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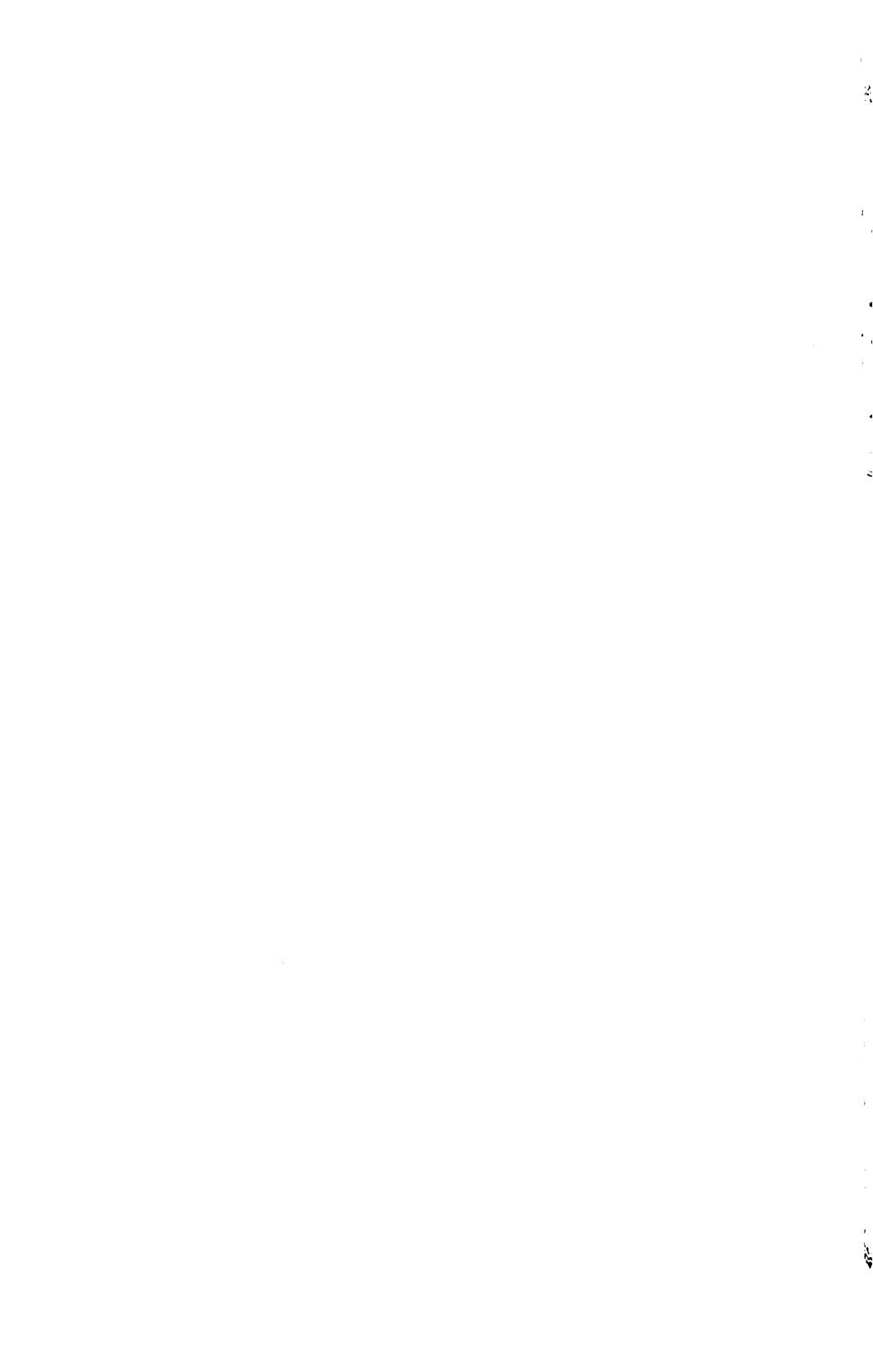


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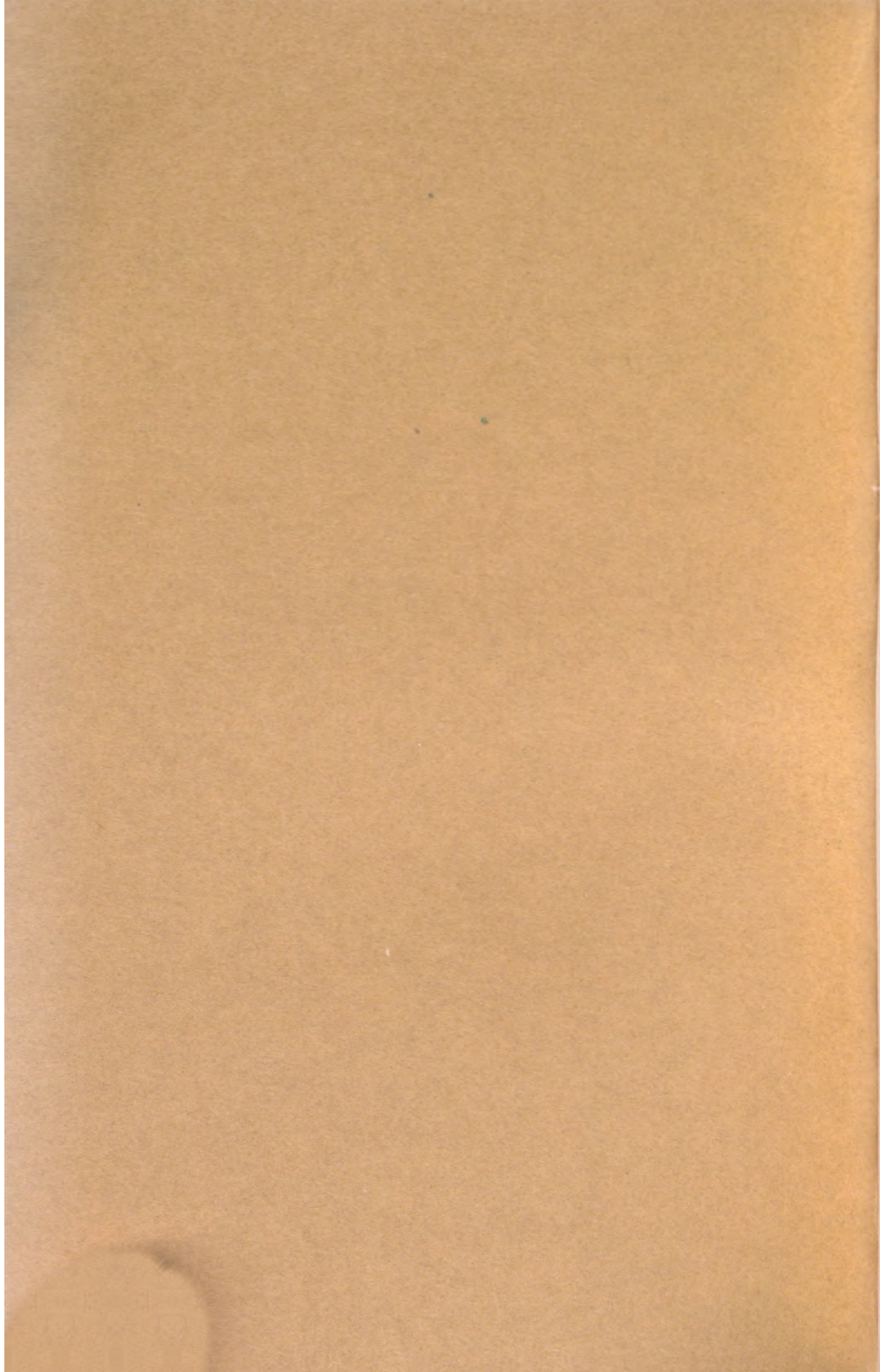
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A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

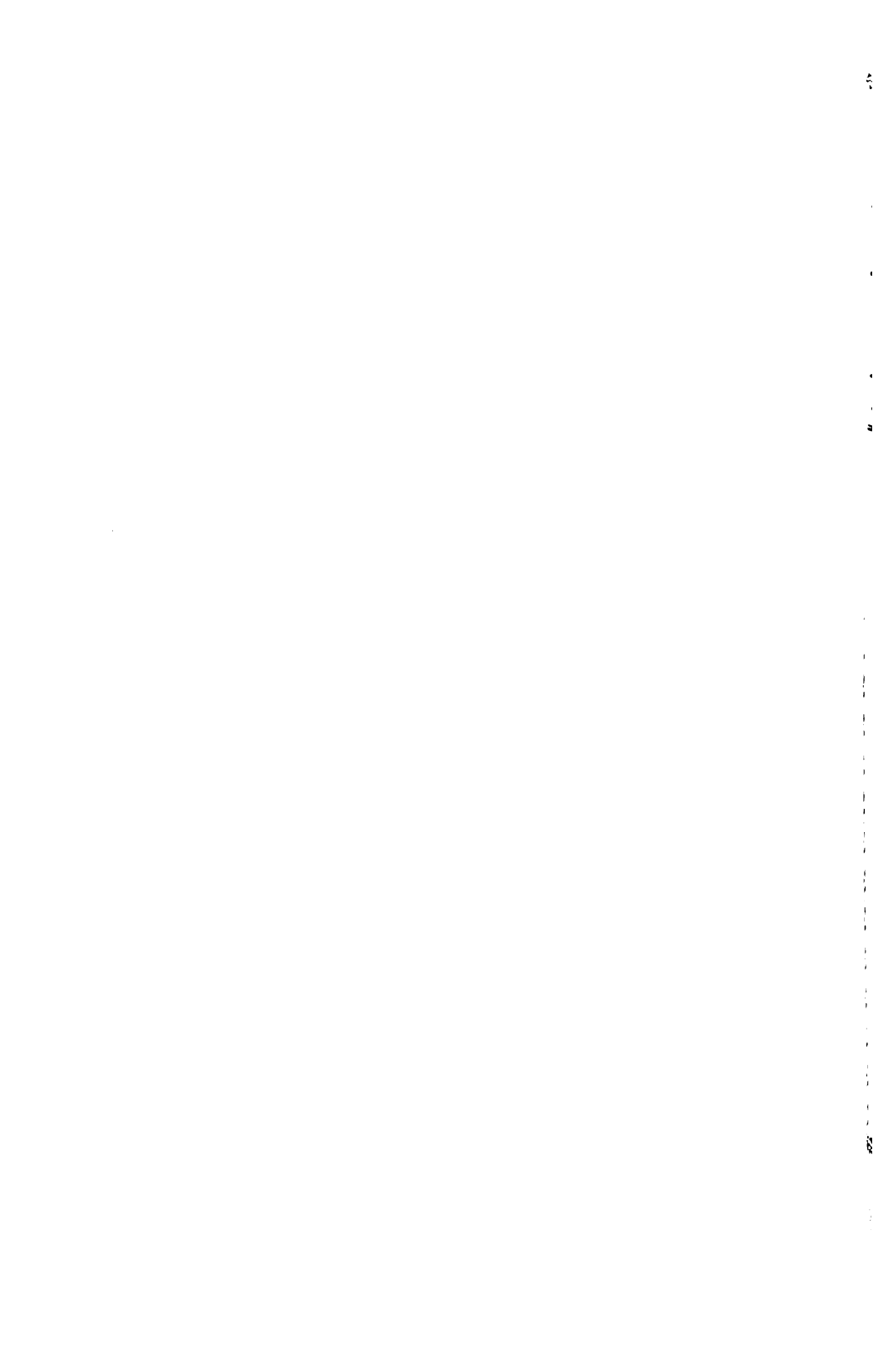
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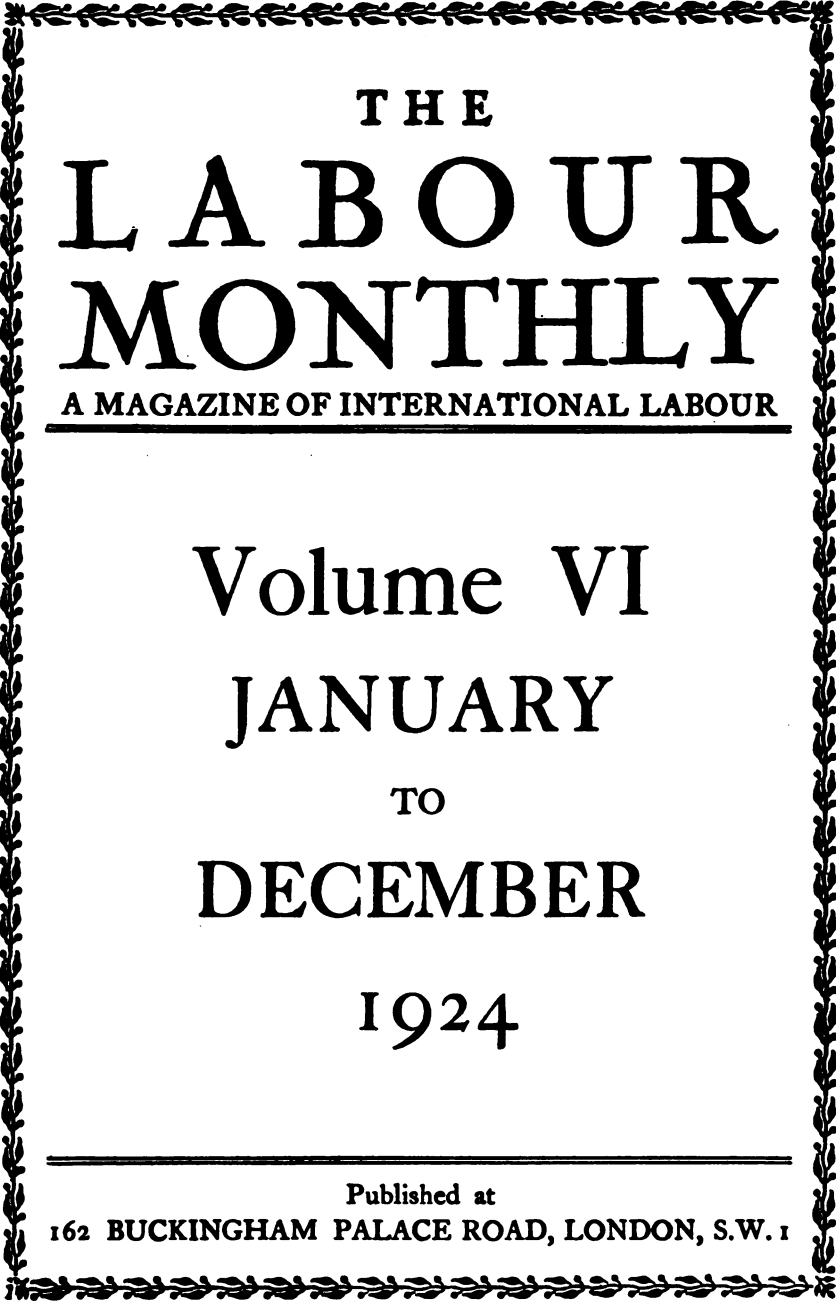
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THE LABOUR MONTHLY





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Volume VI
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Editor : R. PALME DUTT

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NOTES of the MONTH

The Test—Seeing It Through—Tasks and Problems—Propaganda or Achievement—No Veiled Coalition—Unemployment the Issue—What of Maintenance?—What of Work?—Where is the Money?—The Only Way—Unity First

THE greatest test so far has come to the working-class movement of this country. With startling suddenness the whole question of a Labour Government and all that it involves has come to the forefront. Within a few weeks of the writing of this a Labour Government may have been formed. The issues raised by this are tremendous and urgent, and there is little enough preparedness for them. Every step and act now will have an historic responsibility for a long period to come. Whether the proposed Labour Government is actually formed or not (and at present it looks as if the bourgeoisie is preparing to accept it as the least of many evils) there can be no question that with the results of the election just held a new period has been opened. Real politics have begun. The old controversies, the old pioneering work of preparation, the old discussions and speculations and debating performances are over. The struggle for power is here.

THE struggle for power is here, and there can be no end to it until victory is complete and secure. From henceforth a definite, concrete object is placed before the whole working class to unify its endeavours and call forth its most supreme purpose. That object is not this or that particular measure, not this or that sectional or limited aim; the object is Power itself, the Power of Government and the State, Power to mould the world anew and bring in a workers' society. Once that grand object is firmly printed in the minds of all the workers, is made vivid to all by the struggle now opening, and is stamped in their very being by the episodes of its unfolding fortunes, then the workers will have awakened to a new consciousness which will overcome all their

present difficulties and despondencies and carry them forward to irresistible triumph. Whatever the stages that will have to be gone through, whatever the defeats and setbacks, whatever the shedding of illusions and dropping of false hopes, that struggle, once entered on, will have to be carried through. It is not the port of a voyage that is being entered into with the first Labour Government nor with the second, but the beginning of a struggle whose magnitude is still hardly guessed at by most. Therefore the first need for all of us at the present moment, whatever our differences, whatever our criticisms and distrusts, is to unite in support of a Workers' Government and its supremacy first and foremost, and to exert all our forces one and all to fight on its behalf foursquare against the whole capitalist world.

