passing judgment and observing everything in relation to the Charter of Amiens, which excels in only one respect—and that is the prevention of its devotees from a real earnest consideration of life. What a sad impression these resolutions, full of conceit and rejection of any chance to learn from the Russian revolution, give when there is much to be learned, especially by French trade unionists.

In an article by a certain Max Steffen entitled "Affiliation to the R.I.L.U. is Impossible Without Giving Up Our Principles,"<sup>1</sup> the Congress is belittled because representatives of Georgia, Azerbaidjan, and other Caucasian comrades attended. This citizen considers Azerbaidjan, Georgia, and the Far Eastern Republic as negligible quantities. He is unaware of the fact that in Azerbaidjan there are 100,000 organised workers, and that its history is a brilliant one of centuries of struggle. Were a little union from Luxembourg to send a representative, the author would possibly say: "Oh, Luxembourg is in Europe, Azerbaidjan is in Asia, and one can scarcely compare Asiatics with highly cultivated Europeans." Such people style themselves "revolutionary trade unionists," and do not see how blinded they are by old-time prejudices.

This contempt for the awakening peoples of the East is akin to the psychology of the white European who regards all coloured

<sup>1</sup> The C.G.T.U. affiliated at its first Congress in June to the R.I.L.U.

peoples as a gift from God to be exploited for his benefit. What concern of this citizen is it that in the Far Eastern Republic there are 130,000 organised workers, or more than in all Portugal and three times as many as there are trade unionists in Holland, to which he refers. He knows that there are 30,000 trade unionists in Holland, and about the same number in Sweden, and he considers these 30,000 a proper organisation, whilst he hardly regards the 100,000 organised workers in the Far Eastern Republic even as workers. And why? Because they are still free from the ideas which crowd his muddled brain.

\*     \*     \*     \*

The French trade union movement is going through a crisis. The unions have sacrificed an enormous number of members; the masses are full of discontent with the leaders. They are no longer to be placated with phrases, no matter how revolutionary these may be; only practical tactics will win them. The activities of the C.G.T.U. do not seem to be a preparation for the struggle. It is too slow and looks too much to the "libertaire" methods. But this policy will only lead to defeat. Every workers' organisation must be quite clear about what it risks. The time for words, revolutionary phrases, and empty formulæ is long passed. Now is the time for concrete, revolutionary, realistic tactics, uniting the trade unions to the masses and making them face the facts of the social revolution.

The C.G.T.U. is vacillating and torn by tendencies in its midst. It does not yet command sufficient clearness or certainty. But this does not mean that it will collapse; it will survive this period of vacillation and storm and stress, and of anarchist phrases, but precautions should be taken to prevent the anarchist phase from costing the movement too much. To attain this object curtsies to the Charter of Amiens will not suffice, nor will retrospective methods succeed; it will be necessary to study the revolution which has already taken place, and also to look ahead. One must consider that life cannot be modelled on the Charter of Amiens; but that the charter can and must be made to fit the needs and requirements of the class struggle as it is to-day.

# The World of Labour

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## INTERNATIONAL

### Approaching Fusion of Vienna and Second Internationals

**A**T the meeting of the Second International Executive at Prague on August 12, Tom Shaw, M.P., was elected secretary, to replace Ramsay MacDonald, who resigned. MacDonald had held the position of secretary since 1920, when the Second International secretariat was reconstructed at Geneva. His own commentary on his resignation, which appeared in the *Forward*, is illuminating at this juncture, when negotiations are being carried on to amalgamate both the Second and "Vienna" Internationals. "The work which I undertook," he writes, "has been finished; the Third International is out, the Vienna Union can no longer obstruct. . . ." In his opinion, the union of the Second International with Vienna is a "chance for re-creating a real International." The postponement of the First International Congress of the "Vienna" Union, fixed for September 16, at Carlsbad, is condemned by Jean Longuet, who protests against the "Vienna" Union merely becoming absorbed by the Second International. He demands conditions and guarantees for the new International such as would ensure the admission of all Socialists, "including those of Moscow." Since the "Vienna" Union professed to come into existence to bring about international unity, Longuet insists that it must meet and formulate the conditions on which it will enter the ranks of the Second. He maintains that this proposed amalgamation will not bring about the unity of international Socialism; but having protested, weakly adds that "it is possible that this partial unification is an inevitable stage in the march towards complete unity."

The "Vienna" Union Executive met at Frankfurt on September 2 and 3, and issued a statement to the effect that international unification must continue even though the Communist International is not included. The

postponement of the Carlsbad Congress was approved, and an extended meeting of the Executive would be called to consider whether to hold a separate congress at all or to merge it in the future united congress.

### The Fight on the Miners' International

THE results of the International Miners' Congress at Frankfurt on August 6-10 showed two things. First, that until the unorganised mass of the American miners are brought into their own national miners' movement the prospects of a successful international miners' action in Europe are small. Secondly, that even within the organisations of the European miners themselves there are still important differences, coinciding to some extent with the national difference on economic policy which divides the capitalist Governments.

The three most important questions which came before the conference were: (1) The Spa Agreement, (2) workers' control and miners' councils, (3) the American strike and, connected with it, the whole question of international action against the capitalist offensive.

On the first point the Congress arrived at a unanimous decision. Here, undoubtedly, the miners of all Europe are interested in putting an end to the present state of affairs. For the miners of England and France are suffering unemployment because of the German reparation coal, while the German miners are being continually threatened with the necessity to work overtime in order to give the French financiers the chance to dominate the coal markets of the continent. The resolution adopted, however, was of a moderate nature, and only went so far as to request the Reparations Commission to receive a deputation from the International Executive, "with a view to securing a modification of the Spa Agreement, so as to ease the present economic situation in the coal industry." The speech of Frank Hodges, proposing the resolution, characterised the tone in which this subject was approached. "If the German miners," he said, "should be forced to undertake regular overtime, it would be a black day in the history of the miners. In demanding a revision of the Spa Agreement we are not touching the political problem of the Versailles Treaty, but the international coal problem and the coal question in each country separately. The conference will only set out to realise practical points."

The unity which characterised the realising of this programme of "influencing" the Reparations Commission stood in sharp contrast to the lack of unity which characterised the proceedings on the other days, particularly when the question of organisation for international action against the capitalist offensive was discussed. The first sign of disagreement arose over the debate on the question of workers' councils in the mines. The Germans pointed with some pride to their own *Betriebsräte Gesetz*, and advocated agitation for workmen's council laws in other countries through the national sections. The French miners, however, took the view that the International Executive and not the national sections should take the initiative in this matter. They apparently had no faith in the latter, and put all their faith on *l'internationale d'action*. Then commenced a skirmish between the French delegates and the delegates of the small nations, including Czecho-Slovakia, of whom seven



were Communists and two Anarchists, Luxembourg, and the Saar. The latter declared that all attempts to establish the German workmen's council law in the two latter countries were suppressed by the French military authorities. Whereupon the Belgian Dejardin asked how was international action possible if the national sections did not use more effective pressure on their Governments than was done hitherto. They, in Belgium, had forced their Government to inquire into cases where the Belgian military authorities had interfered with the rights of workmen's councils in German occupied areas. Why did they not find the same pressure exerted by the French? In reply to this, the French delegate, Barthuel, an imposing figure with an apparently strong, revolutionary temperament, could only say: "We demand an International of action, not of words." In contradiction to what he had said before, he now maintained that a matter of this sort did *not* concern the International, but was a domestic matter which only concerned the national sections! The contradictory utterances of the French delegation are attributable to the fact that, while the rank and file of the French miners are living under the very worst possible conditions, and are daily becoming more exasperated, nevertheless they are numerically weak (only 100,000 organised men) against a capitalist class relying on the greatest military power in Europe. In fact, one had the feeling that their gestures were those of helpless rage. In addition to this they seem to have the Latin weakness of revolutionary temperament without the capacity to direct. The opinion was freely expressed by delegates of the other national sections, in private conversation, that the French delegates were unconsciously helping their own Government when they put all the emphasis on international action to the neglect of the national sections. A Belgian delegate remarked in his speech that this could only come from a national section that was weak and comparatively impotent.

The greatest struggle at the Conference took place on the question of international action against war and the capitalist offensive, with which was closely connected the attitude of the European miners to the American strike. Here the French delegation showed an attitude which was at once clear, unequivocal, and free from any suggestion that it could have been even unconsciously influenced by its own Government's policy, as was the case with its attitude on the workmen's council question in Luxembourg and the Saar. On this point it was the British delegation which seemed, whether consciously or unconsciously, to be playing the game of the British coal exporters, who are reaping profits out of the American strike. The French introduced a resolution which called, firstly, for a twenty-four hours' strike on an international scale, as a first warning to the capitalists of Europe and America; secondly, for an international strike of longer duration to secure a minimum programme for the miners of all lands; and, thirdly, for the drawing up of this programme by the International Executive, which should also work out the details of a general strike to stop war. On this resolution, Barthuel, in a powerful speech, said that only action of this sort would be of any avail. It could, however, only be put into practice if the British miners agreed to take action with the rest. The conditions of the French miners were no less heartrending than those of the British miners, unemployment and wage cuts being everywhere the order of the day. Yet the situation could only

be saved by direct action on an international scale. If England permitted the export of coal to break the American strike this action was impossible, and the defeat of the Americans would come back on them in Europe. "The International to-day is a conglomeration of impotence." Against it stood "the solid front of the employers' international. We need a real, not an imaginary International. Otherwise let us speak the truth: the International does not exist."

Whereupon Robson, on behalf of the British miners, arose with a resolution confirming the decision of the Geneva Congress in favour of a general strike against war, instructing the Executive of the Miners' International Federation to arrange that the questions of ways and means of international miners' action be placed on the agenda of the congress of each national section affiliated to the Miners' International, instructing the international committee to consider measures to be taken in order to bring about closer relations with the American miners' organisations. Robson vehemently opposed Barthuel's idea of a strike or of direct action in the interests of the American miners. It was impossible to carry out and did not frighten the employers. Barthuel's misfortune was that he did not realise how the present relations of strengths lay. Unity of aim and organisation was necessary. "We demand," he concluded, "political action, and we are out to capture Parliaments." Robson had the support of the great majority of the Conference, the German and Dutch delegates referring to Barthuel's ideas as dangerous and misleading.

An interesting episode, which throws some light on events of the last eighteen months, took place when the Belgian Dejardin spoke. He supported the Robson resolution and opposed Barthuel. Nevertheless, one had the impression that his words were addressed, not solely to the Frenchmen, but were meant also to be heard by a certain young miners' leader across the channel. Dejardin declared: "We also are for a general strike, when it is necessary; for instance, when it is against war. But where was the international solidarity during the English strike last year? *Belgian miners were ready to back it, and struck work weekly for one day (Monday) for six successive weeks.* But, from Dunkirk, French and Dutch coal went to England. Where was the French solidarity then?" This statement came as a great surprise to the German delegates, who learnt now, for the first time, that the Belgian miners had declined to work blackleg coal during the great British coal strike. In private conversation, Dejardin stated after, that he had come to London and had made arrangements with Frank Hodges that this should be done in Belgium. Yet the Belgian action was fruitless, because not only did the French continue to work blackleg coal, but so also did the Germans, in spite of the fact that the latter were only waiting for the word from England to take the same action as their Belgian colleagues. In fact, the late Otto Hue informed the writer, in the autumn of last year, that he had telegraphed direct to Frank Hodges informing him that he was ready to stop working all coal intended for England and knock off a certain number of shifts a week for this purpose. This telegram, according to Hue, was never answered, and no one knows to this day in Germany why this section of the international miners' front was, so apparently wantonly, left open.

Nor did the decisions of the Frankfurt Congress indicate that the mistakes of the past were being learned. For the French resolution, which, in spite of some unclear passages, provided a basis of action to help the American miners at a point where they were being hit, viz., blackleg coal from Europe, was turned down, only the seven French delegates and five Communist and two Anarchist delegates from Czecho-Slovakia voting for it. The Robson resolution was then passed, and, as a sop, £10,000 voted for the American miners in aid of their strike fund.

### Trade Union Internationals and Expulsions

THE series of international trade union congresses which have followed closely upon one another during the past few months has afforded ample opportunity of making a closer survey of the international Labour position. The capitalist offensive has in no instance been met by a united body of workers, nor has any congress displayed a really serious attempt to meet the situation. Other congresses besides that of the miners (described above) have illustrated this strongly. They have rather concentrated on local grievances, and as regards the international situation have confined their energies to the task of expelling the revolutionary elements.

The Woodworkers' International, which met in Vienna on June 12-15, is a striking instance of the sectional internationalism now being cultivated in the trade union world. This Congress was said to represent thirty-six organisations, with a total membership of 856,347, from eighteen different countries. It passed a resolution, by fifty-nine votes to eleven, making it incumbent on all bodies which desired affiliation to support the International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam. Representatives from Russia, Bulgaria, and Czecho-Slovakia were debarred from voting because of adherence to the Red International of Labour Unions at Moscow. Those in the opposition vote included the British and Norwegian furnishing trade workers', and the Italian and Swiss woodworkers' unions, with a total membership of 55,527. This divergence of opinion did not interfere with the re-election of Alexander Gossip (British Furnishing Trades) to the Executive.

The International Seamen's Federation, at a Congress in Paris on August 2, was marked by the decision of the French Seamen's Federation to secede, because the Congress, by thirty-nine to six votes, refused to support the French seamen in their fight for the universal introduction of the eight-hour day. This International had already become weakened by the secession of all but the British, American, French, and Swedes at the Hamburg Conference in January last, and now the withdrawal of the French makes it more a "Havelock Wilson" International than ever. The French are determined to form a new International, open to all seamen, regardless of "grade or character," which will in all probability be outside the International Transport Workers' Federation, thus creating three international bodies to which seamen are affiliated.

The chief question under discussion at the Congress of the International Landworkers' Federation—held at Vienna on August 16-18—was the application of the eight-hour day to agricultural workers. This point, it may be recalled, dominated the last conference of the International Labour Office,

when the French alleged that the International Labour Office had no jurisdiction over agricultural workers. The International Court of Justice, at the Hague, when it met in July, however, has established the right of the International Labour Office to control agricultural matters; therefore the Congress decided to continue to press for the application of the eight-hour day to agricultural workers. Though the duration of the working day is a matter of paramount importance, the Congress declared it had excluded the Russian and Bulgarian unions from affiliation because their policy in regard to the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Red International of Labour Unions was not considered satisfactory, thereby cutting off large bodies of agricultural labourers from assisting in the common fight.

## GERMANY

### Fusion of the Majority Socialists and Independents

**T**HE expected fusion of the German Majority Socialists and the Independent Socialists has at length taken place. As already related, after the murder of Rathenau, the parliamentary socialist groups of the Majority and Independent Socialist Parties decided to combine on the policy of defence of the Republic against monarchist reaction. The union thus begun has since been developed further, and both parties have now decided to unite and form one party, and will hold their unity congress at Nuremburg on September 24.

A common programme of action has been prepared, and reveals the ground on which the Majority and Independent Socialists have been able to come together. The defence of the Republic is made the main plank, and the establishment of democracy through all its institutions. The nationalisation of key industries is also mentioned. The abolition of the hated strike breaking corps of Noske is advocated, and their replacement by corps under trade union control, to maintain vital services in an emergency. It is noteworthy that the Majority Socialists have refrained, for the present, from pressing their Görlitz Congress decision of uniting with the bourgeois parties in a coalition government should occasion arise.

### PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE UNITED SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF GERMANY

The course of historic development shows that Capitalism is incapable of giving the world peace, work, or bread. It is becoming daily more evident that Socialism is the only means of securing freedom and prosperity to humanity. Having in view the unification of all the forces of the proletariat in the work of securing political power, thereby ending class-rule and establishing Socialism, the United Social Democratic Party of Germany lays special stress on the following plan of action, based on scientific Socialist principles:—

#### (1) *The Protection of the Republic*

Being fully convinced that the democratic republic affords the widest scope for the workers in their struggle, and the securest foundation and basis for the realisation of Socialism, the United Socialist Party of Germany demands the adoption of the most ruthless tactics against all efforts to restore the monarchy. For this purpose the Reichswehr should be fully equipped to act as a protective force, the unity of the Reich ensured, and the republic developed into an organically united State.

For the realisation of this policy the various provinces must eradicate all supporters of the monarchy from within the ranks of the police and other officials. Further, the entire Government must be put on a democratic basis, and self-government ensured to all local bodies and authorities. All reactionary activities must be quelled.

## *(2) Fight Against Class Justice*

Reorganisation of the legal system on the basis of socialist principles. Eligibility of all classes for the Councils of Judges; lay justices to be allowed to assist in all branches of legal procedure. Abolition of capital punishment. Legal regulations, rendering the position of women in public or private matters inferior to that of men, to be annulled.

## *(3) Finance and Economic Policy*

Fundamental financial reforms to be based on the principle of the taxation of the sources of wealth, and the distribution of imports in accordance with economic productive power.

The Reich to share in the proceeds of capitalist enterprise, and have a right to fortunes bequeathed to distant relatives, with a share in bequests to be regulated according to the number of heirs. Avoidance of paying taxation and doctoring of capital to be stopped, and all gains from speculation to be meticulously taxed. Export duty raised so as to profit fully by the gain accruing from variations in the exchange. Foreign investments to be more vigilantly taken over, and foreign trading centres made use of for this purpose. Provisions to be secured for the populace, especially bread, potatoes, meat, milk, and sugar: the co-operative societies being used to help in this respect. The development of building operations for the public and opposition to all usurious charges for building. Private monopolies to be controlled, and all key industries, especially mining, to be socialised.

## *(4) Social Policy*

Protection of the workers by the development and extension of the laws for socialisation. Rejection of all attacks on the eight-hour day. Reduction of the working day in dangerous trades and those injurious to health. Limitation of night-work for men and abolition of night-work for women and juveniles. Children of school age to be debarred from casual earnings. Firm establishment of the right to strike and organise. Extension of the civil and economic rights of all officials. The technical emergency corps to be dissolved and substituted by a system run by the workers under the management of the trade unions for the maintenance of emergency work in all enterprises requisite for the daily necessities. Adequate support to be provided for the needy, for those incapable of work, and the unemployed. The establishment of a uniform labour law. Development of the economic council system so as to secure representation for the economic interests of the workers, employees, and officials.

## *(5) Public Health and Education*

The socialisation of all establishments for public health, education, and general culture. A uniform school to be established on a universal basis. Religion to be classed as a private matter. Schools to be developed according to socialist-pedagogical principles. Education and material production to be linked up.

## *(6) International Politics*

Capitalism and the class-rule of the owners of wealth let loose the world war, and has proved utterly incompetent to bring about a real peace since its cessation. Only

the spirit of international socialism can bring about such a peace. The United Social Democratic Party of Germany demands the adoption of a foreign policy of mutual understanding and reconstruction, with particular attention to the capacities of Germany. It regards the reconstruction of the devastated areas of Northern France and Belgium as a moral obligation on the part of Germany, and at the same time a necessary means of re-establishing better feelings between the peoples. It is, however, convinced that the continuous destruction of the German State and economic conditions, together with the catastrophic fall of the exchange, necessitate a revision of the Reparations burdens with a view to their reduction.

The reign of imperialism and its continuation in the peace treaties has caused a serious world crisis: in the victorious countries this is seen in unemployment, the falling of producing, lack of markets for raw materials and manufactured goods; whereas the defeated countries are suffering from reduction in purchasing power in wages and general degeneration in working-class conditions. Expropriation of the middle classes and compulsory under-cutting. War, economic crisis, and the Peace Treaty have made the workers of all countries the conquered victims of imperialism. To fight this imperialist policy, to bring about a revision of the treaties, to overcome the policy of force by means of an international organisation necessitates the unity of the world proletariat into a single fighting organisation.

Our aims and programme call for the greatest development of proletarian power, the strengthening of its political trade union and co-operative societies, together with complete unity of action. For this purpose the Party urges all workers, employees, and officials to strive for unity. It is the duty of all Party members to oppose all attempts to split or bring about disunity in the trade unions. It is essential that our demands become the basis of the common struggle of all organised bodies with socialist principles. Confident of victory, and with relentless energy, the Party will then be able to realise the historic mission of the workers: the establishment of socialist society!

The Independent Socialist Party, created during the war because of the reactionary tactics of the Majority Socialists, is not effacing itself without protest. Various provincial branches have protested against this amalgamation with the extreme Right wing, and amongst Independent leaders of note Ledebour and Rosenfeld have expressed opinions adverse to coalition. Rosenfeld, who, by his attitude to the Russian Soviet in the matter of the trial of the Social Revolutionaries, cannot be said to have Communist tendencies, denounces the Independent Socialists for the compromise made over the Defence of the Republic Act. He contends that, since this Act may be used against Left wingers as well as monarchists, the Independents should have opposed it, for it will obviously be used as another weapon against the workers. Rosenfeld further points out that this union of the two parties does not create a united workers' party, but merely widens the breach between the new united Socialist Party and the Communist Party. In his opinion, the bulk of the United Social Democratic Party members will not follow their leaders, but will recreate the Independent Socialist Party or join the Communist Party.

Already the parliamentary representatives of the Communist Labour Party formed by Levi after the March rising in 1921, and who since joined the Independents, have issued an appeal to the former members to rejoin the Communist Party. In Germany, during the next few months, there is bound to be a great reshuffling of the Centrists.

Trades Unions and the Economic Chaos

THE catastrophic fall of the mark, its effect on the value of real wages and on the prices of commodities, forced the trade union representatives to formulate a programme to be urged on the Government to meet the situation. The programme was divided into two main sections, (1) economic and financial, (2) home politics and economics.

The suggestions or demands under the heading of measures to cope with the situation caused by economic, financial, and exchange policy comprise:—

(1) Limitation of imports, with special reference to articles of luxury which should be either entirely prohibited or subjected to excessive import duty. Under "articles of luxury" are to be understood, amongst other items, cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, beer, tea, chocolate, furs, and silk. To what extent coffee should be included to be decided by a special inquiry.

(2) Increase of export duty. Although the Government has in contemplation certain increases, the trade unions desire a special inquiry so that further increases may be made wherever conditions permit.

(3) Control of traffic in stocks so as to ensure foreign values to those only who require them for trade purposes. Speculation on the exchange should be forbidden and any turnover thus gained seized.

(4) Preparations to be made for an internal gold loan by the collection of real values as security; in this connection also regulation of the German coinage to be undertaken.

(5) Income tax to be collected more rapidly.

(6) Measures to be instigated to alleviate the credit system for agriculture, &c.

Home politics and economic measures suggested include:—

(1) Measures to be undertaken to ensure a sufficient supply of potatoes for the population. Cattle trade and export of meat to be watched vigilantly. In this connection the recommendation was made to abolish the system of paying commission on the price of cattle, thus making the cattle dealer interested in high prices.

(2) Manufacture of spirits for drinking to be forbidden, or the use of potatoes, corn, maize, rice, and other foods in the production of spirits. Finally, complete prohibition of alcohol to be aimed at.

(3) Beer brewing to be restricted. The use of sugar-beet in brewing to be strictly forbidden.

(4) Sugar to be put under control; restriction of its use in all articles of luxury.

(5) Still stricter regulations to be imposed to secure milk and its products for the nourishment of the people. Since butter is held responsible for the fabulous rise in the price of milk, the cessation of the production of butter would be advisable, as its use is far beyond the means of the masses.

(6) A supply of sea fish should be secured to the population, and those sea-fish enterprises punished which sell more than a regulated percentage in foreign markets.

Further suggestions for the punishment of all profiteers, the care of the unemployed and those dependent on small incomes, &c., were included in the memorandum presented to the Chancellor. The German Federation of Trade Unions also wired to the British Trades Union Congress urging the danger of the collapse of Germany for the British workers, and its reflex action on the increase of unemployment here.

German working women, on August 30, in a big assembly, protested energetically against the exorbitant prices of foodstuffs in the markets; a committee was formed to see that the following programme was realised without delay:—

- (1) Formation of committees to control usury.
- (2) Seizure of all foodstuffs and their distribution at normal prices.
- (3) Seizure of the new harvest and preparation of the necessary reserves for the winter.
- (4) Workers' control of imports and exports.
- (5) Control of banks and exchanges.
- (6) Formation of commissions for the requisition of daily necessities.
- (7) Preparation of cheap fuel and winter clothing for the destitute.

## RUSSIA

### Legal Position of Trade Unions

**T**HE regulation relating to criminal law, which came into operation on July 1, also defines the legal rights of trade unions. By virtue of this law, trade unions are empowered to appoint representatives to appear in any court case that in any way involves the interests of trade union members. For this purpose no special permission is necessary, and the trade union is at liberty to delegate any of its members, or even an outsider, to represent it. It lies entirely within the discretion of trade unions to take legal proceedings against persons or public bodies (not only in respect of matters concerning civil law, but also criminal cases). In such cases, instead of the public prosecutor, the trade union representative, at the request of the trade union, appears as plaintiff in the law suit, and is vested with all the rights of the public prosecutor. Thus, trade unions in Russia can command the law, both in civil and criminal matters, and also conduct the case. Trade unions are empowered to take legal proceedings against private employers or managers of State enterprises, and at the same time appear as plaintiff.

Trade unions are also entitled to act as defendants or plaintiffs on behalf of their members when any one of them is involved in legal proceedings. For this purpose the trade union gives plenary powers to one of its members, or even a stranger. Such persons are not required to possess any legal qualifications (neither are trade union plaintiffs nor defendants), so that the trade union has full liberty to make its own choice.

The law further invests all labour inspectors with the rights of investigating magistrates. By a special law, also passed in 1922, those inspectors, who are the representatives of the State, are chosen by the trade unions and their election ratified by the Labour Commissariat. This ensures the whole system of labour inspection being completely manned by trade union nominees. This law justifies trade unions in instigating legal investigations into all cases of infringements of labour regulations, or wherever the interests of the trade unions are at stake.

In order to perfect the legal position of the workers, the summer session of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions decided to create Labour Law Courts to deal with everything within the purview of the Labour Laws, thus withdrawing this function from the general law courts. The Soviet



Government, being entrusted with the task of elaborating this law, has completed the task. These Labour Law Courts, whether they are local or in provincial centres, or the Central Labour Law Court, are to consist of three members. The Central Court is composed of one representative of the Labour Commissariat and of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions, and one member specially appointed by the Soviet Government. The local courts and those in Government towns are similarly constituted. A workers' majority is thus ensured, and the competence of the courts to deal with labour questions established.

The legal rights of trade unions arising out of the first year's working of the new economic policy may be summarised thus:—

- (1) Trade unions have full powers to take legal proceedings in both civil and criminal offences, and to act on behalf of their members as defendants or as plaintiffs against the accused.
- (2) Labour inspectors, chosen by the trade unions, can investigate all matters within the purview of the Labour Laws.
- (3) Judgment will be given in a court in which the majority is composed of trade union representatives.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A CONJURING FEAT

*Labour and the War Debt.* A Statement of Policy. The Labour Party, 2d.

**I**N the chaos of capitalist economy emerging from the war, the gigantic bulk of the war debts weighs like a nightmare on the shoulders of the workers. In this country the bond holders are now entitled to £345,000,000 of the wealth created annually. Of this sum, 96 per cent.—more than £331,000,000—goes into the pockets of those already wealthy. It comes from the pockets of the small tax payers, the mass of the workers paying their tribute in indirect taxation. The result, as this pamphlet states, is “to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.” It is an intolerable burden against which the workers must rebel. It is a problem towards which every party is forced to define its attitude, and being a fundamental problem of capitalist economics, it acts as a touchstone in testing their attitude towards capitalism.

The clamour which the burden of the war debt is beginning to arouse was plainly revealed at the Conference of the Labour Party at Edinburgh. The irrepressible cry was—the burden of the interest must be reduced. It has been in vain that the official spokesmen of the Labour Party have long ago given their benediction to the scheme of a capital levy. Innumerable resolutions came before the delegates urging in various ways a forcible reduction of the rate of interest. These resolutions were compounded into a general demand for a reduction, which was duly proposed and seconded, and then, without any official refutation, referred back to the National Executive for further consideration and report.

The result is the pamphlet now under review. It makes short work of the demand for a reduction in the rate of interest. In the seclusion of Eccleston Square it can easily be proved that such a policy would be “a breach of faith with the present holders of war loan,” and that the breaking of pledges is “not an example which a Labour Government should follow.” It is, perhaps, significant that this simple declaration of faith was not made to the Conference itself. There the seconder of the resolution threw down a challenge daring any mining leader “to go into the mining areas and speak in favour of maintaining the rate of interest at the level fixed during the war,” and there was none to take up the gage.

This pamphlet, however, is not for the miners. Its appeal is to those who understand that the war debt is a sacred obligation, and that “the full amount of the interest, as specified in the agreement, must be paid until the debt is redeemed upon the terms agreed upon.” Hence the importance at the outset of setting down unequivocally the reassuring statement: “Under no circumstances will the Labour Party propose or support any plan which robs the holder of any form of National Debt of his property.” Yet the burden of the debt

must be removed. The problem is at one and the same time to extinguish the bonds and to respect the claim of the bond holders, to confiscate wealth and yet not to confiscate it. Short of a conjuring feat it cannot be done. Fortunately, the Labour Party has a way out—by means of a levy on capital. For a Government to seize a particular form of wealth is confiscation; for it to levy a toll on all forms of wealth is not confiscation. Thus we have a solution which has all the required properties of the conjuring feat. Even more, not only can the debt be honourably redeemed, but the capitalists, whose power of exacting tribute from the workers is thus reduced, will not even “feel the draught.” As for joint stock companies, it is said “their activities would in no way be hindered by the levy. Certain of their shares might change hands, but this would not affect the companies’ operations.” The levy would be paid with pieces of paper; the debt redeemed with pieces of paper. As we are plainly told: “No disturbance of business would be involved in any of these methods of payment, but only changes in the ownership of a number of pieces of paper.” A pretty picture, and a harmless pastime. But one wonders what those miners would say if they were told that the solution for their troubles was the shuffling of pieces of paper between one set of capitalists and another.