THE conditions under which the first Workers' Government is likely to be formed are of exceptional difficulty. All normal imaginings have calculated on the assumption of entering on to power on the basis of a definite majority and proceeding to tackle the problems of administration. To-day the situation is wholly different. The problem of the Labour Government is not an administrative, nor even a legislative, problem. It is a tactical problem. The Labour Government is to be entered into for a single purpose—to prepare the way. The normal anticipations have, in fact, been forestalled, not because the majority has been achieved sooner than expected, but because it has become understood that the formation of a Labour Government itself may only be a stage in tactics in a continuous struggle. The coming Labour Government, if it is formed, may be able to effect certain definite things, such as the recognition of Russia, even though it lasts only the shortest time. But in the main it will only exist to prepare for the next General Election.

SHOULD our object be Propaganda or Achievement in a Labour Government under such conditions? This question is sometimes asked, but the question is wrongly stated. It assumes a pair of alternatives neither of which exist. It assumes on the one

hand the possibility of a solid achievement which the circumstances preclude. This is just the path along which Liberal capitalist "friends" would like to tempt the Labour Party, knowing that it would under such circumstances be in their power. It is the *Manchester Guardian* which expatiates on "the immense opportunities which Labour may now have of carrying a whole series of constructive reforms and proving itself to be a party capable in a high degree of governing, and worthy as such of the confidence of the country." This fine talk deceives no one as to the basis of Liberal dependence which is intended by it. On the other hand, to lay down propaganda as the object is to suggest a kind of negative desire to accomplish nothing because the desired majority is not there. These two alternatives equally do not express the issue, which is a real one, as to the line a Labour Government under the present circumstances should adopt. A more exact expression needs to be found.

WHAT is the issue which has to be settled with regard to a Labour Government on a minority basis? That issue may be simply and clearly expressed. It is whether to look for capitalist support or working-class support. Any attempt to calculate in terms of what will be accepted and go through is in practice to court the deciding support of the capitalist representatives. It is obvious that any such position is impossible for a Labour Government, and above all one which is trying to establish its position for the future with the working-class electorate. It is one thing to make use of existing divisions, lines of policy, election pledges, &c., in the capitalist ranks in order to take advantage of them. It is another to be dependent on such a basis for the character of the programme to be put forward on fundamental issues. Such a suggestion cannot be entertained. It is only a veiled form of coalition. A Labour Government must proclaim a working-class programme and build on working-class support, not only for the sake of the present, but still more for the sake of the future. This does not mean to raise some sudden disruption as a grand total of activity. But it does mean to put forward a positive programme—what to do in the present situation and how to do it.

IT is here that arises the real practical problem. The issue on which a Labour Government will stand or fall is one and one alone—Unemployment. All the other issues are by comparison easily outlined, and raise no special questions at this moment. Housing cannot immediately be more than a question of a scheme, even though rents call for attention at once. Foreign policy, apart from the recognition of Russia, cannot yield immediate results. Democratic reform—universal suffrage, the abolition of the House of Lords, &c.—should certainly be put in hand, though it cannot occupy the forefront of attention. But Unemployment brooks no waiting. The unemployed are there, two millions of them, suffering daily on miserable pittances, many of them in receipt of nothing, hundreds of thousands falling outside the scope of insurance or cheated of anything by one or another of a hundred devices, those in receipt struggling to exist on scales which consider five shillings a week sufficient for a man's wife and one shilling a week for his child. The *Daily Herald* Commissioner has been describing vividly enough the lives of those actually adrift. What is a Labour Government to mean to all these people? What can it offer to their anxiety and hopes? That is the question of questions for a Labour Government.

A LABOUR Government on a minority cannot be expected to show easy successful action or immediate results straight away. That must be recognised, and there will be patient understanding of the position on the part of the workers. But a Labour Government must show a real programme to deal with unemployment and readiness to fight on that programme. What is that programme? This is the question that must be answered. What in practical terms is the Labour policy on unemployment? The old slogan has been Work or Maintenance. But that slogan will now have to be defined. What work? What maintenance? How is it to be provided? Take first the question of maintenance, since it is clear that work cannot be provided at once for two million people. What is to be the maintenance scale? What the conditions? It is universally agreed, and has been a commonplace of Labour platforms, that the present scale is impossible. But what is the

Labour scale? The last figure officially adopted was that at the Special Emergency Conference on Unemployment at the Kingsway Hall. There the figure was 25s. for a single man and 40s. for a married couple. Does that resolution still hold? Or is the figure the National Unemployed figure? No matter what the figure, any attempt at improvement raises at once one question. A great deal of money will be required. Even supposing it is considered impossible actually to deal with the existing rates at present, it will be manifestly necessary as a minimum to end the gap, review the exceptions, provide in some way for the uninsured, and in fact afford some real national all-in basis of provision, however scanty, for the unemployed in place of the present mockery. But this will require financial provision which does not at present exist.

IF we turn to the question of Work, the problem is even more acute. The existing proposals of the Trades Facilities Act, acceleration of Government orders, and even schemes of afforestation, &c., can clearly absorb only a small proportion of the unemployed. And these also will require money. But if anything serious is to be attempted, if vast national schemes are to be undertaken to absorb even the greater proportion of two million unemployed, then a tremendous volume of money will be required. Baldwin's fifty millions—in any case hypothetical—was laughed out of court as a pitiful drop in a bucket to deal with the unemployed, covering at most, even on the most optimistic figures, perhaps a couple of hundred thousand of the unemployed. It is clear that, if serious provision is to be made, even on a conservative estimate, something very much nearer a thousand millions would be wanted.

WHERE is the money to come from? That is the root question for a Labour Government. Everything turns on this. If Baldwin only offered fifty millions, and that imaginary, for unemployment, it was not because he was unaware that a hundred millions would be at any rate twice as popular and two hundred millions four times as popular, but because he did not know where to raise it. Where will the Labour Government raise it? From revenue? There is little enough to be raised in the way of cutting expenditure that has not been tried already, so long as

the sacred mountain of the debt is left untouched, and even the cutting of armaments, unless carried out with a pacifist recklessness that is improbable, will not yield anything much. The Capital Levy is ruled out. In any case it was only intended for debt redemption. The interest saved by debt redemption will not be available, as it has already been promised for other purposes. Even if it were taken the figure would not amount, assuming a capital levy of three thousand millions, to more than one hundred and fifty millions at the best, from which half would have to be deducted for loss of revenue, leaving a figure of seventy or eighty millions, probably promised already several times over for the reduction of income tax, abolition of corporation profits duty, repeal of all food taxes, and ending of the entertainments duty. Besides, the capital levy is admittedly placed on the shelf by the present political situation. What remains? The only suggestion is a Loan. A great National Development Loan is proposed to raise the necessary finance. What serious prospect is there of this? It would mean a tremendous loan comparable with the great war loans, raised only under the supreme capitalist stimulus of war. What equal stimulus is there now? A high rate of interest? But from a Government which openly professes the Capital Levy as a means of wiping out the payment of interest on debt! No doubt the bankers will be so innocent as not to think of this. Or perhaps they will be eager to produce money in hundreds of millions for expenditure a great part of which must be unproductive in an immediate commercial sense. Perhaps patriotism will move them? No doubt the City of London will fall over itself to make a Labour Government's scheme a success, as Premier Theodore could relate. Or perhaps the security will tempt them? The security of a Labour Government which is admittedly in existence on sufferance perhaps only for a few weeks. The whole conception is remote from any actuality, and to entertain it seriously is to court failure.

WHAT, then, is to be done? Neither taxation, nor the capital levy, nor a loan can solve the problem—the fundamental problem which faces a Labour Government. We believe that the plain facts of the case show, and will

increasingly show to all the movement, that there is only one thing to be done—and that is to establish control of the banks and banking credit. Either the Government must control the banks or the banks will control the Government. A Labour Government which has to come begging to its enemies, the great financial interests, for permission to carry out its schemes on their terms is a pathetic spectacle. Which in that case is the real Government of the country—the Labour Cabinet on its knees or the banks with the whip in their hand. A Labour Government must be a real Government or nothing, the unquestioned sovereign authority in the land. The credit is there, waiting to be used and needing to be used for the great productive and social purposes into which a Labour Government would wish to direct it. All that is needed is the determination of the Labour Government and the working class behind them that it shall be so used and no monopoly interests shall be allowed to stand in the way. The same applies, and will be found increasingly with every piece of experience to apply, to every field of industry. Not bargaining with the capitalist interests, not hole-and-corner schemes of a canal here and a bridge there by gracious permission of the capitalist rulers while leaving them in unchallenged possession of the great monopolist industries they are unable to run, but State control of all the great industries of the country by a Labour Government with the full backing of the working class through every pit and factory—that is the only weapon to deal with the present economic situation of the country.

THIS is a practical question. There is no wish at this moment to endeavour to force alternative programmes or issues upon a Labour Government or to complicate its path or embarrass its support. But these issues are bound to arise, and they will have to be faced. It is not a question of particular policies or principles. It is a question of how the thing is to be done. And the sense of the danger if what is proposed or attempted should fall short through lack of recognition of these questions, and if in consequence a wave of disillusionment or disbelief should pass through the masses and ruin the movement that has been built up, compels the earliest and most urgent attention now. But, lest there

be any misunderstanding, let this be said at once. Whatever the programme adopted, whatever the measures and proposals, so long as the Labour Government stands clear for independent Labour, for the organised working-class movement against the capitalist parties, then the first duty of all is to support it, no matter whether they agree with its programme or not, because the formation and the battle of a Labour Government is the first beginning of the struggle of the whole working class against capitalism.

R. P. D.

TOWARDS A NEW POLICY

By W. H. HUTCHINSON

THE issues of the General Election and the Parliamentary crisis have temporarily obscured from view the problems of the organised working-class movement revealed by the Plymouth Trades Union Congress. Nevertheless, these problems have to be faced, and the sooner the better.

There is no question that the present position of the organised movement is very serious. The movement is weaker than it has been for a considerable time passed; the conditions of the workers are very bad; there is very great confusion of policy and action; and there is a marked discontent inside the membership with what is felt to be a failure of the existing leadership. I know very much can be said to counterbalance these points, but these facts need to be faced, and it is better to face them frankly at the outset and consider what needs to be done.

What are the causes that are responsible for the present weakness? It is possible to set down a variety of causes, all of them having their measure of truth.

It is often said that the present position is simply a reflection of the economic situation and trade depression. The trade depression has led to cuts in wages. Lower wages have created discontent and diminishing numbers. The exhaustion of union funds has weakened the unions, and failure to continue benefits has sapped the confidence of many. Some have simply taken advantage of the decline to let their payments lapse.

All this is true, but it is not the whole truth. For to be satisfied with these points as the explanation of the whole position is to confess failure. A healthy movement is stimulated and strengthened by adversity to fresh endeavour, to self-criticism, to stronger organisation and preparation. It is the weakness of our own movement that is brought out by bad times. To be satisfied, therefore, with pointing to the bad times as a justification is to miss the whole meaning of the present position. It is simply to take the

whole crisis fatalistically, and to present no policy whatever other than to wait for a possibly mythical trade revival. Such an attitude would be equivalent to a confession of bankruptcy of the whole movement.

It is necessary to look within for the weakness which we must find a way to remedy.

Now it is easy for anyone to lay a finger on a score of weaknesses of the existing organised movement. It is easy to point out the division of organisations, the multiplicity, the lack of co-ordination, the internal quarrels, the distrust between officials and the rank and file, &c., but all these are themselves only symptoms of something that is deeper.

I believe that the fundamental weakness of the existing movement is the lack of a clear common aim and objective. The movement has grown up haphazard under conditions of a day that is past; under the conditions of that time limited organisations with a limited objective could achieve marked successes for their members, and it was upon these successes that the traditions of the great skilled unions which still dominate the movement were built up.

But to-day we are thrown into a new world. The economic and political crisis let loose by the war, and intensified after the war, and the changed industrial position of Great Britain, have all affected the whole situation of the working class of this country. The skilled trades no longer occupy the peculiar position of exemption from the crisis which at present affects all workers equally.

The separate workers of separate trades have merged into the whole working class. Large world issues, issues of war, trade, prices, unemployment, the whole running of industry affect all workers equally, more intensely, and more intimately than any separate conditions of separate trades. Even in their separate day-to-day economic struggles the workers find themselves brought up, not simply against the individual employers, but against the Government and the State. They are faced with the attack of the capitalists as a class. And all the time their own outlook and organisation follows the old limited lines. In consequence, defeat is inevitable. The lack of a common class conception, which previously did not seem to matter to the practical man in the

movement, is now seen to leave the workers helpless to fight even their every-day fight.

Thus the necessity of a new policy is forced upon the movement by the present position. The old aims and the old organisations are thrown into doubt. It becomes open to question how much longer we can hope to gain anything on the old lines ; how far there can be any improvement of wages and conditions under the economic decay of British capitalism. If we are to go forward at all, we have to be ready—a united force with a positive policy of advance against capitalism. It is clear that here we are concerned with something more than mending this or that in our machinery. A new aim and a new outlook is required, in accordance with which we must re-model our whole movement.

The old movement is trying to go on without any adaptation to new conditions; that is the secret of the present position. The consequences of that position are to be seen alike in the defeats and weakness of the movement, and in the suffering and despair of the mass of the workers. These consequences, if allowed to continue unchecked, are so serious as to compel every responsible reader who feels conscious of the position to speak frankly what he sees.

What are the prospects if something is not done radically to change the position? There are two alternatives, the symptoms of both of which have already revealed themselves.

One alternative is the blind and anarchic revolt of sections of the rank and file, already shown in the growing tendency of unofficial strikes, repudiation of authority of leaders, and even break aways from the accredited organisation. These tendencies are too often treated as simply occasion for individual blame or moral exhortation to leaders of men: but they are really the symptoms of a disease which lies deeper and for which we have to find the remedy.

The other alternative is even more serious. Revolt is at any rate something positive, however confused and destructive. But the much more probable alternative is simply apathy. If hope and confidence in the unions die down and are not replaced by a new and larger hope and confidence, then we may expect to see, and deserve to see, a creeping paralysis of apathy producing decline,

and decline in its turn producing apathy in an endless vicious circle.

These are the two alternatives in front of us if a serious attempt is not made to face the whole position and mark out the future path. Revolt or apathy—both alike are equally fatal to the future of the movement. Yet as long as we are content to leave the position as revealed at the Plymouth Congress we can hope for no other result.

A new movement has to develop within the body of trade unionism.

It is not a separate movement, or a movement for a particular scheme or formula that is wanted, but a common movement of all elements that sincerely wish to remedy the present lamentable situation and bring a revival of our forces. Such a movement must be based upon a common programme, going beyond the separate aims of separate sections, and setting out the common aims for all the workers to set before themselves.

In a future article I shall be glad to contribute to the formulation of such a programme, which should in any case represent the outcome of common consultation and discussion of representative leaders. For the present, I am concerned particularly with the steps that can be taken immediately.

From where are we to look for this new impulse, which is at the moment admittedly necessary? It is clear that, to be a healthy and vigorous one, it must come from the body of the workers themselves. But where are the forms of expression through which such a revival can find its way?

Looking round the existing field of the moment I think it is from the Trades Councils that we must look for the new impulse towards the solidarity and common action of the working class as a whole. The importance, or rather the potential importance, of the Trades Councils in the present period is still not generally realised. In the past they have been rather adjuncts to the movement than definite parts of it. But in the period that is now coming, the transitional period of working-class organisation in which we are groping our way towards the realisation of greater unity, they hold the secret of the position. For on our development of the Trades Councils depends the development of working-class unity, not merely at the top, but right throughout the movement.

The General Council can only function effectively when it is securely supported by a basis of strong and active local organisations such as the Trades Councils. The weakness of the General Council at present is not so much its lack of formal power, as is commonly said (even if it were theoretically endowed with power it is doubtful if it would attempt to use it in the face of the real sovereignty of the great unions), but rather the lack of any conscious and organised backing throughout the movement on which it can rely. Such an effective backing the Trades Councils alone can supply.

Many Trades Councils have already made notable efforts towards enlarging the scope of their activities and developing as unifying bodies of the local movement. It has been customary to ignore or even to discourage such developments. This is a fatal mistake. Such tendencies should be encouraged and assisted along right lines. The Trades Councils can never play a great part until the district committees or other industrial authorities of the unions are ready to link up with the Trades Councils, and it is important that this should become the practice. At the same time the tradition of the Trades Councils should be regularised by their admission to the Trades Union Congress (the technical difficulties in the way of this could be overcome in various ways). There is no question here of duplicate representation, but of the representation of different capacities: on the one hand, the trade functions and national basis of the unions, on the other the reflection of the local expression of the workers without distinction of trades. Both are essential to make the Trades Union Congress a real expression of the whole movement.

The recent Birmingham Conference of Trades Councils is a significant development. It reveals the strength of the natural tendencies within the Trades Councils towards greater self-assertion and extension of their rôle. Many have felt that this development carries danger within it. There is no doubt of the danger, if the movement is allowed to grow up in separation. But the actual present policy of the conference has been confined to a strictly legitimate advocacy of a place within the Trades Union Congress and the development of the rôle of the Trades Councils as local propaganda bodies. Such a policy deserves support, and the movement should not be allowed to grow up in separation.

At the same time as we develop the local bodies of the movement, we must deal with the question of the centre body. While all will agree that the extension of the powers of the General Council, as fast as the movement is ripe for it, is an essential step of the future, it is not the primary step. The first necessity is to overcome those difficulties and causes of friction between the leading national bodies which stand in the way of effective unification being realised. To hope to accomplish this by a long-drawn process of amalgamation is to dream an idle dream which does not realise the complexities of the situation. Were the movement being organised afresh for the first time things might be done differently. But as things are, amalgamation can only touch the fringe of the problem. What is wanted is an effective policy of demarcation clearly laid out and resolutely enforced, to make internal dissensions and confusions impossible in the future.

These, then, are the immediate steps before us that I can see:—

A common programme to unite all the most active elements in the Trade Union Movement on immediate common aims ;

Development of the Trades Councils as the local unifying bodies of the working class, with right of delegation to the Trades Union Congress ;

A demarcation policy to make an end of all cases of overlapping, confusion, competing organisations, &c.

In putting forward these propositions, I am conscious that it is not possible to do more in an introductory article than to touch on the outskirts of a very large field. The actual proposals that may be made are at the moment less important than the realisation that such proposals must be forthcoming. It is rather with a view to opening up the whole subject than to making any claim to lay down what should or should not be done that I have put forward these considerations on the whole position of the movement for the serious attention of all who have the future of the movement at heart, and in doing so I shall be glad to hear of contributions that any may have to make on the subject.

THE GENERAL ELECTION AND BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

By R. PALME DUTT

THE results of the British General Election are likely to mean a change in the whole international situation. British and French reaction have been the firm basis on which European reaction was built. That basis is now shaking, and the election results reveal its approaching fall.

Internally, the results mean that Britain is no longer in proud and secure isolation unshaken by the currents agitating Europe, but that Britain is now reduced to the same situation of chronic parliamentary crisis, party deadlocks, shifting combinations, and all the time the growing working-class challenge. Britain is made part of Europe and social and revolutionary politics begin in Britain.

Externally, the results are immediately even more important. The whole fabric of British foreign and imperial policy is profoundly shaken and an entirely new set of forces is likely to come into play. How immediate will be the changes will depend on conditions: but there is no doubt that a change of immense significance for European history is about to take place. The full force of this change affecting the whole line of development of world capitalism demands to be understood in relation to the whole position of British capitalism after the war.

British Capitalism After the War

British capitalism has been in a position of extreme difficulty since the war. The triumphant crushing of the hated German rival, and the apparent establishment of the British Empire on a basis of undreamt of strength, very soon turned out to be a barren victory. In the place of the German rival, two new rivals were found to have arisen, each more formidable and unyielding than the German: on the one hand, the French hegemony of Europe;

on the other, the American hegemony of the world. At the same time the British Empire was weakened by internal divisions and the growing strength and independence of the Dominions.

In consequence, since the war, immediately after the elation of the boom of prosperity that first succeeded to the war and then burst like a bubble, the British bourgeoisie has been engaged in a desperate struggle in four great spheres.

First, in relation to the Empire and the world leadership of finance.

Second, in relation to the Empire and the formidable disruptive tendencies within it.

Third, in relation to France and the leadership of Europe and the Near East.

Fourth, in relation to the Labour Movement at home and the threat of revolutionary tendencies.

In three of these spheres—America, the Empire, and the Labour Movement—the bourgeoisie has succeeded for the moment in maintaining its position at a heavy cost. In the fourth, Europe, it has failed.

In relation to America, Britain has succeeded in maintaining its financial credit at a terrific cost, though the old financial hegemony and the old naval supremacy is lost. The pound still keeps near the level of the dollar, though of late months it has begun to fall. The price has been the ruinous debt settlement, involving the payment of thirty millions a year tribute for sixty years and the stagnation of British industry paralysed by dear money and resultant high export prices, and consequently now beginning to rebel and demand the path of inflation.

In relation to the Empire, the governing financial groups and military bureaucracy have succeeded in suppressing the universal war of revolt that swept through all the subject millions and in reaching some kind of an accommodation, however limited and insecure, with the growing self-assertion of the colonial bourgeoisie. The highest point of disruption was reached in the Chanak crisis, when some of the Dominions refused to answer the call of the London Government for war, and in the American-Canadian Treaty immediately after, which was signed with the deliberate exclusion of Britain. The patched-up settlement, based on no common

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positive policy, but only on an undefined negative unity, and the immediate concession of limited economic and financial advantages, was reached at the Imperial Conference which has just concluded.

In relation to the Labour Movement, the ruthless capitalist offensive, which has cut wages by 50 per cent. and brought down standards far below the intolerable pre-war conditions, has succeeded with such fatal completeness in destroying for the moment all effective opposition as to have dealt a heavy blow to British industry by the virtual annihilation of the home market, with the result that a considerable section of the employers are themselves calling for a reversal of policy. The unconscious character of the working-class movement in this country, bred in the stable conditions of British monopolist industry without knowledge of the revolutionary class struggle, and the consequent combined corruption and stupidity of the Labour bureaucracy, made the workers, despite their instincts of resistance, an easy prey for the scientific capitalist offensive. Only in the last year has the tremendous growth of the Labour Party, and the first beginnings of a serious Communist movement, brought within view once more a real approaching menace from the working class.

But in relation to Europe, the British bourgeoisie, already thus heavily occupied in other directions, has met with complete and unmitigated failure.

Britain versus France

French diplomacy rapidly seized the character of the post-war period: the rule of military and economic force, the collapse of democracy, the dominance of the issue of revolution and counter-revolution, and the possibility, through the union of counter-revolution and the ruthless subordination of all normal prudential considerations to one objective, of the establishment of an economic, military, and political hegemony in Europe.

By the occupation of German territory and the assiduous demoralisation of the German Government and the establishment of a ring of client States beyond Germany France could establish effective control of almost all the coal and iron resources and a great proportion of the railways of Central Europe. By judicious subsidies and military missions, she could establish financial and strategic

leadership of the new States. On this basis she could establish a virtual dictatorship in Europe, based on a series of subordinate petty dictatorships, such as to-day, when it is complete, constitutes a system of power unparalleled in European history since the Napoleonic times—and with this difference from that period, that whereas the Napoleonic system was a system of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, unchaining the forces of bourgeois nationalism in Europe, this is a system of the bourgeoisie in decay, laying its dead hand upon the rising forces of the proletariat.

Against this system, the growth of which was viewed by British eyes with growing apprehension, the British Government found itself powerless to intervene, because it had no weapon. The only effective course for Britain to contest the French system in Europe was open alliance with Germany and Russia. But the British ruling class shrank from such association with the latent and actual forces of revolution and the class consequences that such a union might bring throughout Europe. Britain remained tied to the heels of France in more and more unwilling partnership.

The most versatile of British politicians, Lloyd George, increasingly recognised the necessity of such a course. He gave signs of this recognition at a very early period after the Armistice, and finally in 1922, when British industry was already in a desperate position, he staked all upon the attempt in the Genoa Conference. But the mass of British bourgeois opinion, not yet equally alive to the realities of what was happening on the Continent, was hostile to the attempt. He failed, partly through the obstacles placed in the way by the French Government, partly through the concealed opposition of the Conservative forces on whose support he had to rely. When this failure was followed by the still more resounding failure in the Near East through the victory of Turkish Nationalist arms over the British protégé, Greece, Lloyd George fell. The Conservatives took over the Government under Bonar Law with Curzon continuing as Foreign Minister, now no longer under the very interfering thumb of Lloyd George.

Conservative Policy

The new Conservative Government immediately revised the whole Lloyd George - Balfour foreign policy. Through the

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Chancellor of the Exchequer, Baldwin, they effected an immediate unconditional settlement of the American debt on terms that aroused bitter and indignant comment even from its negotiators, without any attempt to use it as a bargaining weapon in relation to the European situation and inter-Allied debts and reparations. This was a surrender, out of which Lloyd George made heavy capital in the election campaign.

At the same time, in relation to France, the threatened Ruhr occupation, which Lloyd George had staved off so far by protracted diplomacy, alternating with threats, was at once passively allowed to take place to the accompaniment of mild expressions of benevolent neutrality and polite agreement to differ on the part of Bonar Law.

In place of these directions of policy, the Conservative Government, and particularly Curzon, yielded themselves up to their most cherished objective—war on Russia. All forces were concentrated on this objective and a tremendous propaganda campaign prepared: but the skill of the Soviet diplomacy robbed them of this prey.

In consequence, within a few months the Conservative Government found themselves faced with failure in all fields of their foreign policy. In Western Europe all initiative was surrendered to France, thus destroying British credit in Germany. In the Near East the Lausanne Conference witnessed the humiliating surrender by Curzon of Britain's traditional rights and privileges to the Turkish Nationalists they had despised. The offensive against Russia crumbled to nothing, and the representative Rakovsky had to be received, even though the fastidious Curzon refused to meet in person the hated symbol of Russian success.

British prestige had now fallen to a low ebb. Defeat followed defeat. Italy, the faithful barometer of European politics, turned against Britain and openly defied her over Greece and the occupation of Corfu. Britain tried vainly to invoke the League of Nations, only to the disastrous discrediting of both. Never, it was currently commented, had British authority in foreign policy fallen so low since the days of Charles II.

The Premier, Bonar Law, was an invalid cruising in foreign waters to recover his failing health. His successor, Baldwin, was a new man without experience or authority. Curzon was—Curzon.

By August the menace to British industry through the French occupation of the Ruhr was so serious that the British Government attempted to take action. A Note was dispatched, informing France of the illegality of her action and its certain failure, threatening separate action by Britain, and reminding her of the debt on which no interest had been paid.

This attempt came to nothing. Whatever the causes, which are still obscure, whether through pressure of the Conservative forces at home, or uncertainty as to the next step to be taken, or expectation of the impending French success in the Ruhr and hopes of participation, Baldwin met Poincaré and publicly "made it up" with him on no basis whatever.

Immediately after came the German surrender and the French victory, which recently received its culmination in the agreement with the German industrialists. British attention now speedily forgot that it had ever officially declared the Ruhr adventure "doomed to failure" and began to concentrate on how to get a share in the proceeds.

One more attempt at intervention was made on the basis of the American President, Coolidge's, repetition of the Hughes offer for an impartial conference of inquiry on reparations. French determination, undeterred by Baldwin's pathetic entreaties to think "once, twice, and thrice," rapidly defeated this offer.

The Liberal Attack

The discomfiture of British policy was complete. The Lloyd George camp, the National Liberals, and the National Conservatives (if the latter name may be used for the Birkenhead-Chamberlain-Balfour combination that allies with Lloyd George-Churchill), as also the Independent Liberals, lost no opportunity to make capital out of this failure. Britain has suffered "a sorry rebuff," declared Lloyd George. "It is the Empire snuffed out of Europe." "It almost seems," declared Asquith, "as if Great Britain has ceased to count among the Great Powers of the world."

Liberal opinion (followed as usual by the Labour leaders) declared openly for a break with France and for association with America to win France. "Our problem," declared Keynes, "is not how to co-operate with France but how to defeat her." "We

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cannot extricate ourselves," declared the National Liberal Fisher, "without the Washington Government's aid." Lloyd George went on a triumphant tour to America invoking American aid for a war with France. "The time is coming," he declared, "when the principles of Lincoln will be fought for again. When that time comes the American and British flags will be rallying centres in that struggle." Already, months earlier, the sixty-seven Labour M.P.'s had sent their cable to America to intervene "as the one hope of saving Europe": and resolutions against "French militarism" were the order of the day at Labour meetings.

The campaign on armaments which accompanied this war propaganda is notable. Against the Conservative policy of heavy battleships and the costly dock preparations at Singapore, obviously directed towards Empire sea routes and potential war in the Pacific with Japan and America, the Liberal campaign was all for aircraft and submarines—the two weapons in which France excelled. The old redoubtable Liberal strategists, Lord Fisher and Sir Percy Scott, pounded away at the folly of the heavy battleship and called for submarines, more submarines. Birkenhead, Lloyd George's ally in adventurist politics, specialised in the Air Peril and called for more aircraft to match France's equipment. Birkenhead also visited America on a triumphant tour, and found that "the one glimmer of hope in Europe's dark situation was the growing spirit of co-operation between the American and English peoples."

The Election Plunge

In this situation Baldwin was faced with a dilemma. He had to do something, and yet there was nothing that he could do. The Conservative policy in foreign affairs, of alliance with France, had come to a standstill, and yet the dominant forces of Conservatism still supported it, as the Plymouth Conference showed. A crisis in British industry with the fourth year of unemployment was approaching and there was no sign of a remedy. The industrialists were expressing open discontent. Working-class discontent was rising. Lloyd George was about to return from America and enter on a big offensive campaign. Every stage of delay and discrediting was playing into the hands of the Labour Party and the approaching menace of a Labour Government.

Faced with this intractable situation, Baldwin plunged. He called a short, sharp election—to catch his opponents before they were ready. He called it nominally on tariffs ; but that this was only secondary in his mind is shown by the extreme slowness and hesitation with which he proceeded later to define what he meant by tariffs. Tariffs might be useful as a bargaining weapon against France to secure a share in the proceeds of the Ruhr; tariffs might enable something to be done towards meeting the colonies' desire for Imperial Preference; tariffs might help to fight the American Fordney tariff. In any case, tariffs afforded a line on which to hold an election and claim absolution for all his failures and mistakes. So Baldwin went to the country—while Curzon remained at the Foreign Office—"owing to the urgency of the issues."

The Liberals immediately seized on the dissolution to attack in full force, and concentrated on the failure in foreign policy. The question of Protection and Free Trade compelled, in view of past associations, a temporary split of the National Liberals from the National Conservatives, but it is already clear that this split will turn out more apparent than real. But the united Liberal manifesto spent its whole preamble on foreign policy. "Co-operation with America" was its keynote; "prompt settlement" of reparations and "full relations" with Russia. Lloyd George gave his new militant campaign full play.

"You do not want protection against French mills," he declared, "but against French militarists."

And again, "Lord Derby said last night that French statesmen preferred to deal with Baldwin. I am sure they do." (Laughter.)

And again, "Mr. Baldwin has admitted that he cannot bring peace to Europe for some years. Then let him chuck up his job and make way for someone who can."

Against this the Conservatives' spokesmen declared that they could see no intention in the Liberal programme save war with France. "From the tone of the Liberal criticism," declared the Foreign Under-Secretary, Mr. McNeill, "it is evident that if that Party is returned to power the principal effect will be a breach with France." Whether that meant an alliance with Germany he did not know. In contrast to such a policy, "I shall endeavour to

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maintain intact our friendship and alliance with those great nations by the side of whom we fought.”

The Outcome of the Election

Thus the alignment of forces on the morrow of the election is for the moment comparatively simple and clear; and it is in the light of this alignment that the results are of exceptional interest.

The Conservatives stand for maintaining the French alliance while endeavouring to establish some recognition of British claims, by tariff or other means; for an anti-Russian policy; for Empire trade and development; for heavy battleships and naval bases, implying preparation for war with America. At home they stand for endeavouring to develop certain home industries by tariffs and for a hypothetical subsidy to agriculture; but in all else for a passive policy, continuing the present currency position, restricted unemployment relief, &c.

The Liberals stand for war with France, for alliance with America for this purpose; for recognition of Russia and probable alliance with Germany; for aircraft and submarines. At home they stand for the Federation of British Industries policy of inflation, or, as they term it, “a bold and courageous use of the national credit,” to develop the country and the Empire as the solution for unemployment and the industrial stagnation.

In relation to these the Labour Party holds, or should hold, the key position. They alone are in a position to raise the class issue which dominates all others, to challenge the whole existing system, and to present a clear alternative. The working-class challenge and the issue of a Labour Government was the dominating issue of the election: and wherever it was to the front, all other issues of Free Trade, Protection, Liberalism, Conservatism, &c., were put in the background or openly coalesced in one bourgeois front.

But while the Labour Party is thus recognised as the representative of the working-class challenge and therefore an unknown, dangerous, and even revolutionary factor, in its actual expression it still follows its traditional policy of clinging close to Liberal lines. With the Liberals it calls for a break with France; with the Liberals it calls for the co-operation of America; with the Liberals it calls for the recognition of Russia; with the Liberals it proposes veiled

inflation. Its only distinctive proposals, the Capital Levy—confined to the redemption of debt—and the nationalisation of mines, railways, and electric power, are not immediate and have already been recognised as practically shelved for the present.

Thus in actual practice Labour and Liberal policy on immediate issues represent a single force (despite the complete divergence of the elements they represent, which prevents coalition even though the leaders on both sides have shown themselves not ill disposed to it). Nowhere is this more clearly the case than in the most typical expression of capitalist policy, the sphere of foreign affairs, where both make strongly for hostility to France and alliance with America. Labour expressions on both these points have been more emphatic than any. It was the group of sixty-seven Labour M.P.'s which sent the cable to the American President to intervene to "save Europe." It was on the very morrow of the election that the Leader of the Labour Party delivered his interview to the French public in which he informed them that "the British people are not well disposed towards France, and nothing would be easier than to rouse opinion against her," and proceeded to remind the French people of their debt to Britain. This interview, which aroused a storm on the Continent, repudiations from Vandervelde in the name of the Second International, and consequent statements in correction which changed nothing from MacDonald (as for the Second International, "we never have agreed, and we never will agree, to anything which victimises Great Britain in the interests of any other State"), was a significant warning to Europe of the future line of a Labour Government.