This picture may appear a pleasantry, but it contains the kernel of the problem. As long as the effects on capitalism are not more serious than those described in this pamphlet, the position of the wage earner will hardly be improved. In that case, capitalism has nothing to fear from it. It may even be resorted to by capitalism. It is, in fact, in this form, a liberal policy, a policy of cautious capitalism, and therefore it is that “it is supported, not only by members of the Labour Party, but by some of the most clear-headed economists outside the Party.” “Indeed,” as the pamphlet triumphantly adduces, “the Labour Party policy is now supported by the Reparations Commission.”

On the other hand, if the capital levy were a weapon that could really attack the grip of capitalism over the work, it is hardly likely that it would receive such open-minded support. All the problems of storming the citadel of capitalist power would be raised before the problem of the war debt could be dealt with. In that case the question arises whether the complicated scheme on which the Labour Party so much prides itself has any superiority over the definite policy expressed in the single word—*repudiation*. C. P. D.

### SURPLUS BOOKS

*Against the Red Sky.* By H. R. Barbor. C. W. Daniel, 7s. net.

“**C**ATCH hold, Nathaniel!’ rang out a clear voice, and at the same time a baby porpoise came hurtling through the air, to be followed by the owner of the voice, a sturdy boy of fourteen, who leapt lightly from the rigging on to the taffrail.” Thus used to begin the novels of G. A. Henty; thus he used to lure his readers into a study of the campaigns

in the Peninsula—for he has a serious purpose. This author goes on similar lines, but he has a different class of reader, who has to be lured into reading about the red revolution in England in 1928 or thereabouts.

So it begins with a man in bed with a woman (countess), and ends with the same man (revolutionist) about to go to bed with the same woman in the course of turning her, too, into a revolutionist. Throughout the book the love interest is never allowed to flag; or if it is, its place is promptly filled by the revolutionary interest.

Now, of course, there is a public to which such a book as this makes a strong appeal, the public of Belgravia and South Kensington. Those who look for a burglar under the bed every night are slightly gratified to find in this novel their worst fears realised. For what to them is a revolution but the burglar multiplied a millionfold? The fact that the author is pro-revolution makes it all the more telling. A White romancist wanting to make their flesh creep would have pitched the tale too high and lost the credence of his readers. Thus, to write a best seller about Bolshevism, one must oneself be a bit of a Bolshevik.

Revolutionary value the book has none. The working-class struggle is not helped by a mechanical transference of events from Petrograd to London, or by speaking of Windsor instead of Tsarkoe Selo. It is cheerful, too, to see the Life Force harnessed to the chariot of Communism. But, bless you, it doesn't help the revolution. Wells can harness it to any chariot he likes, whichever make at the moment is the most fashionable.

A word in Mr. Barbor's ear, a kindly hint: G. A. Henty was careful to write about the past, not the future.

R. P. A.

#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

*British and Continental Labour Policy.* The British Labour Movement and Labour legislation in Great Britain, France, and the Scandinavian countries, 1900-1922. By B. G. de Montgomery. Routledge. 21s. net.

*Builders of To-morrow.* By Prof. T. L. Vaswani. Ganesh & Co., Madras. Re 1.8.

*Secrets of Menshevik Georgia.* With authentic copies of documents taken from the archives of the late Menshevik Government of Georgia. By J. Shaphir. Communist Party of Great Britain. 1s. 6d.

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# NOTES of the MONTH

*The "Crisis"—The Realities—Unemployment and War—A Key to Policy—The Challenge of Unemployment—The Great Refusal—The Penalties of Refusal—Unemployment at the Election—The Issue of the Election*

**I**T is easy and dangerous at the present moment to be carried away by the surface eddies of the political stream. The loudly bruited threat of war, the international crisis, the noise of a prospective election fill the ears with rumour and counter-rumour and all the facile sensation of newspaper politics. If we let ourselves be carried away by the stream we may gain a sense of playing a part in high politics. But in the end we may find that we have only been led along in the direction that we were meant to go and away from the direction to which we need to keep. For there are things that we are meant to forget and that we must never forget. It is not an accident that all this sudden noise should arise just at the opening of winter. For the winter that is opening is the third winter of the industrial depression, of shattered trade and production, of lowered wages cutting into the very lives of the workers, of unemployment and semi-starvation and misery. This is the scene amid which breaks out the clamour and drums of war or peace, the Cabinet sensations and party shufflings, the speeches and manifestos. But no manipulations of the professional political stage must be allowed to turn our minds from the realities which alone concern the working class. It is not only that these realities are the whole meaning and subject of working-class politics. It is that these realities are the key to the political manipulations.

**T**HE driving forces of the present situation are the breakdown of British industry and the want of the masses. It is economic need, the desperate demands of a declining industry, that is driving the British ruling class to new imperialist adventures. It is economic need, the destitution and struggle for life of the masses, that is driving them in reality, despite the verbal protests of their leaders or their ballot votes, in everyday existence

to give their lives and their labour to the service of these new imperialist adventures. The Labour policy, whatever its hopes and its aspirations, is made of paper and pasteboard if it does not take account of these basic facts. On the morning of the war crisis the cry went out from the official movement "Not a man, not a ship, not a gun." And on the morrow of this declaration the dockers and railwaymen, the engineers and the foundry men, the shipwrights and boilermakers, were all working at high pressure to turn out and send the men and the ships and the guns : yes, and men were besieging the docks and the munition factories in the hope of a job from the opportunity of the crisis. It is the fact that in the present situation a new war would be popular. To the ex-soldier vainly tramping the country for work, to the men thrown out of work by foreign competition, to the men on short time through the stagnation of industry, to the employed worker haunted by the ever-present fear of the sack, the return to war conditions from the horrors of peace would come as a relief and a solution.

"**A** FRIEND asked me," writes George Lansbury, "'what I would do, were I a young man with a wife and children, to whom, after a long period of semi-starvation through unemployment, work at good wages were suddenly offered in connection with a war.' My answer was quite a halting one, for so true is it that none of us know what we would do when in such a difficult position. I replied, 'I *hope* I would follow truth wherever it might lead me.'"' To George Lansbury, a member of the Labour Party Executive, the question presents itself as primarily a personal question of conscience. "This is the very worst tragedy of modern industrial civilised life. *Only war* on a tremendous scale provides *work* for *all*." But do none of his fellow members of the Labour Party Executive see the tremendous political implications of such a statement? The significance of this situation is not a personal tragedy, to be individually deplored, while leaving policy unaffected. It is a political significance, and if it is not understood, the whole existing policy is rendered worthless. If this situation is left out of account,



all the resolutions on international policy with their painstaking workings out of complex questions become only professorial declarations without political significance. For while the names of " five million workers " are being attached to a barren document, the acts of those workers are being driven by economic necessity to serve and strengthen the forces that are denounced. Until this situation—the home situation of unemployment—is tackled, the resolutions on international policy are beating the air, because they can have no fighting value behind them. It is often said that the key to unemployment is international policy. But there is a deeper and directer sense in which the key to international policy is unemployment.

**U**NEMPLOYMENT is the essential factor for Labour policy in the present period. Success or failure in tackling unemployment is the condition of success or failure in every other aspect of the struggle. Unemployment is the force behind wage reductions and trade union defeats. Unemployment is the power which renders resolutions on international policy inoperative. Unemployment is the issue which will make or mar the fortunes of the elections. Unemployment is the test by which the first Labour Government will be tried. A strategic leadership of the Labour Movement would concentrate all its forces on the issue of unemployment. For if only successful provision could be obtained for the unemployed—a real, adequate, and universal provision in place of the present partial, limited, miscellaneously administered, and constantly withheld provision—then the position would at once be ready for the whole line of labour to advance. Until then every side of the Labour Movement is crippled. The attempt to rally the workers to a concerted resistance against wage reductions has repeatedly failed, and is bound to fail, so long as the employed workers are living in individual fear of unemployment. The working class is rent by the division of employed and unemployed. The Labour Party is discredited among large sections by its failure to tackle the question seriously. The trade unions are financially sapped and, as fighting machines, put out of action.

The only issue to rally the workers is unemployment. A powerful and combined agitation on unemployment, seriously meant and unhesitatingly carried through with every available force, would unite the working class and command widespread popular support. If successful, it would open the way for advance ; if unsuccessful, it would have rallied the workers to the struggle on a single issue. An offensive on the issue of unemployment is the best defensive action of Labour to-day.

THE Labour failures of the past two years date from the rise of unemployment and the deliberate refusal of the movement to deal with it. It was in the winter of 1920-1921 that unemployment first began its sensational growth. In September, 1920, the registered figure was only just over a quarter of a million. By November it had reached half a million ; by January, 1921, it had reached three-quarters of a million ; by February it had passed the million ; by June, under stress of the miners' lockout, it had risen to nearly two and a-half millions ; but even after the conclusion of that, in September, it stood at one and three-quarter millions ; by January of this year it had reached close on two millions ; with the summer it went down to one and a-half millions, and is expected to increase again in the New Year. The critical period of change is thus the winter of 1920-1921. This was the turning point both in the economic situation and for the Labour Movement. Up to that point had been the period of the post-war boom in industry and the post-war revolutionary impetus, reflected in the lightning increases in trade union membership and the easy appearance of strength. The tremendous possibilities of that first period after the war had been spent without visible fruit other than paper promises from the governing class in the shape of Coal Commission Reports, Washington International Labour Conventions, Industrial Conference agreements, and so forth, which were immediately dishonoured as soon as the period giving rise to them was at an end. Now began the second period after the war, the period of the economic depression and the rise of unemployment, and with it came the second opportunity. The second opportunity was

the opportunity of unemployment. Here was the militant issue to rouse the workers to the struggle, disillusioned from the golden hopes of after the war. Success in taking it up would mean the recovery of the struggle ; failure to take it up would mean the defeat of the whole movement. What happened ?

A SPECIAL Conference of the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress met in December, 1920, and passed an emergency resolution on unemployment. A joint committee was set up to report on measures to be taken. In January, 1921, a further Special Conference met to receive the report : and a resolution was adopted outlining plans for work or maintenance. The Conference was now brought up against the question whether it meant these resolutions and was prepared to take action on them. It adjourned for five weeks in order to consult its constituent organisations as to action to be taken. When the adjourned Conference met in February, the situation was revealed : practically no consultation had taken place, a resolution was adopted calling on trade unions to join the Labour Party as a means of securing the desired objects, and a delegation from the unemployed was refused a hearing. The movement had officially signalled its refusal to tackle the question of unemployment. From that moment the decline began. The unions had to pour out their money in millions of pounds of unemployment benefit, and the reserves built up in the previous period of prosperity were dissipated without result. Because they had refused to spend their funds in fighting unemployment, they had to spend their funds in subsidising it : and the fight they had avoided facing in unity with a full exchequer and undamaged fighting spirit came on them sectionally all the same at the end of the period, when their funds were exhausted, their *morale* weakened, and they themselves were on losing ground. The rôle of the unions in relation to unemployment was justly expressed by a leading trade union official in the House of Commons, when he declared : " I want the Government to realise if they can what would have happened in this country, supposing there had been no trade unions to stand between the working classes of this country and the revolution which would

have undoubtedly broken out, had it not been for the fact that the trade unions were looking after their own members in time of stress and thereby saved the country from disturbance time and time again." (Mr. T. E. Naylor, M.P., Hansard, 9/2/22.)

**T**HE disastrous consequences of this policy have not been confined to the trade unions. The separate organisation of the unemployed (of which a contributor writes elsewhere in this current issue) dates from the refusal of responsibility by the organised movement. It was in the spring of 1921 that the refusal of responsibility took place ; it was in the spring of 1921 that the first national conference of the unemployed was held. The separate organisation of the unemployed was a misfortune from the point of view of the working class as a whole. It made prominent the division between employed and unemployed ; it publicly discredited the official movement as unrepresentative of the working class and unresponsive to its demands ; it confined the unemployed themselves to separate demonstration activities, which would only secure limited objectives. The only working-class party which sought to unite the interests of the unemployed and the employed was the Communist Party, which helped to guide the activities of the unemployed into support of the organised movement in strikes and lockouts. But it was alone in this, and reviled on both sides for its pains. The net effect may be seen to-day. The trade unions are knocked out. The unemployed organisation, as our contributor shows, is at the end of its policy and in danger of degenerating into some type of one big union movement, which will simply repeat old examples of dispersion of effort. The opportunity of the second period has been lost. Will the new opportunity, which is now arising with the present crisis and election prospects, be seized in time ?

**T**O take up the issue of unemployment now means more than to adopt a resolution or a programme. There must be evidence of a serious will behind them. When the Near Eastern crisis was at its height the cry of " Summon Parliament " was freely heard. But who has raised the cry of " Summon

Parliament " over the crisis of two millions unemployed ? What member has held up the formalities of parliamentary procedure to press the case of millions in privation and rouse the masses to the struggle ? What sign is there even of serious consideration of the resolutions so glibly passed ? When the special conference on unemployment was held last December, it was of so mechanical and meaningless a character that the chairman of the London Trades Council was constrained to declare the conference " a waste of time and an insult to the unemployed and the workers of London." It is not enough to approve proposals calling for the provision of work or maintenance. It is necessary to show how such work or maintenance can be provided. But there is only one way by which it can be provided, and that is by getting at the wealth which alone can provide it, and this means by nationalising the big industries. That is why any serious proposals for unemployment must be accompanied by an economic programme. A campaign behind such a combined programme, backed by the full political and industrial strength of the movement, and making it the dominant issue, would rally the workers to the united struggle both in the election and after it. There are two ways of treating unemployment. One is to refer it to the international situation and look there for remedies. This is the liberal and capitalist policy. The other is to treat it for what it is as part of the class struggle, and join battle upon it. This is the Labour policy. Will the Labour Party stick to the Labour policy, or will it pin its faith to the Lloyd George capitalist policy of international reconstruction, which means simply the reconstruction of capitalism ? According as the Labour Party answers this question will determine the value of its campaign in the coming election. According as the whole Labour Movement answers it will determine the possibility of its recovery in the next few years.

**W**E are now witnessing the break up of the unstable capitalist equilibrium after the war. At home and abroad the same thing is happening. The artificial combination of forces set up and maintained to defeat the revolution, and known at home as the Coalition Government, and abroad as the Allied and Associated Powers, is being rent asunder by the

insoluble problems to be faced. Whether an attempt at consolidation in face of the class issue is maintained, or is thrown aside, the deep-seated division of forces is there, and the capitalist ruling class is presenting a spectacle of confusion and irresolution under the menacing shadow of the coming era and the new and fateful issues which it brings. Now is the moment and opportunity for the working class to press home its advantage and unite all its forces in support of the Labour candidates to defeat the capitalist parties in the hour of their division. A blow struck at the capitalist coalition forces now will mean a blow struck for the working class, not only in this country, but for every country in Europe and the world. It will mean renewed hope and energy for the workers of Europe to carry forward their struggle without fear ; it will mean a stimulation for the struggle of the masses in India and in Egypt. The workers of Europe are straining with anxious eyes to this country for a sign of change : and it rests with the working class of this country to see that the shadow of a capitalist coalition government at the seat of the British Empire is no longer cast across the world.

# GETTING READY FOR THE NEXT WAR

By W. N. EWER

**A** HUNDRED AND THIRTY years ago William Pitt was—with much despatching of ultimata and mobilising of fleets—trying to force Great Britain into a war on the question of Oczakoff; for it was declared to be a vital matter for the future of the Empire whether that Black Sea port was under the rule of the Tsar or of the Sultan.

The country and even Parliament refused to be interested or involved, and Pitt, seeing that he must relinquish Oczakoff or office, stuck to office, withdrew his ultimata, and declared, “even with tears in his eyes, that it was the greatest mortification he had ever experienced.” So Oczakoff became Russian. The Empire did not fall. And Fox jeered mercilessly at the ministry in a speech which is still remembered though Oczakoff is well-nigh forgotten.

Now in the middle of that crisis Joseph Ewart, ambassador in Berlin, who was the chief inspirer of Pitt’s war policy, wrote to his colleague at the Hague, Auckland (who was trying to persuade Pitt that Oczakoff was of no importance whatsoever and certainly not worth a war) :—

I am sure, that your Lordship will agree with me. . . that Oczakoff and its district are very secondary considerations in comparison with the great influence which the decision of the present question must have on the strength and permanency of the system of the allies ; on which the preservation of peace likewise depends.

“Preservation of peace” is of course a mere decency of diplomatic correspondence. What Ewart meant was that his plan of including Poland and Turkey in the existing Triple Alliance (England, Holland, and Prussia) necessitated supporting the Sultan’s claim to Oczakoff.

Oczakoff, in fact, was nothing in itself. It gained importance because of its bearing on the “system of the allies.” Pitt was willing to risk an eastern war, not for the sake of an unimportant

Black Sea port, but for the sake of his alliance with Prussia. And his alliance with Prussia was directed against France—was, in fact, a preparation for the next western war.

Oczakoff, Agadir, Chanak. The succession is a direct one, and the explanation of the quarrel, almost to war, over an obscure seaboard town is in each case the same. Preparation for the next big war gives the key to diplomatic intrigues and conflicts over apparently insignificant points.

Agadir was important because England and France on the one hand, Germany on the other, were preparing to fight each other. Chanak is important because—and only because—England and France are preparing to fight each other. It is an incident in the diplomatic struggle which—unless other forces intervene—will bring an Anglo-French war in 1925 or 1926. Chanak is a passage in the prelude to 1926, just as Casablanca and Agadir were passages in the prelude to 1914.

This Anglo-French rivalry which is the chief moulding force of the European diplomatic system to-day became inevitable when the collapse of Germany (the withdrawal of America) and the immobilisation of Russia left the two strongest allies face to face in Europe.

That has always been so, and must always be so, while Europe remains a collection of predatory militant States. The two leaders jostle one another in the struggle for power. They are mutually jealous. Their interests clash, and round them, naturally, other clashing interests—both political and economic—group themselves.

The chief characters change, and the grouping of the others around them. But whether it be Austria and France, or France and Germany, or Germany and England, the game is always the same; and its minor incidents, Oczakoff, Agadir, Chanak, Cleves-Julich succession, Pragmatic Sanction, Hohenzollern candidature, reproduce each other with almost comic fidelity.

Anglo-French hostility—"two nations warring in the bosom as a single entente"—is the key to European history since 1918.

Actually, the quarrel began to develop even before America became too proud to ratify. The notes exchanged by M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George in the spring of 1919 have already the



sharp tone of latent hostility. England is already jealous of France's military predominance. Already, though scarcely consciously, Mr. Lloyd George is toying with the idea of restoring Germany as a balance to the French power. And already, on the other hand, M. Clemenceau is spitefully mindful of England's great war plunder overseas and in the East.

Clemenceau's eyes were fixed too steadily on the Rhine. But with his fall the Near East became at once the scene of conflict. England was building up, on paper, a wonderful empire. Palestine and Mesopotamia were held under mandate. Arabia, trans-Jordania, and Syria (except for the sea coast) were under the dependent Shereefian kings. The establishment of an "independent" Armenia would extend British influence from the Euphrates to the Caucasus and link the oilfields of Mosul and Baku. The Greeks at Constantinople, at Smyrna and at Trebizond . . .

France began, with Clemenceau's going, to sap the foundations of that unbuilt structure. Easily she flung poor King Feisul from Damascus—so that we had to give him another throne in Mesopotamia. But her main weapon has been Mustapha Kemal. He has cleared England's Greeks from Anatolia. He has shattered the vision of a chain of client States from the Persian Gulf to the Caucasus. France gave him Cilicia, and in return he has destroyed Mr. Churchill's empire. It was a good bargain.

And now that Turkey is nearly herself again, French statesmanship is working on a plan not unlike that German Berlin-Bagdad one which did so much to bring the war. She thinks of an extended Little Entente, of a Francophile combination that will run from Danzig to Mosul.

Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Jugoslavia, Bulgaria, Turkey—that is the projected group of French client states.

Now that grouping, if it came into being, would have, for France, two advantages. It would give, for her client armies, a direct route to England's weak spots in the East. And it would cut the Anglo-German combination off from Russia. Russia, in all these diplomatic calculations, counts as a heavy weight which may be flung into one or other scale. She is, though for very different reasons, as doubtful as Italy.

Thrace and the Straits in the presence of such a scheme become of prime importance. If Greece is in Thrace and the British are on the Straits the chain is broken and useless. It will serve neither as link nor as barrier. Britain is free of the Black Sea, and Turkey is cut off from the Little Entente. (I assume, with the French diplomatists, that Bulgaria can be brought into the system.)

But if, on the other hand, Turkey has Thrace and the Straits are under some shadowy régime impotent for their effective guarding, then the land highway from north-west to south-east (which France needs clear) is open; the sea highway from south-west to north-east (which England needs clear) is shut.

That is the strategic meaning of the whole struggle. Whether Turks cut the throats of Thracian Greeks or whether Greeks cut the throats of Thracian Turks, neither Downing Street nor the Quai d'Orsay cares two raps. They will both talk—and with equal glibness—about the “freedom of the Straits.” But they (or at any rate their protégés) are fighting, not for freedom, but for control: England because she wants to keep open for her friends the passage *through* them and to bar to her enemies the passage *across* them; France for precisely the opposite reason.

Therefore we shall strain every nerve to remain both in Chanak and in Constantinople—or somewhere on the Bosphorus. France will strain every nerve to get us out.

It will not come to war, for neither side is ready as yet. But it is quite surely the prelude to war.

One word on oil. It is, I think, an over-hasty diagnosis that finds the root of the whole trouble in oil. Certainly the Mosul oilfields are at stake. Certainly there are two powerful oil groups (Standard and Shell) competing for them. But to say that this is the origin of the Anglo-French rivalry in the East is a quite unjustifiable deduction.

It is a common fallacy among socialists that State quarrels spring out of these commercial group quarrels. A far truer statement of the position is that warring commercial groups tend to associate themselves with warring States. Anglo-French rivalry would exist were there no oil at all in Mosul. But because there is oil there, and because the victor in the Anglo-French conflict will

have the disposal of the oil, the big companies associate themselves with one or other of the combatants. They put their money, as it were, on England or on France.

England and France are not rivals in the East because of the rivalry of Shell and Standard Oil; they were rivals there long before either Shell or Standard was born.

France is not fighting England because Standard is closely linked with the Quai d'Orsay. *Standard is linked with the Quai d'Orsay because France is fighting England.* The big trusts exploit the warring States as white invaders exploit warring savage tribes. They utilise, but do not create, their quarrels.

Therefore, at bottom, it is not the oil of Mosul that is the cause of the Anglo-French conflict in the East. Nor is it the wealth of the dead Habsburg Empire that is bringing quite surely a similar conflict in Central Europe.

The mainspring of the forces that are turning the erstwhile allies into bitter enemies is not the will to wealth. It is the will to power. They are preparing, in blind human fashion, for a trial of strength. Chanak means that they are getting ready for the next war. Chanak in fact is just like Oczakoff.

Perhaps the resemblance may prove to be very close indeed. The war for which Pitt was preparing never came off. It was forestalled by revolution.

# THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE LABOUR PARTY

By ALBERT H. HAWKINS

*(In the following article an active member and organiser of the unemployed has been asked to present the aims and outlook of his organisation and consider them from the point of view of the working-class movement as a whole. The subject is further dealt with in the Notes of the Month.)*

**M**ANY who accept the unemployed organisation as an accomplished fact have never stayed to ask themselves why there is such an organisation in this country, having its existence quite separate from the general Labour Movement. The answer is threefold. First, because the organisation of the unemployed is traditional whenever unemployment becomes acute; secondly, because many of those drawn into the movement were previously entirely outside any form of working-class organisation; and finally, because neither the official organisations of the working class nor their leaders showed any inclination to tackle the problem themselves.

If only those responsible for the direction of the working-class movement in this country had possessed an adequate mental equipment coupled with sufficient clarity of vision to anticipate the present world-situation, many of our grosser errors might either have been avoided altogether or at least might have had their more disagreeable consequences minimised.

It was quite obvious to any intelligent student of working-class problems that the period of prosperity and the revival of trade which came after the conclusion of hostilities were purely artificial, and would be followed in their turn by unemployment upon an unprecedented scale. When the war ended there were enormous potentialities for the working-class movement. The necessary factors of a revolutionary situation existed, but those responsible

for the leadership of the working class either failed to recognise them or were unwilling to take advantage of their presence. As a consequence, the Government which was returned to "Win the Peace" was able, aided by its financial backers, to quiet the returning soldiers with unemployment donation and to create a fictitious prosperity by means of a campaign for "More Production." All this time the world economic position, made considerably worse by the politicians of Versailles, showed unmistakable signs of the slump which was coming. Although the signs were visible, few of the leaders of the Labour Party saw them, and even those who did were apparently unable to anticipate the effect the slump would have upon the workers and their organisations. When, therefore, the inevitable trade depression set in it found the Labour Movement totally incapable of protecting the workers from its worst and fullest effects.

The storm broke in 1920. The winter found three-quarters of a million workers unemployed, and the Labour Movement was unprepared and helpless. The material which might have been used to strengthen the movement was kept outside and left to organise itself. If the unemployed had been attracted to the Labour Party by a sympathetic hearing and a fighting policy; if there had been united action on the question of unemployment; and if the whole of the unemployed had been incorporated into the Labour Movement, the events of the past two years would have taken a different course.

Instead, we find, in October, 1920, that active spirits amongst the unemployed, seeing no signs of life on the part of the Labour Party, began the task of building up an unemployed organisation. The movement had its commencement in London with the seizure of a number of public buildings and the setting up of a number of local committees. These committees were soon linked up in the London District Council of Unemployed; and then the militants turned their eyes towards the provinces, which had so far remained quiescent, and presently similar steps were taken there. The movement began to assume national proportions, and in the early spring of 1921 a "national" conference of delegates from the various committees met in London to place the organisation upon

a proper basis. The conference was not altogether satisfactory, owing to the absence of delegates from many important industrial areas, and the London District Council was still the mainstay of the movement. Still the movement grew, both in numbers and influence. Adopting the slogan of "Work or Full Maintenance at Trade Union Rates" the local committees all over the country were organising demonstrations to boards of guardians, and were obtaining outdoor relief upon a scale which, although inadequate from the view-point of the unemployed, was at any rate considerably higher than any which had previously been granted. All this agitation was not carried on without incessant struggles with the organs of government, both national and local. The boards of guardians were not giving relief willingly, and in many cases angry demonstrators besieged their offices to compel them to accede to their demands. Conflicts between the unemployed and the police were of daily occurrence, until the unemployed learned the futility of opposing mere rioting to organised force.

With the summer, the movement fell away; but the framework was maintained against the coming of winter. In the autumn the revival started, and at the beginning of the winter the organisation was stronger than ever. A national conference upon a really representative scale was then held at Manchester, at which a national programme was adopted. The programme included:—

- (1) A national scale of relief to be demanded from all boards of guardians.
- (2) Cessation of the payment of interest on the National Debt until the demands of the unemployed were met. (Not to apply to holdings under £100.)
- (3) The immediate operation of the trading agreement with Russia.

By this time the necessity for a policy in relation to the Labour Party had already manifested itself and the conference decided that a questionnaire based on the national programme should be submitted to all working-class candidates at all elections, and the support of the organisation thrown in on the side of those who gave satisfactory replies. It was this assistance (as was admitted by the candidates themselves) which was decisive in winning for

the Labour Party the seats at Southwark and Camberwell in the by-elections this year.

There had been sporadic attempts made to organise the unemployed during previous trade depressions prior to the war, but these had always been in the nature of organisations for collecting and distributing relief in the shape of food and money for their members. The movement had taken this form in certain localities in the present instance, but the conference made a definite break with old traditions. It was decided to eliminate all suggestion of collecting boxes and soup kitchens from the organisation and to place it upon a self-supporting basis by exacting a contribution of 1d. per week from all members. This move has been remarkably successful, when the poverty-stricken condition of its membership is taken into account. The conference marked a definite period in the life of the organisation, and since then it has been a definite factor in the general working-class movement. Thus was set up the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement. The summer of 1922 saw another decline in the organisation, but even in the slackest season there were between 300 and 400 branches retaining contact with the centre.

Turning from the internal organisation and growth of the N.U.W.C.M. to the attitude of the official Labour Party during the same period, we find that very little was done to understand and assist the movement during the period of its growth. In December, 1920, a special Labour Party and Trades Union Congress met to receive the report of the Commission on Ireland, and at this conference an emergency resolution on unemployment was placed before the delegates. Shortly afterwards a special Joint Committee of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress set to work to produce a set of emergency measures to deal with the situation. The committee presented their report to a special Labour Party and Trades Union Congress in January, 1921, at the Kingsway Hall, London. It included a demand for the maintenance of the unemployed, a condemnation of the inaction of the Government (no resolution is complete without this), a trade policy and expenditure policy, and a number of items under the heading of work to be undertaken. The report was adopted, and

the conference adjourned for five weeks for the purpose of obtaining expressions of opinion from the members of the constituent organisations as to the action to be taken if the Government refused to adopt the proposals. The adjournment was hastily carried, as it became known that several thousands of the unemployed were marching upon the conference to put *their* point of view.

Five weeks later the conference came together again, and it then became obvious that the official Labour Movement either could not or would not function in the crisis. Very few of the union executives had troubled to consult their members or to obtain any mandate for or against direct action in support of the programme adopted by the previous session of the conference. In place of a decision upon the action to be taken to carry the programme into effect there was a long resolution *recommending the local and national affiliation of all trade unions to the Labour Party*, and urging the electors of various constituencies, where by-elections were at the time in progress, to vote for the Labour candidates. If that happened, said Mr. Thomas of the N.U.R., we should then consider, as a Parliamentary party, the possibility of raising the matter in the House of Commons, knowing that we have the electorate behind us. Before the resolution was submitted a communication was read from the London District Council of the Unemployed asking the conference to receive a deputation to put the point of view of the unemployed. The efforts of Robert Williams and others were of no avail, and the request was negatived on a show of hands, Arthur Henderson voicing the official view by saying that the delegates themselves represented the unemployed through their union. In spite of this, Hannington, then London organiser of the movement, gained admission to the conference and held up the business for half an hour whilst he addressed the delegates amidst general pandemonium. Ultimately the official resolution was put and carried, together with a Free Trade declaration submitted in the interests of the cotton operatives. The delegates then scattered in good time for lunch and early enough to escape the unemployed, who again marched on the hall. So ended the first and last attempt of the official Labour Movement to deal with the problem.



It was not, however, the last time that the matter was brought before a Labour Party conference. The unemployed saw to that. At the Brighton Conference of the Labour Party in June, 1921, they determined to make themselves heard. A picked contingent marched down from London to Brighton, and an efficient publicity campaign was conducted, which compelled the conference to receive the deputation when it arrived. The deputation who put the case for the unemployed were listened to—and a collection taken amongst the delegates for their expenses. The conference then returned to its agenda. The unemployed had asked for action, and had been given a collection! Similarly at Cardiff, at the Trades Union Congress in the autumn, a deputation was received, but nothing was done. The same thing has occurred at the Labour Party Conference and the Trades Union Congress this year: a considerable amount of sympathy has been expressed for the victims of unemployment, but every demand for affiliation or official recognition of the N.U.W.C.M. has, so far, been ignored.

So ends, for the present, a most deplorable chapter in the history of the British working class. The amount of harm which has been done by the divorce of the unemployed from the general body of Labour organisations is incalculable. The failure of the Trade Union Movement to resist the attacks upon the workers during the last two years; the low *morale* of the movement, the depletion of its funds by the payment of out-of-work benefits—£7,500,000 during the year ending September 30, 1921—all these can be traced back to the mistake that was made when it was assumed that the delegates at a Labour Party conference adequately represented the unemployed.

Having traced the development of the unemployed organisation and its relations with the official Labour Movement down to the present time, it becomes obvious that the *status quo* cannot be maintained very much longer. Either the movement will take a recognised place in the ranks of the organised workers, or it will develop in the future upon independent and antagonistic lines. Whichever happens will depend upon the attitude of the Labour Party leaders. So far the only effective move towards the

identification of the interests of employed and unemployed has come from the Communist Party.

The Communists were amongst the first to recognise the significance of the agitation and the possibilities of the movement, and devoted considerable attention to work amongst the unemployed. They have all along played a leading part in the organisation and have been largely responsible for its general direction. It is particularly the result of their influence that the policy of joint action with the employed workers in industrial disputes has been so successfully carried out. At the Ediswan Works, Ponders End, when systematic overtime was being worked, it was the unemployed who raided the place and put a stop to it. At Battersea, Norwich, Covent Garden, Smithfield, and a score of other places, strikers received assistance from the unemployed organisation in the shape of mass picketing and propaganda campaigns. In the engineering dispute, despite official discouragement from the Executive Committees of the A.E.U. and other unions involved, the unemployed were the backbone of the resistance which was offered to the employers. They sent their delegates on to the lock-out committees, and they shouldered their share, and more than their share, of the work of picketing and propaganda. In some of the important engineering centres, such as Barrow, Sheffield, and Coventry, the mass pickets of the unemployed were the most important feature in the situation.

All this has had its inevitable effect upon the workers still in the factories. Although it was not sufficient to outweigh the other factors which were responsible for the general retreat in face of the onslaught of the Federation of British Industries, it went a long way towards removing the long-standing fear of undercutting by the unemployed, which always has existed in the mind of the man inside the workshop. This much, at least, has been gained, but it only throws in bolder relief the loss to the workers when the official Labour Movement failed to tackle the problem. Thus the men who have been labelled as "disruptionists," the men who have been accused of "splitting the movement," have been achieving unity in action, whilst the officials have been passing resolutions on

unity as a preparation for the exclusion of the Communists from the Labour Party.

This position cannot last. The rank and file of the unemployed organisation are beginning to point out that whilst they have refused to blackleg upon the employed workers the latter are now blacklegging upon them by accepting the very conditions upon which the unemployed could have obtained work months ago. They refused to play the employers' game, and now they are beginning to ask whether the sacrifice was worth it. At the same time the unemployed organisation has very nearly reached the end of its tether upon its present programme. Going to the *Guardians* was an excellent political tactic when it was instituted, but nearly all the concessions which can be looked for in that direction have already been won. The N.U.W.C.M. stands to-day at the cross-roads. It can go forward as an integral part of the Labour Movement, making unemployment a full political agitation directed against the Government during the coming winter. It can work for closer contact with the Trades Councils and the Trades Union Congress, making its voice heard in their councils. On the other hand, it can attempt to satisfy the demands of one section of its members by encouraging the idea of a new union for employed and unemployed, degenerating into a definitely separatist One Big Union Movement, dissipating the energies of many of the most active elements in the working class in a hopeless and unscientific struggle.

Now is the time for both the N.U.W.C.M. and the general body of the Labour Movement to face facts and readjust ideas. There are some not altogether unjustifiable suspicions on the part of the trade unions in connection with the attitude of the unemployed towards the retention of membership of the organisation by those members who obtain work. This is regarded in some quarters as an attempt to create a rival union organisation. The N.U.W.C.M. must make clear their position in relation to members who obtain work and desire to retain their membership of the organisation.

Even more is there an immediate need for a broader vision on the part of the Labour Party Executive. They must recognise that the prevalent unemployment will endure for a considerable

time. There is no prospect of a revival in trade, and the only other happening likely materially to alter the position is a European war. Under these circumstances the N.U.W.C.M. must be regarded as something more than a temporary organisation, and it should therefore be recognised as an integral part of the Labour Movement and receive representation as such, both locally and nationally. If this is done, there is some small chance of repairing the damage which was done two years ago; if it is not done, the blame for the dissipation of our forces will again rest upon the shoulders of the Labour Party.

As an additional inducement to Mr. Henderson it might be added that the alliance would do more than is commonly imagined to win the General Election for the Labour Party.

# THE FUTURE OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

By G. ZINOVIEV

*(On the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the Russian Soviet Revolution, special interest attaches to the following frank consideration of the future of the Russian Communist Party by one of its most active leaders and the president of the Third International. The statement is taken from his speech to the Eleventh Congress of the Party held this year.)*

THE question of the line of demarcation between the Soviet Government and the Communist Party is one which has already been under discussion and is worthy of further attention.

It is no new problem, as may be seen by the clear-cut resolution passed at the Eighth Congress of the Party, which said:—

The mingling of party functions with the functions of State organs such as the Soviets is under no circumstances permissible. Disastrous results, especially in military affairs, would accrue from any such mingling. It is the duty of the party to realise its decisions by means of the Soviets *within the Soviet constitution*. The party endeavours to give a lead to the Soviets, but not to supplant them.

This resolution was passed in 1919, the year in which also the watchword was issued: "Back to the Party!" That was a period when we had concentrated with too great impetuosity on the Soviets, and the party became a mere appendage of the Soviets where bureaucracy began to take root. For this reason we issued the watchword: "Back to the Party!" The party was thus enabled to combat, independently, these unhealthy traits of the Soviet power, and we gained certain results.

We have put into effect the lessons of this experience as far as trade unionism is concerned. Their field of activity is marked out exactly: trade unions will now be trade unions! Certain comrades have wanted to add that "the party will now be a party!"

In what sense will the party be a party? What is the Communist Party in other countries? What were we prior to 1917? We were the party of agitation and fulfilled the same functions as does our present section for agitation and propaganda. We agitated, carried on propaganda, organised strikes, and at best, when we were lucky, we organised revolts. That was what our party was hitherto, and that is what the party is in other countries. The party in this interpretation must concentrate on agitation and propaganda, and must on no account meddle with the work of our economic State machinery. But in broad outline we cannot accept without reservation the formula: The party must be a party! Our party is a leading party, as a Menshevik said, whom I shall quote later. Our party has to undertake the guidance of economic activities. As regards the section for agitation and propaganda, it receives the utmost attention, but it cannot now be said that it should absorb nine-tenths of our work. Formerly that was the case, but it must not be so now. Hence we cannot accept the formula "the party must be a party." On the contrary the party must take the lead, it must be a party that guides the life and activity of the State.

Its most important duty is as follows: In view of the fact that it is incumbent on us to direct the State, we should establish within our party such a division of labour as would free us from the necessity of directing political life by means of resolutions of the provincial party committees. We must divide up the live forces of our party in such a way that *they* themselves are enabled to guide the work. If the provincial party committee possesses such first-class material, and full understanding of economic affairs, then they must be delegated to the various economic departments. In this way we shall make an economical division of our forces.

According to available figures, the number of members in the party who had joined before 1917 is but *two per cent.* of the total—the remainder are more recent additions to the party. This circumstance is of great importance. For even the Mensheviks say that we are living on the dividends of our basic capital, that is from that basic group which gained prominence because of the Revolution, comrades who have been at work since 1917 being regarded as old comrades. This position is one of the most delicate in the

whole party problem and must be made clear. Comrades of long standing should certainly possess more tact than to maintain that they understand the work better because their "party beards" are longer and because they date from such and such a year.

The total membership of the party amounts to 486,000. Here we touch on another delicate question, viz., the relation of the members of the party in central Russia and in the border regions. Undoubtedly the party membership in the latter is of very recent origin. We can rejoice that there are 25,000 members in Turkestan now, although for historical reasons there could be no such number of workers as in the proletarian centres of central Russia. But we must beware of allowing the appearance of even the least trace of what has been aptly nicknamed "colonisation." We must not regard the party members in the border regions as citizens of a second order, but prove the reality of our internationalism, allowing that the party membership there is of a special type and requires especial attention. The party in an immense country such as ours, which forms one-sixth of the whole globe, cannot be homogeneous. The new executive committee should pay particular regard to these differences in the social constitution of our party membership; types from Siberia, Turkestan, and Bokhara, for instance, require in each case to be treated from a different point of view.

Let us next examine the statistics of the Red Army. From official figures, which Comrade Trotsky confirmed as regards essentials, it appears that there are from 90,000 to 100,000 communists in the Red Army. In this figure the military youth organisation and the staff colleges are included. I must, however, make it clear that of these 100,000 communists only about 40 per cent. are workers, the other 60 per cent. are peasants. So far we have been accustomed to believe that in staff colleges workers were in the majority, but it appears that they all consist, to the extent of two-thirds, of peasants.

I consider this estimate of the number of communists to be more or less correct. And if it were possible to make a distribution of the membership of the party according to a well-thought out plan, I would estimate the number necessary for the army at 100,000; 25,000 to 50,000 for the Government machine; 100,000 for the

district and regional organs, and the balance for the factories and big undertakings. In my opinion this is the first duty to be accomplished.

Hitherto the distribution of our forces has not been in keeping with our numbers. It is a fact that there are big districts, mines, &c., where there are from 10,000 to 12,000 workers, where we have only a party nucleus of six. With our present strength a more correct distribution should now be possible. The proportion in the army is quite right; it might be possible to raise the number to 120,000, but it is important that the present figure is about right. Comrade Larin has written: "How can a government party exist, if it removes its members from the State apparatus and sends them into the factories and workshops?" He is wrong. We are both a governing party and a workers' party and should possess a percentage of communists everywhere where there are workers. A revision on these lines is possible and the party must carry it out.

A word may be said on the proportion of non-party members in the various executive committees. In the period 1920-1921, taking twenty more or less arbitrarily selected provinces, the number of non-party members was doubled and in many places reached 50 per cent. of the total. Although a supporter of the view that the number of non-party workers could be increased, this number appears to me to be somewhat too great and attention should be paid to it.

What is to be the future method of accepting members in the party? To me this is one of the most important questions before this congress, and our proposal is to adhere to the rules extant during the period in which the party was being purged of unsuitable elements. In other words it is our intention that any entrance in the party should be held over until the next congress.

Is there any necessity for such a decision? Certain derogatory comments have been made against it; Comrade Larin and some other comrades wrote that by these tactics we should be transformed into a mandarin sect. The reason why Comrade Larin should fear this is quite apparent to me; he anticipates a separation from the masses, from whom we are already partly separated. But such truisms as unity with the masses must not lead us astray; the party must be taken as it actually is, with its useful and good points, as it stands



after the new registration, the expulsions in the year 1922, at the time of the new economic policy, &c., and in the light of that position we should examine whether there is actually danger of our becoming a sect. I do not think any party but ours can show such an increase during the past four years, when its membership rose tenfold. There is no necessity for us now to put all our energy into increasing the party membership. Let us examine the present position. In the Putiloff works we have now sixty members. If that sixty should be increased to 100 of the same standard, nothing would have been gained. Before the revolution there were thirty to forty members of the party in the Putiloff works, all chosen comrades, energetic men with wide-awake minds, a picked crew. Every non-party worker understood that every communist towered above all the others. We must now make it our duty to see that the communists tower over the others, that they attract attention, and that the masses regard the communists as they used to do, as those who are the most far-sighted and clear-headed. It is this position that calls for the focussing of our attention not on the increase of the membership, but on an earnest and energetic endeavour to improve the quality of the existing membership. We are more interested in quality than in quantity. A year or two ago this position was evident, but no steps could be taken to better matters because of the war and the absorption of all our forces by other duties.

Now, however, we can cover Russia with a network of schools. By one year's intensive work the level of the average party member can be raised. The heroism and self-sacrifice displayed generally by the mass of the party members is well known; they saved the Republic and the party, and the Republic takes off its hat to these common soldiers of the party. These comrades, because of their upbringing, and not through any fault of their own or ours, are in the ranks of the preparatory class, and it is questionable whether it is even the preparatory stage, for some comrades do not know the A B C of Communism. The party and this congress are their debtors. Hence we must devote this year, which to all appearances may permit of the quiet development of our economic life and that of our party, not to gaining new adherents, but to the improvement of the present membership. Let us shut our doors to all but those who

would exercise a healthy influence on the party; to no others should we give admittance. The workers will understand. This will be no lasting regulation, but merely an episode in the life of a great party whose membership under the Tsar was but 5,000 and afterwards suddenly jumped to 40,000 and then to 500,000. A year's interval is absolutely essential to enable the party to examine the hidden corners, to size up the position, and to help the mass of the members to become communists in reality. To this work we should devote all our energies.

Something should be said also of some special activities. More attention must be paid to work among the youth. The Red Army is almost entirely a youth organisation. In 1921 in order to complete the army and navy cadres 21,000 men were called up and all these new recruits have to go through the youth organisation. Work among women is of equal importance. Among women we have only 70,000 women members of the party, representing some 3,000,000 women workers.

In reviewing the progress of the party, it is important to consider existing dangers, and in this respect I should like to draw special attention to the opinions of our fairly far-sighted enemies, the Mensheviks. In a work devoted entirely to our party, the author writes :—

Why do we devote so much attention to the inner life of the Bolshevik party? By no means out of deference either for the party or its theory. During the past years, however, with their lack of any sort of public life, in the prevailing atmosphere of apathy and the general confusion, all other parties and organisations were helpless and the Bolsheviks, together with the Red Army, have been the only organised social power. For this reason the downfall of the Bolsheviks cannot be brought about in the same way as that of former governments. Revolt cannot avail; the period of revolts corresponds with revolutionary advance and the growth of revolutionary feeling. The fall of the revolution will be signified by quite different political upheavals such as splits, plots, and *coups d'état*.

There is the peasant element in the party without any special tendency, although firmly entrenched in the district and regional administrative bodies. The party possesses besides very important workers' groups, just beginning to awaken to their special interests within the party state. There are also large intellectual groups, partly of democratic views, and partly with desires for a "Great Power" State, as aimed at by the *Smyena Vyekh* ("changed signals").

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Finally there are within the ranks of the party no small number of the new bourgeois elements. All these elements at present live alongside one another in the same party. When the appointed hour strikes, all these elements will come out of the common womb into the light of day, and their quarrel with each other will accomplish the task of political history.

The author scorns our cleansing policy and declares :—

How childish are these attempts at frustrating the inexorable centrifugal forces by means of “party purification”! How it shows the bureaucratic arrogance and boundless vanity common to all conquerors. What was the outcome of this party purification which was planned to expel the bourgeois from within its ranks? Widespread discontent, the expulsion of both right and left elements, of pure and defiled, and in addition a few dozen anecdotes which are careering round the world. Such methods will not change or conquer the history of the world.

And he concludes :—

This is the cause of the long-drawn delay in overthrowing the Bolsheviks; it is also the reason why Bolshevism can only be destroyed from within, by the decomposition and decay of the Russian Communist Party.

These words, coming from one of our greatest enemies, should not be forgotten. Although this same writer foretold, a year ago, that the downfall of Bolshevik rule would happen thus :—

From their own ranks, from the ranks of the Red Army, there will spring up some commander or lieutenant who will become a miniature Napoleon. And the sympathy for the Government will dwindle to such an extent that Napoleon will one day march into the Kremlin, seize the reins of power, and scatter the Council of Commissars.

His recent prognosis on the other hand counts on the decay of our party and the formation of internal divisions resulting in the total break-up of the party. There is an atom of truth in his statement. Our party is a party of monopoly, and because it is the only one active in public affairs, certain elements force their way into it which under other circumstances would belong to other parties. What a variety we have! The peasant element is a source of danger, so too the office workers, who are not from the ranks of the working class and have joined us merely from self-interest. There is no denying the difficulties in our path. It is quite true that a

molecular process is taking place within the party which reflects more than one struggle, which even reflects the class struggle.

We must think of the unity of the party. We dare not forget the Menshevik's statement that they are waiting for the heterogeneous elements within the common womb to emerge and do the work of political history by fighting one another. It is on this card that the whole international counter-revolution, including the Second and Two and a Half Internationals, put all their hope. It is not our intention to hush up the weaknesses of the party. We must go forward step by step, inch by inch. Many difficulties beset our path, but the thought that for us there is nothing dearer than our party should be ever present. Communists of the whole world admit that we guided the party on the right way during all the difficulties in those four years of revolution. We mean to continue to guide it in the same way.

# ANGLO-AMERICAN RIVALRY IN THE ARGENTINE

By H. P. RATHBONE

**T**HE middle-class merchant who resides in that mythical region of suburbia, when confronted with the declaration of war by Britain on August 4, 1914, was first constrained to remark—prompted by it said by his daily paper—on the amazing altruism of the British nation. He was told by that same daily paper—and naturally he believed it—that Britain had been dragged much against her will into the conflict to protect the little buffer State of Belgium—that Britain stood to gain not one iota from the struggle—and on his loyal co-operation in continuing his business as usual depended the honour of the British Empire. Now let us imagine that our excellent middle-class merchant was thereupon transported into the realms of thought, and held there immobile until the first of the numerous progeny of Big—the Big Five—had set a seal to the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919. Imagine the surprise of our excellent merchant—full as he would still be of feelings of righteous altruism—when he learnt that as a direct consequence of the war the British Empire had been enlarged at the expense of its chief rival by the addition of nearly a million square miles in Africa alone, not to mention a few mandated territories, a captured trade, a navy and merchant tonnage added as makeweights. If only our imagination could be stretched further—the strain becomes too terrific at this point—it ought to be possible to visualise the distressing complications into which our poor merchant must have fallen. But we will leave him at this point, not without gratitude for having clearly indicated the value of a continually informed Press.

The reason for this opening homily is to emphasise the consequences of the imperialist struggle between Britain and Germany, a struggle which has taken nearly twenty years to germinate and which has finally marked the completion of the

purely inter-European imperialist conflict. It resulted from the desire of two rival groups of finance capital to gain control of certain undeveloped areas of the world for the export and utilisation of its surplus capital. In particular it put the question, for instance, whether British or German capitalists should derive profit from the construction and operation of the Bagdad railway. It was, in fact, no mere desire, as was so often repeated parrot-like by patriotic economists before the war, to drive out British or German trade from the ports of the world. The victory over the common enemy and the immediate appearance hydra-like of a further head was marked, after the sinking of the German fleet off Scapa Flow, by the transference of the base of the English grand fleet from the North Sea to the Atlantic. That transference meant the realisation of the existence of a new foe in the new-born imperialism of the U.S.A.

The study of the factors which are bringing this new conflict nearer every day should therefore be of supreme importance. As we have already remarked, it is no mere study of the growth of the exports and imports of the two opposing sides, but simply and crudely a study in the race for new capital markets. The two central streams of this race have momentarily been checked and dispersed in China by the manœuvres at the Washington Conference. In Africa the British stream still flows uninterrupted, while Europe, strangled by internecine strife, is so entangled as to give but little scope for even a mere rivulet to flow, let alone the full-blooded stream which appears in consequence to be overflowing its banks.

The South American continent, however, presents a different problem. Here can be studied the flow of the two opposing streams, all the stronger for the virtual closing of the European sluices. In its southernmost republic, the Argentine, we find one stream already so well established as to provide a source of difficulty for the entrance of the opposing stream. Before, however, examining the actual conditions of this preserve of British capital, the why and wherefore of its position must first be examined. We need to understand why the Argentine has been so exclusively developed by British capitalism, and why it has not already, in consequence, been absorbed into the British colonial empire. The answer to

these questions will be found in a brief history of the republic, of which the main points can be rapidly given.

During the early years of the Napoleonic wars we find a certain Francis Miranda touring the courts of Europe to seek aid for the liberation of the Argentine from the domination of Spain. His reception in England was marked by extreme friendliness, for it is recorded that during the years 1796-8 Pitt seriously considered commencing operations in the Argentine. Operations in fact were begun in the years 1806-7, but were driven underground by the treaty with Spain in 1808. Their effectiveness, helped by other intrigues, however, was seen in the declaration of independence by the Argentine in 1816 and the establishment of a republic. Such was the growth of British influence that a movement quickly arose for a closer alliance with Britain in the form of a protectorate by the latter country. This and numerous other happenings in the other States of South America, which had arisen, phoenix-like, out of the remains of the old Spanish-Portuguese hegemony, forced the Government of the United States to assume a definite attitude. This was embodied in the message in December, 1823, delivered by President Monroe to the American Congress, laying down that there should be no interference by Europe in the governments of the American continent—the Monroe doctrine. Thus, the nominal independence of the Argentine was guaranteed, and the interest of the United States in the development of South America defined.

Financial interference was another matter. Not a year passed before the province of Buenos Ayres had obtained a loan from Europe for the then considerable sum of £1,000,000. But this financial interference, increasing rapidly as it did throughout the nineteenth century, contained elements of danger to the inviolability of the Monroe doctrine. For just as Russia, when she repudiated her debts, drew the armies of all her debtors around her, so did the States of South America. It was not till 1907, when Venezuela defaulted and drew down a naval demonstration on her coasts, that the United States was constrained to apply this time to the Hague Conference for an elaboration of the Monroe doctrine by means of the Porter resolution, which—

forbids the employment of force for the collection of public debts until the claims of all have been approved of by an arbitration

court, appointed by the collector and the debtor nation, and the payment thereof shall have been refused, or until the demand for arbitration shall have been refused or disregarded by the debtor nation.

The diplomatic relations of the South American States were thus finally settled, in the sense that their territory was guaranteed inviolable by the United States.

But this Monroe doctrine, as will appear, provides only a *casus belli* for the United States, and will be torn up by the first State to whom it would appear a "military" necessity. The real interference and the fundamental cause of future conflicts began with the million pound loan of British capitalists in 1824 to the province of Buenos Ayres, and continued to grow almost uninterruptedly to the commencement of the war. Such was this growth that it has been estimated that the British Empire had in 1914 a greater financial interest in South America than in any other country, and that its financial interest in the Argentine was larger than in any other South American State. The *American Federal Reserve Board Bulletin* for July, 1922, gives an estimate of the British industrial interests in the Argentine as £328,000,000, divided as to railways, £263,000,000; industrial enterprises, £16,000,000; others, £49,000,000. To this total must be added some £80,000,000 of foreign debt, out of a total of £137,000,000, held by British capitalists, thus bringing up the grand total to close on £400,000,000, which is the total estimate of the *Manchester Guardian Commercial*. This total of £400,000,000, be it noted, is fully 10 per cent. of the aggregate capital held by Britain in all foreign countries before the war. The total, in comparison with other interests in the republic, both Argentine and foreign, is still more illuminating, for out of the capital of registered companies operating in the Argentine in 1917,<sup>1</sup> 71 per cent. were British owned, 22 per cent. owned in the Argentine, and only 7 per cent. owned elsewhere. Nor is this all, for a considerable proportion of the Argentine registered companies were subsidiaries of British owned companies. It is therefore certain that quite three-quarters of the capital employed in enterprises in the Argentine was owned by Britain in 1914.

<sup>1</sup> The position is stated to have remained unchanged since 1914.



We said before that to ascertain the rivalry between nations in another country it was not sufficient only to investigate their respective trade with that country. This is borne out by an investigation into the trade of the Argentine. If we keep in mind, first, that 10 per cent. of the capital exported by Britain was exported to the Argentine, and, secondly, that 75 per cent. of the capital in the Argentine was owned by Britain, the relative position in our argument of Argentine trade can be more truly estimated. For in 1913 the following were the proportions of the trade of the Argentine with the United Kingdom, U.S.A., Germany, and other countries:—

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS OF THE ARGENTINE IN 1913				
	UNITED KINGDOM	UNITED STATES	GERMANY	OTHER COUNTRIES
Imports .....	30 per cent.	15 per cent.	19 per cent.	36 per cent.
Exports .....	25 per cent.	5 per cent.	12 per cent.	58 per cent.

In the same way we find that British exports to the Argentine were only 4 per cent. of the total British exports in 1913, and imports from the Argentine only 5 per cent. of the total British imports. This trade position is illuminated, however, if the position of the Argentine railways is examined in relation to the total trade of the Argentine. The increase since 1861 is detailed in the following table:—

TRADE AND RAILWAY MILEAGE, 1861-1913			
Year	EXPORTS Million dollars gold	IMPORTS Million dollars gold	RAILWAY Kilometres
1861	14	22	—
1890	101	142	9,432
1900	155	113	16,563
1910	373	352	27,994
1913	484	421	32,494

Now the importance of the railways in the development of the Argentine can well be seen from this table. These railways were very largely constructed by British owned capital; in fact, in 1913, between 65 per cent. and 70 per cent. were British owned. Consequently, the trade position of the Argentine has largely been built up by British capital, and though the majority of the trade of the Argentine was not mainly with England, English owned capital was largely instrumental in making that trade available, and, incidentally, it derived a large profit therefrom.

The position and historical influence of British capital was

indeed well described by Senor Tornquist in a speech made when on an official visit to England in March, 1921.

He said:—

Great Britain was one of the first countries to recognise our independence, and was our first friend who saw the possibilities of our young republic. You were the first to have the courage—for courage it was at the time—to invest largely in South America and specially in the Argentine, opening up our immense sources of wealth unexploited in the colonial period. You built practically all our railways, docks, and other vital public utility works, starting only a few years after our emancipation when our institutions were still in the process of formation . . .

In fact, the position of England before the war was that she owned practically all the means of transportation, a considerable proportion of the meat-packing industry (which will be referred to later), and large interests in such other businesses as banking, insurance, tanning extract, and retail business.

Then the war came. There was a complete cessation of capital export, which had continued unceasingly up till then, and a momentary interruption of trade. This interruption quickly ceased when it was found that England could absorb more than her pre-war proportions of the meat and wheat she mainly imported. But with the war came also the opportunity of America to capture German trade. This she did, but certain new factors entered into the position, which made her position still more favourable. For the Argentine, which had always been a debtor nation to England, gradually assumed the temporary guise of a creditor due to the enormous increase in exports to England and a heavy decrease in imports from England; further, State loans were impossible from England. Accordingly, in 1915, New York lent the Argentine Government the considerable sum of £5,000,000. Likewise, the result of this favourable position of America on the import trade to the Argentine was that the American proportion steadily increased from 15 per cent. of the total in 1913 to 34 per cent. in 1918, having touched 36 per cent. in 1917, while the British proportion equally steadily declined from 30 per cent. in 1913 to 25 per cent. in 1918, having been as low as 22 per cent. in 1917. During the whole of this period practically no new capital was invested in the Argentine at all, the Americans apparently preferring pure trading

methods. This inspired the Department of Overseas Trade in 1919 to make the hopeful statement that for that reason the position of the U.S.A. "may be regarded as less favourable" than the British owing to the "legitimate influence due to the heavy investment of British capital in Argentine enterprises of all descriptions." There were, however, two industries in which the position radically altered; one was the meat-packing industry, in which America further consolidated her position, and the other the oil industry, which developed from practically negligible dimensions to a most prolific source of conflict.