The result of the election coming upon this situation of the parties brings the issues to a clash. The electors gave a decisive majority for the Labour-Liberal side without yielding any single majority. They destroyed the Conservative majority, but left them the strongest single party. They handed over the proceeds of the Conservative majority to Labour and the Liberals, but divided them almost equally between them. The consequence is a situation without parallel in British Parliamentary history and of extraordinary value and fruitfulness for forcing the pace of political development. It means in effect that there is a decisive majority for change, but no majority for stable government.

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In external policy it means that there is a definite majority for a complete change of policy. Whatever the Government that succeeds to the Conservative Government, whether Labour, Liberal, or Coalition, there is no question that that change will take place and will have far-reaching effects on the whole world position. For Germany, for Russia, for France, those results are of great importance. The recognition of Russia, the attempted economic settlement of Germany under the ægis of international (Anglo-American) finance instead of its subjection to France, the possible break and even war with France, all these are involved. But behind these is the impetus given to the working-class forces of Central Europe when once the reactionary fortress of British and French capitalism in the West breaks up, and the disappearance of Curzon, to be followed by the disappearance of Poincaré, and their replacement by Labour or Leftward Governments, diminishes the danger of intervention. Important as the results are for the existing States of Germany, France, Italy, &c., for the balance of power between the working class and reaction all over Europe they are even more important.

In internal affairs, on the other hand, it means a deadlock of forces compelling intensified conflict and forcing to the ground the class issue. The point has now been reached where all the tactics of the bourgeoisie, whether of division or coalition on their own side, whether of opposition or conciliation to Labour, only lead to the same result. Any form of bourgeois coalition strengthens the Labour forces, as the experience after the war abundantly revealed. Any form of co-operation or understanding with Labour only arouses the strongest class antagonism within the Labour forces, and thus intensifies the actual struggle, as the short controversy after the election has already shown. Finally, the admission of the only remaining course—a Labour Government—means the abandonment of the last great constitutional position and the consequent bare confrontation of the workers with the alternatives of either achieving their ends through the weapon thus won or seeing clearly set out before them the last stage in the struggle for power.

In any event, therefore, there can be no question of the significance of the election in the decay of British capitalism. In

world politics it means the turning of the tide in favour of the revolutionary forces, and at the same time the hastening of the approach of war. In home politics it means the first awakening of the workers to consciousness of the struggle for power. In both it means a visible stage nearer to the approaching epoch of revolutionary struggle. The attempt to shore up British society on a basis of pre-war stability has failed. Britain is faster and faster being brought into its place in Europe to play its part in the common revolutionary epoch.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO FIX A DEFINITE TIME FOR A COUNTER- REVOLUTION OR A REVOLUTION ?

By L. TROTZKY

“ **O**F course it is not possible. It is only trains which start at certain times, and even they don't always . . . ”

Exactitude of thought is necessary everywhere, and in questions of revolutionary strategy more than anywhere else. But as revolutions do not occur so very often, revolutionary conceptions and thought processes become slipshod, their outlines become vague, the questions are raised anyhow and solved anyhow.

Mussolini brought off his “revolution” (that is, his counter-revolution) at a definitely fixed time made known publicly beforehand. He was able to do this successfully because the Socialists had not accomplished the revolution at the right time. The Bulgarian Fascisti achieved their “revolution” by means of a military conspiracy, the date being fixed and the rôles assigned. The same was the case with the Spanish officers' *coup*. Counter-revolutionary *coups* are almost always carried out along these lines. They are usually attempted at a moment when the disappointment of the masses in revolution or democracy has taken the form of indifference, and a favourable political *milieu* is thus created for an organised and technically prepared *coup*, the date of which is definitely fixed beforehand. One thing is clear: it is not possible to create a political situation favourable for a reactionary upheaval by any artificial means, much less to fix a certain point of time for it. But when the basic elements of this situation already exist, then the leading party seizes the most favourable moment, as we have seen, adapts its political, organisational, and technical forces, and—if it has not miscalculated—deals the final and victorious blow.

The bourgeoisie has not always made counter-revolutions. In the past it also made revolutions. Did it fix any definite time for these revolutions? It would be interesting, and in many respects instructive, to investigate from this standpoint the development of the classic and of the decadent bourgeois revolutions (a subject for our young Marxist *savants!*), but even without such a detailed analysis it is possible to establish the following fundamentals of the question. The propertied and educated bourgeoisie, that is, that section of the "people" which gained power, did not make the revolution, but waited until it was made. When the movement among the lower strata brought the cup to overflowing, and the old social order or political regime was overthrown, then power fell almost automatically into the hands of the Liberal bourgeoisie. The Liberal *savants* designated such a revolution as a "natural," an inevitable revolution. They gathered together a mighty collection of platitudes under the name of historical laws: revolution and counter-revolution (according to M. Karajev of blessed memory—action and reaction) are declared to be natural products of historical evolution and therefore incapable of being arranged according to the calendar, and so forth. These laws have never prevented well prepared counter-revolutionary coups from being carried out. But the nebulosity of the bourgeois-liberal mode of thought sometimes finds its way into the heads of revolutionists, when it plays havoc and causes much material damage. . . .

But even bourgeois revolutions have not by any means invariably developed at every stage along the lines of the "natural" laws laid down by the Liberal professors; when petty bourgeois-plebeian democracy has overthrown Liberalism, it has done so by means of conspiracy and prepared insurrections, fixed beforehand for definite dates. This was done by the Jacobins—the extreme left wing of the French Revolution. This is perfectly comprehensible. The Liberal bourgeoisie (the French in the year 1789, the Russian in February, 1917) contents itself with waiting for the results of a mighty and elemental movement, in order to throw its wealth, its culture, and its connections with the State apparatus into the scale at the last moment and thus to seize the helm. Petty bourgeois democracy, under similar circumstances, has to

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proceed differently: it has neither wealth nor social influence and connections at its disposal. It finds itself obliged to replace these by a well thought out and carefully prepared plan of revolutionary overthrow. A plan, however, implies a definite organisation in respect of time, and therefore also the fixing of a definite time.

This applies all the more to proletarian revolution. The Communist Party cannot adopt a waiting attitude in face of the growing revolutionary movement of the proletariat. Strictly speaking, this is the attitude taken by Menshevism: to hinder revolution so long as it is in process of development; to utilise its successes as soon as it is in any degree victorious; and to exert every effort to retard it. The Communist Party cannot seize power by utilising the revolutionary movement and yet standing aside, but by means of a direct and immediate political, organisational, and military-technical leadership of the revolutionary masses, both in the period of slow preparation and at the moment of decisive insurrection itself. For this reason the Communist Party has absolutely no use whatever for a Liberal law according to which revolutions happen but are not made, and therefore cannot be fixed for a definite point of time. From the standpoint of the spectator this law is correct; from the standpoint of the leader it is, however, a platitude and a banality.

Let us imagine a country in which the political conditions necessary for proletarian revolution are either already mature, or are obviously and distinctly maturing day by day. What attitude is to be taken under such circumstances by the Communist Party to the question of insurrection and the definite date on which it is to take place ?

When the country is passing through an extraordinarily acute social crisis, when the antagonisms are aggravated to the highest degree, when feeling among the working masses is constantly at boiling point, when the Party is obviously supported by a certain majority of the working people, and consequently by all the most active, class-conscious, and devoted elements of the proletariat, then the task confronting the Party—its only possible task under these circumstances—is to fix a definite time in the immediate future, that is, a time prior to which the favourable revolutionary situation cannot react against us, and then to concentrate every

effort on the preparations for the final struggle, to place the whole current policy and organisation at the service of the military object in view, that the concentration of forces may justify the striking of the final blow.

To consider not merely an abstract country, let us take the Russian October revolution as an example. The country was in the throes of a great crisis, national and international. The State apparatus was paralysed. The workers streamed in ever-increasing numbers into our Party. From the moment when the Bolsheviki were in the majority in the Petrograd Soviet, and afterwards in the Moscow Soviet, the Party was faced with the question—not of the struggle for power in general, but of preparing for the seizure of power according to a definite plan and at a definite time. The date fixed was the day upon which the All-Russian Soviet Congress was to take place. One section of the members of the Central Committee was of the opinion that the moment of the insurrection should coincide with the political moment of the Soviet Congress. Other members of the Central Committee feared that the bourgeoisie would have made its preparations by then, and would be able to disperse the congress; these wanted to have the congress held at an earlier date. The decision of the Central Committee fixed the date of the armed insurrection for October 15 at latest. This decision was carried out with a certain delay of ten days, as the course of agitational and organisational preparations showed that an insurrection independent of the Soviet Congress would have sown misunderstanding among important sections of the working class, as these connected the idea of the seizure of power with the Soviets and not with the Party and its secret organisations. On the other hand, it was perfectly clear that the bourgeoisie was already too much demoralised to be able to organise any serious resistance for two or three weeks.

Thus, after the Party had gained the majority in the leading Soviets, and had in this way secured the basic political condition for the seizure of power, we were faced by the necessity of fixing a definite calendar date for the decision of the military question. Before we had won the majority, the organisational technical plan was bound to be more or less qualified and elastic. For us the gauge of our revolutionary influence was the Soviets which had

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been called into existence by the Mensheviki and the Social Revolutionists at the beginning of the revolution. The Soviets furnished the cloak for our conspiratorial work; they were also able to serve as governmental organs after the actual seizure of power.

Where would our strategy have been if there had been no Soviets? It is obvious that we should have had to turn to other gauges of our revolutionary influence: the trade unions, strikes, street demonstrations, every description of democratic electioneering, &c. Although the Soviets represent the most accurate gauge of the actual activity of the masses during a revolutionary epoch, still even without the existence of the Soviets we should have been fully able to ascertain the precise moment at which the actual majority of the working class was on our side. Naturally, at this moment we should have had to issue the slogan of the formation of Soviets to the masses. But in doing this we should have already transferred the whole question to the plane of military conflicts; therefore before we issued the slogan on the formation of Soviets, we should have had to have a properly worked out plan for an armed insurrection at a certain fixed time.

If we had then had the majority of the working people on our side, or at least the majority in the decisive centres and districts, the formation of Soviets would have been secured by our appeal. The backward towns and provinces would have followed the leading centres with more or less delay. We should have then had the political task of establishing a Soviet Congress, and of securing for this congress by military measures the possibility of assuming power. It is clear that these are only two aspects of one and the same task.

Let us now imagine that our Central Committee, in the above described situation—that is, there being no Soviets in existence—had met for a decisive session in the period when the masses had already begun to move, but had not yet ensured us a clear and overwhelming majority. How should we then have developed our further plan of action? Should we have fixed a definite point of time for the insurrection?

The reply may be adduced from the above. We should have said to ourselves: At the present moment we have no certain and

unqualified majority. But the trend of feeling among the masses is such that the decisive and militant majority necessary for us is merely a matter of the next few weeks. Let us assume that it will take a month to win over the majority of the workers in Petrograd, in Moscow, in the Donetz basin; let us set ourselves this task, and concentrate the necessary forces in these centres. As soon as the majority has been gained—and we shall ascertain if this be the case after a month has elapsed—we shall summon the workers to form Soviets. This will require one to two weeks at most for Petrograd, Moscow, and the Donetz basin; it may be calculated with certainty that the remaining towns and provinces will follow the example of the chief centres within the next two or three weeks. Thus, the construction of a network of Soviets will require about a month. After Soviets exist in the important districts, in which we have of course the majority, we shall convene an All-Russian Soviet Congress. We shall require fourteen days to assemble the congress. We have, therefore, two and a-half months at our disposal before the congress. In the course of this time the seizure of power must not only be prepared, but actually accomplished.

We should accordingly have placed before our military organisation a programme allowing two months, at most two and a-half, for the preparation of the insurrection in Petrograd, in Moscow, on the railways, &c. I am speaking in the conditional tense (we should have decided, we should have done this and that), for in reality, although our operations were by no means unskilful, still they were by no means so systematic, not because we were in any way disturbed by "historical laws," but because we were carrying out a proletarian insurrection for the first time.

But are not miscalculations likely to occur by such methods? Seizure of power signifies war, and in war there can be victories and defeats. But the systematic method here described is the best and most direct road to the goal, that is, it most enhances the prospects of victory. Thus, for instance, should it have turned out, a month after the Central Committee session of our above adduced example, that we had not yet the majority of the workers on our side, then we should, of course, not have issued the slogan

calling for the formation of Soviets, for in this case the slogan would have miscarried (in our example we assume that the Social Revolutionists and Mensheviki are against the Soviets). And had the reverse been the case, and we had found a decisive and militant majority behind us in the course of fourteen days, this would have abridged our plan and accelerated the decisive moment of insurrection. The same applies to the second and third stages of our plan: the formation of Soviets and the summoning of the Soviet Congress. We should not have issued the slogan of the Soviet Congress, as stated above, until we had secured the actual establishment of Soviets at the most important points. In this manner the realisation of every step in our plan is prepared and secured by the realisation of the preceding steps. The work of military preparation proceeds parallel with that of the most definitely dated performance. In this way the Party has its military apparatus under complete control. To be sure, a revolution always brings much that is entirely unexpected, unforeseen, elemental; we have, of course, to allow for the occurrence of all these "accidents" and adapt ourselves to them; but we can do this with the greater success and certainty if our conspiracy is thoroughly worked out.

Revolution possesses a mighty power of improvisation, but it never improvises anything good for fatalists, idlers, and fools. Victory demands correct political orientation, organisation, and the will to deal the decisive blow.

THE FRENCH PRESS AND TSARIST RUSSIA

By T. L.

WHEN the present Russian Government came into power in 1917, one of its first acts was to search the offices of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for the secret treaties concluded during the war, which were duly published and have been brought to the notice of readers of the British Labour Press.

A second task, immediately undertaken but delayed by the conditions of civil war which supervened, was that of searching the State archives for documents showing the origin of the war of 1914. This task was interrupted by the enforced removal, during 1918, of many of the archives which were in Petrograd to the present capital, Moscow. The Russian historians who were engaged in this research were helped by M. René Marchand, at one time Russian correspondent of the *Figaro* and the *Petit Parisien*, a journalist of undoubted honesty.

M. René Marchand printed some of the documents discovered in these archives in the *Livre Noir*, the second volume of which was published in Paris this last autumn. The most important documents given were the letters of Isvolsky, at one time Russian Ambassador in Paris, to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. Among the facts proved by this detailed correspondence was the expenditure of considerable sums of money (particularly during the Balkan wars) by the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs in order to influence the policy of the French Press.

The effect of these revelations in Paris was very considerable. The light they threw on the origin of the war secured for them a certain publicity in Labour and pacifist papers in this country, but the payments to the French Press were not widely noticed. Meanwhile the Russian archives were still being searched by students of history, and the Ministry of Finances was being investigated. From these *dossiers* new material on the French Press has been taken, which shows that the majority of the papers not only

received regular payments from the Russian Ministry for Finance, but almost without exception were engaged in blackmailing the Russians in order to get as much as possible.

The new documents include letters by M. Kokovtzev, a Russian President of the Council of Ministers, M. Sazonov, Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Isvolsky, Ambassador to Paris, and M. Davidov, Director of the Russian Office for Loans. But the most important letters are those of M. Arthur Raffalovitch, the secret adviser of the Russian Finance Ministry in Paris.

M. Raffalovitch was *Grand Officier* of the Legion of Honour, a corresponding member of the Paris Institute, a member of the Society for Political Economy, and a contributor to the *Débats*, *l'Economiste français*, the *Journal des Economistes*, and other publications. He was a director of the *Marché Financier* and a member of various statistical societies, &c. His correspondence cannot be treated lightly. He was well known in Paris—and the receipted cheques, the passage of which he describes, are in Moscow. It will therefore be a little difficult for the newspaper owners whom he describes in such acid terms to disprove his statements.

He was not, of course, in any way a revolutionary or a radical. The indignation that he expresses at the "abominable venality of the French Press" arises naturally from the ordinary honesty of a reactionary accustomed to upper class traditions of decency.

His letters are appearing in *l'Humanité*, and the first can be given without further introduction.

PARIS,
August, 1904.

The Minister of Finance,

I have the honour to report to Your Excellency the arrangement that has been made for the French Press. I have been careful to consult, with regard to these calculations, M. Hottinguer and M. Chevrand, who is the managing director of the *Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas*; they agree with my view-point. Though it is necessary to continue to make a sacrifice, in order to ensure tranquillity on the part of the Press, it is very important to limit the sacrifice. After carrying on for one more month on the old terms of one hundred thousand francs, it is necessary to reduce considerably the outgoings.

Here then is the arrangement that we have come to: the next monthly grant shall be of one hundred thousand francs, but will in reality be spread over six weeks, covering the period from August 15 to October 1. Hitherto the grants have been from the 15th of one month to the 15th of the next, beginning

with February 15. For the coming months only fifty thousand francs will be given, which will carry us on to the end of January. I hope to be able to avoid breaking into the 25,000 francs which will be left as a result of this arrangement, but I beg that this money should not be used for any other purpose before the end of that period, for it is possible that we may have extraordinary needs at any given moment. As for example if it is necessary to explain satisfactorily the Budget of 1905.

For the first ten¹ months, the abominable venality of the French Press will have absorbed (quite apart from the advertising of the Loan of 800 millions) a sum of six hundred thousand francs, of which the bankers have furnished one half. We have had to pay for three months at 66,666 francs (February 15 to May 15) during which the bankers spent 33,334 francs, then one hundred thousand francs for the months ending June 15, July 15, and August 15. The month and a half from August 15 to October 1 must be paid for by us.