In the meat industry we find the first entry of America to be in 1907; from then till 1911 there appears to have been no agreement between the already established British companies and the new comers, but from 1911 to 1913 a temporary agreement was put in force, only to be broken by the Americans in order further to increase their share. An agreement was secured in the following year, and continued right throughout the war, the Americans being strong enough to enforce revisions in their favour from time to time. The following table gives the position:—

SHARE OF ARGENTINE MEAT TRADE

	1909	1911	1913-14	1914-16	1918-20
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
British Companies . . . . .	37.0	30.2	24.4	26.4	22.1
Argentine Companies . . . .	27.0	25.1	17.6	14.6	9.8
American Companies . . . . .	35.3	44.7	58.0	59.0	68.1

If the 1918 output of the two British non-conference companies is included, the British proportion would be increased to 34 per cent., and the American proportion decreased to 57 per cent. The result has been the British share of this industry has been with difficulty maintained by non-conference methods, after being completely defeated by the alternating policy of conference and non-conference imposed by the Americans; while the American companies have gradually swallowed up the Argentine share and have now become the dominating interest in the meat trade. It remains to be seen whether the non-conference combine, Vestey Brothers, will be strong enough to hold out against the united forces of the American packers.

The oil industry first became important during the war. Oil, though discovered in 1907, fortuitously, be it said, in a search for

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water, had not been developed owing to the cheap and plentiful supplies of South Wales coal. But with the war coal became scarce and many times as expensive owing to perfectly fabulous increases in freightage. As there are practically no coal deposits in the Argentine, oil at once came into prominence as an alternative fuel. To illustrate the importance of this position the following table is presented, showing the amount of fuel consumed on the railways in 1913 and 1919:—

YEAR	COAL Tons	WOOD Tons	OIL Tons
1913	1,443,443	466,658	1,126
1919	431,783	4,463,921	44,609

Now the production of oil, in consequence of this need, has increased at a tremendous rate; in 1907 only 101 barrels were produced; in 1913 130,411; in 1915 518,837; in 1918 1,242,740; and in 1921, 1,747,000. It is estimated that the 22,141 miles of railways alone (compared with a total mileage in Great Britain of 23,701) will need themselves close on 3,500,000 barrels a year. The oil output has thus already reached close on a half of the total railway requirements. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that "the country is almost overrun with oil experts," according to the *Manchester Guardian Commercial*. The three big combines, the Standard, the Royal Dutch, and the Anglo-Persian, have already staked out their claims, in addition to a company owned by the railways themselves.

Now the war produced amongst the peoples of the Argentine a growth in nationalist spirit. This found vent in a dislike for foreign owned companies, which appeared very clearly in the dispute over railway rates in 1921. According to a law passed in 1907, the Mitre Law, the rates of the railways should be such as to secure a certain maximum rate of earnings on the capital of each company. During the war the rates were increased to an average of 44 per cent. above pre-war rates. In 1920, the boom year in Argentine trade, the railways made large profits; in the following year they showed most unfavourable results in comparison. Accordingly they notified the Government that it was necessary to increase their tariffs. This the Government refused to permit, and imposed daily fines on the companies. After a considerable manœuvring, and after the

railways had created a regular storm in the Press at home, and had ventilated their grievances in the House of Commons, the Argentine Government gradually gave way, but the obvious dislike of the absentee capitalist still remains.

The position after the war has resulted in a certain set-back to American trade, as the following table, giving percentages of total trade, shows:—

	IMPORTS		EXPORTS	
	INTO THE ARGENTINE		FROM THE ARGENTINE	
	U.K. <i>Per cent.</i>	U.S.A. <i>Per cent.</i>	U.K. <i>Per cent.</i>	U.S.A. <i>Per cent.</i>
1918	24.0	34.0	39.0	20.0
1919	22.0	35.0	28.0	18.0
1920	23.5	33.0	70.0	14.5

No comparable figures are available for 1921, but it is known that the import trade by the U.S.A. decreased by one half, whereas the total import trade only decreased by a third, while the export trade to the U.S.A. decreased by two-thirds; whereas the total export trade only decreased by one half. The falling off in 1921 is due, it is said, to an overplus of goods left over from 1920 which had been exported from the U.S.A., or ordered, but cancelled, by the U.S.A. because of the falling prices. These goods became almost unsaleable, and were left as a drug on the American market. The position of Britain, on the other hand, has improved, especially in exports, and she has again become the creditor of the Argentine, having hastened to pay off, in January, 1920, a whole year before due date, a credit which had been granted by the Argentine Government for wheat, &c., in 1915, thereby causing considerable surprise in Argentine financial circles, as it was assumed that Britain had no more money to lend.

Just as the United States has received a set-back in trade, so she has done in shipping and banking. It seems that this set-back will be purely temporary, for great efforts are being made and money has been voted freely by the American Government for trade development work in South America. Further, there is every reason to think that America, profiting by her trade losses at the end of 1920, will in the future endeavour to export her surplus capital as well as her surplus goods.

This process is already taking place in the development of the Argentine State Railways. It has been stated that the republic has

already borrowed \$277,000,000 from the U.S.A. A writer in *The Times Trade Supplement* points out that:—

Probably the real reason underlying the comparative liberality of American financiers to this Republic lies in the gradual understanding on the part of American business men that trade follows the dollars far more than it does the flag.

This same writer then proceeds to discuss whether American loans have reached their maximum or not. He refers to the recent decisions of the Argentine State Railways to construct a further 4,000 kilometres of new line. The railway material for this has already been ordered to the extent of 70 per cent. in the U.S.A., and undoubtedly the reason for this large proportion is the fact that American bankers, while not definitely stipulating that the money raised by them must be spent in America, have brought their influence to bear to that end. The American Department of Foreign Trade is admittedly taking special interest in Argentine railway extension, and it is further admitted that the reason for this interest is based on the knowledge that such extensions mean increased trade all round. It is therefore not surprising that our writer should come to the conclusion that American loans have only reached their initial stage of growth. Moreover, in spite of remembering to insert the half forgotten caveat that the United States will not have it all their own way owing to an alleged preference for "British methods and British material." The same writer concluded in the following significant strain:—

The crux of the matter lies in finance, and the main object of this article is to throw as much stress as possible on the fact that the United States, having been converted to the advantage of long-term foreign investment, when seeking to build up foreign trade, hold trump cards at any rate in Argentina.

These "trump cards" are the unlimited capacity of American capitalists to combine the export of capital with the export of goods. She has already substantial interests in the meat-packing and petroleum industries, the latter of which has already provided potential sources of conflict and, elsewhere, actual sources of irritation between the two rival imperialisms of America and Britain; while the recent acquisition of an interest in railway development will assuredly tend to increase the rivalry just as rivalry in railway development in the Near East provided one of the main causes of the European war.

# THE MORAL OF THE ITALIAN SOCIALIST DEBACLE

By "OSSERVATORE"

**N**OWHERE has the struggle of ideas and forces in the Socialist Movement to-day been so clearly set out as in Italy. The rapid succession of events, from the high hopes of two years ago to the breakdown of to-day, has proceeded with the relentless inevitability of the acts of a drama : and the actors in it—the International, the Reformists, the Centrists, the Revolutionaries—have all played their part with an unequalled clearness in this tragedy of the working class.

Two years ago the Moscow physicians looked dourly on the vigorous and flamboyant health of the Italian Socialist Party and professed to detect disease. They recommended surgical interference : they insisted on the excision of the Reformist element. The all-too-imprudent foster parent of the Italian Socialist Party, Serrati, uneasily, it is true, rejected Moscow's advice. A few months later the patient showed obvious symptoms of rapid decline. Its strength forsook it, it shrank to a mere shadow of its former self, and it resisted the attacks of its enemies with ever feebler and feebler vigour. Two years elapsed, and even the indulgent Serrati was obliged to confess that his charge was moribund. It was then that with his own hand and with a determination born of desperation he performed the operation he had formerly scorned. But meanwhile the malignant growth—if Moscow was right in stigmatising it as malignant—had assumed such proportions that it was difficult to say which was growth and which was patient, and those who have followed the operation attentively are not at all sure whether the Reformist wing was cut out of the Italian Socialist Party, or the Italian Socialist Party was cut away from the Reformist wing.

The headlong descent of the Italian Socialist Party from power to impotence stands out as unparalleled even amongst the catas-

trophic Labour defeats of the post-war years. In 1919, in conjunction with the General Confederation of Labour (the federated Trade Unions of Italy with whom it was in close alliance) the Socialist Party was expecting, as Serrati said at the recent Congress, to take its place in the forefront of European revolution. Everyone will remember the sensational news which repeatedly came from Italy at that time, telling of fresh conquests by the workers, and how one awaited with abated breath the culminating news of the seizure of power. At the Bologna Congress of 1919 the Italian Socialist Party adopted the programme of a Communist Party, a party expecting to assume the responsibility that the Russian Communist Party had already assumed. It was true there was a right wing, it was true that many of the leaders of the Confederation of Labour were even still more on the right, but even these professed, and, no doubt, believed, in a programme so revolutionary as to appear almost incredible to-day.

It came as a shock to all when the Third International in the following year crudely dubbed this right wing "Reformist," and displayed such vulgar hostility and suspicion towards it as to insist on its expulsion from the Italian Socialist Party before the latter, much to its amazement and horror, could be admitted to the Third International.

Serrati, whom the war had cast up as the acknowledged leader of Italian Socialism, and who was himself an ardent Communist, was the worst outraged of all. His psychology then, and since, was peculiar. He cherished an almost sentimental affection for the Italian Socialist Party. He shrank from the prospect of disruption; his doting passion blinded him to facts and arguments; and when under his influence the Party in January, 1921, voted for the retention of the Reformists, we find the curious paradox of Serrati, a Communist, on the plea of unity, remaining indifferent to the self-expulsion of nearly 60,000 Communists rather than permit his darling Party to suffer the loss of 15,000 Reformists.

The Italian Socialist Party was then 200,000 strong. Serrati's following, who called themselves Unity Communists, and since Unity Maximalists, numbered over 100,000. The 60,000 Pure Communists left to form the Italian Communist Party. The Reformists, since called Concentrationists, were then the merest



minority. Serrati, in retaining them, declared that the Party was strong enough to keep them disciplined, and the Reformists on their part promised to remain faithful to the will of the Party. They contained some of the oldest, most powerful, and expert of Italian Socialists, men like Turati and Treves.

Unfortunately, in the wave of reaction that shortly burst over Italy neither the Reformists showed the will to adhere to their promise, nor Serrati the power to hold them in leash. Paralysed by two wills (and several minor wills, because between the Serratists and Turatists there were other nuances of groupings) the Party was powerless against the tide of reaction. As Socialist and Labour stronghold after stronghold fell to the violence, the murder, and the incendiarism of the Fascisti armies, and as the organised workers became more demoralised and discouraged, the Reformists grew more emboldened. From revolutionists they became open Reformists, and then proceeded to demand collaboration with the bourgeois parties.

The unstable character of Italian cabinets was a great temptation to the Reformists. The culmination came with the fall of the Facta Cabinet last July, when Turati with the majority of the Socialist Parliamentary Group behind him, and against the express prohibition of the Party, went to see the king with the object of forming a coalition cabinet. Nothing eventuated, but after that the Reformists could not be held in check. It was they who talked and wrote openly of the necessity for splitting the Party, if the Party could not bring itself to collaborationist tactics.

If, at the last Congress of the Italian Socialist Party in Rome on October 4, it was Serrati who demanded the expulsion of the Reformists, it was because their boldness and effrontery had worn down even his indulgence. Two resolutions were finally voted on at the Congress, one by the Maximalists, demanding expulsion, the other for unity; the voting was, for the former resolution 32,106, for the latter 29,119. The Concentrationists thereupon left the Congress to form a separate party.

The speech which Serrati made in moving the Maximalist resolution is summarised as follows :—

#### SERRATI'S SPEECH

The Maximalists have always stood for the policy of Moscow. The

Bologna Congress merely confirmed the decisions of Zimmerwald and Kienthal. There was always a contrary minority, and some of us even then proposed their expulsion ; but I was against that, and in compiling the Bologna programme I asserted the unity of the party. At that time the idea of unity was determined by the conviction that no movement to revolution, then believed by us all to be imminent, was possible without a compact party. We were unitarians then from the belief that the Italian socialists, in conjunction with the Confederation of Labour, might enter the front rank of the revolutionary movement of Europe. When we sent our delegation to Russia, we made them declare to the Russian comrades that we did not want schism in Italy, since we were in need of men in whom we could trust, believing them to be socialists. Unity was a necessity of the revolution, and the rights so felt the influence of the new era that they were all for the Russian revolution, for all that they are so fierce against Bolshevism now. If they were in favour of revolution in 1919, why are they not so to-day ?

The truth is that they have abandoned the revolution to-day because the situation has changed: they exalted it when things were going otherwise. Outside events have swollen the collaborationist nucleus, which hopes to find greater nourishment in reaction.

Having turned to the right, they are ready to give their men to the Government: we will not. We are at the crest of the hill, and must turn either to the right or to the left. Equivocation is dangerous; it will tie the hands of all.

In the situation we are in to-day numbers no longer count, as they did in 1919 when it was necessary to retain all our adherents—and import other elements nearest to us—in order to place us in a position to assume power. To-day, however, we must fight reaction, and we must replace the extended front by a front of quality.

It is said that there is a profound antithesis between Socialism and Communism. There is none such. The profound difference is between Socialism and Reformism, which is not Socialism, but tends to deny Socialism. Some of you have put us the question: "Are you not concerned by the fact that having entered the Third International you will have to play the politics of Russia ?" To which we reply with another question: "If you enter the Government will you not have to play the politics of bourgeois Italy ?" You exercise all your critical faculties exclusively against the revolution, and end by becoming the negative critics of Socialism. You are afraid we will enter the Third International, forgetting that you yourselves adhered to Moscow, and repented your adhesion even at your group conference at Reggio Emilia, with certain reservations as to autonomy. To-day you are decidedly against the Third International.

We never believed it possible to achieve Socialism through the conquest of the majority. Where the bourgeoisie feels its power menaced it suppressed the democratic guarantees; legally, where it is strongest, or illegally, where it is weakest, it establishes its own dictatorship. We will not delude the masses

with visions of peaceful sunsets. We never said the regime could be overthrown by the ballot-box, and our fault is that we did not conduct a systematic propaganda for revolution, that we never sufficiently prepared ourselves for the events that have overtaken us.

No one thinks to-day that the revolution is imminent. Yet we believe it essential to abandon the democratic illusion, and to create a combative, active, and audacious party.

When we have severed ourselves from the collaborationists we can rally the masses around the programme of 1919. We shall be done with those who are making advances to the Government, and we can then seek approach to those who stand by the class war. When reaction rages most furiously we must be true to ourselves, we must stiffen our idealism, we must close up our ranks, and remain faithful to the masses.

The resolution which Serrati was supporting in this speech, and which declared for the definite expulsion of the Reformists, ran as follows:—

#### THE MAXIMALIST RESOLUTION FOR EXPULSION

This Congress, realising that, in spite of the party's efforts to maintain unity and to harmonise the diverse opinions on tactics into a single and disciplined action, there has nevertheless arisen within the Socialist organisation a fraction with a discipline of its own, and with the avowed object of inducing the Party to consent to collaboration with the bourgeoisie and to accept the existing institutions;

And realising that with this avowed object in view definite acts have been committed, contrary to the express prohibitions and resolutions of party congresses, and against the opposition of the party direction, notably the following : (1) manoeuvres for participating in the solution of ministerial crises by promises of eventual support to the Government; (2) declarations of the autonomy of the Parliamentary group; (3) the sending of a representative of the group to the Quirinale with the object of advising the king as to the solution of a cabinet crisis; (4) open proposals for the formation of local and national electoral, political, and administrative blocs with bourgeois parties; (5) publishing renunciations of political actions by means of which alone joint continuation within a single party were made possible; (6) the publication of denunciations and statements to the effect that the party majority alone were responsible for the outbreak of reaction; (7) voting and acting with the purpose of participating in a so-called "better" Government; (8) proposals and attempts to divert the proletarian movement from its class policy;

And realising, finally, that the manifesto issued by the collaborationist group, the vote of the Milan Conference of September 10, and the resolution put forward by them at this congress are in full, decided, and irrefutable contradiction to the policy adopted by the party at all its congresses, from that at

Reggio Emilia in 1912 to that at Milan in 1920, and that they fundamentally violate the very programme of the party adopted at the Bologna Congress of 1919 and since confirmed by every subsequent congress:

From all these motives this congress decides:—

That all persons adhering to the collaborationist group and approving the policy indicated in the manifesto and resolution above-mentioned be expelled from the Italian Socialist party;

That all sections, groups, and individuals, who although contributing to activities or points of view not in conformity with the present resolution, but who have been convinced by the discussions that the decisions arrived at in the present resolution are in conformity with the class interests of the proletariat, be invited to apply for membership in the reconstructed party.

The resolution of the Reformists, which was put forward as a unity resolution and remained silent on the issues in dispute, was to the following effect:—

#### THE UNITY RESOLUTION

This congress, recognising that only a united party can confer on the proletarian cause the full effect of all its energies, especially at the moment of greatest reaction;

That the right of citizenship in the party is indispensable to all who accept the Socialist aim and the principles and methods of the class war;

That it is not possible to eliminate the inconveniences that arise from the appearance and development of different groupings within the party by the method of scission, which may become systematic;

And that the co-existence of the various groupings could be made possible by a system of proportional representation within the directive and executive organs of the party, which are the faithful custodians of party discipline, whereas the parties which would result from a scission would mutually paralyse their respective activities to a greater extent than would be the case if the various groupings were subjected to a common discipline ;

Asserts, in face of all other decisions, the indivisibility of the Italian Socialist Party.

On the day following the expulsion, the remainder of Serrati's following met to continue the Congress. The proposal was made to seek approach to Moscow, when the following communication on the result of the split was read from the Third International:—

#### THE MESSAGE OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

The scission between the Maximalists and the Reformists in Italy is at last effected ! That which the Communist International demanded two years ago has inevitably come to pass. The necessary surgical operation was delayed for two years; the patient was neglected, with the natural result that incalculable

injury has been done to the organism of the Italian Socialist Party. The losses suffered by the working class of Italy owing to the errors of the Maximalist leaders have been enormous. The bourgeoisie took advantage of the mistakes of the Socialists to consolidate their power and to pass to a bold and cynical offensive against the Italian workers. That the Maximalist leaders in 1920 committed a terrible error is plain to every honest Maximalist worker; we are told that the split is necessary in 1922, but that it was not necessary in 1920, since, it is said, at that period no definite acts had been committed to prove the treachery of the Reformists. Such a declaration is either a piece of childishness, or a deplorable attempt to conceal from the workers the true course of events.

He cannot be called a leader of the proletarian masses who with great effort and after the lapse of several years comes to a correct conclusion, but rather he who can detect a tendency at its birth and can warn the workers in time of the peril that menaces them.

That is exactly what the Marxists are for, to study the process of the class war, to draw conclusions therefrom, and to fight danger at its inception.

It is only too easy at the end of 1922 to see where Italian Reformism is leading when it has already passed over with bag and baggage to the camp of the bourgeoisie. But it was not so easy two or three years ago. The Communist International saw it in good time, but certain Maximalist leaders either refused to see or conscientiously shut their eyes to the betrayal of the Reformists. But however that may be, the situation of the Italian workers is so terrible that those who are sincerely devoted to the welfare of the proletariat must not lose time in discussing who was right and who was wrong. The most urgent and most elementary task in Italy is to achieve the unity of the revolutionary forces at the earliest possible moment, and thus to form a proletarian bloc against the bloc of Reformists, Fascisti, and Imperialists.

Comrades Maximalists!

Two paths lie before you: either you attempt to form something intermediary, a so-called independent, centrist party; in which case after six months or a year your party will again become the prey of the Reformists and the bourgeoisie. (Such a middle party, independent and centrist, in the conditions existing to-day, and in the actual process of the class war in Italy, cannot but drag out a miserable existence for a certain period and then be inevitably doomed to a shameful end.) Or you follow the other path: resolutely and undeviatingly taking measures for union with the Italian Communist Party, placing yourselves on the true revolutionary road, and before all, with this end in view, returning to the banner of the Communist International.

Comrades, make your choice!

Your congress must take heed of the importance of the choice. See! At the very moment when you, Italian Maximalists, under the pressure of events, have snapped the rusty chain which bound you to the Reformist traitors, in the international field the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals are

uniting. The independent centrists, as the Communist International long since predicted they would, are capitulating to Noske, Scheidemann, and Renauld. The Two-and-a-Half International has ceased to exist, it has capitulated to the mercy of the yellow social democrats. Is it possible that you will overlook the significance of such an event to the international working-class movement? Is it possible that you will even now fail to see that there are only two paths: either the Second International, the international order of equivocations, or the Communist International, the international of the class war.

The tactics of the united front propounded by the Communist International is being attended by immense success in all the countries where the workers' movement is advanced. In Italy also will the tactic of the united front achieve success if your congress is conscious of the problems to be solved, if you are determined, not merely in word, but in deed, to sever yourselves once and for all from the Reformists and from the opportunists, if the split does not become a mere episode, if you are fully conscious of the profound irreconcilability of Marxism and Reformism. If with firmness and with courage you decide to repair your past errors and will go forward to unite with the Italian Communist Party, then the working class will at once feel that a new era has begun, that the formation of a potent proletarian bloc has been initiated. Then, our forces united, we shall very soon bring about the discomfiture of the Turatis, the D'Aragonas, the Modiglianis, and the other agents of the bourgeoisie.

Either slow putrefaction, or the correction of past errors by the adoption of a new path. The choice must be made!

For its part, the Executive Committee of the Communist International sincerely desires to do its utmost to facilitate the return to the banner of the Communist International. The situation of the Italian working class is such that we dare not permit ourselves the luxury of protracted polemics with those who are, perhaps, on many points still in error, but on fundamental questions recognise their mistakes and are ready to amend them.

The Executive Committee of the Communist International makes the two following proposals:—

- (1) Select a delegation from your congress to proceed to Moscow towards the end of October for the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International. This delegation will be given every opportunity to place your point of view before the Third International and to hear the opinion of the Communist International on the questions which are of vital interest to the Italian working class movement.
- (2) Admit the necessity for forming, with the shortest possible delay, a committee for proletarian action in union with the Italian

Communist Party, which is now the sole representative of the Communist International in Italy.

We repeat: your fate lies in your own hands. Further errors, further hesitation and irresolution, will be nothing short of a crime against the working class of Italy, whom the Fascisti brigands are anxious to rend to pieces, and over whose heads are hovering the black crows of Reformism.

Remember, Comrades Maximalists, decision can no longer be delayed. It is for you to say the word!

As a result of this invitation and the discussion which followed, the Congress adopted the following resolution :—

The Italian Socialist Party, having expelled its Reformist bloc, will renew its application for affiliation to the Third International.

Thus, the split that Moscow demanded two years ago, inexorable events have now fulfilled. The Unity Communists have again turned their faces towards the Moscow International. But two years ago they numbered over 100,000 in strength ; to-day they are a bare 30,000. Two years ago the Italians worker were full of the pride of anticipated power ; to-day they are crushed into the dust.

# The World of Labour

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## INTERNATIONAL

### Transport Workers

**T**WO International Conferences of Transport Workers have recently been held, one under the auspices of the International Federation of Trade Unions and the other under the auspices of the Red International of Labour Unions.

The International Transport Workers' Federation at their congress in Vienna, which opened on October 2, decided to set up separate departments for (1) seafaring workers ; (2) railway workers ; and (3) transport workers in other trades. The seamen's section has gained in importance since the International Federation now has a large proportion of seafaring workers within its ranks and the International Seamen's Federation has practically ceased to exist because of the split on the question of the eight hour day at the congress in Paris last August. To meet the new situation thus created the International Transport Workers' Congress appointed a special secretary to take charge of the seamen's section.

The congress passed anti-war resolutions threatening to use the economic power of both railwaymen and other transport workers to prevent another war. The next congress is to be held in 1924.

A conference was held at Hamburg on August 1 of those transport workers who are in organisations affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions. Representatives were present from the Netherlands Federation of Transport Workers, the German Seamen's Federation, the German Railway Union (minority section), the All-Russian Federation of Transport Workers, the French United Federation of Railway Workers, the minority section of the Swiss Railwaymen's Union, and also from the R.I.L.U. in Moscow and the I.W.W. in America. It was decided that the propaganda committee determine the methods to be used in the fight against wage-cuts and against prolongation of the working day.



### Postal Workers

The second congress of the International Federation of Postal, Telegraph, and Telephone Employees was held at Berlin, and began its sittings on August 18. Seventy-five delegates were present representing twenty-two organisations from eleven countries which included : Austria, Argentine, Belgium, Czecho-Slovakia, Dutch Indies, England, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. The position of women in postal and telegraph services was one of the chief points discussed and a resolution was passed advocating equality of treatment for men and women; but the question is to be discussed further at the next congress.

Delegates from the All-Russian Union of Post and Telegraph Workers were refused admission by a vote of 305,000 to 223,800.

A resolution of far-reaching importance was passed excluding all organisations but those affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam. It urged that only such organisations should be regarded as national trade union federations as are affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions, and that all such affiliated organisations should have equal rights.

The P.T.T. executive committee was enlarged to seven members, one of whom is a woman.

## CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

### Communist Congress

The Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia, which assumed its present form in November, 1921, when the German and Czech left wing workers joined forces, met in congress at Prague on September 23-24. Owing to the present serious economic crisis which has resulted in the unemployment of from 600,000 to 700,000 workers the chief points under discussion comprised : (1) The employers' offensive, the wage cuts, and the unemployment crisis ; (2) the social democrats' attempts to split the trade unions ; (3) the question of the united front and a workers' Government.

The congress, having discussed the situation, suggested carrying on the struggle against unemployment on the following lines : (1) An increase of 100 per cent. in unemployment benefit ; (2) a determined stand against the reduction of salaries and agitation for the control of production ; (3) the deputies in Parliament to resist all wage reductions of State employees ; (4) a fight to be put up to abolish duty on food products, meat, and cereals ; (5) the workers throughout the country should form " workers unity committees."

The congress further recommended that in the event of a workers' Government being formed the following tasks should have that Government's earliest attention :—

- (1) The unification of all banks into a single body directly under State control ;
- (2) The amalgamation of all the big capitalist cartels and the establishment of syndicates of production controlled by the State ;
- (3) the organisation of the population with the ranks of the co-operative societies.

**GERMANY****United Social Democratic Party**

At Nuremberg on September 24 the fusion of the Majority Socialists and the Independent Socialist Party was finally ratified. The congress was attended by 150 delegates from either section ; its task was the purely formal one of ratifying the unity of the two parties which had already been decided at the congresses of both parties which preceded that of Nuremberg. The new party will henceforth be known as the United Social-Democratic Party of Germany ; the official organ will be the *Vorwärts*. The chief aims have already been published in the joint programme printed in last month's issue. The following manifesto was the outcome of the Unity Congress, and in addition to making an appeal for support from the German people, summarises some of the objects of the party :—

**MANIFESTO OF THE GERMAN UNITED SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC  
PARTY**

The task of uniting the Social-Democratic Parties has been accomplished. At the Unity Congress in Nuremberg the fusion of the Social-Democratic and Independent Parties has been completed. The attainment of this much-sought aim has caused rejoicing amidst the ranks of their supporters. Outsiders, too, realise their interest in it, for they feel that this event is of incalculable importance both for the fate of the people as a whole and of every individual.

The social democratic movement is one of the most powerful the world has ever seen. United once again it will develop new force. In the beginning the party was composed of manual workers, these being the first to recognise the significance of the Socialist idea ; gradually other sections of the workers joined until large sections of agricultural workers, employees, and officials were united under its flag. Its development has shown a continuous upward tendency, checked by occasional obstacles which were soon surmounted. Its present position commands attention from all, whether as friend or foe, none can maintain an attitude of indifference.

Vast bodies of mental and manual workers, almost half the population, gave proof by votes that they have confidence in the Social-Democrats. But many of them have hitherto refrained from joining the movement openly, held back possibly by diffidence, and a regrettable lack of the spirit of sacrifice. It is to these that this appeal is addressed, to ask them to become Social-Democrats in reality and to make no delay in joining the ranks of the united party.

The party has need of all possible support to grapple with the immense task before it. The young German Republic has a hard fight to maintain against both internal and external foes. Its foundations are being shaken by the force of monarchist reaction ; whilst the war and its consequences, the Treaty of Versailles, have made the Republic the slave of the world. The great want of the working masses tends to increase the wealth of the few, and promote the development of capitalist domination which aims at corrupting public life and undermining the State.

But what are the aims of the United Social Democratic Party? It stands for the protection and consolidation of the Republic. It wants the German people to take part in the reconstruction of the world, consciously and to the full extent of their capacity, demanding, however, that they shall have the same rights as anyone else, and that the malicious policy of overburdening the people shall be terminated.