The intermediary recommended to me by the representative of M. Rouvier, last February, is M. Lenoir, *Chevalier* of the Legion of Honour, who takes 10 per cent. commission for his trouble.

The amount spent on the political papers is 48,350 francs, on securing personal co-operation (that is, the co-operation of editors, financial editors, and the managers of the papers) 13,300 francs; 15,000 francs for the provincial papers and the news agencies, and 14,500 for the financial papers.

The money is paid over at the end of the month by means of the *Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas* to the *Credit Algerien*, against which the intermediary draws cheques. Some individuals have to be paid from hand to hand.

As it is necessary that the name of the Russian Government or of the agent of the Ministry of Finance should not appear in this transaction, the payments are made as if they still emanated from the Syndicate of Banks and Bankers.

This expenditure is made in order to defend the credit of Russia; it softens the systematic attacks against the Russian Government in general without making it possible to stop them entirely. If at any time there were any communications to be put into the papers, it would be necessary to profit by the circumstances which give us a certain influence over them.

I have reported the arrangements to the Russian Ambassador.

Your most obedient servant,

A. RAFFALOVITCH

The date of this letter serves to place it. In August, 1904, the Russo-Japanese war was beginning, and a loan of 800 million francs had been floated on the French market. It was necessary to "soften the attacks" of the French Press in order to secure the success of this loan and keep the market open for the further loans that would certainly prove necessary.

Further letters describe in detail the blackmail levied on the

¹ This appears to be a misprint for "six months" (*dix* instead of *six*)—T. L.

Russian Government as a result of its failures in Manchuria by the editors or owners of *Le Figaro*, *La Liberté*, *Gil Blas*, *l'Action*, *Le Petit Parisien*, *Le Petit Journal*, the *Temps*, and the *Matin*.

The last named is probably better known in this country than the others, and its case is the most interesting in view of the libel action against *l'Humanité* which it has begun. But before proceeding to describe the charges against the *Matin* and the evidence on which they are based, it would be as well to follow for a moment the fortunes of the Russian Government in Paris as the defeat of its armies in the Far East became more and more evident.

We have already seen the expenditure during 1904. The following curt memorandum shows the increase in 1905 :—

[Copy]

NOTE.

The sums expended in subventions to the French Press during the two years reach the following figures :—

	1904	1905
Publicity	725,000	1,728,700
Publication of the Loan redemption drawings ("tirage")	151,210	148,500
<i>Matin</i>	—	35,000
Loan Redemption Office	16,079	15,961
Correspondence R.	28,800	28,800
<i>Bulletin Russe</i>	11,496	—
<i>Marché Financier</i>	3,200	3,200
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	935,785	2,014,161
	<hr/>	<hr/>

(Signed)

BELLEGARDE.

January 23, 1906

It will be seen that the heading "Publicity" is given to the sums spent in calming the avidity of the French Press, and that the other headings—except for one—represent normal expenses such as the publication (necessary by law) of the successful numbers in the *tirage* and the subsidies to two journals officially or semi-officially subsidised by the Tsar's Government.

The huge sum of 1,782,700 francs (in 1905 worth over £70,000) spent on "publicity" in 1905 is analysed in the following memorandum prepared by the Russian Office for Loans (*Chancellerie des Operations de Crédit*):—

[Copy]

NOTE

The expenses for 1905 for publicity may be divided into four periods, as follows :—

(1) From the beginning of the year until the battle of Mukden, February 28 (February 14 Old Style), 1905 : 100,000	247,700
(2) After Mukden (on the insistence of M. de Verneuil) up to the conclusion of peace, August 16 : rather more than 200,000	1,035,000
(3) From the conclusion of peace to November: 100,000	200,000
(4) From November (the revolutionary movements at the time of the Empire) : 150,000	300,000
Total	Fr. 1,782,700

For the future, M. Raffalovitch, the agent of the Finance Minister in Paris, estimates the cost of publicity according to the schedule given below at the sum of 115,000 francs per month.

DAVIDOV.

January 23, 1906.

This useful division of the total shows how Russia's crushing defeat at Mukden provided a welcome opportunity to her close allies. It is now possible to study an individual case—that of the *Matin*—which while typical is by no means one of the worst.

Two days after *l'Humanité* began its revelations the *Matin*, which had scarcely been mentioned, took upon itself to issue a complete denial to the charges which it knew were certain to come. The letter ends:—

We must renew our affirmation that the *Matin* has never received subventions : we defy any one to prove that any government or any person has paid to the *Matin* a sum of money which has not been entered as usual in the accounts, and is not represented by the net sale of copies or by advertisements.

L'Humanité republished this letter, and Boris Souvarine, who is "editing" the publication of the documents, replied in the following terms:—

"The *Matin* is very fearless. But behind its bragging, what it says amounts to this: When we make a deal, the results are written down under the heading 'publicity.'

"That proves that the accounts of the *Matin* are well kept. Nothing more.

"But when a paper obtains publicity (advertisements), or a higher price for its advertisements, by threatening to publish disagreeable things if its demands are not fulfilled, what is that to be called ?

"We answer: blackmail.

"And when the fruits of this blackmail are written down as 'publicity,' the blackmail is still blackmail.

"And now, let us draw a few more documents from the packet.

"Here is a letter written at a moment when Russia's position, during the war with Japan, was going from bad to worse"¹:—

March 1, 1905.

To come back to practical matters, we must think over the possibility of getting in touch with the *Matin* and conceding to it the large sum that it will ask for changing its attitude to at least a benevolent neutrality. It has already had at one time 50,000 to 60,000 francs when the Belgian campaign against Russia's credit was on. That was in peace time; at present it has refused the 3,000 a month that we wished to assure to it; it would ask for a great deal more.

While there were no troubles in the interior (of Russia) the *Matin* was not of much importance. But now it is perhaps necessary to neutralise it. That is what I have permitted myself to ask Your Excellency.

The formula, then, is to make a big sacrifice to bring pressure upon the political side of the Press, to cleanse the attitude of the *Matin*; but money is wanted for that. I should be glad to know what Your Excellency wishes me to do.

His Excellency approved. Not only was M. Bunau-Varilla, millionaire owner of the *Matin*, "neutralised" by large sums paid for financial advertisements, but at the same time several members of the staff received *mensualités*. One gentleman mentioned by *l'Humanité* is stated to have received 1,000 francs a month, while another, the Financial Editor, received 500 a month. Photographs of the cheques by which payment was made are said to be available.

The following letter clinches the question of the Financial Editor:—

¹ [We give the second half of the postscript.—T. L.]

May 11, 1906.

Monsieur le Ministre,

. . . The Financial Editor of the *Matin*, Brégand, writes to me with to-day's date :—

I am going to have two articles a month for six months to do for the *Matin*, to justify the monthly payment made to the paper (Russia). In the two articles which I have published to justify the price of the Russian Loan, I have sucked dry all the documents which I had at my disposal. I should be much obliged if you could prepare for me some documents, books, or reports on Russia, or useful extracts from your *Marché Financier*, 1906, concerning Russia. I shall take from them the material necessary for these articles.

May I ask Your Excellency to be so good as to prepare and send some rough drafts of articles, with figures and arguments, for the use of M. Brégand and others ?

. . . I may also ask for some sort of receipt or *quittance* for the money distributed to the Press, through the *Banque de Paris* and the intermediary Lenoir, if Your Excellency considers it necessary.

Your most obedient Servant,

A. RAFFALOVITCH.

It will be seen that the sacrifice has been made; the *Matin* has become very benevolently neutral. Let us go back a little and see how the *Matin's* accounts were kept during this period.

The following letter introduces a new character, a certain de Verneuil. He acts as go-between in the business of blackmail, as Lenoir acts in the business of payment. His title—for he is an official and acts in concert with the French Government—may be translated as Official Trustee to the Stock Exchange (*Syndic des Agents de Change*).

We print the second paragraph of this letter, as the others describe only the manœuvres of the *Syndic* to secure a guaranteed 300,000 francs a month freely at his disposal for distribution to the Press, and Raffalovitch's attitude—"stingy, niggardly, mean"—towards this demand.

PARIS,

March 14, 1905.

. . . The *Syndic* has informed me that he has seen the owner of the *Matin*, and has flattered him enough to bring him to be willing, in the event of a panic, to act in defence of Russia's credit. The *Matin* will not take any money, but he has asked for the maximum of advertisements of the redemption drawings. He must be having 3,000 (lines of advertisement) a month, and he wants to be put on a level with the *Temps* and the *Economiste Européen* which

have about 7,000 to 8,000 lines. I don't know his tariff, which ought to be between 3 and 5 francs (a line) ; I hope so . . .

Your most obedient servant,

A. RAFFALOVITCH.

“ The *Matin* will not take any money, but . . . ” A special 35,000 francs is set aside for the “ personal interviews ” with members of the *Matin's* staff (see Bellegarde's memorandum, above), and some 20,000 to 40,000 francs given for advertisements every month.

This was in 1905. In 1908 the arrangement was still working, though M. Bunau-Varilla was now insisting on a “ most favoured nation clause ” in the new treaty—which was at a lower rate now that Russia had come safe through the war and the revolution of 1905. Raffalovitch writes:—

PARIS,

March 5, 1908.

[Secret]

Monsieur le Ministre,

I have just had a long conversation with M. Bunau-Varilla on the occasion of the agreement reached with him for the publication of lists of the drawings. These will run to four thousand lines at 5 francs each or two thousand at 10 francs. I will communicate the details to M. Davidov, who will put it into effect.

The point on which he has insisted above all is that he should have the most favoured treatment. I have replied to him that he has this, for no paper gets 20,000 francs . . .

While the last extract given above was being published, the *Matin* decided to take action. It published a note stating that “ the propaganda sheet of the Soviets in France . . . has attacked the *Matin*. In order to permit it to go through with its demonstration, we offer it a public occasion, in suing it for five hundred thousand francs damages. This is exactly the amount offered by the Russian propagandists to the *Matin*, and refused by the *Matin*, as will be proved by irrefutable documents handed over by the *Matin* to the French Government and published more than fifteen years ago.”

The challenge was at once taken up by *l'Humanité*, which in turn has entered a counter-claim for 500,000 francs for defamation —“ propaganda sheet of the Soviets ” being apparently the basis of the charge.

Not content with this, *l'Humanité* is continuing its publication

of the documents. The cumulative effect of these—the store seems inexhaustible—is very marked. It is notable, for instance, that various papers challenged by *l'Humanité* to reproduce extracts or at least to give the general sense of the revelations have ceased to do so. One dug up some “revelations” from the *Livre Noir*, published months ago, and made a half-hearted effort to palm them off as the cause of all the excitement. Others gave, for one day, hurried and emasculated summaries; then silence. *l'Humanité* went on:—

[Telegram]

MINISTRY FINANCES, ST. PETERSBURG,
February 1, 1905.

Publicity agent employed until now supposes with 700,000 maximum per quarter can reach satisfactory result, including *Matin*.

RAFFALOVITCH.

“The whole of the correspondence of M. Raffalovitch,” says *l'Humanité*, “shows the exceptional character of the subsidy given to the paper known to be ‘the most untruthful in the world.’”

To the best of our knowledge the British Press has so far avoided any mention of the revelations or of the lawsuits arising out of them. A point of considerable interest is that M. Kokovtzev, the Russian Premier who received reports from Raffalovitch and Davidov, trusted them, and maintained them in their positions, is at present in Paris and will be called as a witness by *l'Humanité* ! If this *émigré* aristocrat can be got into the witness box, he will find it difficult to deny his own signature or to cast doubts on the honesty of his dead friend Raffalovitch.

The whole affair induces reflection. Does it seem probable, for instance, that the machinery of propaganda throughout the world built up by Lord Northcliffe for the British Government can really have been allowed to fall to pieces? Is money flowing now for “publicity” of some sort by means of the Board of Trade (under the heading “Consular services” or “trade facilities”) or through the Foreign Office? And is it not just possible that one or two British papers, so notably sober in their honesty, political or journalistic (and so vigorously pro-Poincaré), may have played the part allotted to the *Matin*? Subtler methods are in vogue nowadays,

but surely the *Credit Lyonnais* has appeared between the same brackets with a British newspaper in one of Walton Newbold's essays on modern capitalism? When Souvarine and his friends are in power in France we shall know more. Meanwhile, let us continue in the belief that all Frenchmen are naturally dishonest and all English editors impeccable.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN SWEDEN.—I

By FREDRIK STROM & KARL MALMSTEN

INDUSTRIALISM began to develop on a small scale in Sweden during the period 1840-1850, and was soon followed by the formation of workers' unions in 1860. These so-called workers' unions, in which the foremen were most prominent, were partly under the tutelage of Liberalism and concentrated on general education, discussions on political, social, and other duties, the formation of centres for libraries, meetings, and such like. Others were purely reform unions for the purpose of carrying through certain Liberal reforms. The employers soon recognised and supported these workers' unions, which protested in 1870 against the down-tools policy, strikes, enmity between foremen and workers, and above all against "the Socialistic, Communist, and Nihilist doctrines preached in other countries."

A section of the younger workers, however, began to rise up against the conservative spirit of both the workers and the reform unions and demanded a "clear Liberal" course.

Towards the end of 1870 Sweden witnessed the first great strike, in the Sundsvall district amongst the saw-mill workers. It was a spontaneous peaceful cessation of work, as a protest against unbearable conditions. The workers concerned in the strike were for the most part Christians and Royalists, and yet the strike was put down by force: enticed to a meeting, the strikers were surrounded by the military with artillery and warrants for the arrest of the strikers.

Discussions on the formation of unions took place at various workers' congresses towards the end of the 'seventies and beginnings of the 'eighties. Opinions varied greatly. The formation of a few unions in Sweden and the development of trade unionism abroad provoked wider discussions.

The oldest trade union in Sweden is the Typographical Union, which was founded as far back as 1846 and continued to operate

till 1872, when it was succeeded by "the Union of Stockholm Bookbinders." In 1874, the "Union of Stockholm Hatters" was founded, and in 1876 the Upholsterers' Union; the Carpenters' Unions were founded in 1880, and also the "Iron Workers' Union of Northern Stockholm." The following years marked the formation of quite a number of unions, not only in Stockholm, but also in the larger provincial towns.

The leadership of the Trade Unions, which at first had but a modest programme, was in the hands of workers with Liberal sympathies who were on a friendly footing with the Liberal "workers' unions."

They formed a left-wing and represented the Left opposition within the Liberal Unions.

A series of small and often badly conducted strikes marked the early stages of the growth of trade unionism. In 1883 the Central Committee of Trade Unions was formed in Stockholm, under Liberal leadership: but was also partly influenced by August Palm, a tailor who at that time returned from Germany and Denmark and delivered Socialist speeches which met with vigorous opposition from the Liberals.

The statutes of the Central Committee included amongst their aims the intention "of forming a really strong Labour Party from the various categories of workers, with a view to attaining such reforms as are necessary to the development of the State on reasonable lines; further to link up with similar committees and trade unions both at home and abroad, to organise Labour meetings, and to encourage the propagation of really broad-minded literature."

The programme demanded a ten-hour day, factory inspectors, old-age pensions, the establishment of a Labour Exchange, a conciliation committee for quarrels between workers and employers, the advancement of temperance, progressive taxation, more humane laws, and universal suffrage.

A sharp conflict arose, both in the ranks of the Central Committee and the trade unions, between the Liberal and Social-Democratic elements. The struggle of the Socialists was for a considerable period without results, but after some years the Socialists gained the day and Liberal trade union leaders gave place to Socialists throughout the movement.

In 1886 the Central Committee adopted a new programme, and proclaimed in its declaration : " On the assumption that the profit of labour should accrue to those who do the work and that all members of the State should have the same duties and rights, the Swedish Trade Unions wish to try to protect the workers against oppression and despotism by means of united effort and mutual support, and step by step to fight for the attainment of equality for all citizens."

The programme was divided into two sections: economic, and "citizenship." The economic section demanded a ten-hour working day; the inspection of factories by the workers; compulsory insurance against accident, illness, and old age; the right to strike, and State-aided production. Amongst the demands included under citizenship were : universal suffrage; abolition of indirect taxation; progressive income tax and death duties; elementary education to be compulsory, free, and without variation for all classes; the abolition of the State Church and of the standing army and the introduction of a militia on a conscript basis.

The struggle between Liberalism and Socialism continued within the ever-growing trade union movement; a few Liberal unions seceded from the Central Committee, only to rejoin when the Socialist element in their ranks had taken the lead. Attempts to found a separate Liberal Central Committee were frustrated. It was in this period that programmes concerning the economic struggle with the employers were revised repeatedly, with the object of securing greater legality and power for the organisation in the conflict with the employers in the labour market.

The strikes which took place in Sweden in the period between 1863-1889 were as follows :—

1863 .. 1	1874 .. 9	1883 .. 5
1865 .. 1	1875 .. 3	1884 .. 6
1867 .. 2	1876 .. 1	1885 .. 10
1868 .. 3	1877 .. 3	1886 .. 29
1869 .. 4	1878 .. 1	1887 .. 16
1870 .. 1	1879 .. 7	1888 .. 41
1871 .. 5	1880 .. 3	1889 .. 38
1872 .. 8	1881 .. 10	
1873 .. 11	1882 .. 4	

The increase in strikes towards the close of the 'eighties

resulted in the formation by local unions of craft unions linked up throughout the country. Thus in 1885 the Typographical Society was founded, in 1887 the Painters' Society, in 1888 the Iron and Steel Workers' Society. But the societies thus formed were very weak ; the strongest, the Iron and Steel Union, was reported to have a membership of 1,421 and eleven branches at the Congress held in 1889. The craft unions joined the national body in 1895.