The party intends to put up an effective fight against the scandalous exploitation of the people. It desires a sensible economic order of things, guided by the common good

and the right of all who work to lead lives worthy of human beings. On this account it defends the eight-hour day and the protection of the workers, and works hand in hand with the trade unions and co-operative societies. This, too, is the reason why it fights for an eventual social and economic order, free from capitalist exploitation, in which all shall be assured their share in the enjoyment of the fruits of civilisation. In this sense it wages the class war, not so as to establish a new class domination, but to destroy class and thereby grant freedom to the creative population.

It feels at one, both in struggle and aims, with the world socialist workers' movement. The unity just established in Germany is to us a security for the unity of the reconstructed Socialist International. The United Social Democratic Party of Germany knows that its way is long and the work difficult. It is aware that to accomplish its programme the active participation and assistance is essential of all those who have shaken off their prejudices of the past and are prepared to strive for new aims.

Workers! Men and women! All you who create either by mental or physical labour, who are suffering from want, realise that nothing will help you if you do not help yourselves. For the workers, self-help is identical with joining and working for the United Social Democratic Party.

To those millions of our old comrades and friends who stood bravely in one or other camp during the fraternal quarrel: to-day, this day which marks the unity of the Social Democratic Party, we say: In unity lies strength! Be faithful to the united party as you were formerly to its component parts! Be fraternal in council, united in action and suffer no splits! Work and act with redoubled energy for our great and common cause!

Long live the United Social-Democratic Party of Germany!

The ratification at Nuremberg of the decision to rejoin the German Socialist Party closes the chapter of dissension between the Majority Socialists and Independents which dates from March, 1916, when the Social Democratic Alliance was formed, which took the form of Independent Socialist Party at the Gotha Conference in April, 1917. Chief amongst the causes for the original split was the policy adopted by the Majority of supporting the Government during the war. At Gera, where the last congress of the Independents was held on September 20, the report showed that the party had steadily declined in numbers. Its greatest strength was reached in the year 1920, when it had 850,000 members. The majority of these, however, decided at the Halle Congress in October, 1920, to join the Communist Party; and the remaining membership fell to 300,659 in 1921, and a further decline of 10,000 was now reported.

The voting on the unity motion was 192 to 9; amongst those who have refused to give up the class struggle are Ledebour, the veteran Socialist leader and Theodor Liebknecht; Dr. Rosenfeld, who had loudly denounced the action of the party in uniting with the Majority, finally decided to give up his fight in view of the Dissmann resolution, which demanded freedom of opinion within the new party. Ledebour has formed a small provisional committee to organise those who with him refuse to join the Majority, and a weekly organ, *Der Klassenkampf*, edited by Ledebour, is the present organ of this section. *Freiheit*, the Berlin official organ of the Independents, ceased publication on October 1.

The Majority Socialists held their final congress, before the fusion, at Augsburg, where no obstacle was raised to the unity proposal. Their membership was given as over one million, so that the new United Socialist Party of Germany may well be over one and a-quarter millions should the bulk of the rank and file of the Independents follow their leaders.

## RUSSIA

### Fifth Trade Union Congress

At Moscow, September 15-21, the fifth All-Russian Trade Union Congress met. There were 970 delegates present, about fifty of whom were women. The majority of the delegates were Communists, forty-six were non-party, two Social Democrats, and one Social Revolutionary. According to the new policy membership of trade unions is no longer compulsory, and according to the report the majority of the workers joined anew. The statistics for August, 1922, show a membership of 5,100,000, in comparison with 8,400,000 in July, 1921.

The delegates occupied themselves chiefly with the discussion of the industrial situation in relation to the Soviets, and in this respect it was decided that:—

The trade unions, as hitherto, recognise that the restoration of State enterprise is a fundamental essential for the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore the trade unions should seek by all means in their power to enforce this consolidation by promoting large-scale enterprise and the development of the industrial proletariat.

The congress elected a National Trade Union Council, consisting of eighty-nine members, representing practically all the federations and departmental unions. The Council then appointed an Executive Bureau of thirteen to be responsible to the Council, which should meet at least once in three months; the All-Russian Congress should meet annually. A delegation was elected to attend the Second Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions, to meet in Moscow early in November, consisting of forty-five members and entitled to a voting power of seventeen.

## SWEDEN

### Industrial Unionism Adopted

At the eighth Congress of the Swedish Federation of Trade Unions, which met in Stockholm, August 28, it was decided that by January, 1925, all the Swedish trade unions affiliated to the Swedish Federation of Trade Unions should be transformed into industrial unions. This motion was put forward by the Metalworkers' Union and passed by 179 to 119 votes; the other chief supporters included the transport workers and the Communists. The following motion was put by the Executive Committee and adopted by the Congress:—

The workers of one or more factories belonging to an industry or craft shall in each locality form a local section, which shall unite with similar local sections of other localities and form a national industrial union, to be organised on lines

laid down by the Congress. The national industrial unions shall then form the Federation of Trade Unions.

In localities where there are two or more trade union organisations affiliated to the national industrial unions belonging to the Federation of Trade Unions, these shall create local central organisations to conduct all propaganda and actions of the locality.

The report which was submitted to the Congress showed that the membership had increased, the present strength being 313,208, in comparison with, 280,029 in 1920, 186,146 in 1917, and a membership of 101,207 in 1914. According to the statistics on the conditions of unemployment 30 per cent. of the membership of affiliated organisations was unemployed in April, 1922.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A WORD TO MAX BEER

*Social Struggles in Antiquity.* By Max Beer. Leonard Parsons.

MAX BEER ought not to have written this book. He has shown, in his *History of British Socialism*, that he is capable of doing excellent work; but he simply does not know enough about the ancient world to write its history. There is ample room for a study of the social struggles of antiquity written from the working-class standpoint, but it must be written by someone who has first mastered the essential principles of the history of the ancient world. Max Beer evidently approached his task without the necessary equipment of knowledge. He read many books, and he sought to extract from them evidences of class conflict. But, just because he did not understand the ancient world, he had no principle whereby to test the value of evidence; no sound basis for selection or for the assigning to different persons and events their real importance. Consequently, he degenerates again and again into anecdotage and mere collection of references and extracts, and when he does seek to pass judgments, his conclusions are often quite extraordinarily capricious and disputable.

Moreover, this book has an even more serious defect. A large part of it is really almost irrelevant to any study of the social struggles of antiquity. Long extracts from Plato's *Laws* or from early Christian Fathers advocating communal feeding arrangements have really nothing to do with social struggles. And Max Beer shows a quite unwarrantable tendency to sort out all classes of ancient reformers into the two classes of "Communists" and "bourgeois reformers." His interpretation of Communism seems wide enough to include almost anyone who said it would be nicer if we all took our meals together, or shuffled our wives and children, or abolished the use of money. The semi-mythical Lycurgus turns up as a full-blown Spartan Lenin. Solon, on the other hand, is merely a "middle-class reformer," while Agis is a sort of ancient Kurt Eisner. And were the Stoics really Communists? And did the great heart of the Greek peoples really yearn for the proletarian revolution? With all respect to Max Beer, I beg leave to doubt it.

The section dealing with Rome is even less satisfactory. Max Beer has a down on the Romans, and he doesn't let you forget it. The Romans were brutes and hypocrites all the time. Perhaps they were, but I could cap every instance he quotes with one as bad from the history of the city states of Greece. He finds few Communists among the Romans—the Gracchi were "social conservatives"; but Cataline was a Communist, presumably because our knowledge of his aims is too scanty for anyone to be able to prove that he was not. The account of Spartacus and his slave revolt is straightforward and to the point, but it is the only bright spot in the Roman chapters.

The book deals also with Palestine and, incidentally, with ancient Egypt, and its later sections discuss primitive Christianity and the dissolution of the ancient world. I cannot check those sections so well, because I know less of the matters with which they deal. But in them, as in the sections I have described, there is really no coherent explanation of underlying economic forces, and therefore no real history such as one would expect from a Marxian student of Max Beer's capacity. I have dealt with the sections I can best criticise. I suspect that what I say of them applies to the rest.

Either the author or the translator has made a sad mess of some of the names, technical terms, and Greek and Latin words. What Roman official was called a "quastorium"; where was "Pdokea"; who was "Euhomerus"; and what are "Ecclesiazuses"? Someone might have checked these and other words. Also, Max Beer might have given references and a bibliography. A book like this badly needs them. But—I come back to my first point—he ought not to have written it at all. He can write good books; this is a bad one.

G. D. H. C.

### AN ENGLISH LUDDITE DRAMA

*Die Maschinensturmer.* By Ernst Toller. E. P. Tal & Co., Verlag, Vienna and Leipsig.

THERE are certain chapters of English history about which we learn very little. It would seem that powers above are anxious to gloss over those periods, which might teach lessons running counter to a certain view of society, and of tactics in changing the same. One of these periods concerns the unrest among the working class in England following the Napoleonic wars, and continuing, with interruptions, into the 'forties of last century. I know of no popular play in England which unfolds to us a picture of the spiritual ferment and material struggle in the ranks of the working classes of that time. But it seems to have been reserved for a young German playwright—one of the ablest of the rising generation—to give this picture in all its sharpness to the German public. Incidentally it may be noted that he has written this drama from the fastness of a Bavarian fortress, to which he has been confined for four years for participation in the Munich Soviet Republic. Thereby a light is also thrown upon the prison systems in England and Germany. For no part of Germany has been so little affected by the new spirit since the war than Bavaria. And yet it has been possible for one condemned for "high treason" to a long term of imprisonment to spend his time in prison writing revolutionary plays. I cannot imagine the same facilities being permitted by the governor of Wormwood Scrubs to one convicted for "seditious conspiracy."

Ernst Toller's book, "*Die Maschinensturmer*," produced as a play during July and August in Berlin, depicts the struggle of the Nottingham hand-weavers in the years about 1813 against the grinding and intolerable misery to which they were subjected by the introduction of the factory system

and by the exploitation of cheap women and child labour. Several historical characters come into the play. There is Lord Byron, Lord Castlereagh, Jimmy Cobbett, and Ned Lud, the leader of the rebellious "Luddites." The scene opens in the sleepy and dignified atmosphere of the House of Lords, where the Lord Chancellor is reading to the House the text of the Government Bill condemning to death all persons found guilty of committing acts of destruction against machines. The wordy duel, which results on the third reading of the Bill, between Lord Byron and Lord Castlereagh is doubtless meant by Toller to show the contrast between the small section of humanitarians and romanticists among the British aristocracy of those times and the die-hards of that day, fed on Malthusian ideas, who saw in the misery around them the "weapons of the Lord, before which we must bow down in reverence," and who thought that the "poor of England must not be allowed to increase, for it is against the heaven-sent law of nature, and to act against that law is to act against all morals."

Toller takes us through the festering slums of Nottingham of that day; he shows us the children working at the machines falling to sleep through weariness and being lashed by thongs, while their fathers are striking, breadless, on the streets for a rise of a penny a day; he shows us children dying, and women cursing their men as cowards for not destroying the machines. It is a drama of mass action, of the raw elemental impulses bubbling up from the springs of hunger and despair. It is in fact an epic of England's industrial revolution when the terrible iron man came in, was housed in factories, belched forth steam, and ruined the thousand little hand-weavers and families nourished on domestic industry.

And yet one sees that the iron man had to come, and that the tragedy of last century and of this is not that he came, but that he was not harnessed for the common weal. In the climax of the play, when the strikers, headed by Ned Lud, burst into Mr. Ure's factory, the issues at stake are shown by three of the principal characters. Facing the savage mob, the factory engineer, faithful servant of his master, pleads for the machines "created by the spirit of man! The machine! Whoever fights against it fights against godly wisdom. The demon of steam is conquered, and submits to the law of numbers. Power, man-embracing, hurled from the thrones of tyrants, belongs now to those who were once slaves. Now you can be lords over things. This is Time's latest creation. Man can be lord of the earth."

To which the dispossessed hand-weavers, forced to work in the factory at starvation wages, reply: "The machines are binding us. Once we were free! Once we were lords of our looms! We weaved the flowers of God in the work of our hands. Is this dog's service worthy for men? It creates automatons, not Britons!" To which Jimmy Cobbett, the far-seeing, deposed from the leadership of the strike because he would not countenance the destruction of the machines, cries: "Brothers, you are fighting the wrong enemy by rejecting these sacred gifts! If the producers of the earth do not unite for great human



acts and conquer the machines, then you remain slaves for the rest of your days." And so saying, he is murdered by his former companions, who regard him as a traitor. The play ends with the rounding up of the strikers by the police in the "name of King George," and Mr. Ure returns to his ruined factory.

Of course there were some anomalies in the play when it was produced on the Berlin stage. The Lord Chancellor was made to sit on a high stool like a bank clerk, and tinkle a little bell to announce the passing of the Bill. But the scenes of mass actions were exceptionally impressive when produced in the Greek-like amphitheatre of the "Grosse Schauspielhaus."

M. P. P.

### THE CANONISATION OF HARDIE

*Keir Hardie's Socialism.* By Francis Johnson. Published by the Independent Labour Party. 6d.

**K**EIR HARDIE has been dead seven years. So crowded with events have those years been that already he has become a legend. His name evokes the wildest applause from men who were his fiercest critics when he walked among them. As the revolutionary who threw the money changers out of the temple became in the careful presentations of his followers "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," so the sturdy, independent, hasty tempered Scottish miner, after suitable veiling, has become the patron saint of the mild-mannered middle-class pacifist.

The I.L.P. has taken the opportunity of the seventh anniversary of his death, and of the revision of the Party's aims and objects, to publish a pamphlet entitled "Keir Hardie's Socialism," which is an attempt to justify the programme in the words of the founder. The writer has tried, by numerous quotations from Hardie's own speeches, to let the prophet speak for himself, and the result is interesting.

Hardie's character and work were hewn out of the rock of the hardship of his early days, when the Miners' Union movement was in its early infancy. The writer of the pamphlet considers, however, "that it was from the phrase, 'This that they call the organising of labour is the problem of the whole future,' in *Past and Present*, that he got his conception of the need for a Labour Party"!

Mr. Francis Johnson is careful to state that "Keir Hardie's Socialism took shape before he had ever heard of Marx," but the quotations from Hardie's writings show that he had been profoundly influenced by Marx's teaching. The preamble to the rules of the Ayrshire Miners' Union, beginning "All wealth is created by labour," is a terse summary of Marxian doctrine.

Keir Hardie lived the class war. His conception of the Labour Party that he helped to build was that it must become a revolutionary working-class party. Not only did he denounce the manifesto of the Labour Electoral Committee of the Trades Union Congress (that its movement was not

antagonistic to the interests of any class) as "either a piece of casuistry or an untruth," but he was equally against alliances with the parties of the privileged classes in the House of Commons, a fact which the pamphlet does not make clear. At the Bradford "Coming of Age" Conference of the I.L.P., when the famous Bradford resolution against voting with the Liberal Government against the principles of the Party was debated, Hardie was one of MacDonald's most vigorous opponents. Consistently through the critical years 1910 to 1914, Hardie opposed the constant attempts to attach the Labour members to the Liberal chariot. He fought strenuously to maintain the Movement's complete independence from the two traditional parties. To Hardie the House of Commons was a good platform for socialist propaganda, and he would never be persuaded that the small band of Labour men could do very much else with it at that time. The pamphlet prints the terms of the famous socialist resolution which was moved by him in 1901.

While supremely concerned with the small Independent Labour Party, of which he was the founder, Hardie refused to be drawn into any antagonism to the trades unions, then mostly Liberal in outlook and tradition. "The unity of the working class is the one thing that matters," was his slogan whenever relations with the trade unions were under discussion. He laid the foundations of the modern Labour Party well and truly, and it is therefore somewhat ironical that his successors in the I.L.P. should have been the leaders at the Brighton and Edinburgh Conferences of that Party in breaking the united front that it was his life work to preserve.

Hardie was not a theorist. He wanted to get rid of the capitalist system. He recognised that the best organisation to secure that end was a revolutionary working-class political party leading and co-ordinating the work of the trades unions. With the details of the transition he was not very much concerned. His was the pioneer spade work, and MacDonald has played Paul to his Christ.

E. C. W.

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# NOTES of the MONTH

*Who Won the Election?—The Lost Opportunity—Evading the Class Issue—The Price of Evasion—Impersonating the Liberal Party—The Lesson of the Local Elections—The Lesson of the General Election—What Saved the Labour Party—The Path to Fascism*

A CONSERVATIVE Government is now in the saddle in Great Britain. That is the outcome of the election which is most easily forgotten. The natural jubilation over Labour successes must not blind us to the menacing character of the total result. For the first time in a generation pure conservatism has received an absolute majority of representation—and on the largest electorate so far known. So little have the workers of this country yet been effectively awakened to what confronts them. "The return of Mr. Bonar Law's Government," declared Mr. Henderson before the election, "would falsify every hope of further progress." The character of the Government was stated to recall the "bad old times" of thirty-four years ago. Yet after an election on an electorate of twenty millions has returned to power this Government of open hostility to the workers, the Labour Manifesto following on the election has nothing better to say than that "the Labour Party finds abundant reasons for satisfaction in the results of the General Election." This will not do, and is not a frank facing of the issues.

WHAT is the position? The Government of Lloyd George had come to power on a programme of showy promises to the workers, had betrayed them all and become thoroughly discredited. The by-elections showed that that discredit was going to the credit of the Labour Party as the obvious alternative. Working-class opinion was looking to the Labour Party to oust the unpopular Lloyd George Government. The Labour Party was in a position to lead an agitation both inside and outside the House which would have made the continuance of the Lloyd George Government impossible. For such an agitation the Labour Party could have mobilised the millions of workers, both employed and unemployed. But the Labour Party did not do

it. Its leadership was too preoccupied with fighting the revolutionaries in its own ranks and excluding the unemployed from its councils. What was the consequence? The fall of the Lloyd George Government came, as it was bound to come: but the driving force of that fall came, not from the Labour Party, where it should have come from, but from the extreme right. The Conservatives had the credit of overthrowing the unpopular Lloyd George Government. Lloyd George was able to make his appeal as the tribune of the people overthrown by a camarilla of the aristocracy. The Labour Party was not in the picture. By a skilful manoeuvre, and by the inactivity of the Labour Party, the bourgeoisie had been able to save themselves from the popular wrath and even to strengthen their power.

**I**N such a position what was the manifest line for the Labour Party? The line for the Labour Party was to take a clear stand on the class issue and damn all the capitalist parties. Such a stand would have won an immediate response from the workers. Such was the general line taken by the vigorous manifesto of the Scottish Labour Party, and the Scottish Labour candidates swept the field. But such was not the line of the official manifesto of the National Labour Party from Eccleston Square. The official Election Manifesto was, in the words of one conservative journal, a "pastoral." It tried to placate, to minimise, to conciliate: to disguise all working-class associations, and to present the Labour Party as a progressive party with a programme of reconstruction instead of as the challenging party of the working class. This disguise was useless for its purpose: but it was also damaging. The class issue was forced on the Labour Party whether it liked it or not: but the Labour Party was unable to meet it clearly. The central feature of the election was that *the manifest dominating issue the whole time was the class issue: but that the one party which stood most to gain by facing it was most anxious to evade it.*

**T**HE price of this evasion was the denial of the most elementary realities of the working-class struggle in which the Labour Party has its roots and by which alone it can live. The Election Programme expurgated every association

with the working class. The tacit condonation of imperialism, the approval of reparations "within Germany's capacity to pay," the silence on Russia, the refusal to state policy in relation to a future war, the ignoring of the attack on trade unions (though room was found to enter a protest against the attack on trade boards), all pointed in the same direction. The Labour Party Executive was out to cut its connections and appear in "respectable" garb. Even the *New Statesman* was compelled to comment on the picture thus presented. "On all questions of foreign policy," declared this organ of the Elder Statesmen of the Labour Party, "and on nearly all questions of domestic policy there is no serious division between the Liberal and Labour Parties." It is a pretty pass when such a statement can even be made by a responsible Labour organ. While the situation it reveals might, no doubt, be a source of satisfaction to those who look to see a rapid coalition of the two parties, it was an open betrayal of the masses of supporters in the country who had worked to build up the Labour Party as an independent party of the workers.

**T**HAT this policy, which openly ignored the repeated and emphatic votes of Party Conferences, was deliberately designed to win the middle-class vote and turn the Labour Party from a working-class party into a replica of the old Liberal Party is made additionally clear by the Manifesto issued immediately after the Election. "In the past," declares this Manifesto, "the Radicals won elections for the Liberal Party, and the Whigs held office ; but it is now plain that all the progressive elements of the country, the members of the Free Churches in particular, are being gathered up into the Labour Party, and that the sole alternative to a Conservative Government is a Labour Government." By this statement the opposition is set, not between a capitalist government and a Labour government, but between a Conservative government and a Labour government. What does this amount to ? We are told first that there is no longer any important difference between the Liberal and Labour programmes. We are told next that the component parts of the old Liberal Party are being gathered up into the Labour Party. Finally we are told that the opposition of the future will be between Conservative and Labour instead of

between Conservative and Liberal, Labour, it having been already explained, corresponding closely in programme and in membership to the old Liberal Party. In what then have we advanced ?

**T**HE policy of destroying the working-class programme in order to win over the middle class is a mistake. It is one thing to endeavour to attract the middle class by special appeals or proposals so as to widen the area of support for the working-class programme. It is another thing to sacrifice the programme for the purpose, and to "win" the middle class only by going over to them. For this policy will produce no results of value. The support obtained by it will not be a solid support : it will disappear as soon as any vital question arises affecting the working class. What then will be the issue ? The workers will have been alienated, while the middle class will not have been won in reality. The issue can already be seen in the municipal election results. The easy victories of three years ago were destroyed by the failure to follow them up with a vigorous action when in office. Where a vigorous Labour action had been pursued, as in Poplar, or where there was a strong left-wing element, as in Battersea and Woolwich, the Labour majorities were successfully maintained. But when the right wing prevailed, and respectability and caution were the keynotes, seat after seat was lost. In Herbert Morrison's own borough of Hackney all the twenty-nine seats were swept away. It is to be hoped that such a close student of election statistics as Herbert Morrison will not fail to read the lesson, and that the foolish talk about a "slump," as if it were some phenomenon of the weather, will be dropped.

**T**HE same issue can be observed in the results of the General Election compared with the results of the by-elections. Of all the fifteen seats won by the Labour Party at the by-elections, only two were held at the General Election. Once again the failure to follow up led to a rapid falling away after the first success. And this will be repeated even more so at the next election, unless the Labour Party begins to put up a real fight. The increase in Labour representation is not an automatic process to be awaited with open mouths and to be protected against the risks of



any rash action : on the contrary the Labour Movement only exists by fighting, and will go down if it does not fight—witness the defeat of Henderson and the heavy fall in the majorities of Clynes and Thomas. The dramatic feature of the election on the Labour side was the chain of victories of the Glasgow Reds. It is to be hoped that they will infuse some life into the Parliamentary Labour Party and will not let themselves be stifled by the official atmosphere, for the active working-class movement is looking to them, and they have a heavy responsibility.

**W**HAT actually saved the Labour Party this time and raised it up again, against all the prophets' expectations from the "slump" of municipal elections, was the action of their opponents in forcing forward the capital levy as a class issue. Thus was the Labour Party's fight turned into a class fight in spite of itself. In vain the Labour Party protested that this was not a class issue, and showed (perfectly correctly) that the proposal had been looked on favourably by all the most respectable capitalists, including Mr. Bonar Law and the Treasury experts a short time back. The capitalist press and the capitalist candidates would have none of it. They insisted that the capital levy was confiscation and the beginning of the end. Of course, the pretence was obvious nonsense. The capital levy is a piece of reconstruction of capitalism which the capitalists themselves will probably have to undertake sooner or later. Eighteen months ago it received respectful attention from the capitalists, and eighteen months hence it may do so again. The whole agitation was simply an election stunt, like "Hang the Kaiser" in 1918 or "All for Belgium" in 1914. But the agitation for the moment turned the capital levy into a class issue. It turned the Labour Party, however unwillingly, into leaders of the assault on wealth and property, and the Labour Party, which had previously been slumping heavily, swept the industrial centres of the North.

**N**OTHING is more significant than the sharpening of the actual class issue at the very same time as the official policy of the Labour Party is trying to minimise it. At the very time when the Labour Party spokesmen are extolling the

virtues of Parliament and democracy, the bourgeoisie has carried through its first Fascist revolution in Italy amid the acclamation of the press. *The Times* applauds this "wholesome resentment" of the masses against the corruption of the parliamentary régime. The accession of Fascism to power in Italy coincides with the victory of the Die-Hards in Britain and the fall of the Wirth Government before Stinnes in Germany. Everywhere the bourgeoisie is moving to open conservatism. The liberal period of after war promise is over ; the workers are defeated ; now is the time for repression. In every country they are clearly preparing for future struggles and for an iron régime. And in that struggle the phrases of democracy will not avail : the clear choice will have to be made between the working class and the capitalists. Behind the soft mask of democracy will be revealed the hard realities of Fascism, and to support democracy will mean in the end to capitulate to the bloody argument of the Fascisti. Already the Labour press in this country may be observed hanging nervously upon the Fascisti : the organ of the Labour Party, the *Daily Herald*, under its new editorship acclaims the "bloodless revolution" of these instruments of capitalist terrorism ; while the organ of the Independent Labour Party, the *New Leader*, actually prints an article which declares that "we must cease from carping and make the most of the situation. . . . Labour must meet Fascism half way." *Labour must meet Fascism half way!* This, then, is the outcome of all the idealism and pacifism. The working-class movement, after being battered and butchered into impotence, must come out trembling from its ruins to hope for crumbs of mercy from the hands of its murderers. Meanwhile in Germany the Social Democrats find themselves forced along the slippery path of Coalition nearer and nearer to union with the Stinnes octopus. It is easy to begin by being "moderate" : but the class issue knows no moderation, and the end is unity with all the bloody barbarities of capitalism. That is the issue at the end of the avenue of "peaceful progress" of the Labour Party unless the workers awaken in time.

# THE FUTURE OF THE LABOUR PARTY IN BRITISH POLITICS

By R. PAGE ARNOT

**T**HE Labour Party in Parliament has now twice its previous numbers ; and, since the total membership of the House of Commons is down as a result of the Irish treaty from 707 to 615, the Labour members become a still larger proportion of the whole. But, in measuring the success of the Labour Party in the elections with a view to its future possibilities there are factors on the other side that must be borne in mind. For one thing, the majority of the gains were made in three or four cornered contests. The capitalist majority in the House of Commons becomes greater still if the total votes cast throughout the country are considered. But counting totals is poor consolation. Future elections, therefore, if they appear likely to yield a still greater proportion of Labour victories, will be rigged against Labour by a combination of the capitalist forces, a tactic of which we have already had an example in the recent municipal elections. Alternatively, the electoral law may be altered so as provide for some " democratic " device, such as the second ballot or proportional representation. So soon as there is any danger of the capitalists being in a minority in a large number of constituencies, the law may be altered to secure that full representation of minorities which was denied when Labour was the victim of the present system.

The purpose of this article, however, is not the measurement of the Labour Party success by the actual numbers returned or votes cast. The whole danger to the Labour movement lies in this preoccupation with figures and persons. The real measurement is not one which asks the question, " What success has Labour had ? " but puts the other question, " What is this ' Labour ' which has had such and such a success ? " To put it another way, it is the Labour policy itself which has to be measured, not the votes

caught by the policy. To neglect this primary concern would be to turn policy into vote catching.

How is policy to be measured? The answer is clear. The election programme is the only recognisable test of policy. The proportion of the various schools of thought in the Labour movement represented in the returns, the proportion of trade union officials to middle-class intellectuals and to local active workers, are questions of interest, bearing deeply on the character of the party. But whatever differences of tendency there are within the Labour Party, however election addresses and still more election speeches varied from individual to individual, the official programme issued by the Labour Party executive on October 25 remains as the guiding statement of policy for the whole country. To this programme we must therefore turn.

The election programme had of necessity to be issued by the executive committee without any reference to a National Conference. It was their business and their duty to issue the best possible programme, taking into account both the circumstances of the time, *i.e.*, the political situation, and also the fundamental policy of the Labour Party as laid down at successive conferences. But it is equally the duty of the local Labour Parties, the trade union branches and executive councils, and the individual trade unionists to study this programme and to prepare their criticism, favourable or adverse, for the annual conference seven months hence. Now that the election is over, it is our business to consider "Was it the right policy?"

The programme begins on "a policy of international peace." To any of the great socialist parties before the war, to great numbers of working men and women throughout Europe, the phrase "International Peace" contained within itself both the end and the means. The end was peace, the means was the International. The international association of working men was not thought of as a sentimental basis of occasional congresses of delegates from various countries. It was actually the means by which war was to be prevented. On this there was no difference of opinion. Socialists might differ as to the actual methods by which the International would endeavour to prevent war. Keir Hardie at Copenhagen in 1910, in pressing for the method of the general

strike, might find much opposition to this particular method : but on the function of the International, as the *only* sure means to prevent war, all socialists and all the great working-class parties were fully agreed. Conditions changed after the war : the old International failed : a new International sprang into being, followed by yet others : and the terms second, third, and fourth International were made familiar by their quarrels. But, still, the prevention of war remained as the legend on their banners. "The International," to every party reckoned as a socialist party, still stood as the chief means for the prevention of war.

The British Labour Party has not only been affiliated to the Second International ; it has been its mainstay. Surely it was the business of any Labour Party to proclaim its adherence to the International of its choice, to point to that International as the means of preventing war and to call upon the workers to put their trust and their backing behind it. Yet in the "policy of International Peace" no reliance is placed in the International. No mention is made of it.

What is mentioned ? A future "all-inclusive League of Nations." Unfortunately there is nothing particularly distinctive in this demand, well-intended though it may be. Mr. Lloyd George too has good intentions. Already in this election he has proclaimed his desire that all countries in Europe should be included in the League : while at Genoa he more than once pleaded for a future participation of America. The Independent Liberals, too, have an identical policy<sup>1</sup> : "Peace and disarmament made secure through the League of Nations." Even Mr. Bonar Law in his manifesto of October 26 uttered his faith as follows :—

During the war the feeling supreme in the minds of men and women throughout the world was that a similar calamity should never again be allowed to fall upon mankind. It was to meet this feeling that the League of Nations was instituted, and it will be our earnest aim to give it wholehearted and practical support.

On this primary issue of war and peace the programme does not say where the Labour movement stands. What it does say, with slight differences, is the common stock of all parties. As far

<sup>1</sup>Manifesto of National Liberal Federation, October 24.

as intentions go, there is nothing to make the worker choose the Labour Party.

The first detailed item, after a general statement about revision of the peace treaties (a revision which is being assiduously carried out by the Entente Governments, month by month, in conference after conference, from San Remo to Spa, from London and Paris to Cannes, from Genoa to Lausanne) is the sentence, "German reparations must be brought within Germany's capacity to pay."

Nakedly, it reads like the terms of reference to the Reparations Commission, or, indeed, like instructions to any bailiff. Nor does it differ in its British practicality from those other exponents of foreign affairs, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Lloyd George. Mr. Lloyd George stated :—

We could not attempt to impose on Germany any payment which was beyond her capacity.

Liberalism, too, according to the manifesto already quoted, stands for "the prompt revision and settlement of reparations and inter-Allied debts" (the last not mentioned by the Labour Party in spite of Mr. Brailsford's eloquent diatribes in the *Daily Herald*).

Finally, Mr. Bonar Law in opening his election campaign at Glasgow declared in his dull sensible way that he had never thought that Germany could pay the whole of the war debt, but that England and France must "get everything which Germany can reasonably be asked to pay."

But not only is the programme policy on reparations identical with the policy of the Imperialists—that might be an unfortunate coincidence—but it is actually the reverse of a true working-class policy. During the agony of the war the one slogan which was repeated in every country was "No annexations and no indemnities." It was voiced with sufficient force and meaning for the gentlemen of Versailles to substitute for the hated word "indemnities" the new word "reparations." But that change of wording did not make reparations the workers' policy. The workers who voted in the elections in Clydeside and Dundee were not misled by their candidates. Mr. Morel cannot have allowed a single syllable to pass his lips approving a system of reparations that implies Germany's sole guilt for the war. Yet he and the other

I.L.P. candidates were committed to a programme which in this respect was against all they had ever stood for. They go into Parliament committed by the election programme to a reparations policy practically identical with that of the capitalists and war-mongers.

A further item is "Labour advocates self-government for India." Again there is no express distinction from the views of Mr. Bonar Law. He says<sup>1</sup> :—

We desire to promote the quiet and orderly development of India under the constitution which was conferred on her by the Act of 1919.

This Act was framed to carry out the Government promise of "the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." If the Labour Party programme means anything different from this, it does not say so. But the Indians themselves mean something different ; and it is significant that the election message from the Indian Trade Union Congress was sent, not to the headquarters of the Labour Party, but to one of the "left-wing" candidates.

Thus in three main programme items—others might be added—the Labour Party policy is actually similar to that of the capitalists. Those who see that this is true and deplore it may feel that the real distinction of the Labour programme from the others lies in its proposals for national reconstruction—for instance, the Capital Levy, or Nationalisation of Mines and Railways.

Take nationalisation first. Nationalisation of mines was inserted at the behest of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain at the Edinburgh conference of this year. The miners were on their guard against any "strategic" omission of this demand. But in any case mines and railways can be, and have been, nationalised under capitalist governments. Under modern conditions, the scattered and anarchic private ownership of the basic British industry and of the railroads was becoming as irksome to private capitalists in other industries as would be the continuance of private highroads with toll-bars and way charges. Already in 1918 Mr. Winston Churchill at Dundee, speaking, it is believed, as the result of a

<sup>1</sup> Election manifesto of October 26.

provisional Cabinet decision, announced the nationalisation of railways. True, this promise was gone back upon. But none the less it remains a perfectly feasible undertaking for a capitalist government. Nationalisation with full compensation (and the Labour Party proposes no confiscatory measure) would have gladdened the heart of many holders of ordinary shares who for years had been unable to get anything like the return on their capital which they would receive by investment in other industries, particularly after the other industries had received the benefits of the low freights which their henchmen in the House of Commons could wring from a State industry.

The Capital Levy is a measure of the same kind. It has been approved by the present Prime Minister and by the officials of the Treasury. By it the load of debt would have been removed and the capital thus set free would have been reinvested in industry. There is nothing in it essential to a socialist programme or fundamentally repugnant to a capitalist programme. But the moment was not considered opportune for its imposition. In 1922 it was felt that bleeding would not relieve the patient but only weaken him further. And so the capitalists declared against it. But they did more. They made it the main election issue. Under cloak of an attack on this relatively harmless expedient, they stimulated all the prejudices of their followers against the working class by an outcry of "Spoliation," "Confiscation," "Bolshevism." Hard put to it to find in the Labour Party election programme any item which would justify the alarum raised about the Labour-Socialist menace, Mr. Lloyd George and the capitalist press concentrated on this proposal and made it almost the sole issue between the propertied parties and the workers.

In this way, and by the act of the enemy, a General Election which would otherwise have been fought, nominally, on very similar programmes, was turned into a real fight. Whatever the Labour Party might say about its being a non-class party, the capitalists had no illusions on that score. By their insistence, the General Election became an engagement in the class struggle.

The effect was surprising and, in one way, humiliating. Amongst the workers in the North, as a newspaper correspondent confessed on the day after the election results were out, the capital levy pro-



posals brought votes to the Labour Party candidates. But amongst some of these same candidates there was a perceptible weakening—a weakening which the press exploited to the uttermost—until one or two of the more weak-kneed standard bearers of Labour were fain to confess outright that they thought the capital levy to be a mistake. It almost seemed as if the discovery of a class issue item in an otherwise unimpeachable programme was sufficient to make some Labour supporters abandon that item.

How unimpeachable the election programme is, how free from any reproach of setting class against class, is very noticeable in another respect. That is the extraordinary vagueness of its phrasing. Instead of presenting in crisp unmistakable words exactly what Labour stands for and what it stands against, it gives, in spite of its apparent detail, the impression of a rigmarole of meaningless generalities, such as any tired speaker utters when informed that there are persistent and awkward hecklers in the audience.

Now this is not unintentional. The drafters of the Labour Party programme are perfectly well aware of the value of words, vague words as well as precise words : and vague words have been chosen in this case just because it *is* an audience that is being thought of, an audience that might be alienated by a crisp statement of working-class policy. Here we have the clue to the tone of the election programme. It is tuned to reach the ear of the middle-class voter.

Now, whatever justification may be sought for thus roaring as gently as a sucking dove, it is another matter when it leads to emasculation of the programme. The working-class organisations have been attacked in the last two years, their funds depleted, their local leaders imprisoned, their meetings spied upon, and their members blacklisted. Strikers have been terrorised by the use of armed force, the War Emergency Powers Act has been passed giving the Government dictatorial powers over the workers during big strikes. White Guard Defence Corps have been officially formed to break strikes. The whole power of the trade unions to send representatives to Parliament has been attacked by a Bill which passed its second reading in the last House of Commons. The men who voted for that Bill are now the Government of the

country. Sir George Younger, the organiser of victory for the Conservatives, was the chief backer of that Bill. Yet there is no word said in the programme of the Labour Party's intention to deal with these matters. Have they been discreetly silent because the middle-class voters would be frightened? Is that the reason why there is no demand for the recognition of Soviet Russia? Would it have aroused memories of a Council of Action which many Labour members would wish forgotten? Is that, too, why the police and prison officers question is passed over? It may be so, but it should not.

Even from the purely electoral point of view these omissions are mistaken policy. Take the example of the municipal elections in London. There was practically a clean sweep made of the Labour candidates—except in Poplar and adjacent boroughs where a purely working-class policy had been pursued and where the workers who had experienced it were not to be alarmed by middle-class apprehensions and middle-class slogans.

It is too early to say definitely, though there are indications, that a similar reasoning holds good for national politics. But the return of the left wing Scottish members and the defeat of some of the most moderate leaders would seem to show that there was no need of imperialist items in the election programme or of its dilution to suit the digestion of the middle-class voter. Too high a price can be paid for the votes of the middle class.

All these are questions which should come up at the next Labour Party conference, when the annual direction of party policy is decided. But something more is involved in these matters than the examination of a programme with a view to its improvement on the next occasion that demands a party pronouncement. The whole future of the Labour Party is involved and with it the future politics of Britain. For British politics in the next ten years and their effect on Europe and the world will depend, not on the numerical strength of the Labour Party, but on what sort of Labour Party it is.

Ten years ahead in politics? Down that vista no man can see clearly. Nevertheless, tendencies show themselves and the working of these tendencies can be discerned. More, if we look back on the past twenty-two years of the Labour Party we can now see the curve

of development and can begin to recognise the factors that determined the way it would develop. From 1900 to 1910 we can see the Labour Party as a political federation of large Trade Unions and socialist societies in which the socialists were the leaven that was to leaven the whole mass. During the early years the leaven was working strongly, but with the tacit coalition of Liberals and Labour in the years immediately preceding the war a change was showing itself. The mass of Lib.-Lab. tradition was proving itself too stiff. By the outbreak of war the old leaven had worked itself out. Did socialism regain its virility during the war? At first it seemed as though it would, but with the diversion of many of the I.L.P. from socialist anti-militarism into a semi-religious pacifism, tending to a propaganda of social harmony, the chance was lost. And when, towards the close of the war, a new leaven began to work, it was no longer the old socialism. The new influences boldly stood for social peace and against social struggle. It was from the end of 1917 onwards that there began this new propaganda within the Labour Party, by which Labour was made to stand for all sections of the nation and not only for the labouring masses.

At first the change seemed to be all to the good. Large numbers of ex-Liberals, but with much of their old garments clinging to them, were reborn into the Labour Party (and now Mr. Asquith, seeing and recognising these old clothes, refers to them in his pompous way as the "stolen thunder of Liberalism"). Soon after the promulgation of *Labour and the New Social Order* came the negative but strategically important claim that the Labour Party was "not a class party." But that claim had to be made good; the Labour Party had to be purged of those who, though numerically feeble, still stood for the old idea of an independent purely working-class organisation: and so the Communists were expelled. Again, the Labour Party chiefs intervened with mediation in one industrial struggle after another, until they began to be reckoned on by the public as influences for social peace. In foreign affairs there was at first a harking back to the old socialist tradition in the agitation against Churchill's wars culminating in the Council of Action. But as the election approached nearer the new influences reasserted themselves more and more strongly; and finally the old reproach

that a Labour victory would mean the disruption of the British Empire was taken away by the official pronouncement of the Labour Party Executive against the Indian nationalist movement led by Mr. Gandhi ; while the refusal, a little later, to embark on a campaign against General Smuts for his brutal repression of the rebellion which his Government had deliberately provoked was a guarantee that there would be no return to the old methods of the South African deportees agitation of 1914. The features of a class party, features that made it such a disturbing and subversive factor in British Empire politics, were gradually being made to disappear. With the issue of the Election Programme five weeks ago it might seem the transformation was complete.

What is to be the future of the Labour Party, developing in this way ? Will it continue to " fit in " with the existing framework of British Parliamentaryism ? The answer to that partly depends on the others. There are, roughly speaking, only two possibilities for the future of the parliamentary game in Britain. One is the further development of the group system. The other is a return to the two-party tradition. Group politics are already the rule in every other country (except the U.S.A.) where there are fully-developed parliamentary institutions. Even in the United States the two-party tradition has been weakening of recent years. Here we have not, as we had before the war, the strife of the two great parties, tempered by the necessity of keeping the Irish quiet on the one hand and doing nothing to upset Labour too much on the other. Die-hards, Unionists, National Liberals, Independent Liberals—all these divisions correspond to real though minor differences of interest within the compact capitalist majority. At the moment Die-hards and ordinary Unionists are lying down together, but a distinction exists between them, which is real just as the distinction of the separate Chamberlainites is unreal. With Labour, this gives five groups, and the possibility of group politics.<sup>1</sup> Group politics means the Parliamentary bloc, like the *bloc national* in France. It means that instead of various interests sinking minor differences and

<sup>1</sup> If Proportional Representation, now being pushed by the *Manchester Guardian*, and assented to by the Labour Party at its last Conference, is brought in, the number of groups may be increased.

coming before the country as a united party, the interests go separately into Parliament and there unite, for purposes of opposition at first, and then to form a Government. How will this affect the Labour Party?

Under the circumstances of group politics there is a greater fluidity, both of persons and principles, than in the more rigid framework to which we have hitherto been accustomed. What would be the effect on a Labour Party? The Party Whip would still be: "It is Labour's interest to defeat the Government." Would it be Labour's interest to form a bloc, of the most temporary or the most solid nature, just for this purpose of overthrowing Governments, and for no other? Once the progressive forces were united in a successful opposition must they never continue the combination so as to become the Government? Mark you, it would not be a coalition like that before the war, in which Labour was the junior. Mr. Henderson was very definite about that when he left the Lloyd George Cabinet in 1917; he made it clear that he would never again be a member of a government in which the majority control was not in the hands of Labour. It would be mere quixotry to refuse the chance of Government because of some old fetish about the party being independent of every other party. After all, the sort of coalition that was banned was the harmful kind: it was surely not intended to prevent an alliance by which (and by which alone) Labour would be enabled to attain its own objective.

Such, or something such as this, would be the inevitable reasoning. The morale of the Labour Party could not stand out against it. Nor, with its present slogan of "not a class party," is there any reason why a bloc with other groups should be rejected. If in the phrase "Independent working-class representation" "independent" means nothing more than the status and recognition of a separate political party with leaders' rooms and whips and all attained, then there is certainly every reason for such a party to participate in forming the best possible government. It would not, of course, be a socialist government. It would not even be able to do the work of an Australian Labour Government! The pace of a party is regulated by its right wing; and it would be bound to travel at the pace of the least progressive member of the bourgeois party to which it was allied.

More, as, during its term of office, it was inevitably driven, being in a position of responsibility and bound to carry on the King's Government, to sanction the repression of industrial disturbances by workmen (should it be proved the workmen had really destroyed property) it would actually turn the workers into despair of gaining emancipation through any political activity. On the other hand it would finally be confirmed in the opinion of the bourgeoisie as "not a class party." But even so, if this were the future of the Labour Party under group politics, there are some who would view that future without dismay.

But this is not the only possibility, though it is the most likely outcome of a continuance of the last five years' development. It is conceivable that instead of group politics there may be a reversion to the two-party system with this distinction, that one of the two parties would be Labour and the other a combination of all the capitalist parties. This event would maintain the formal independence of the Labour Party at the insistence of its adversaries. But here, too, though not so rapidly as in the case of a group politics future, the inclined plane to destruction lies before it. Take the parallel case of the great German Social Democratic Party before the war. In the Reichstag the official displeasure of the Kaiser and the bitter enmity of all the other parties seemed to guarantee both its strength and its political chastity. But it is not necessary to enter into formal relations with bourgeois parties in order to become a supporter of the existing system. To compromise the working-class position it is only necessary to refrain, in a significant manner, from wrecking the capitalist plans. When in the Reichstag elections of 1907 the Social Democrats endeavoured to curry favour with the jingo electorate by not voting against the war credits, they lost the future of European socialism. Their tacit consent was given to the enormous expansion of German navalism which rushed neck and neck with the building of British Dreadnoughts to the catastrophe of 1914. There was no need for them to make a potter about voting the war credits in August, 1914. They had sanctioned them in advance by their election programme of 1907.

The future of the European working class is now more closely dependent upon the British Labour Party than upon any other.

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Yet in the elections of 1922 there was no firm stand taken on war credits, on indemnities and international debts, the seed of war. More, in the case of German reparations, apart from details the programme was solid with the Imperialists. If another world war comes the responsibility for this present election programme will be heavy on the Labour Party. And before that time comes it had best reverse that policy ; and that quickly.

# THE OVERTHROW OF LLOYD GEORGE

By KARL RADEK

**A**FTER being sixteen years in the British Government and six years at its head, Lloyd George has handed in his resignation.

His resignation is the result of the vote in the Carlton Club, the organisation of the leading circles of the Conservative Party.

The overthrow of Lloyd George appears as one of the greatest historical events. Its importance can only be estimated when one attempts to portray, at least in general outline, the political development of Britain during the last thirty years.

## *Petty Bourgeois Radicalism against Imperialism*

Lloyd George, the son of a village schoolmaster—brought up by his uncle, a shoe-maker in a remote corner of Wales—grew up in circles of petty bourgeois radicalism. The peasants, shopkeepers, and hand-workers of Wales belonged to the nonconformist Baptist Church. They opposed the dependence of the Church upon the State; they were petty bourgeois democrats. Lloyd George was drawn into the excitement of the discussions and struggles against the payment of taxes to the State Church. His uncle, a shoe-maker, was a Baptist preacher, and Lloyd George prepared himself for the same calling. As, however, the Baptists required that their preachers shall engage in work, he was sent to a small provincial lawyer. And after practical acquaintance with the profession he prepared himself for examination. At the same time he toured the country as an agitator. From his childhood on Lloyd George lived under conditions of the greatest poverty. And until recent years he has remembered in thoughtful hours the misery and the hard work of his mother, who after the death of her husband had to bring up her children. These recollections were also the source of his efforts after social reform.

In the year 1890, in his twenty-eighth year, he was elected member of Parliament for the constituency of Carnarvon, where



he had been educated. At the same time he worked in a barrister's office in London and lived with a colleague together in one dwelling. He was so poor that he was unable to practise as a barrister, solely because he did not possess the necessary money to buy his robes. His friend at that time relates that never in his life had he heard such blatant accusations against the capitalist order as he heard from Lloyd George during these years.

When Lloyd George appeared in the political arena, England was passing through a very severe inward crisis. The period of the Manchester school was over, the period in which the whole of the British bourgeoisie stood for free-trade, for liberalism, and for peaceful relations with all countries. German competition and the development of American capitalism pushed the bourgeoisie on to the open road of imperialism.

During the period following the reform of the customs in the year 1846, England was the only strong capitalist power and she could rely upon the success of her cheap wares. The British bourgeoisie was therefore against the annexation of new colonies, against protective duties. Now, however, when the policy of protection was actually adopted in all European countries and in America, when British goods everywhere were faced with competition, there increased in Britain the desire to retain the British colonies for British industry through a policy of protection. At the same time there increased the need for a strong fleet to defend the existing colonies, and to conquer new ones.

At the head of this movement which won the British bourgeoisie stood Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. The Boer War was a result of this policy. Lloyd George entered as its strong opponent. During the Boer War he fought strongly against "Jingoism," against the "religion of blood and iron," against "the religion of imperialist robbery." He repeatedly spoke at meetings in the face of enraged crowds and even placed himself in danger of being mobbed. The policy of Chamberlain did not achieve its aims. The opposition of the agricultural population of the British colonies, who desire industrial products regardless of whence they come so long as they are cheap, is one of the chief hindrances to the economic union of British imperialism.

The interests of the broad masses of the British workers and of the British petty bourgeoisie developed in the same direction. The British petty bourgeoisie, apart from the high standard of capitalist development in England, occupied a higher position than the petty bourgeoisie of other countries, thanks chiefly to the cheapness of the most necessary articles of consumption. The "cheap breakfast" appeared as the means by which the bourgeoisie dampened the aspirations of the British working class. The policy of Chamberlain threatened high prices and the working masses were against this. Supported by the broad mass of the petty bourgeoisie and the workers, the British commercial bourgeoisie, the British textile industrials, who owing to the cheapness of their products had succeeded in retaining the world markets, took up the fight against the imperialist policy of protection. Manchester, the chief centre of the textile industry, fought against Birmingham and Sheffield, the centre of the metal industry, against the chief basis of imperialism.

In the year 1906, the policy of the liberal bourgeoisie and of petty bourgeois radicalism was victorious. Lloyd George, one of the proponents of this policy, entered the Government as President of the Board of Trade. In 1908 he occupied one of the most important offices in the Government, the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, where he remained until 1916. The first years Lloyd George spent in this office belong to his heroic period.

Against the imperialist programme which claimed by means of a protective tariff to ensure high wages to the British workers, and to fill the coffers of the British Government through import duties, Lloyd George proposed taxation of the great bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. Against the imperialist ideal of armaments Lloyd George proposed social reform which should improve the lives of the broad masses of the workers. On April 29, 1909, he brought his budget into Parliament which he introduced by a speech lasting four hours. He concluded his speech with the following words: "This is a war budget. It must provide money for the unrelenting fight against poverty and the depression of the standard of living of the mass of the people."

In order to get an idea of the spirit of agitation which animated Lloyd George at this time we will quote but one passage from

one of his speeches : " No land which permits the sick, the incapacitated workman, the widows and orphans to starve has the right to be called civilised. Society has already some hundreds of years ago abandoned punishing even the greatest criminals with hunger and even in the barbarous stages of humanity the children of criminals were not subjected to hunger. What do we see now ? In his riper years the worker loses his strength. Now he can work no more. Are we to permit this rich country to reward him and his children with starvation ? "

This spirit is expressed in all the speeches of Lloyd George at this period, the whole of which appeared in a book entitled *Better Times*, a book to be regarded as splendid propaganda material.

The bourgeoisie decried Lloyd George as a Socialist. But Lloyd George was never a Socialist. He never sought to abolish capitalism. He was a petty bourgeois radical who endeavoured to abolish ground rents and to limit profits. Lloyd George's budget evoked a mighty struggle in the House of Lords. The Upper House without right rejected the budget and characterised it as undermining the British constitution. The new election resulted in a fresh majority for the Liberal Party. Lloyd George then carried through his budget and a whole number of social reforms.

### *The Victory of Imperialism over Petty Bourgeois Radicalism*

The times of the victory of petty bourgeois radicalism are gone ; gone also are the times of the victory of bourgeois social reform. Britain rejected the imperialist policy of Chamberlain, but she could not altogether abandon the stream of imperialism.

Britain in 1902, after she had concluded a treaty with Japan against Russia who threatened British imperialism in Central Asia, pursued the road of feverish armaments. After the collapse of Russia, Britain saw herself face to face with German imperialism which, freed from the pressure of Tsarist Russia, enlarged its fleet. In the year 1904 there began the Anglo-French *rapprochement* which in fact was an Anglo-French alliance against Germany. The building of dreadnoughts strengthened the chances of German imperialism, because they reduced the importance of the old ships in which Britain had the superiority. The attempt of the Asquith

Government to come to an arrangement with Germany for the limitation of armaments led to no result.

British imperialism could not give up having a fleet at its disposal which should be as strong as any other two fleets in the world. Petty bourgeois radicalism could not retain its pacifist position. And when in the year 1911 Germany sent her warship the *Panther* to Agadir, on the west coast of Morocco, in order to show to the world that it would not permit France and Britain to hinder the expansion of German imperialism, the Liberal Government of Asquith took up the defence of the British Empire. The German base on the west coast of Morocco could threaten the ocean routes by which Britain received raw materials and food.

At the time of this Morocco crisis, Lloyd George delivered his celebrated speech, in which he—the leader of petty bourgeois social-reform-pacifism—threatened Germany with war. This speech of Lloyd George is not only a turning point in his history, but a turning point in the history of present-day British liberalism. This speech meant the capitulation of petty bourgeois pacifism before the interests of heavy industry, before the interests of the imperialist annexation policy.

When in July, 1914, the British Liberal Government found itself faced with the open danger of world war, it already had no choice. When the Foreign Secretary of the British Liberal Government informed Parliament on August 3 that Britain was not formally allied with France, but that there were moral obligations on the part of the British General Staff to the French General Staff, the question of Britain's participation in the war was decided. The "defence of Belgium" was only an excuse. Britain could not possibly permit the victory of the strongest European Power. And she entered into the imperialist war.

In this war the "Pacifist" and "Social Reformer" Lloyd George occupied the post of War Minister.

And he became the soul of the Entente. With the same passion with which he had but recently led the war for social reform against need and misery, he now brought all the forces of Britain into movement and organised her for the imperialist war. In the work of organising the war industries he came into close relations with the actual leading circles of British big business, of British imperialism.

And these in 1916 made him chief of the Coalition Government, which not only united commercial capital with big business but even connected these with leaders of the "Labour Party."

In this Government there was a leader of the Labour Party (Henderson) who helped Lloyd George to influence the working class to renounce all social reform and to concentrate all its energy to secure victory. Lloyd George became the darling of British capitalism. No one possessed so much organising capacity, no one understood so well as he how to persuade the broad masses that it was not a fight for capitalist profits, but for democracy, for the establishment of peace upon a firmer foundation in the future, for equal rights to development for all. No one understood so well as he how to fight against every attempt to end the war with Germany by means of a treaty.

After England had succeeded in dragging America into the war, he turned Henderson out of the Government, only because this leader of the Labour Party, out of apprehension of the pacifist tendencies in the working class, had ventured to concur in the convening of the Stockholm Conference of the social patriots who were to prepare a compromise between the combatants.

In November 1918, the Entente defeated Germany. Lloyd George was at the height of his fame. Liberalism lay with shattered limbs on the ground.

### *The Downfall of British Imperialism*

With the instinct peculiar to him, Lloyd George perceived that the end of the war was pregnant with the greatest dangers for international capital. He saw the blaze up of the Russian revolution and understood that the working masses returning home from the war would present their demands. And he attempted to preserve the unity of the bourgeoisie at all costs. He dealt most drastically with those Liberals who desired the independence of the Liberal Party at the election. When some of these Liberals under the leadership of Asquith entered the election as Independent Liberals, Lloyd George scored a magnificent victory over them. At the General Election in December, 1918, the Independent Liberals—the opponents of the Coalition—obtained 31 seats, at the time when the Conservative Party received 358 seats and the

Coalition Liberals 124. There were recorded for the Coalition Conservatives and Liberals 5,295,000 votes while the Independent Liberals only received 1,298,000.

This victory of the Coalition not only expressed the intoxication of victory and the wish to lay the whole cost of the war upon Germany, but also the deep social reaction which the war had brought about. British industry, which was very badly organised before the war, formed itself into one great organisation which held the political rudder in its hands. Lloyd George became the representative of the speculating elements of British capitalism.

When the anonymous author of the book, *Mirrors of Downing Street*, indicates as a sign of the moral downfall of Lloyd George that he associates with doubtful personalities (the author points to the friendly relations of Lloyd George with such speculators as Lord Sassoon or Vassily Zaharov), so this moral downfall is also an expression of the fact that the man who won the war has won a leading influence upon British capitalism. Lloyd George was their prisoner. And although he knew very well that the murderous Peace of Versailles would only be the starting point for new armaments and further wars—he declared so in his memorandum to the leader of the Versailles Conference—he could not fight against the robber capitalist aims because, after the break up of the petty bourgeois radical party, he was left with no support save the chauvinistic majority in Parliament.

The whole policy of Lloyd George after the Versailles Treaty, the domestic as well as the foreign, was full of contradictions, mostly favourable to the imperialist elements. In his attitude towards the working class Lloyd George played the part of a master of trickery. His sole concern was how to pacify and deceive the working class. At the beginning of 1919, when the miners rebelled and demanded the nationalisation of the mines, he appointed a Commission of Inquiry which in the course of six months conducted a public investigation of the exploitation rights of the Coal Kings. The Commission evoked the great enthusiasm of the working masses. They rejoiced when Smillie, the leader of the miners, clearly proved to the Duke of Northumberland that the sole source of right to the ground in which he held the workers in servitude was a sixteenth-century document of an infant English king. The

Commission decided on nationalisation. But in the meantime, the danger was already past and Lloyd George had nothing but gibes for the miners. All the promises of Lloyd George over the free development of democracy were only barefaced lies. Never before did such an exclusive little clique rule Britain as in these times of "Democracy."

In foreign politics Lloyd George followed well-defined aims. He clearly understood that Britain, which was faced with the greatest competition on the part of America, and on the Continent was faced with a struggle for hegemony with France (which was supported by an army of 800,000), must unconditionally seek support in Russia and Germany. He was an opponent of the intervention policy and of the strangling of Germany. Yet he was the captive of the imperialist forces and had to repeat like a parrot : "*Germany must pay!*" "*The Soviet robbers must be annihilated.*"

But it was evident that Germany was incapable of paying and that the "Soviet robbers" were very tough and did not surrender easily. Lloyd George took advantage of the victory of Soviet Russia, put an end to interventions, and concluded a commercial treaty. He lacked all power, however, to make the British Government honourably execute the arrangements with Soviet Russia. He had not the power to overcome the sabotage of his Foreign Minister, Lord Curzon, the champion of the Beaconsfield policy of weakening Russia. He came to Genoa with a programme that permitted no agreement with Russia because—the conference was convened under the slogan of the economic restoration of Europe—it demanded of Russia that she should assume liabilities which would convert her into a colony of the Allies. He appeared as the supporter of the revision of the economic demands of the Allies upon Germany. Behind the scenes he sought to persuade France against slaying the hen that should lay the golden egg. Yet whenever France threatened to proceed independently against Germany he gave in as if the imperialist element in Britain feared the breakdown of the Entente as being a leap in the dark.