When the Swedish Social-Democratic Labour Party was formed on May 10, 1889, it was suggested that the Trade Union Central Committee should be dissolved. On August 9, 1889, the Committee was declared dissolved by a general meeting of the trade unions and all craft unions were invited to join the Social-Democratic Labour Party. Thus a death-blow was dealt to the Liberal craft unions and workers' movement which had prevailed for thirty years. After 1889, none but Socialists were elected as leaders of the craft unions and trade unions generally. The local trade unions were obliged to belong to the Social-Democratic Labour Party ; and the party aims and programme (revolutionary for those days) were to be a standard for the political efficiency of the craft unions. We shall return to this programme later. It marks the first revolutionary period of Swedish Trade Unionism, since it maintains the principle of the revolutionary class-war and takes as basis *The Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels. During the years 1889-98 (when the Federation of Trade Unions was founded), the Social-Democratic Labour Party was the centre and directorate of the rapidly growing Trade Union Movement.

The Trade Union Movement was Socialist from the point of view of an organisation. The Party became the central director of the whole Labour Movement ; the history of the Trade Union Movement during this time is identical with that of the Social-Democratic Labour Party. After the foundation of the Federation of Trade Unions in 1898 the independence of the Trade Union Movement increased somewhat ; but since the lessening of the Party and provincial organisation was on the whole the same, and since the local unions throughout the country affiliated *en bloc* to the Party, whilst the papers started by the trade unions became Party organs, the Trade Union Movement in Sweden (even up to

the present day) is practically nothing but a branch of the Social-Democratic Party.

This dependence of the trade unions was of great value as long as the Party was revolutionary or at least Socialistic and active. But since revisionism and reformism finally conquered the Party in 1909, this vassaldom of the trade unions to the Party has been the cause of damage to the Swedish workers in their struggle for liberty.

At the moment a helpless, cowardly opportunism, a paralysing surrender policy towards the employers, and saddening pessimism pervades the whole Swedish Trade Union Movement. The leadership is mainly in the hands of revisionists and citizens of a most inactive calibre, mentally sterile. The Swedish Federation of Trade Unions adorns the Amsterdam Trade Union International and the International Labour Office, where it operates with the extreme right wing.

As a result of discontent due to the reactionary development of the Federation of Trade Unions and its craft unions, a Syndicalist Trade Union body was founded in 1911 with the title of the Swedish Workers' Central Organisation. At first this body was slightly revolutionary, but recently this movement has developed a right wing tendency under Anarchist leadership. It is now nothing but a petty bourgeois counter-revolutionary economic-reformist movement. The present membership is about 30,000. Discontent both with this movement and with the Federation of Trade Unions has resulted in the formation of the "Craft Propaganda Society" by the Communists within the Federation. This is a Communist opposition movement, operative throughout the whole craft union movement.

*The history of the Trade Union Movement as regards membership is best reviewed by the following statistics :—

1888	..	2,228	1912	..	125,763
1890	..	7,398	1915	..	161,639
1895	..	12,255	1918	..	296,156
1900	..	59,368	1919	..	332,798
1905	..	118,793	1920	..	402,000 ²
1908	..	225,325	1921	..	390,000 ²
1910 ¹	..	106,465	1922	..	350,000 ²

¹ After the disastrous general strikes in 1909.

² These figures are approximate.

The number of unions affiliated to the Federation of Trade Unions and the number of branches included is as follows :—

Year	No. of Unions	No. of Branches	Year	No. of Unions	No. of Branches
1899	16	669	1910	27	1,576
1900	23	787	1915	27	1,502
1905	30	1,291	1918	30	2,305
1908	28	2,172	1922	33	3,207

In 1922 there were thirty unions not affiliated to the Federation of Trade Unions ; these unions have 1,000 branches and a membership of about 70,000. Therefore the total membership of the trade unions in Sweden may be estimated at 360,000, organised in sixty-three unions with about 4,300 branches. If we include the Central Syndicalist organisation, the number of organised workers is 400,000.

Practically every trade union has its own newspaper, the total circulation being over 300,000. All these journals are reformist and right wing in character, and edited in a counter-revolutionary spirit. The majority of the Swedish unions comprise benefit societies, which have funds for continuous pay during strikes, lock-outs, &c., and also pay unemployment benefit, provide funds for travelling, and in special cases give support during illness and defray the cost of educational classes, holidays, &c. In consequence of the considerable amounts which the Swedish unions pay the members during conflicts with the employers, the subscriptions are accordingly very high.

There were 307 disputes in 1922 on account of wages, and for other causes eighty-five, involving 75,679 workers.

The cost of disputes borne by the unions amounted to 668,840 kronen in 1914 ; 1,411,058 kronen in 1917 ; 10,334,813 kronen in 1920 ; and 4,304,760 kronen in 1921.

In 1921 the disputes involved 9,838 employers and 234,421 workers. The majority of the differences were settled by negotiations without resorting to strikes. In those cases where strikes took place, 25 per cent. were settled within a week and 40 per cent. within a month.

All agreements between the trade unions and the workers are made by collective bargaining. In 1922, 1,416 collective agreements were concluded which comprised 279,772 workers.

The numbers of workers' disputes which have taken place are :—

Year	No. of Disputes	No. of Workers	
		Organised	Total with Unorganised
1912 ..	345	19,441	29,481
1913 ..	426	38,847	69,882
1914 ..	430	27,489	46,814
1915 ..	398	18,450	32,568
1916 ..	1,247	79,279	125,900
1917 ..	1,777	105,116	156,650
1918 ..	2,878	156,536	217,694
1919 ..	2,950	226,104	275,964
1920 ..	3,419	282,784	339,234
1921 ..	3,292	198,181	234,420

Reformist methods and tactics marked the conduct of the majority of these strikes and during the days of industrial prosperity important results were achieved in respect of wage increases. With the slump, however, these methods have resulted in one overthrow after the other, and deterioration and defeat.

When the trade boom in Sweden was at its highest in 1922, 23 per cent. of the disputes were settled on the workers' conditions, 21 per cent. on the employers', 51 per cent. ended in compromise, and 5 per cent. remained unsettled.

Swedish employers are organised in various exceedingly strong societies which are linked up with kindred bodies throughout all Scandinavia. These organisations in Sweden include employers who have a total of 450,000 workers. They possess enormous strike funds, raised by means of bonds based on the number of workers engaged in the various industries. These bonds are realised in times of strife so that the employers involved in strikes receive support for their enterprises. In addition there are the banks at the disposition of the employers' association ; so that in cases of big strikes the Swedish workers are up against the whole system of organised capital.

(We hope to print in a future issue a second article on the Labour Movement in Sweden, by the author of the above, in which the political organisations of the workers in Sweden will be described.—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.)

The World of Labour

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POLAND

Strike Movements

IN Poland during the past year two parallel and striking series of events have been noticeable. First, Polish bourgeois economy has entered on a period of acute crisis, symbolised by the collapse of the mark : politically, power has passed to the hands of the (Fascist) National Democrats. Secondly, the Polish workers are beginning to awake.

The economic position of the workers has been getting progressively worse. At the beginning of 1923 the average real wage only amounted to 30 to 40 per cent. of pre-war wages, as compared with 50 per cent. in 1921. In June and July food prices rose by 100 per cent. and more ; while from official statistics it was calculated that the rise in purchasing power of an average working-class family was just over 49 per cent.

The strike wave began when the workers in the saw mills of Eastern Galicia demanded wage increases. They were joined by the textile workers of Lodz (the Manchester of Central and Eastern Europe), and by the metal and building workers of Warsaw and other centres. By the middle of July the strike had become practically general, the most notable exception being the miners, whose demands had been acceded to by the employers at the beginning of the month. In Warsaw alone 20,000 metal workers, employed at 70 factories, and 15,000 building workers were on strike. But the struggle centred in Lodz.

Here all the factories were involved, including the leather works, and the number of strikers was estimated at 100,000. Despite the repressive measures immediately adopted by the government in all strike centres, the workers presented an unbroken front. The mass meetings and demonstrations were described as bigger even than those of the revolutionary year 1919. Virtual leadership of the movement was in the hands of the left-wing opposition within the workers' organisations—the partisans of the Red International of Labour Unions and the Communists.

As a result of the solidarity and fighting spirit of the workers, following a forward policy, the majority of the strikes were successful. The Lodz textile workers secured a 67 per cent. wage increase (they had demanded 79 per

cent.). In Warsaw the metal workers gained, among other demands, a three months' collective agreement, for which they had been fighting for the past two and a half years.

The influence of the left-wing opposition has increased remarkably among the masses of the workers. Two illustrations of this may be given.

The elections for delegates to the conference of the Textile Workers' Union took place in August and September, immediately after the successful conclusion of the strike. Out of 67 delegates 35 were left-wingers. Of these 22 came from Lodz. On certain alleged purely formal grounds the right-wing Union executive demanded a re-election in Lodz. The 22 left-wing delegates were all re-elected on an increased vote.

In the Warsaw district of the Metal Workers' Union, the left-wing elements have long been agitating for proportional representation in elections to the Union executive. This demand has been steadfastly opposed by the right wing. However, at the Warsaw Shop Stewards' Conference, at the end of September, a resolution demanding a proportional ballot for the Union executive was carried. It was also decided that the executive should cancel all expulsions of revolutionary members from the Union.

The united front is rapidly becoming an actuality in Poland. Even the right-wing Polish Socialist Party has been affected by the new spirit among the workers. It has been forced out of its attitude of subservience to the government, but it is obviously perplexed by the rising tide of revolt among the workers. The result is a certain lack of resolution which was exhibited most strikingly in the part played by the Socialist Party during the strike movement of the autumn.

This second strike wave commenced in the early days of October in Upper Silesia, where right through the year unrest, often breaking out into serious and widespread strikes, has been endemic. The movement comprised miners, railwaymen, iron and steel workers, and postal and telegraph workers. Demands for wage increases were put forward, variously reported at 200 per cent. to 240 per cent. The employment by the government of military force to break the strike, and the determined resistance of the workers, lent it an atmosphere of civil war. The government persecution was directed particularly against the Communists.

Meanwhile, the cost of living continued to leap up. During the first half of October it increased 85 per cent. The official wage-regulating price index was only compiled fortnightly, and lagged a long way behind the actual cost of living. About the middle of October, the railwaymen struck at Lemberg: within a week the railway men at Cracow, Lodz, and other centres had come out. Silesia was cut off and railway traffic all over Poland disorganised. On October 24, the 100,000 Lodz textile workers struck, demanding a weekly calculation of the price index. Other workers, miners (70,000 in the Dombrowa), municipal employees, postal workers, joined the strikers. The strike rapidly took on the aspect of a wide mass movement. The government replied by instituting courts-martial for the summary trial of strikers and by the militarisation of the railways (*i.e.*, the calling of striking railwaymen to the colours).

Up to now the Socialist Party had held aloof: certain leaders had

approached the government with a request for "mediation" and had been politely snubbed for their pains. At length, realising the desperate nature of the position, the Socialist Party issued a call for a general strike, to take place on November 5. In Cracow the strikers came into armed conflict with the troops. Many workers were killed and wounded. But, most significant of all, the infantry (mostly peasants recruited in Silesia and Eastern Galicia) actually fraternised with the strikers and handed over their arms. The control of a large part of the town passed into the hands of the workers, who set up their own police and generally took over the administration.

Now seriously alarmed, the government hastily decided to revoke the courts-martial and the militarisation of the railways. Instead of pursuing its advantage, and giving every possible assistance to the Cracow workers, the Polish Socialist Party acquiesced in the government's decision and called off the strike. This was on November 7.

A special manifesto on the Polish strikes has been issued by the Communist International. After criticising the Socialist Party leaders as being "afraid of victory," special emphasis is laid on the significance of the events in Cracow.

In Cracow the Polish and Ukrainian peasants in uniform went over to the workers and gave to the proletariat the weapons which the bourgeoisie had intended for use against them.

To extend and to consolidate this alliance between the workers and peasants which was sealed with blood in Cracow is the chief lesson from the Cracow events, the main task of the Polish Communists, and a guarantee of the victory of the Polish Revolution.

The events in Cracow, in short, are taken as pointing the moral of the Workers' and Peasants' Government.

BULGARIA

The Communist Party and the Peasantry

BULGARIA is predominantly a peasant country. The peasantry comprise, it has been estimated, 85 to 90 per cent. of the population. No urban class, whether the bourgeoisie or the workers, can govern without the support, or at the worst the benevolent neutrality, of the peasantry. It is equally certain that the peasants themselves, lacking the political cohesion of the urban classes, cannot hope alone to hold power for any length of time. However, the experiment was made.

Under the leadership of Stambulisky, the Peasant Party after the war swept from power the discredited military-bourgeois clique who had ruled Bulgaria for the last forty years. But the Peasant Party was far from being a homogeneous party. Its leaders were largely intellectuals, and the rich peasants gradually secured more and more influence within it. Consequently the small peasants became apathetic towards the party. Signs of disintegration were apparent.

Stambulisky himself and his immediate followers were over-confident, relying absolutely on the big Parliamentary majority of their party. Their political evolution was to the right, as their persecution of the Communists showed.

Meanwhile the urban bourgeoisie had not been idle. On June 9, 1923, a successful Fascist *coup d'état* was carried out, with the countenance of British imperialism. Stambulisky was captured and shot after a few days' fighting, and the organisation of the Peasant Party virtually broken up for the time being. A Fascist government was set up under the presidency of Tsankoff, with the collaboration of the Social-Democrats.

In this crisis the powerful Bulgarian Communist Party made one fatal error. The executive telegraphed to all local party organisations to remain neutral in the struggle between the Peasant Party and the Fascist urban bourgeoisie. That telegram sealed the fate of the masses of small peasants and the working class and ensured a Fascist victory. The Communist Party, large in numbers and experienced through many years of peaceful propaganda though it was, had failed to see the necessity for rallying the masses in the Peasant Party (as distinct from their reactionary leaders) for the struggle against Fascism.

A few months of the Tsankoff regime, in which Fascists and Social-Democrats united to terrorise and oppress the active elements among the peasantry, as well as the Communists, brought a different situation. In the widespread insurrection which broke out all over the country in September, the Communists took their place as the leaders of the revolting peasantry. The latter had gained much in political consciousness and homogeneity as a result of the Tsankoff terror; also the realisation was rapidly coming to them that their true interest lay in a firm alliance with the revolutionary workers in the towns. The insurrection was only suppressed by the government after weeks of very heavy fighting.

The significance of the Bulgarian events has been summarised by Zinoviev in an authoritative article. We quote :—

Together with a working class led by the Communist Party, the peasantry is everything; without the working class, and endeavouring to take up an intermediate "independent" position between the bourgeoisie and the working class, the peasantry is nothing. And every such endeavour leads to the open dictatorship of the unbounded reaction of the big landowners Class elements essentially hostile to the peasantry invariably try to gain a hold over the peasants. The Communists must reply to this with intensive propaganda for the Workers' and Peasants' Government, and must make it clear to the active sections of the peasantry of the whole world that the peasantry can only defend its real interests when allied to the working people of the towns. This is the import of the Bulgarian events.¹

At the General Election in November the Government Coalition secured 201 seats with 60 per cent of the total votes cast; the Agrarian-Communist opposition secured 46 seats with 40 per cent of the total votes.

¹ See further, on this point, the manifesto of the International Peasants' Congress in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* for December, 1923, Vol. V, No. 6, pp. 357-359.

GERMANY

Dictatorship, the Communist Party, and the Working Class

THE Stresemann government has fallen. After several days of ministerial crisis, of only superficial significance compared with the profound social crisis through which Germany is passing, a Cabinet has been formed by Herr Marx (Catholic Centre Party). Herr Stresemann has been given the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. A sweeping Emergency Power Bill virtually liquidating constitutional rule in Germany was carried on December 8 (with Social-Democratic support) by 313 votes to 18.

Meanwhile, on November 23 at Dusseldorf, Stinnes and Krupp with other associated Ruhr industrial magnates at last signed the long-negotiated Ruhr agreement with the M.I.C.U.M. (Inter-allied Mission for Control of Factories and Mines), representative of the French industrialists. The demand for the ten-hour day is being vigorously pressed. The *Mittag*, a Stinnes Dusseldorf newspaper, in the course of an argument for a longer working day, observes that :—

The mines to-day employ 550,000 workers, that is to say, 150,000 more than in 1913. As a result of the establishment of the eight-hour day, these 150,000 workers are a crushing burden on the mines of the Ruhr, and they must be got rid of in order to support the new burdens which the conditions laid down by the M.I.C.U.M. have imposed on the mineowners.

The misery of the German workers continues to increase. The attempt to stabilise the currency by the issue of the Rentenmark is a mere bluff. On all sides the tales of starvation and the consequent heavy mortality from diseases of all kinds are the same. They are accompanied by reports of intensive and brutal repression of the suffering and rebellious workers. This virtual White Terror has reached its height in Saxony and Thuringia : in the Reichstag session of November 23, the Social-Democratic Premiers of Saxony and Thuringia, Herren Frölich and Fellisch, exposed the "Black-and-Tan" excesses of the Reichswehr and entered a vigorous protest. Next day, *Vorwärts* suppressed their speeches entirely, though it gave fifty lines to the reply of Gessler, the Reichswehr minister.