In his speech at Manchester on October 14, Lloyd George even seemed to have perceived the madness of Britain's Turkish policy. But this policy was carried through by him and its bankruptcy was the last stone over which he stumbled. The crisis in the East and

the bankruptcy of the policy of the British Government was, however, only the last thrust by which Lloyd George fell.

The real causes of this overthrow are, first, that the war strengthened the capitalist reactionary elements of the British bourgeoisie and they believe that the Lloyd George mask is no longer necessary for them ; secondly, the extreme danger of British imperialism in the Near East and in Asia, where the revolutionary forces of nationalism are being mobilised against it. In the Far East it runs the danger that, in its attempt to sit on the Japanese and American stools, it will fall between both, on to the European Continent where Britain was several times faced with the danger of a breach with France ; the profound economic difficulties in connection with the inter-allied debts and the new protective tariff of America—all these dangers demand drastic remedies.

The Conservatives are ready to give up the magnificent intellect of Lloyd George for the price of a man with a stronger hand, but with a stupid head.

The last gifted leader of imperialism has retired. The last leader who possessed constructive ideas for the salvation of capitalism no longer found so much power as could have helped him to carry out these ideas. The bourgeoisie requires stupid but strong politicians. Yet these will not be able to save it.

The overthrow of Lloyd George will open the way for a new grouping. It will bring in its train an intense sharpening of the international situation.



# THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE NEW SOCIALIST UNITY IN GERMANY

By G. LEDEBOUR

*(The following article, from the pen of the well-known veteran Independent Socialist leader of Germany, Georg Ledebour, shows the historical development of his Party which has been one of the most important representatives of the "Centrist" or Austro-Marxian School of Socialism. The story, which he gives of the rise and fall of this party, is particularly interesting from the fact that the writer himself has played a prominent part in its inner councils. Throughout its career it has been a party which has always stood on the border line between the doctrinaire constitutionalism of the Reformists and the direct action of the revolutionary school of German Communism. As can be seen by reading between the lines in this article, the crisis in the German Independent Socialist Party is an indication of the disruption of the whole "Centrist" position, leading logically to the union of the right wing to the Reformist parties and of the left wing to the revolutionaries. The splitting off of the latter took place at Halle two years ago, that of the former just recently at the Gera Congress. The writer of this article, however, believes that the small remaining group has still a rôle to play and that this great party of the Centre is not dead and has a future.)*

**I**T is difficult to make British people understand German political life because the historical development in both countries has taken very different ways. England had its decisive revolution to crush absolutism in the middle of the seventeenth century ; about the time when Germany was trodden down by a thirty years' civil war that in no way profited the labouring classes. On the contrary, monarchism and bureaucracy established

themselves firmly, while self-government in town and country was nearly annihilated.

In England, on the other hand, the Cromwellian era impregnated so deeply all political life with a spirit of self-government and with a democratic tendency that all aristocratic restorations of later times never could efface it. Compromise between democracy and aristocracy became the leading feature of British political life, and from compromise to compromise democracy gained ground step by step.

When socialism, the result of the self-assertion of the labouring classes, in revolt against the capitalistic exploitation of labour, was gaining ground in England, it moved on the same lines as middle-class democracy in former times, from compromise to compromise with the ruling classes. Only now in our own time the labour movement is beginning to emancipate itself thoroughly from all compromise with capitalism.

In Germany, two hundred years later than in England, in the year 1848 we had a weak attempt of the middle classes to emancipate themselves with the help of the working people from the domination of monarchism, feudalism, and bureaucracy. The revolutionary movement was put down by the standing army that remained firmly in the hands of absolutism. The middle classes soon gave way and left the labouring people in the lurch. This thorough collapse of the combined middle-class and proletarian movement gave birth to socialism in its Marxian shape. Marx and Engels, both fighters in the rising of '48, published as exiles in London the "Communist Manifesto." It became the keystone of the socialist movement throughout the world. But more than in any other country it took hold of the minds of the working people in Germany. These two historical reasons, already mentioned—the dominating influence of absolutism with its standing army on the one hand, and the extreme weakness of middle-class democracy as well as its revolutionary failure on the other side—impregnated the class-conscious proletarians in Germany from the beginning with the conviction that they had to stand upon their own feet—that they had to fight their own fight without help from other classes; their leading maxim became the Marxian

word : The liberation of the working classes can only be effected by the working class itself !

The steady rise of socialism in Germany even during the imperialist era inaugurated by Bismarck, who gathered all the exploiting classes round his standard, proved the soundness of this leading maxim. The " socialist law," forged to oppress socialism, only furthered its advance. After this oppressive law was abolished, a tendency arose in the ranks of the Social Democratic Party to compromise with the liberal middle class. But this " revisionism " never gained the upper hand in the German socialist movement up to the outbreak of the great war in 1914. Then we had the unfortunate breach with all our international and revolutionary tradition, when the great majority of the socialist party in Parliament gave their vote for the war credits, influenced by the official lie that Germany with its " guiltless " government was entangled in a purely defensive war.

A small minority of fourteen members, who had voted against the credits in the preparatory meeting of the parliamentary party, voted notwithstanding for the money grant in Parliament because it shrunk from splitting the party at such a critical moment. But the opposition began at once the fight for revolutionary and international socialism all through the country within the party organisations. Karl Liebknecht was the first to break away publicly from the traditional submission to party discipline. About a year later the growing opposition severed its connection with the majority and founded the " Independent Socialist Party." We Independents fought from that time onwards publicly for an *immediate peace* on equal terms for all belligerents, and for a revolutionary rising of the working classes against autocratic government. In this fight we had as our opponents, not only the government centring in William II, but also in addition to all the bourgeois Parties the Social Democratic Party under the guidance of Ebert and Scheidemann. We Independents then were the only republicans in Germany; all other parties bowed to monarchism.

We also kept up connections with the revolutionary socialists in other countries. Our new internationalism was founded in Zimmerwald ; later on we came together in Stockholm, where in 1917 I succeeded in bringing our international conference

unanimously to accept the idea of a general strike in all war-faring countries to enforce peace. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in November, 1917, helped also to propagate the idea of the international rising of the workers. But only in Germany did it become possible to bring the working classes to such a rising. In Berlin a great *metal workers' strike* broke out in January, 1918, but it soon broke down because the working classes in France and England did not side with us.

Then after four years of war came the military breakdown on the German west front ; it was effected by the foolish tactics of the militarist leaders who refused all peace negotiations, though the western Powers, reinforced by the United States, could gather overwhelming numbers and overpowering war material against the German Army, while Germany itself was suffering from want of food. It was the unpardonable guilt of the military leaders, Hindenburg and Ludendorff, that they let it come to such a pass. The utter collapse of the army staring them in the face, they lost their heads and telegraphed to Berlin that an armistice ought to be effected under any conditions. It is necessary, again and again, to state this fact because those two weakminded generals now try by all kinds of dodges to wriggle out of their responsibility for this collapse, and to put it on other shoulders.

The military breakdown brought the soldiery on the side of the revolutionary masses. To save the monarchy from annihilation the men in power won over the leaders of the Social Democratic Party to their side by making them ministers. When the first revolutionary movement exploded in Germany Ebert, the leader of the Social Democratic Party, accepted the office of Chancellor of the Empire, or German Prime Minister. But this nomination remained without effect upon the working classes. After the meeting of the sailors of the North Sea Fleet there were republican risings in several German towns; even in Munich on November 7 the monarchy was overthrown by the workers, headed by our friend *Kurt Eisner*, who then became republican Prime Minister of Bavaria. In Berlin our endeavour to effect a rising already on November 5 unfortunately was crossed by some too cautious friends. Only after the imprisonment of some revolutionary leaders we succeeded in bringing the "*Committee of Revolutionary Fore-*

*men*" to proclaim a general strike on the morning of November 9, and calling them to march from the outer parts of Berlin to the centre in order to break by force of arms all military resistance and bring all power into the hands of the proletariat.

This rising, effected entirely by the influence of the Independent Socialist Party, was a complete success. The soldiers in Berlin went over to the working classes, and when there was no longer any doubt about the revolutionary victory the socialist ministers, led by the Imperial Chancellor, Ebert, who in the morning even had published a warning against any revolutionary rising, came to us Independents and offered to side with us in establishing a republican and socialist government.

On the following day, Sunday, November 10, the victorious working men and soldiers elected a Workers' and Soldiers' Council after the model of the Russian Soviets. In this council, by their stronger organisation, the socialists of the right had succeeded in gaining the majority. The congress endorsed a proposal originating from the parliamentary groups of the two Socialist Parties that a government should be formed by six people's commissioners, three to be appointed by each party. A council composed in this way necessarily was condemned to fruitlessness. For this reason I, myself, had refused to enter this cabinet. After seven weeks the "Council of People's Commissioners" broke down because the Social Democrats Ebert, Landsberg, and Scheidemann, behind the back of their Independent colleagues Barth, Dittmann, and Haase, on Christmas Day had ordered an attack on the revolutionary sailors' division garrisoned in the centre of Berlin.

It is impossible to state in this article all the details of the struggle now going on between the socialists of the right in power, backed by all the capitalist parties, and the revolutionary Independent Socialists and the Communists who had separated themselves from our party at the end of 1918. It is sufficient to mention that, by the attack of the government troops, led by Noske in January, 1919, it came to open fighting against the Independents and Communists under the joint leadership then of a directing committee: Ledebour, Liebknecht, Scholze. The Noske troops, with all military materials at their disposal, soon gained the upper

hand. After the open fighting was over, prisoners even were slaughtered by the soldiery ; Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered by officers ; I, myself, was imprisoned and after five months' imprisonment was brought before a jury on the indictment of insurrection and several other crimes against the State, but after a five weeks' trial was acquitted.

Meanwhile, all this revolutionary activity gave a strong impulse to the Independent Party, so that the General Elections in June, 1920, gave five million votes and eighty mandates to the Independent Socialists against 110 mandates to the Social Democrats, and two mandates to the Communists.

Unfortunately by the influence of the Russian Bolsheviki, making the entrance of the German Independents into the "Third International" dependent upon their "Twenty-one points," a split was effected in the Independent Socialist Party, more than half of our party submitting in Halle, 1921, to the twenty-one points, and after their separation from us joining the Communist Party.

The most disastrous effect of this split, drawing over part of the revolutionaries to the Communist side, was to weaken the influence of the revolutionary elements within the Independent Party. The revisionist elements, slowly gaining the upper hand, at last succeeded in bringing over the party more and more to the side of the Social Democrats, who on their part already during the fights of 1919 had established a coalition government together with the Catholic "Centrum" and the Democrats.

It was necessary to state all this historical development of Socialism in Germany to make our English friends clearly understand the fundamental difference between the proletarian position in Germany and in England. We had not, two centuries ago, a successful middle-class revolution introducing into political life a labour movement with a reformist tendency, but we had a growing revolutionary proletarian movement for half a century, and then a proletarian revolution completely victorious at first, though it maintained itself in power only for a few weeks and soon was betrayed by the Revisionists.

This revolutionary tradition cannot be blotted out of the minds of all those Socialists who with heart and soul partook in that revolutionary fight. And it is this revolutionary tradition

that prevented the radical wing of the Independent Party from going over to the Social Democratic Party, as the great majority of our party did on September 23 in Gera.

The dissensions between the revolutionary Independent Socialist Party and the Revisionist Social Democratic Party came out clearest in their different relations to the capitalist parties. As stated before, the Social Democratic Party maintained a coalition government together with two capitalist parties, which, since the revolution, have adopted a republican platform ; while we Independents even still in our party congress in Leipsic in January 22 declared decidedly against any coalition with capitalist parties. Our manifesto stated exactly that such a coalition ought to be rejected, because it would prevent the reunion of all proletarian parties in Germany, necessary for conquering the power of the State with the aim of establishing Socialism.

Now the Revisionists also affirmed they were for proletarian unity, but with the exclusion of the Communists. The Revisionist wing in our own party at last succeeded in winning over the majority of the members for the idea of a restricted unity. I, myself, and a few delegates in Gera refused to join under such conditions the " United Social Democratic Party," as it calls itself since the congress of Nuremberg, as we cannot adopt either the coalition tactics or the exclusion of the Communists from the ranks of proletarian unity, for notwithstanding strong tactical differences which separate us from the Communists, we are united with them in that common blood brotherhood of the revolutionary period.

In Gera we resolved to maintain the Independent Social Democratic Party. We chose a leading committee and founded a weekly paper *Klassenkampf* (Class Struggle) that appeared first on October 4. We are now working hard to build up again our party organisations, and in the face of all revisionist scoffings about our "small group" we are firmly convinced that all the revolutionary elements of German Socialism will by degrees come back to our side. The economical and political development of decaying capitalism is working for us.

Already the last sitting of German Parliament gave new proofs of the detrimental results of a coalition government. The agrarians have to deliver to the State a certain part of the grain for fixed

prices in order to keep down the price of bread for our starving people. The government proposed a bill to raise the price of this grain. Then the coalition parties took opposite sides against each other, the Centrum and the Democrats siding with the government and with the other capitalist parties (Nationalists of all denominations) for making the price for the part of the harvest to be delivered to the State *four times* as high as it was fixed in spring ; the Social Democratic Party siding with the Communists and with the Independents against this vote. The capitalist parties had the majority.

Instead of leaving now directly the government, as they had threatened a few days previously, the great United Social Democratic Party (178 members) did not withdraw their members from the Wirth Cabinet. They remained in the coalition instead of seizing this splendid opportunity of enforcing a dissolution of the Reichstag and going into new elections together with the other branches of the proletarian movement with the war cry : Cheap bread for the people and socialisation of the mines!

Anyhow, the working people of Germany now have got a lesson showing how pernicious all coalition policy must turn out for a proletarian party, and we Independents will not fail in making that clear to all the suffering masses.



# THE FASCISTI: PIONEERS OF DISRUPTION

By W. T. COLYER

**F**ASCISM is one of those post-war phenomena which are simply horrifying and inexplicable to people who still try to think in pre-war terms. It only becomes intelligible in the light of the changes wrought between 1914 and 1918, not in Italy alone, but throughout the civilised world.

None of the States involved in the great struggle had expected the fighting to last as long or to prove so exhausting as it did. Some of them went completely to pieces under the strain, and even those which emerged nominally triumphant were in no condition to grapple successfully with the tremendous social and economic problems with which they found themselves confronted.

The so-called peace treaties gave the lie to every promise and slogan which the victors had used to arouse enthusiasm for the war. The world was full of disillusioned men trained to the use of arms; and the numerous political revolutions which occurred in the defeated countries with the approval of the Allies helped to destroy what remained of the superstition of the divine rights of governments as such. Moreover, the Workers' Revolution in Russia in 1917 had breathed new life into the revolutionary sections of the Labour movement everywhere.

Naturally enough the capitalists whose interests had been faithfully served by the old type of State did what they could to protect themselves from the impending danger. In some countries all that was thought necessary was a tightening of the legal restrictions upon the expression of opinion; in others, of which America is the outstanding example, complicated systems of public and private terror were elaborated.

In Italy, however, not much was possible in this direction. From November, 1919, until September, 1920, Italian Labour's star was in the ascendant; Socialists were numerous in Parliament;

there was every appearance of solidarity between the labour unions, the co-operatives, and the political party of the workers. Of this period a *Times* correspondent wrote, in retrospect, "Italy, without daring to make a revolution, lived in a revolutionary state." Factories were seized throughout the country; the next step was awaited with breathless interest throughout the civilised world; and then the whole movement collapsed!

Too many of the key positions had been held by men who shared the view of certain Labour politicians in this country that the supreme duty of a Labour leader is, under all circumstances and at any cost, to head off revolution. Signor Giolitti, the Prime Minister, had no difficulty in dealing with leaders so "reasonable." On the side of the workers everything was surrendered that had been won, and in exchange the government handed out a few paper promises which were promptly dishonoured when the crisis had passed. By their tactic of betrayal the leaders expected to avert "revolution" and bloodshed; what they actually did was to pave the road to power for the Fascisti.

After their first shock of relief the Italian capitalists were not slow to recover their wits. Unexpectedly saved by the soft words of a crafty politician, they perceived clearly that the same trick was not likely to serve their turn a second time. Their best hope lay in an immediate, vigorous offensive against the now demoralised workers; and an instrument well-suited to their purpose was already in existence in the young organisation, known as the Fascisti, which had been formed in March, 1919, under the leadership of the renegade Socialist, Benito Mussolini.

A large proportion of Mussolini's followers were well-to-do youths—glorified boy scouts one might almost call them—without definite political philosophy, but with a strong sentimental objection to what superior young men of the same class in this country sometimes call "these labour swine." Punitive expeditions against Communists and Socialists were to them a mildly exciting form of sport. They had, of course, the violent patriotism which in every country accompanies a general outlook of the kind indicated. Many of them no doubt had pretty manners when mixing with members of their own class. In other respects there is little that can be said about them.

The early manifestos and pronouncements of the Fascist leaders betray the familiar mental confusion of nationalism. Alongside the demand for a strong State and army, capable of creating "necessary and sufficient conditions for Italy's peaceful expansion in the Mediterranean and beyond the ocean," we come across talk about reducing the State to its "fundamental political functions" and denunciations of "State collectivism which . . . sterilises economic energies" and of "the vampire of official socialism."

During the autumn of 1920, after the victorious workmen had handed back the factories to the employers, the Fascisti roamed about the country destroying co-operative and trade union buildings and socialist headquarters, and killing and wounding labour sympathisers right and left. Officially, the Giolitti Government assumed an attitude not unlike Lord Balfour's towards rowdy British patriots during the Boer War—their activities were very reprehensible, but it was to be regretted that the opposition should place upon poor human nature a greater strain than experience had shown poor human nature could bear. This, of course, meant in practice a free hand; and what a free hand meant was shown by figures published in June, 1921, when the moderate Socialists opened negotiations for a truce with their enemies. It then appeared that, between January 1 and May 31, 1921, the Fascisti had destroyed 120 labour headquarters and had attacked 243 Socialist Party centres and other buildings; that 202 persons had lost their lives (excluding forty-four workers killed by the police and *gendarmes*) and 1,144 had been wounded. Arrests in connection with these outrages totalled 2,402, divided in the proportions of 2,240 workers to 162 Fascisti.

By this time Giolitti had begun to feel nervous, for the Fascisti were beginning to make themselves troublesome to him, as well as to the Socialists and Communists. In the political negotiations which preceded the election of May, 1921, the Fascisti had been backed by the big manufacturers, who were described in *The Times* as hoping "that the Fascisti movement may get rid for them of all Labour organisations and pretensions." Yet in spite of this backing, the Fascisti were by no means so subservient to big

business as similar terroristic organisations had shown themselves to be in the United States.

An uneasy suspicion arose among the capitalists, that they had called up a Frankenstein which they could not control. During the revolutionary period which preceded the emergence of the "black shirts" from obscurity, the prestige of the Italian State had been at a very low ebb, and subsequent events had assuredly not rehabilitated the official government in the eyes of the people. This would not have mattered if it had been made plain that the central power resided in the big banks and business offices. The trouble was that the young patriots and strike-breakers whom big business had called in to protect it from the proletariat had begun to manifest a corporate personality of their own.

The old forms of State power which had served so long to hold the mass of the people in subjection to the economically dominant class had admittedly broken down. Dreading the creation of a new form of State on the soviet plan, the master class of the old order themselves threw aside the customary disguises and openly patronised forms of brigandage which had been forbidden even by their own capitalistic laws. They are now face to face with the problem of controlling their brigands.

Obviously they cannot appeal to the long established habits and moralities which secured general obedience to the State. Recent developments have made it clear that the issue is not one of right or wrong in the old sense, but simply one of power. Men who have flouted Prime Ministers and hunted Parliamentary representatives into hiding are not likely to listen to moral pleadings from the elderly bank and business directors who started them on their careers of crime. The upshot will be either a bargain on such terms as the brigands choose to exact or plain confiscation by people who have neither respect for the capitalist system of production nor interest in the establishment of a Communist society.

The social ruin which is likely to follow upon such a condition is not difficult to picture. The Italian Fascisti, the German Orgesch, and similar reactionary societies in other countries are adventurers demoralised by the brutalities of the World War, and quite destitute of the stability of character and conviction which enabled

past generations of the bourgeoisie to maintain themselves at the head of a coherent, if cruel and unjust, social system. Nor are the social conditions the same as fifty or one hundred years ago.

On every hand we are confronted with the decay of civilisation as we have known it. The question is what shall take its place. The plutocrats of the United States have initiated an iron centralised rule by big business which has, under favourable conditions, succeeded in getting the State, the press, the churches, the schools, the politics, and practically all the other social activities of the people so well in hand as to ensure, for some time, a considerable measure of stability and "tranquillity" for the existing governing class.

In Italy another possibility is fore-shadowed. After a period of extra-legal activity, the Fascisti, the only civilians who are now permitted to carry arms, decided that they would prefer to take over the State. There are between 300,000 and 400,000 of them: they mobilised: and by the beginning of the present month the State power was in their hands, though they had elected no more than twenty-three out of nearly 540 members in the sitting Parliament.

Last August the weak Labour leaders who had refused to go forward in September, 1920, talked of a general strike of protest against Fascist excess. The preceding twelve months had witnessed the burning of 500 Labour halls and co-operative stores, and the dissolution of 900 Socialist municipal bodies. But nothing came of it.

Months ago, press correspondents were predicting a Fascist *coup d'état*, and it was plainly hinted that many of the capitalists who originally offered the Fascisti money to do their dirty work are now contributing to the organisation under threats.

The new Government of Italy has been described as "a Government of gigantic energy but without a policy." From terrorising the proletariat the Fascisti have extended their operations to include levying blackmail on the capitalists. One is reminded forcibly of the precedent set by the barbarian colonies invited in by the Emperors to bolster up the decaying power of Imperial Rome. For every danger which they helped to avert they introduced ten which did not exist before.

Under a purely capitalist tyranny such as exists in the United States, large scale industrial production can continue a while longer. Under workers' control such production could be vastly increased. But when a miscellaneous group which has hitherto lived on the surplus produced by modern methods, but without direct and conscious relation to industry, is able to force its way into power with arms supplied to it for other purposes by the capitalists, the prospect of absolute industrial chaos comes near.

If the counterparts of the Fascisti in other countries are emboldened to attempt similar *coups*, and are successful therein, the most probable outcome will be a debacle the like of which has not been witnessed since the break-up of the Roman Empire.

# THE THEATRE AND CLASS WAR IN SOVIET RUSSIA

By HUNTLY CARTER

**T**O the student of the theatre who enters Soviet Russia to-day, two things are apparent. One is that a new conception of the theatre has arisen ; the other, that the theatre conceived of is a transitional one. It is a stepping-stone to an inspiring new form. The conception, it appears, was born of the inner necessity for dramatic self-expression on the part of the new class—the working class—who have entered and taken possession of the theatre in Russia since the revolution. But they have done so before they have had time to arrive at the full revolutionary and working-class meaning of their new play-spirit and play-ground. They are, in fact, in the position of the inspired potter who is not yet fully acquainted with the nature of his clay or of the subject which he requires it to interpret. So the form is undetermined, as yet.

I call the conception a new one, although to some persons it will appear an old one—as old indeed as the world itself. For, apparently, it is no other than the conception of a people's theatre such as the early Greeks realised, and, doubtless, such as was realised long before the Greeks experimented in this kind of socialisation. Other persons will identify it with the conception of a popular theatre which has been actuating the minds of reformers in Germany for some years, and now promises completely to socialise the theatre of that country. Owing to economic circumstances, the commercial playhouses in Germany are no longer able to keep going with the result that the people's theatre movement has received a great impetus. Its membership is growing daily, new popular playhouses are being established every day, the State theatres are adapting themselves to the demand for popular ownership, control, and administration. On the whole it looks as though the German people are going into theatre proprietorship on a big

scale and that the theatre and drama are undergoing social revolution, and becoming humanised, like those of Soviet Russia.

But though it is true that the Russian conception of the theatre has one great resemblance to that of the ancient Greeks and of the modern Germans, it is also true that it has several important differences. It is these differences which permit it to be called new. Like the Greek and German conceptions, it rests on the idea of a mass theatre, that is, a theatre owned, administered, run, and worked by the masses. Here the resemblance ends. The differences arise from the fact that the Russian conception is primarily the outcome of a class war which has no part in the Greek and German conception of a popular theatre. This fundamental difference deserves to be strongly emphasised because it gives direction to all other differences. The Greeks and Germans are concerned with the problem of bringing the theatre to the people as a whole and *vice versa* irrespective of class, but in such a manner that the working class shall derive as much benefit from its educative and recreative power and importance as the middle and upper classes. Thus the poorest person in the community would be assured of as rich a theatrical experience as the wealthiest one. But they are not concerned with the problem of bringing the stage and the drama to the people, and *vice versa*. Both the stage and the drama remain isolated, the one as the playground of deputy players, the other as the product of deputy playwrights. Both are in fact isolated in an aristocratic, intellectual, aesthetic, or some other way from the people themselves. The various projects for bringing the audience into the performance do not affect this contention. All the attempts to mix the people in the production, such as those that Max Reinhardt has been making, do not remove the isolation between the stage and the audience, the spectator and the professional player.

In early Greek times, and during the free theatre movement in Europe, nothing was written for the people. Plays were written by the intellectuals and the educated middle class, and a few by the upper class, who experienced life from a far different standpoint from which the masses experienced it. All through the free state period, which sprang up in Germany some years ago and swept over Europe till the war stopped it, the intellectuals let themselves go with a vengeance. Science, politics, psychology, biology,



pathology, spiritualism, libertinism, and indeed all the intellectual problems of the modern world were dished up one after the other and succeeded in putting a faint glow of interest in the minds of small cliques of intellectuals. But they left the masses icily cold. No better result was attained when the reformers tore down the act-drop, removed the proscenium, and made the stage and auditorium one. They did not put the people in the front of the stage, but they simply continued to advance those personalities who embodied intellectual problems which have no value at all for the people. Thus though the action-place was pushed into the auditorium and the players made their exit and entrances and moved freely amid the spectators, it did not remove the isolation. Every time the reform theatre was filled, and this may be stated as a general rule, it was filled with an audience two-thirds of whom were attracted by curiosity and not by an overwhelming desire to become active participants in a dramatic experience which should have been but was not mainly their own. They were curious to witness that sensationalism of matter and manner, especially scenic, which unfortunately has, of recent years, been allowed to enter the reform theatre disguised as theatrical advance.

The Russians are concerned with a far different problem. It may be called the problem of the theatre and class war. In other words it is the problem of bringing the theatre to the workers and the workers to the theatre, in such a complete way that it actually becomes a functional part of them. The solution will yield a theatre which is a masterpiece of functional correlation and social co-operation.

This then is the new conception according to which a theatre is to be established from which everybody and everything is to be excluded except the mass and their dramatic experiences. It is to contain no personalities and no deputies. The people are to take the stage and the stage is to take the auditorium, as it were. This means that the whole theatre will be turned into a stage to be occupied by the people turned players for the purpose.

This theatre is partly established. The new conception is, in fact, being realised and this in an experimental way. And there is no doubt that it will be fully realised though what form it will finally take is not yet decided. Whether it will be a roofed-in structure

or a space under the sun is uncertain. For the moment it hovers between the two forms.

So to-day there is a working-class or mass theatre in Soviet Russia which has sprung directly out of the revolution and which embodies some at least of the principles for which the revolution was fought. Its aim is to encourage the workers to become their own authors and actors ; to exalt the anarchist mass where the anarchist individualist has been too long ; to replace the culture of the cultured by the culture of the uncultured ; in short, to destroy everything belonging to the old order so as to create everything belonging to the new order.

The theatre falls into three groups. There is the group formed by the established playhouses which have been requisitioned by or for the workers. There is the group formed by the open-air stages. And there is the group formed by the factory, workers' club, and cellar playhouses. Together, the three groups represent many thousands of stages. Recent figures put the number of stages under the working-class organisation as over 6,000. It is interesting to compare this number with the 200 imperialistic stages that existed in 1914.

The building of the theatre has been upon well defined lines of destruction and construction. First came a period of clearing the foundations, then one of collecting the building materials, and then one of making a start at a new structure. Perhaps the first thing that had to be done was to destroy the effects of a period of dramatic literature during which everything was written for the intelligentsia and bourgeoisie and nothing for the working class. Individualistic tendencies in playwrighting which had served to bolster up a worthless form of bourgeois idealism could not be permitted to remain at a period when everything was to be based on the idealism of the working class. And authors of the peculiar anarcho-individualistic mentality of Kuprin, Artzibashev, and Andreiev who represented the revolutionary intellectuals and not the revolutionary proletariat must be banished from the stage.

This meant that a very large number of pre-revolution authors, both home and foreign, must be banished. For, while these authors undoubtedly exploited a wide range of ideas and ideals of their time, these ideas and ideals belonged to the intellectual and capital-

istic classes. It also meant that they must be replaced by authors who had the real revolutionary fire in their hearts. To two of the aforementioned groups these changes did not present any difficulty. The open-air stages were simply spaces in front of public institutions, like the late Bourse, or private ones, like the Winter Palace at Petrograd, or at street corners, where the dramatic events of the revolution could be represented with exactness in the form of political mysteries in which any passer-by could take part without preparation of any sort. Sometimes as many as 100,000 passers-by would be drawn into a performance, such as, for instance, the "Taking of the Winter Palace." As for the factory, club, and cellar stages, they were stages resting upon co-operation and improvisation. They were run by workers, soldiers, sailors, students, and their friends who gave improvised performances of plays in which everybody took part. The motive of such plays was Communist Russia recasting its life in new moulds and destroying the old ones. Besides the extemporisations, there was a selection of little pieces by Gogol, Ostrovski, and Chekhov which gave the old bourgeoisie and intelligentsia a severe drubbing or snubbing. Further there were many adaptations from suitable novels to keep the satirical revolutionary and agitational pot a boiling. On the whole, these two groups were able to carry on the work of destroying the old intellectual revolutionary theatre and constructing the new proletarian revolutionary theatre without bothering overmuch about the scarcity of proletarian authors.

It was different with the first group which had been formed by the requisitioned established playhouses. The playhouses were not only numerous but some of them were very big with big seating capacity. For instance, in Petrograd at one time since the revolution there were seven State and thirty-seven people's theatres. That is to say forty-four people's theatres. The average attendance at each performance at three of them, the Theatre of Opera and Ballet, the Dramatic Theatre, and the Theatre of Comic Opera, was roughly about 5,000. The forty-seven were repertory theatres that catered for the best paying bourgeois audiences in the pre-revolutionary days, and had in consequence laid in a stock of plays suited to them. But now they were expected to cater for the masses. About one per cent. of the plays were fit for the new purpose,

and others must be sought elsewhere. It was the same with the scenery and costumes. Interiors and exteriors and properties that had been built for the intellectual bourgeois plays were no use for plays from which all bourgeois elements were to be eliminated. A true-to-life Ibsen interior as put on by the Moscow Art Theatre, with a multitude of exact details, was a corrupting influence that could not be tolerated for a moment.

As might be expected there was a feverish attempt at elimination of all undesirable plays, scenery, and properties and an equally feverish search for new ones marked by a good deal of creative activity. The result was the beginning of a gradual change in matter and manner, a movement towards the clearance of old authors, plays, and the stage which had three clearly marked periods. There was no attempt to interfere with the form of the theatre. That was impossible owing to lack of money and materials for carrying out schemes of reshaping. At the same time, however, theorists like M. Kerschenzew, an initiator of the new creative mass theatre, were busy with plans of a theatre suited to the requirements of a new form of drama which was seen to be emerging from the chaos of destruction.

The first of the three periods was a romantic one. In its early days the revolution presented itself to many established and unestablished authors who had remained in Russia in a romantic garb. Like Alexander Blok, the well-known poet, they were disposed to regard it as a "holy banditry" and to invest the revolutionaries with the nimbus of saint bandits whose purpose it was to deprive Russia not of its great national virtues but of its foulness of life. They placed Russia indeed on the crest of Mount Calvary crucified between two thieves. The task of the bandits was to take down the body and conduct it with fitting ritual to deified resurrection. As a consequence poets, and other authors, and decorators rushed into the revolutionary theatres and poured forth a lot of pseudo-revolutionary stuff designed to clothe these quaint romantic ideas, while the pre-revolutionary directors and producers who remained at their posts, because the Communists were too busy attending to the German invaders to interfere with them, overhauled their repertories for plays to match the prevailing sentiment. It was for this reason that the programmes of 1917-18 and even

later contained the names of international anarcho-individualists, and titles of plays—Chekhov's principal pieces, Ibsen's plays, the Brothers Karamozov by Dostoievsky, many of Shakespeare's plays, and dozens more—that subsequently disappeared from them.

The romantic period was followed by a realistic one. In the first days of the revolution the poets—symbolists, futurists, imagists, &c.—while the novelty was upon them, had entered their ivory tower and sung of deliverance and the rest of it. But presently came civil war and famine and economic privation which overturned their tower and left them struggling for existence with the mass of people. So in the first year of the revolution authors and decorators became split into two camps. The pseudo-revolutionary ones—Blok, Kuliev, Andreiev, and others—who could not change their conception of the revolution turned tail and fled. Others who had caught the true significance and meaning of the revolution remained and became incorporated with the new body of the theatre. Among the proletarian writers of this period were Alexandrovsky, Gastev, Bessalko, Kirilov, Mashirov-Samolitnik, Sado-fiev, Arsky, Orieshin, Klichkov, Essenin, and Maiakovsky. Caught in the vortex of events arising from the civil war, they very quickly substituted realistic-expressionism for misleading romanticism.

The third period was introduced by the struggle to rebuild the economic and industrial life. By the time this period arrived the workers were firmly installed in the established playhouses. They had a grip of their own true dramatic motive—the initiation of the worker-communist into the secret of his own life, the crucifixion, resurrection, and transfiguration of Russia or, as someone has put it, the passing from the hell of capitalism through the purgatory of proletarian dictatorship to the paradise of communism. They had formulated a new method of interpretation and representation—interpretation resembling that of the *Commedia-dell'Arte* and representation of an extremely simplified futurist-symbolist order. They were their own authors and actors, while at the same time drawing new blood from cultural sources. Among the theorists pledged to their cause were Lunatscharsky, Kerschenzew, Tichonovisch, Gan, Arwatow, Smischlaiew, and Meierhold; among the swelling ranks of authors Lunatscharsky, Pletniew, Maiakowski, Reisner, Kamienski, and Wermischew; among

the prolecut decorators Eisenstein, Nitikin, Schmurow, and Turzew; and among the producers Meierhold, Smyschlaiew, Tischonovisch, Eisenstein, Forreger, Prosvietow, and Radlow. This list, not by any means a complete one, suggests a new theatrical world. They had, too, the foundations of a prolecut repertoire in such surprising pieces as "Misteria-Buff," "Stenka Rasin," "Don Kichot," "The Mexican," "Lena," and others. Finally they had extremists in their own ranks and drawn from the new intelligentsia—Maiakovsky, Meierhold, Kamensky, Yesenin, and others who were ready to go to the wildest extremes to destroy the old order in the theatre, to celebrate the reign of the worker, and to glorify the new fatherland. Indeed, Meierhold and Maiakovsky between them have turned the theatre topsy-turvy. Using "Misteria-Buff" as an instrument they cleared the interior, converted it into a stage, produced a monumental play that covered a period of proletarian history from the flood (the revolution) to the building of the worker's paradise (the electric city), and let the public loose to do as they liked amid the scenes of destruction and construction. Could anarchy in the theatre go further?

The workers themselves in a more sober mood are getting their hand in and exercising their play-spirit according to the meaning they put upon the communist life, present and to come. So they are concerned with writing and producing plays that build up in a creative way the city and country of their dreams. For the moment it is the electrified Russia and the electrified city which communist propaganda has taught them to regard as the first great step necessary to transform them completely. But this is only a transitional motive. Doubtless in a more spiritual collective interpretation of themselves—in a true dramatic unfolding from the trial before Pilate (the capitalist) to the transfiguration—they will reach their full theatrical statures, and this in a human theatre.

# The World of Labour

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## FRANCE

### Crisis in Communist Party

THE second congress of the French Communist Party met in Paris, October 15-19. The questions of importance touched on were mostly held over for final decision by the fourth congress of the Communist International. A sharp division within the party was revealed in the discussions; the Left wing section, led by Souvarine, was sharp in its criticism of the tactics pursued by the section in control (R. Centre); and condemned the method of control of *L'Humanité* and the general inactivity of the whole party. The party would seem to have suffered from the general reaction and disunity prevailing in France, for its members are reported as having dwindled down from over 130,000 in 1921 to not quite 80,000.

The Frossard-Souvarine resolution, which received the greatest number of votes—2,690; 154 of these with reservations—puts forth plainly the several causes of the non-development of the party. This resolution runs as follows:—

#### RESOLUTION ON PARTY DIRECTION

(1) The Congress, in reviewing the epoch elapsed since the Congress of Tours and the crisis existing within the party for over a year, declares that the lack of progress of the party is due essentially to failure to apply the fundamental resolution of the Congress of Tours in support of the decisions of the Second Communist Congress. There is no desire to underestimate the difficulties encountered and the work achieved in reconstructing the party, nor can the general temporary breakdown of the European revolutionary movement, which of necessity affects the French revolutionary movement, be overlooked; but in the light of experience, the survival of the social democratic spirit of the old party, and the misconception of the value of the resolutions of the Communist International, have injured the reinforcement and perfecting of the young Communist Party.

(2) The twenty-one conditions of affiliation to the Communist International, rightly laid down for all parties affiliated, have revealed themselves in practice as indispensable to the creation of real communist parties in every country. The party becomes weak or strong according to the degree in which it adheres to or diverges from these points. The party directorate must henceforth aim at the maximum

realisation of the application of the twenty-one conditions as being the only efficacious method of completely transforming the party into a Communist Party.

(3) The twenty-one conditions of affiliation, the Tours resolution, the break with the old unity, are fundamental decisions which should be accepted within the party. To attack them is in reality questioning the very existence of the party as a Communist Party. It will be the duty of the party to refuse admission, and of the executive to expel, anyone who attacks these decisions.

(4) The affiliation to the Communist International, the approval of the theses and resolutions of the three previous international congresses, of the twenty-one points, and of the international statutes imply the acceptance of these principles, and exclude all those who oppose them. There is no room in a Communist Party for this pseudo-federalism which some commend whilst invoking Sovietism; nor for the syndicalist libertarian who goes directly against the interest of the party; nor, again, for pacifists and anti-militarists who misunderstand the necessity for an organisation of revolutionary violence.

(5) The party has suffered from these deviations which contradict the essential conception of organised Communism. It has tolerated for much too long the inadmissible distortions of the ideas of the Communist International; distortions which can only exist outside the ranks of the party. The executive of the Communist International was quite justified in formulating criticisms of these distortions and errors, thus expressing the views of the majority of the party in which the Congress concurs. The party should no longer admit discussions on questions of principle, systematically brought up at conferences and in the Press, which have been solved by the party as a whole, as in conformity with the experiences of all revolutions and all big working-class movements, and by the decisions of both the national and international Communist congresses.

(6) The party has suffered from a lack of discipline, only too often reminiscent of the state of affairs in the old Socialist Party condemned at Tours. Discipline, that is to say the subordination of every individual and local interest to the collective interest, as well in national as international organisation, expressed by responsible organs, is an absolute necessity in a revolutionary party. To misunderstand such a necessity is to revert to the mistakes of the old Socialist Party and of the Second International. The party does not intend to submit to any such setback. On the contrary, it desires to proceed more quickly with the definite transformation of the party into a Communist Party, and consequently establish more strict discipline. The party will not tolerate that its own point of view, which conforms with that of Communists throughout the world, should be interpreted as submitting to the domination of certain men; such calumny, current amongst the enemies of Communism, may not be echoed within the party. The party obeys the collective revolutionary conscience; comrades in whom it places confidence and appoints to positions of trust only act in accordance with its will.

(7) The party, whose organisation of the central organs is not in keeping with the needs of the present revolutionary struggle, has suffered from want of direction, a state of things which can no longer be tolerated now when revolutionary activity becomes more and more pressing. The executive committee, as well as the daily newspapers, have not fully fulfilled their mission, which is to give expression in all circumstances to the voice of the party, and give a lead to the party members and the labouring masses in the daily class struggle. More than a year ago the International proposed that the party should follow the experience and example of other large Communist Parties and create political bureaux. The party has delayed very long in adopting this proposal. It is indispensable to realise it as soon as possible and create



a political bureau to assume the joint responsibility of directing the party and the organs under the permanent control of the executive committee. Such a measure will suppress any trace of personal authority or anonymous responsibility, and in no way institute a dictatorship; it would be a considerable improvement in the work of directing the party.

(8) The party will not attain the summit of its historic rôle as advance guard of the revolution unless it becomes a working-class organisation in reality. It must substitute gradually its present officers by officers of the working class, and build up a working-class nucleus to get into touch with the masses and imbue them with their class spirit. It is necessary to take an active part in the economic struggles of the proletariat, and prove to them that the party is at their service and not a political party of the type of those which have deceived the workers until now.

The resolution concluded with the declaration that the French Communist Party considers itself a section of the world Communist movement which has its chief centre at Moscow. It acknowledged the debt that all revolutionaries owe to Russia for the part it has taken in this great movement.

The new executive is composed of the Centrists who have been appointed to carry on until after the fourth Congress of the Communist International. Frossard acquiesced in re-election to the secretaryship on condition that it should be merely for the period of crisis.

An attempt was made to weed out members who by their writings and otherwise have displayed definitely anti-communist tendencies. Forty-two were on the list of those to be expelled, but only Verfeuil, Francois and Marie Mayoux were definitely expelled by a congress vote of 1,190 votes to 803, with 136 abstentions; the cases of the other members suggested were consigned to the consideration of the executive. There were numerous resignations after the congress, and reports have been circulated that a new Socialist Party was being formed by them called the Revolutionary Socialist Workers' of France.

The Executive Committee made an appeal to the party generally in which it declared:—

The new Executive Committee is resolved to stand by the Communist International, to which it has always declared its unalterable fidelity since it began its functions. Therefore, in conformity with the decisions of the Congress, it is the policy of the International which it purposes carrying out both in spirit and in the letter.

#### United Front for Trade Unions

The right wing French Confederation of Labour (G.G.T.) held an important executive meeting on October 13-14 at which the whole question of making an attempt to unite their forces with those of the Unity Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.U.) was discussed at length. The recent rank and file attempts of the railwaymen to unite in warding off the attack on the eight-hour day was mainly responsible for this fresh move towards unity. After two days' discussion a resolution was agreed on, one

union only dissenting, in which the Confederation declares its readiness to support the merchant marine, the railway and mines workers, whose working hours have been menaced, in their fight to retain the eight-hour day. In view of this now manifested intention of the employers to abolish the statutory eight-hour day, the resolution urges unity and appeals to the International to use its efforts in trying to bring about co-ordination within the unions, most especially those of the miners and transport workers.

In view of the difficulties now threatening the workers the congress of the C.G.T. which was to have taken place in April, 1923, has been fixed for the end of January ; the chief questions to be discussed are the eight-hour day and the re-organisation of the workers.

The unity Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.U.) convened an executive meeting on October 15-16 at which the present crisis was also discussed. The executive came to the conclusion that the split which took place in December, 1921, had greatly weakened the effectiveness of the trade unions in their campaign. Therefore it advocated a fresh attempt to secure unity between the two central bodies. With this object the meeting suggested calling a joint conference.

## GERMANY

### Congress of Secessionist Unions

**I**N September, 1921, at Halle, the Federation of Trade Unionists, who had formed themselves into independent unions during the revolutionary period in Germany, took place and the "Union of Hand and Brain Workers" was established. At that congress a resolution was passed to affiliate to the Red International of Labour Unions. The union accepts workers of all categories regardless of their trade ; though to a large extent it is composed of miners whose numbers are greatly in excess of those of any other category. It failed to fall in with the Communist programme which requires all Communists to remain within the official unions, and has repeatedly been at loggerheads both with the German Communists and the R.I.L.U. because of its anarcho-syndicalist tendencies, and failure to act in unison with the revolutionary elements in the trade unions.

The union held its second congress in Essen from October 1-6 at which it decided on maintaining the unity of the political and economic struggle, and to support the revolutionary movement in its fight for workers. The congress further decided amongst other points :—

To build up a united combative organisation based on the council system ; to fight all indifference, to organise all those unorganised and indifferent ; to create a good and well written revolutionary trade union Press ; to fight against any collaboration between capital and labour ; to prevent the abrogation of the eight-hour day, and work for the establishment of a six or seven-hour day.

The congress also declared it to be the duty of the revolutionary trade unions to carry on the struggle for immediate improvements in wages and working conditions, to help in developing the class consciousness of the workers, and to unite them for the struggle against the capitalist system and the development of the Communist regime after the conquest of political power.

## NORWAY

### Trade Unions leave Amsterdam International

**T**HE recent decision of the executive committee of the Norwegian Federation to withdraw from the International Federation of Trade Unions at Amsterdam has been under consideration for the past year. The whole trade union movement has been passing through a crisis, having lost nearly half of its members during the period between January, 1919, and May, 1922, when the number of members was estimated at 88,448. The disaffiliation from the I.F.T.U. and the question of future tactics are to be thoroughly discussed at the congress of the Norwegian federation to be held in February, 1923. Other important questions are to be discussed, including a suggested new form of organisation ; already one plan advocating district centralisation of the various unions has been voted on by the members with the result that twelve unions with 40,138 members have voted in favour and sixteen unions with 40,329 members against ; hence a new plan is being formulated for the coming congress.

# BOOK REVIEWS

HODGSKIN AND MARX

*Labour Defended.* By Thomas Hodgskin. Labour Publishing Company, London. 1922 (First published anonymously "By a Labourer," London, 1825.)

**S**AINTE-AMAND BAZARD (1791-1832), the most logical and learned of the Saint-Simonians, lecturing in Paris 1829-30 on the doctrines of his master, quotes the famous encyclopædist, d'Alembert, as having remarked "that all innovators begin by being branded as dreamers and finish by being accused as plagiarists." (*Œuvres de Saint Simon et d'Enfantin*, ed. 1877, vol. 41, p. 11.) This wise observation may appropriately be applied to Marx; it exactly fits his case. At first shouted down as an unpractical visionary and hare-brained doctor of the red revolution he finally reached the stage of being accused of plagiarism from the works of Thompson and Hodgskin, without even acknowledging the sources from which he had drawn. I may add that the accusation of plagiarism is generally levelled at a pioneer in the realm of thought when his uncomfortable truths begin to take root among the masses.

The republication of the once famous pamphlet of Hodgskin may serve us as an opportunity for attempting a comparison of Marx and Hodgskin. I shall not touch upon the question, how far Hodgskin was indebted to his predecessor, Piercy Ravenstone, who wrote five years before Hodgskin. In my "History of British Socialism" I dealt with this point, indicating that the main ideas and even some of the most striking phrases of Hodgskin are to be found in Ravenstone. Marx was a great admirer of Ravenstone. I say this at the risk of giving occasion to some writers to accuse Marx of having plagiarised Ravenstone. All such accusations levelled at great minds have no more weight than the charge against Shakespeare for having plagiarised some Italian writers, or Rousseau having plagiarised Locke.

Hodgskin's general idea was that natural law, right, reason, and justice ought to govern the economic life of the nation. Those ethical principles were however violated, social life was vitiated, for the labourer who produced all, got little, while the capitalist was appropriating the most. And that was the cause of the poverty of the working people and of the conflict between the producers and appropriators. Capital as such had no just claim to any share of the labourer's produce; it was true that the capitalist put at the disposal of the labourer fixed and circulating capital and thus enabled him to produce. But what was fixed capital? Preserved labour. And what was circulating capital? Co-existing labour. Yet about five-sixths of the produce went to the capitalist! According to natural law the workman had a right to the whole produce of his labour.

Such are the main doctrines of Hodgskin, and from them, it is averred, Marx pilfered his theory of value, his condemnation of capital. As if these points touched even the fringe of Marxism !

Marx's aim and end was not to reveal the moral nakedness of Capital or to exhibit the wounds of virtuous Labour, but to inquire into the rise, growth, and destiny of the capitalist system. He tries to show the capitalist world as an historical phase, as one of the stages of the evolution of human society, of the last stage of the prehistoric period of man : Marx regards present-day civilisation as the last stage of savagery. The economic categories of any given society are but the expression of the prevailing economic relations between men. Capitalists and labourers appear in his books not mainly as individuals looking after their own interests, but as unconscious agents entangled in a process of evolving a new and higher stage of civilisation. Society is not vitiated through the lack of right reason and natural justice, but through the contradiction between the productive forces and the conditions of production. Irrational forces are at work, creating and destroying. And it is the task of the sound thinker to analyse this unconscious process, to bring mental order into the material chaos, to turn the unconscious human agents into conscious, thinking men. And the task of the socialist or communist thinker consists of much more than interpretation of the external phenomena or of composing the sociology of it—his task is to change the world.

Feeling, intellect, and will-power—these are the stages through which Marx proceeds.

We see at once that Hodgskin and Marx, in their general ideas, belong to different schools of thought. Marx had, in this respect, nothing to learn from Hodgskin.

And what had Hodgskin as an economist to offer to Marx ? Equally nothing. The view that Labour was robbed by Capital was with Marx not a cardinal fact, but merely one of the effects of private ownership of the means of production. Given the private-property condition of production, then capitalist control of distribution is a matter of course. Hodgskin's dogmatic opinion that the produce of labour ought to belong to Labour has, according to Marx, as much to do with economics as any other religious dogma.

And Hodgskin's theory of value ? The assertion that the real cost of a commodity was labour stands in the same relation to Marx's theory of value as a single cell stands to an organism. Marx arrived at his theory of value in this way. He did not apply to psychology or to any speculative philosophy, but to the manufacturer's office. From there, from the actual calculations of the capitalist or his head clerk, he learned that the cost of production determined value. Marx thought that in a non-capitalist society the determinant of value may be utility, or beauty, or the quality interest in a thing to promote virtue and goodness ; in the capitalist society, however, it is the cost of production which determines value. But what is cost of production ? Expenditure of fixed and circulating capital, plus the usual

profit. The question then arose, where does the profit come from? The search for the source of profit took him away from the manufacturer's office, where he could get no satisfactory reply, and he went to his study to analyse the whole process of production from the materials which he had gathered. He then wrote his Chapter I. of "Capital" (vol. I.). He formulated his theory of value, making it the key to unlock the hidden mechanism of the capitalist system. While his anti-capitalist and socialist predecessors, Ravenstone, Thompson, Hodgskin, &c., only arrived at a rough formulation of exchange value and surplus value and, stopping there, made it into their main weapon for the defence of the dogma that the whole produce of labour ought to belong to the labourer, Marx put that dogma aside and starting from the recognition of the essence of value and profit, gave us an analysis of the rise, operations, growth, and final outcome of capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

Carried away by the grandeur of his sociological structure, he undoubtedly overlooked many imperfections, but his system as a whole will stand as a monument of the age of the rise and growth of industrialism, which is sure to be counted among the most remarkable epochs of human thought and power.

M. B.

[NOTE.—The foregoing review, with its clear differentiation of Marxian theory from the vulgar types of Labour theory, is opportune for clearing out of the way a misconception which has arisen from a statement made in a review by E. C. W. last month on "The Canonisation of Hardie." E. C. W., in combating the notion that Hardie's socialism was not economic in character, quotes very justly his preamble to the rules of the Ayrshire Miners' Union, beginning "All wealth is created by Labour," and goes on to refer to it as "a terse summary of Marxian doctrine." The latter statement, of course, overshoots the mark, and the writer of the review did not intend it to be taken literally. Marx, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, strongly criticises the view that all wealth is created by Labour. We are indebted to a number of correspondents for calling attention to this point.—Editor, LABOUR MONTHLY.]

### A WORKING-CLASS HISTORY?

*A World History for the Workers.* By Alfred Barton. Labour Publishing Company, 2s. 6d.; cloth, 3s. 6d.

THERE is no need to apologise for writing a history of the world from the point of view of the workers. There must be a view-point to govern selection from the accumulated data of centuries, there must be a guiding principle for the interpretation of the data. In a sketch, like the one under review, of little more than 120 small pages the perspective is all important and should throw into relief the relative importance of the factors that are thought to have determined the succession of historical events. In the

<sup>1</sup> Marx deals fully with Hodgskin in his "Theorien über den Mehrwert," vol. iii., pp. 309, 313-380. This volume was written in 1862-3, but published posthumously in 1910 at Stuttgart.

final result the best and truest history is that which demonstrates the action of the most fundamental factors, and which therefore allows of the clearest understanding of the historical process. A view-point is not valuable in itself, but only in the measure that it achieves this result.

Unfortunately this cannot be claimed for the standpoint adopted by the author of this book. He defiantly declares his history to be written "from the standpoint of the disinherited," but he cannot claim that his standpoint is more fundamental than others because he happens to be one of the disinherited. His study is written from his personal idea of a worker's view-point, and unfortunately that is not the same as the working-class view-point, which represents a new stage in human development.

Not that he has written a bad book. The book is in many ways an achievement to be proud of. It is eminently readable (its very succession of chapter headings is a compelling invitation to read it), it contains a wealth of interesting quotations, it covers an enormous field, and is written in simple and graphic language.

The author claims that he has tried to make history "move," and further, that he has tried to make the reader feel "the forces at work that have changed and are changing the face of human society." Compared with the mass of tendentious or incomprehensible irrelevancies that constitute the "impartial" text books of history, he has certainly succeeded. But it is impossible not to conclude that, try as he may, he does not really understand the forces at work. When, in broad outline, there is an obvious working-class interpretation he states it clearly enough. Thus he has no hesitation in interpreting the Renaissance as the advent of capitalism. But where the working of the class forces is not so obvious he either falls back on any superficial view, or his "moving" history simply becomes a cinema film without importance or meaning. In explanation of feudalism he writes, "The idea of feudalism was that of homage." He has a whole section on the horrors of slavery, but no consecutive account of the origin of the proletariat.

He has inordinate praise for liberal and nationalist struggles. "Holland," we are told, "won its freedom from Spain after a long heroic struggle, one of the most glorious in history"; or again, "The heroic struggles for national independence of Italy are some of the finest pages of history." But the Commune of Paris is dismissed as "an attempt at social experiment," and the Russian Revolution is given just the dubious welcome accorded to it by open-minded liberals such as Bertrand Russell.

It is when he comes to deal with the present day that his lack of insight becomes so conspicuous and his failure so enormous.

What are we to say of a history from the workers' point of view which has a separate chapter on "after the war" containing no mention of imperialism except to say that "Imperialism and political Nationalism are anachronisms"? What are we to say of a history that can sum up by saying, "The most crucial problem is that of international peace," and go on in such a mental fog as to

conclude, "It may come through a League of Nations . . . or it may arise from an International League of Workers of the World"? What are we to say of such woolly-minded exhortations as that "it is the duty of every lover of progress to promote all international links which bind the world together," or such sentimental optimism as that "there is a tendency to agree about the disposition of the world which with a Labour-Socialist outlook would be a step in the direction of peace"?

Is this the workers' point of view? It is nothing but the typical expression of liberal pacifism. It shows clearly that the author has no understanding of social forces, that he is not a realist. He confesses as much himself in writing, "Lenin calls himself a 'realist,' a word hitherto used by reactionaries to conceal their hatred of the idealism that alone can inspire men to work for a noble future. The meaning of the phrase as used by the Bolsheviks appears to be that the town workers must hold the reins of power at all costs until communism is established"! The idea of estimating forces at work apart from his own desires and ideals is apparently unknown to him. No wonder that his outlook on the war is little more than orthodox pacifism, that his account of the betrayal of the peace is the usual pacifist story without any understanding, and that, for instance, he can speak of the "drivelling idiocy of the Allied Governments in regard to Russia." It is this absence of understanding of class forces that again and again leads him to lay emphasis on the wrong points and to arrive at the wrong conclusions.

Instead of estimating the class forces at work he tries to interpret history in terms of some evolutionary ideal, in terms of progress and the "Life Force." He begins with a chapter on Evolution which, by the way, betrays more than a little biological ignorance. "The earliest forms of life are simply specks of jelly" is meaningless as it stands, "sexual germination" is a term unknown to biology, while the idea that "adaptations added to adaptations cause organisms to vary enormously" is a new theory of the cause of variation. The calm assumption that the destiny of man is "the sublime task of glorifying the earth on which he dwells," or that "the growing consciousness of man seems to be the goal of evolution" sounds very like religious dogmatism; but, whatever it is, it is certainly not a scientific description of the forces that are changing the face of society.

How are we to explain this failure? The author has honestly endeavoured to present a Labour view of history. He has indeed succeeded in presenting a "Labour" point of view, but it is not the same thing as a working-class point of view. What he has presented is, in fact, a reflection of the views of the Labour Movement of this country, *i.e.*, of a heterogeneous body with a miscellaneous collection of vague ideals and no clear philosophy. Because of the absence of a developed working-class movement here, thought in terms of class forces is something almost unknown, and the author has been unable to burst the bonds of his environment. Hence it is that, instead of a working-class



philosophy, he can only present us with a miscellany of reputed Labour views present in Labour circles. As it is at present, the book should prove very serviceable to the W.E.A. For the real working-class history we must wait for the real working-class movement.

C. P. D.

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- Americanism: A World Menace.* By W. T. Colyer. Preface by Tom Mann. Labour Publishing Company, 6s.
- Thinking.* An Introduction to its History and Science. By Fred Casey. Labour Publishing Company, 4s. 6d.
- Out of the Past.* Some Revolutionary Sketches. By R. W. Postgate. Labour Publishing Company, 5s.
- India's Awakening.* By Wilfred Wellock. Labour Publishing Company, 2s. 6d.
- The Press.* Labour Research Department. Studies in Labour and Capital, Vol. II. Labour Publishing Company, 1s.
- The British Labour Movement.* Syllabus Series No. 1. By G. D. H. Cole. Labour Research Department, 6d.
- The Development of Capitalism.* Syllabus Series No. 2. By Maurice H. Dobb. Labour Research Department, 6d.
- Finance.* Syllabus Series No. 3. By Emile Burns. Labour Research Department, 6d.
- English Economic History.* Syllabus Series No. 4. By G. D. H. Cole. Labour Research Department, 6d.
- Bars and Shadows.* The Prison Poems of Ralph Chaplin, I.W.W. With an Introduction by Scott Nearing. Allen & Unwin, 2s. 6d.

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