Reports indicate that the Communist Party is still growing in numbers and influence, despite the regime of terror directed against it. This was especially illustrated after its formal suppression and outlawry on November 23, by decree of General Von Seeckt, the dictator of the Reich. This decree was of a most sweeping nature. It declared illegal all and every Party organisation and activity, it declared confiscated all property owned by the Party, it closed every Party office, printing press, &c. All members of the Party were declared outlaws, and also all persons who should give them aid or support in any way.

Yet on November 27, Berlin workers to the number of 60,000 took part in the demonstration of mass protest against the suppression of the Communist Party. In a similar demonstration in December 6, 30,000 workers took part. Further, it is reported that the illegal newspapers and broadsheets of the Communist Party in Berlin have an average daily circulation of 27,000

copies. A representative bourgeois organ like the *Berliner Tageblatt* wrote apprehensively of Von Seeckt's decree:—

Now, all Communist activity will be underground. Instead of the struggle between Social-Democrats and Communists the direct struggle between the Communist Party and the military power will commence. It is much to be feared that the action of General Von Seeckt will result in new accessions of strength to the Communist Party.

The struggle in the Social-Democratic Party between the right-wing officialdom and the left-wing opposition has again come to the fore. The Central Committee of the Party has associated itself with the bourgeoisie in the suppression of the Communist Party by formally refusing, once again, any united action with the Communist Party. But, as has been emphasised in these notes during the last three months, the Social-Democratic Party is a broken wreck of its former self, with a minimum of influence among the working class. It may be noted that, in the Reichstag fraction of the Party, the proposal to support the Emergency Power Bill was only carried by 75 votes to 55.

At the Congress of the Saxon Social-Democratic Party, on December 2 and 3, the action of the Central Committee referred to above was repudiated, and a vote of censure on it and on the Reichstag fraction of the Party passed, by 109 votes to 20. A resolution demanding the use of all means in the struggle against military dictatorship and the state of siege was passed unanimously. In the election for the Saxon Executive of the Party the left-wing opposition secured a majority.

An extraordinary Congress of the Thuringian Social-Democratic Party arrived at similar decisions. It condemned all governmental coalition with the bourgeoisie and declared for a Social-Democratic cabinet with Communist support.

Similar left-wing agitation is reported in the Social-Democratic Parties of the Rhineland, Westphalia, and Bavaria.

BOOK REVIEWS

A GOOD TEXTBOOK

An Outline of Economic Geography. Plebs Textbooks, No. 4. (Plebs League. 2s. 6d.)

IT is a pleasure to recognise a piece of work which is a real addition to the equipment of the workers. The object of any textbook is not simply to give information, of which heaven knows there is plenty about already in a confused form, but to help understanding. The test of a textbook is its stimulus to thinking. Its working-class character depends on the kind of thinking that it stimulates, *i.e.*, social thinking.

From this point of view the *Imperialism* textbook was open to criticism, because it presented very crowded information simply *in the order of information*, *i.e.*, British Imperialism, French Imperialism, German Imperialism, Italian Imperialism, in a way that could have very little living meaning to anyone to whom they did not possess a meaning already. It was open to severe criticism because this absence of living meaning meant in part a lack of class content which resulted in the social philosophy behind the book becoming a social philosophy of liberal Labourism.

The present textbook could easily be praised for its more skilled presentation of necessary information not otherwise readily available in a small space and an up-to-date form. The set-out is clear and easy. The tables at the end are both novel and useful. The maps and plans are undoubtedly in the first rank of this class of work, and are really beautiful little models of effective and economical presentation. In commercial value there is considerably more than a half-crown's worth in this book.

The value of this book, however, is not a question of technical skill: or rather, the technical skill is really a reflection of something else, and that is the thinking that it represents. The interest of this book is the character of freshness, of direct, personal, active thinking, and that thinking simply and unalloyedly social thinking, which it bears upon it. Here geography is translated into human society in development, with the successive phases of the River Valleys, the Inland Seas, the Ocean, and Railway Transport, and so to the modern position of the great World Groups of imperial rivalry with the advancing force of the international working class around Russia as the nucleus. The modern world is broken up from the static picture of States to dynamic forces in living movement. The chief object of any textbook is achieved in that the worker who reads it is pulled out of his individual consciousness of himself as a helpless unit in the limits of circumstance into social consciousness of himself as a living force in the full stream of development, united with the past and the future and with all the lands of the earth, and with a part to play.

It is this social conception, however incompletely achieved, that gives to this book its easier and more vivid presentation. The chapters represent ideas—social ideas. The tables at the end are not simply convenient summaries of information: they imply a guiding principle in their presentation of each Power Group with its Possessions, Virtual Possessions, Principal Sources of Raw

Materials, Routes and Strategic Points, and Zones of Friction. The same with the maps and plans. Each map is not simply a map of a certain region of the earth's surface, even in economic terms: it is a map of a social relation—the economic unity of Canada and the United States, French spheres of influence in Europe in relation to coal, &c.

The treatment does not pretend to go beneath the surface. Particularly in the earlier portion, the relation of geographical conditions and class character is very lightly skimmed over, or the two are even treated as artificially separable. "The other fundamentally important factor in history, the struggle of classes, does not come directly within our scope in this book" (p. 21). This is an extraordinary statement to make in dealing with economic geography: and the failure to attempt to tackle this question of the relation of the two, which is admittedly difficult and still largely unexplored ground, deprives this book of the possibility of *permanent* value. The conscious limitation of view to a geographical "factor," to the exclusion of the class "factor," as if the two were mutually detachable, prevents that completeness of outlook which marks the classic.

Nevertheless, the work that is done here is a real stimulus to a fuller consciousness of human development and present events, and a good starting point for further thinking. It is to be hoped that it may be followed shortly by another textbook which will do the same work in more detail for Great Britain, and bring out the different character of the various areas in this country in relation to the notoriously different character and development of the working class in each.

R. P. D.

THE GREAT MAN

The Man of To-morrow: J. R. MacDonald. By "Iconoclast." (I.L.P. Publication Department, 3s. 6d., and Leonard Parsons, 8s. 6d.)

THIS book is a symptom of the inevitable. Once again a "great man" is needed and the process of manufacture has begun. A vein of adulation generally reserved for the biographies of millionaires and Press Trust magnates is tapped by an anonymous "Mr. Gossip" for the benefit of the Labour Movement. And the results of this research are published at a moment when the limelight of capitalist publicity is turned on to the future Prime Minister. Photographs of this "constructive" face (the phrase is "Iconoclast's") begin to appear in the popular illustrated papers. Powerful Sunday papers praise MacDonald's speeches during the election campaign as "worthy of all that is best in the tradition of British public life."

Why has this change, of which *The Man of To-morrow* is an important sign, occurred at this moment? The book, which is not a cheering book to read when the strength and weakness of the Labour Movement are remembered, provides the answer.

A litter of irrelevant material covers the meaning of the thing. Seven pages are devoted to his face (in this style: "It is a face that has weathered storms and kept straight on") and eleven pages are needed for an analysis of

his shyness. Three or four times the fact is stressed that MacDonald's martyrdom during the war culminated in his expulsion from the Moray Golf Club. There is no need to deal with these examples of the art of social gossip. The thing that matters is this: every time that the reader emerges from the inept "write-up" of MacDonald's "sparkling eyes," his pleasantness ("I don't think we'd find Lenin agreeable"), and his love for "a romantic haze," one comes across MacDonald in one pose: that of the leader in the struggle against Communism. The reiterated emphasis given to this impression might puzzle the reader if it were not for the fact that MacDonald has himself described his own position (in the capitalist Press) as being "in the forefront of the fight against Communism."

This then is the need that governed the production of this book. A great man is needed to deal with the growing measure of real working-class revolt within the Labour movement. MacDonald is the man.

Such a great man always needs some factor in his career that will give him a grip on the imagination of the working classes. This MacDonald has. During the war he fought hard. He faced "a long and hopeless fight, foredoomed to defeat." He held meetings in every part of the country. His meetings were broken up. Ex-service men particularly have not forgotten this.

Armed with the loyalty that his efforts and his courage inspired and deserved, and that recent events have not yet completely shattered, he has gone on to a new fight. How completely this has dominated his attention during the last five years can be seen by a closer study of *The Man of To-morrow*.

On page 15 we learn—before the word Socialism has been mentioned, and as the first glimpse of MacDonald's political standpoint—that he "stood for parliamentary democracy against Sovietism, direct action, revolution." On page 35 a caricature of an undergraduate Communist is brought in as a foil to the MacDonald who "understands the English." On page 122 begins a long description of the "big controversy which arose to absorb much of his strength and energy." This controversy, between the adherents of the Third International and those of the Second, is stated to have "ultimately proved the means by which he at once saved and conquered the Labour Party."

MacDonald's "steady and finally triumphant opposition to the newest brand of Russian Marxism is worth the most careful study." It is difficult to disagree with this statement.

It is described how MacDonald, inside and outside the I.L.P., fought the Communists with the weapons of logic, history, and Socialism; and it is emphasised that Communism "was not merely a domestic battle. It was, from 1918 on, the great issue in International Socialist politics." We learn later that, at the Berlin Conference, "in Radek, MacDonald had an opponent intellectually *if not morally* worthy of his steel . . . Radek is probably one of the cleverest men in Europe, but put mere cleverness against an intellect like MacDonald's, and it shivers like fine glass."

The chapter ends with a description of the dreadful things that might have happened to British Labour but for MacDonald's firm grip on fundamentals, his unwavering loyalty to principle.

There are too many such quotations to give more than a sketch of them. On page 186 the "controversies with Moscow" are mentioned again. On

page 192 "you will find MacDonald there denouncing Communism." On page 210 there is a description of the Labour Party Conference of 1923, in which MacDonald is shown opposing the left-wingers; his other achievements at the Conference are not mentioned.

Here is an opportunity to check our author's analysis. He finds MacDonald's opposition to the vigorously anti-imperialist attitude of the Barrow Labour Party the only episode worth mentioning from that crowded conference. Is he right? Does that episode throw the clearest light on MacDonald? In our opinion it does. Nothing could be more typical of the "truly great constitutionalist" than his reply to Barrow's criticism of the Parliamentary Labour Party's leanings towards Imperialism: "Barrow is represented by a Tory M.P.!"

A page further on comes an example of MacDonald's lighter style: "The Communist is a politician in crinoline and corkscrew . . . I, being a modern creature, believe in Government rather than revolution or dictatorship."

To confine the statement of his position to a mere antagonism to Communism would not be to give the whole of the picture. Two sentences, which come together in a short list of his latest achievements, go far towards completing the portrait. "His intervention, first in the Building and later in the Agricultural dispute averted catastrophe. An invitation to dine at Buckingham Palace has given the highest sanction to his present rank and future claims."

The builders are making a great effort to recover the ground lost; but it can scarcely help the agricultural labourers of Norfolk on 25s. a week or victimised for strike activity to read of the "highest sanction" being given to the rank and claims of a Socialist leader of the working-class movement.

In any period of stress and threat the bourgeoisie searches through its store of "great men." It turns in panic from a Kitchener proved wooden to a Lloyd George promising the "knock-out blow." After Ludendorff, Ebert. Behind Millerand, ex-Socialist, Briand, ex-Socialist, is held in reserve.

That is why Ramsay MacDonald's "special quality" is held up with the query, "Is it not that queer unanalysable thing called genius?" That is why—and the gush has truth in it—"Lloyd George, so long the centre of Press interest, dropped out: MacDonald took his place." The Press has spoken and who shall deny it? The Man is needed; MacDonald is the Man.

T. H. W

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NOTES of the MONTH

*Enter the Class Struggle—White Guards Emerge—Let the Issue be Faced—On Whose Side?—The Bourgeoisie and the Labour Government—Their Calculation—The Ever-open Trap—
The Way Out*

BEFORE the Labour Government has come to power, immediate issues have faced it. "Suddenly," writes Mr. Brailsford, "an item which none of us foresaw has been written on the order paper." They had been thinking in terms of foreign policy, of housing legislation, of unemployment relief, of educational reform. And by a sudden symbolic event, they found themselves at the very outset and threshold of their career face to face with—the class struggle. It was disconcerting. It was exasperating. It aroused the most unseemly outbursts within the movement, and produced a flood of abuse from the opportunist socialists against the men who were daring to resist a reduction in wages. Gone was all the talk of better wages. Rival unionism was brought into play. Manifestos of solidarity with the railway companies were issued. All the capitalist Press idols of "public opinion," the sacred principles of "conciliation" and "collective bargaining," were proclaimed in the Labour Press. The men were held up to view as "relatively highly paid." The men's leader who was performing his duty of carrying out a duly reached ballot of the men with a six-to-one majority was denounced, in the best approved fashion of the gutter Press, as an irresponsible hothead and an "egoist."

IT was not a pretty picture. The actual occasion was by comparison small: the issue a simple one of resistance to an attack on wages and conditions. But it revealed as in a flash the whole elements of the situation and the issues that are going to have to be faced in this country. The panic was exaggerated, but it brought out and compelled definite statements of one section after another as to where they stood in relation to the class struggle. The future White Guards proclaimed themselves. From now onwards the type of issue of which we have had a foretaste will

recur. It will recur on a larger and larger scale, and on more and more formidable questions, until it reaches the final issue of civil war itself. It is well that the question should be brought up thus sharply at the outset, for it is the supreme question.' There is a feeling of nervousness in many quarters with regard to it, a desire not to approach it, a notion that to consider it too closely would embarrass a Labour Government. There could be no greater mistake. This question—the relation of the Labour Party and a Labour Government to the workers' daily struggle—has got to be faced and settled, for it will be the question of questions facing a Labour Government. It has got to be settled within the movement by the will of the organised workers themselves. It should be the main question facing the Labour Party Conference in June. On its settlement the whole future depends.

LET there be no mistake as to the position. The great majority of the Labour Movement is wholeheartedly united behind the decision to form a Labour Government. But there is not the same unity as to the policy to be pursued; and there is very great danger if that disunity is not brought out into the open to be cleared. Apart from general expressions of tendency there has been no responsible specific discussion of policy. Not only that, but there has even been a feeling that policy ought not to be discussed. It has been felt this is a matter which ought to be left to Mr. MacDonald and his friends and that any discussion might lead to disunity. This view is, in point of fact, the calculation of the enemy. As Mr. Churchill has stated, a Labour Government is to be encouraged "to continue in office on sufferance in order that, if they are violent, they may be defeated, and if they are moderate, they may become divided." Such a view could only be entertained by an outsider. There is no fear yet of the breaking up of the fundamental unity and solidarity of the British working-class movement, whatever individuals and tendencies may be shelved and thrown aside in the course of its growth. Discussion does not create the danger of disunity; there is too much common sense in the movement for that. What would create the danger of disunity would be the feeling that policy was being decided on in secret apart from the common gaze, and that Labour Ministers

were acting mysteriously behind a veil without the closest daily contact with the masses whom it is their business to represent.

SUCH expression as has taken place upon the policy of a Labour Government has varied between the familiar poles of a maximum and a minimum programme. Whatever the character of the expression, they have all had this in common, that they have discussed the question in terms of legislative achievement. Yet any such discussion is far away from reality. There can be no legislative achievement of importance with a capitalist majority. Right and Left must and do recognise this equally, and here there is no dispute. The most that can be hoped is that the best possible within the limits set will be done to help the workers. That best possible will not be much, for however many pretty things may appear to be in common on the Liberal and Labour programmes, it will be another question when it comes to attempting to carry anything out, since any serious attempt will be dependent on finance, and finance cannot be tackled without more far-reaching measures than can be carried in the present Parliament. To discuss the situation, therefore, in terms of legislative achievement is to miss the mark. The real question is a question of administration. How and for whom will the Labour Government administer? How and for whom will they deal with affairs as they arise—strikes, police, wages, Empire, armaments, foreign issues, &c.? Will they stand by and for the working class first and foremost all the time, for the interests of the vast majority of the population, which are irreconcilably opposed to the interests of the possessing few? Or will they consider themselves the guardians and representatives of the capitalist State machine? Between these two alternatives there must in fact be a choice. Ominous statements have already appeared. The view of the Right Wing, expressed by Messrs. Webb and Thomas, has been declared that the object of forming a Labour Government is “simply and solely to give constitutional effect to the duty of carrying on the King’s Government.” That is at any rate a frank statement. Equally definite views have been expressed by the Left Wing that the object shall be to fight for the workers. Which is it to be? Let there not be any conscious self-deception of trying to hide behind idyllic statements that there

ought not to be any conflict between the two. As soon as a practical issue arises, such as a strike or a war, that abstract harmony is blown sky high, and there has to be definite choice, decision, alignment. Let the Labour Movement take its decision consciously and not drift in a fog to another 1914.

ANY consideration of the policy of a Labour Government must take into account the policy of the bourgeoisie. It must never be forgotten that the present Labour Government is entering into office by the will and the decision of the bourgeoisie. The controversy which has been going on and still continues within the ranks of the bourgeoisie is tremendous. Heavy forces are in favour of opposition to any form of a Labour administration and of immediate open unification of the bourgeois ranks. But the major and more influential forces of bourgeois opinion are in favour of a Labour Government. "We would like Mr. MacDonald to stay in office for twelve months," says the *Observer*. "I do not share the apprehensions with which many people regard the possible advent of the Labour Party to power," pronounces Lord Inchcape. A Labour Government, declares *The Times*, would be "the least dangerous way out of the Parliamentary deadlock." "I regard the advent of a Labour Government," announces Lord Grey, "under these circumstances with no apprehension at all. Their foreign policy is the same as ours." "No Panic Now About Labour in Office," chortles the happy *Daily Herald* leader-writer. No doubt. But why? Why this general welcome to a Labour Government? It is not out of any love to it, or based on any concealment of the aim of defeating it. These spokesmen openly proclaim their ultimate aim of bourgeois coalition with no less certainty than their opponents. Only they believe that the tactical ground they have chosen is more favourable.

WHAT is the calculation of the bourgeoisie? It is a very simple one. On the one hand they know that the approaching situation at home and abroad is of such confusion and menace as easily to bring discredit on any Government. On the other hand they know that the Labour Government will be

tioned from taking any effective action by the capitalist majority. There could not be a simpler or safer device for the handing over of responsibility for difficult problems and decisions, combined with the bringing of discredit on the Labour Party. Abroad the situation is heading straight for a crisis. "It seems to me," declares Lord Grey in the same speech in which he expressed his equanimity at the approach of a Labour Government, "that Europe is drifting towards eventual catastrophe. . . . We are now travelling on the old road on which Europe travelled before the last great war." Against French hegemony in Europe British national prestige is to be reasserted by a "vigorous" foreign policy. It is a ticklish job, but what more suitable instrument through which to effect it than a Labour Government, just as before the war it was the then Radical leader Lloyd George that was used with the Mansion House speech to proclaim the anti-German policy? Has not *The Times* proclaimed repeatedly the national policy in foreign affairs which the Labour Party will be expected to pursue? Has not the former war editor of *The Times*, Mr. Wickham Steed, acclaimed Mr. MacDonald as "almost Conservative" in foreign policy? At home the situation is similar. There is a prospect of a financial deficit, according to the Treasury experts. What more suitable condition for a Labour Government, whose hands will be tied over the Capital Levy, and which has promised reduced taxes and sweeping social reforms? Most important of all: there is every prospect of a revival of working-class struggle in the spring. The miners, the railwaymen, the dockers, the builders, all have approaching disputes. It would be no easy matter for a bourgeois Government to deal with them effectively in the face of a growing and powerful Labour Opposition. But what more suitable instrument than to deal with them through a Labour Government, which shall be spurred under the cry of democracy and public order into performing the rôle of a Briand or an Ebert, while bringing discomfiture into the workers' own ranks?

IT is a simple trap, and yet it would be false to say that there is no danger of the Labour Party falling into it. Our present Labour statesmen have not yet learnt to be impervious to the clamour and suggestions of capitalist influences and to look only to the working class for their approval. There is every sign of a

“ vigorous ” national policy. “ We cannot be disregarded,” declares Mr. MacDonald. “Our interests will not allow us to be disregarded.” The Government, proclaims Mr. Tom Shaw, prospective Foreign Under Secretary, is failing to “ maintain the prestige of our country. I am surprised that true Britons on the Conservative benches—and I trust we are all true Britons—should lie down without saying a word under that sort of treatment.” “ By some means,” observes the *Manchester Guardian*, underlining the point, “ Mr. MacDonald has to convince both M. Poincaré and the German Government that he will not shrink, if pressed far enough, from direct assistance to Germany in resisting violence ”—a plain hint of possible alliance with Germany in war with France. And Mr. Scott Duckers announces (quoted without contradiction in the principal news space of *The Times*) that the official foreign policy of the Labour Party will consist of “ the fullest possible reparations from Germany, a powerful navy, a well-paid and efficient army, and (failing a more satisfactory understanding with France) a largely increased air force.” Suitably along with this goes a patriotic “ national ” policy at home. The hypocritical cry for “non-party” methods, pressed by the bourgeois organs, is actually taken up. “Let Mr. MacDonald,” declares the *Observer*, “ call a six months’ truce to ordinary strife and controversy.” And two days later Mr. MacDonald proclaims, “ This House cannot afford merely to pursue old-fashioned partisan tactics,” while Mr. Clynes calls for “ non-party ” treatment of great Imperial questions. With such lines of policy a strike becomes at once a regrettable outbreak of the undisciplined workers, which it is the first business of a Labour Government to smother or suppress.

THEREFORE the issue raised by the railway strike is of very immediate importance. For it raises the whole question of the relation of the Labour Government to the working class. The whole calculation of the bourgeoisie is by mingled suggestion, intimidation, adulation, cajolery, and tactics to drive the Labour Government into a position of national patriotism and opposition to the working class and so smash the movement. This sinister scheme has got to be smashed, and there is only one way of smashing it. That way is for the Labour Government to proclaim itself and act as the weapon of the working class against the bourgeoisie, and

not the buffer of the bourgeoisie against the working class. The sooner the Labour Government does that, the better and the clearer and the healthier it will be for all concerned. Only thus can the working-class movement go forward as a united force. It will mean a revolution in outlook. It will mean regarding the question of Germany not as an arithmetic in reparations, nor as a basis for Anglo-American financial exploitation to defeat the Franco-German industrial combination, but as questions first and foremost of the German workers and the restoration of the eight-hour day and their rights of combination. It will mean regarding a strike, not as an exasperating inconvenience to the functions of a statesman, but as part of the same struggle in which the Labour Government is itself engaged. Such an outlook may not mean an immediate parliamentary advantage, but it will mean something bigger. For the Government which first sheds the cant of national prestige and the higher interests of the community, and stands openly by the masses of the population in their daily struggle, will earn its reward. Let the Labour Government stand by the workers, and the workers will stand by it.

R. P. D

N. LENIN

The report of Lenin's death reaches us after this issue of THE LABOUR MONTHLY has been passed for press, and, accordingly, too late for us to deal adequately with this news, even were publication delayed for several days.

We shall publish a special Memoir in our March number.

Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY

AN IMMEDIATE INDUSTRIAL CHARTER

By GEORGE HICKS

(In pursuance of the article, "Towards a New Policy," by Mr. W. H. Hutchinson, of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and of the Labour Party Executive, in our last issue, we are glad to print this month a contribution to the discussion from Mr. George Hicks, of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers and of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. We hope to print further contributions to this important symposium in future issues.—
Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.)

AN industrial programme which is to secure united working-class support must be one calculated to win through. Otherwise it would save time and loss of energy not to pretend, or ourselves believe, that revolution is anything else than, in its first consequences, destructive. On the other hand, if we are genuinely convinced that working-class revolt is possible on lines that, owing to scientific preparation, swiftly and, with the minimum of friction, substitute for the capitalist system one of proletarian industry, then, it seems to me, there is great danger in a policy of merely spragging the spokes of the capitalist wheel. There is much talk in certain directions at the present time about action regardless of consequences. The argument is that it is good *per se* to break capitalism ; that capitalist-chaos is a capitalist concern and no concern of ours. Which may be sound revolutionary argument, but it is not sound industrial policy short of actual revolution.

Why do we not propose as a programme to be adopted by trades councils up and down the country that wages shall be increased and hours reduced so that all rent, interest, and profit shall be absorbed ? Because we know that we should be asking for something which capitalism cannot grant and yet live, and that if we

could enforce it there would be no need of a programme. My point is that our industrial programme must be one envisaged within the practical framework of the capitalist system unless we are out to trade upon the ingenuousness of the average worker. Our proletarian brother may be simple, but if he is led to expect for his class-unionism more out of capitalism than capitalism is worth he will not view the collapse of the system with philosophic resignation. Our friend is likely to turn round and be nasty rather than share our rejoicings at the collapse of capitalism. So we might as well be honest and preach unadulterated revolution—if we mean it !

What absurdity it is to imagine that there is any direct connection, by way of scientific preparation, between wages and the creation of a socialist republic ! The only connection is the indirect one that exists between leisure plus proper sustenance and the possibility of a good mental standard. It is not so crudely true that the more the workers get the less there is left for the capitalists, and even were it true as a sum in simple proportion, Socialism would yet remain something bigger than a process of “spoiling the Egyptians.” I suggest that an industrial programme considered as a series of palliatives can be made a valuable auxiliary to the revolutionary movement, but it is not the revolution, even in embryo. Palliatives are supposed to palliate. Our demands must be regulated by what is possible or we become impossiblist.

Obviously, the idea of an uninterrupted crescendo of hours' reductions and wage increases is impossiblist for the reason that capitalism not only would not but also could not stand anything of the kind. “So much the worse for capitalism !” Alas, if with that we could only say, “So much the better for constructive revolution” ! It is true that every increase in scientific knowledge applied to industry adds to wealth-producing capacity in the benefits of which the workers should increasingly share, but it requires only the ordinary socialist's acquaintance with the economics of capitalist imperialism to know that its chief characteristic is a complete incapacity to socialise any such advantage. Consider the fact that within the last century the actual productive power of machinery has added to the wealth-potentialities per head of the working population at least one hundred times. Does anyone

think it possible by any amount of direct action to add to the consuming-power of our class even one hundred *per cent.* let alone ten thousand? It is a commonplace of our propaganda that a standard of life equal, say, to ten pounds a week per family at present prices would be ridiculously easy of accomplishment, given the co-operative organisation of industry. But only an ignoramus would talk about squeezing any such standard out of the capitalist. There is, indeed, a limited amount of juice in the capitalist orange, and, to vary the metaphor, it is not a particularly revolutionary process to try to get blood out of a stone.

To get down to what in rhyming slang are called "brass tacks," articles of intellectual ironmongery of which we have to take practical account: Suppose the trades councils agree to formulate a programme of industrial demands and to back it up by the threat of industrial action. This programme embodies, let us say, the six-hour day and a minimum wage of four pounds a week; a moderate sample of the Communist body of palliatives. No industry, subject to foreign competition, could grant any such demand and continue to exist. Many industries not subject or little subject to foreign competition return in profits only that percentage upon the average which compensates the capitalist for the natural risks of the industry according to the principles upon which the capitalist system is run. It must not be forgotten that surplus-value is distributed amongst a big band of robbers, the last and often biggest of which would remain out of reach long after smaller men had made the acquaintance of the bankruptcy court. As H. H. Champion once said: "If the capitalist system were represented by one person, one would have no compunction about cutting its throat."

These considerations apply to mining and engineering. They also apply to building, which is not at the mercy of the lowest-paid labour abroad. Wages in certain towns were 2s. 4d. an hour for craftsmen when the Government cost-of-living index figure was 170. Is it conceivable that wages in these trades could possibly have remained at the rate quoted with a reduction of ninety to 100 in the index if we grant, as we must, some approximate relation to real prices in the latter, however unscientific might be the compilation of this index figure? The building trades, if it

had had the power to resist decreases and had successfully resisted them, would have brought the greater part of the building industry practically to a standstill. It is impossible under capitalism to get far away from the Marxian law of wages, and every Socialist ought to be aware of the fact that it is impossible. But it is quite possible to maintain a position asserting the claim of the worker to conditions equal to the best which the industry, can, in capitalist parlance, "afford," and resist encroachments upon that standard, whatever it may be. But, clearly, the standard must vary industry by industry and can be determined by industrial power used only as a testing instrument. It is a different matter when we talk in national terms. A national programme must be a minimum programme, based upon what capitalist industry *as a whole* can actually "afford" and what is realisable.

From the standpoint, therefore, that industrial action, unless it is undertaken with the definite object of overturning the present system frankly as a revolutionary act, must be remedial as a basis of a cultural and efficient class structure, let us examine its possibilities within the society that we find extremely complex and sensitive. I assert as my profound conviction that one thing or the other must be done ; either boldly to proclaim revolutionary intention or use the power of trade unionism to make the best of the present system whilst our class are being educated in revolutionary principles. I am convinced that any attempt to trick the workers into an economic stalemate by throwing the weight of industrial machinery over to the side of impossibilist demands merely to harass the capitalist class will not bring the revolution nearer, but will merely recoil upon the heads of too clever people with disastrous results.

In the first place I believe we shall be on sure ground if we take up the position that no industry or section of an industry has any right to exist, or, if an essential one, any right to remain in competitive hands, unless it can assure the workers employed in its ranks food and leisure sufficient for health of body and development of mind. Industry as at present organised can be made to guarantee a minimum such as this without economic dislocation for the reason that a measure of improvement in social life is within the power of the system to establish now, and the stabilisation of demand that would follow, together with further

evolution in the means of production, would create conditions later on for another advance and yet another. My conclusion may be questioned. It may be argued, on classic lines, that the position of the working class must go from bad to worse as long as capitalism lasts. Very well, if such is the case, be honest enough to stand for the real thing. Do not ask for wages to go up if you believe they must go down. Concentrate on smashing the wage system, not on lines of trade union defence, but on those of class-conscious defiance.

We ought to demand, therefore, minimum wages and maximum hours within the range of reasonable possibility of accomplishment, or nothing of the kind. We cannot run with the hare and at the same time hunt with the hounds. The class war now is a question of steady and controlled pressure upon the elastic rind of capitalism ; it is conditioned by the natural "give" possessed by the material upon which the workers operate in that struggle. Some day we shall use an appropriate instrument to penetrate to the inside. We have fought for the eight-hour day and have not yet achieved it universally. Some industries have obtained the forty-four-hour week. At the present stage of trade union development I believe it to be futile to go for any scale of hours less than the forty-four. I believe this to be commercially practical and, therefore, with adequate organisation, capable of achievement. I do not apologise for studying commercial practicability. As a trade union official I am forced to live in a real world. Let us frame our charter. Capitalism, I am convinced, with scientific advantage to itself (which is the test : no general strike, sabotage, or any other "direct action" making the slightest difference), can adapt itself to forty-four hours together with wages equal to pre-war plus the increased cost of living with an additional increase of 25 per cent. The adaptation required under competitive conditions implies increased efficiency. There is no bottomless profit and there are no vast reserves well enough within reach to finance any kind of project we might think heroic. It follows that—more efficient organisation of capitalist machinery bearing an immediate relation to the unemployment margin—our proposals must be coupled with a policy of "work or adequate maintenance," and to this latter policy the Labour Movement to-day is to all intents and purposes pledged.

So far our charter covers hours, wages, and employment—food, clothing, leisure, and security up to a point well above the average of the workers' lot now. It remains to add the one measure which is necessary to approach the elements of a tolerable existence—housing. As I have proved on numberless occasions in the press and on platforms throughout the country, a guaranteed programme of 200,000 houses a year for the next twenty-five years is the very least required to overcome the accumulated shortage of the last fourteen or fifteen years, and the workers' self-respect should be equal to insisting upon houses substantially better than those contemplated to-day by even the most progressive authorities. I submit the above programme for discussion and I believe it will commend itself to the workers and their representatives with only those reactionary exceptions which we have learned through disappointing experience to expect. I believe the trades councils will rally to such a charter and demand adequate representation in national councils for its promulgation.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND POWER¹

I.—Some Continental Comparisons

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

THE entirely new situation created by the political and parliamentary stalemate between the three parties in England is certainly without parallel in the history of this country. Of course it is possible to find apparently similar situations which arose during the latter half of last century, when the Irish Nationalists held the balance between the Liberals and the Unionists. But in those days the issues concerned the struggle for the spoils of office of two parties, representing the big propertied interests of England, in which struggle the smaller propertied interests, the native Irish landlords and traders, levied blackmail on both sides, owing to the stalemate in Parliament. To-day there are the same two parties in England competing for control of the machinery of State, but the former third party has vanished and its place has been taken by the party which expresses the political aspirations of the class-conscious hand and head workers and of a section of the small middle classes. Thus while the parliamentary situation has many similarities to that which faced some of the Liberal and Conservative Cabinets of the 'eighties and 'nineties of last century, the underlying social forces creating this situation are as different as chalk from cheese. For the first time the issues are not between groups within the capitalist class, but between these groups, still carrying on a desultory fight against each other in their own sectional interests, and the new class party of the workers, coming up from below. That is the real novelty of the present position. It is even more important than the fact that we have a parliamentary stalemate and that the workings of the party system in the House of Commons will probably undergo considerable modification in the near future, as Ramsay MacDonald suggests in a recent number of the *New Leader*. The present balance of political power, represented by the parliamentary

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strength of the parties, indicates a new alignment of class forces and the weakening of the hold of the two great capitalist parties in the country over the parliamentary machine.

On the other hand, it is entirely wrong to imagine that what has happened here is without precedent in Europe. Parliamentary stalemate and the placing of a party representing organised Labour in such a position that it can take power only with support of a section of the capitalist class may be new to England. But it is certainly not new to some countries on the Continent, where the breakdown of the capitalist system has gone much further than here. If the situation at present in England is without precedent, that is rather a proof that capitalism here has only now reached a stage of decline which it reached much earlier elsewhere. It is, therefore, very important for us to know what have been the effects, as far as the interests of the working classes and the Labour and Socialist cause are concerned, of these situations of parliamentary stalemate in other countries. What experiences have other Labour and Socialist parties had on the Continent, how have they ordered their tactics, and what has been the result? Have we anything to learn either by way of imitating a success or of taking warning from a failure?

One's mind naturally turns first to Russia, where the breakdown of the capitalist system took place at a very early stage and progressed catastrophically in a very short period of time. But the comparison between the position in England now and the position in Russia between the March and the November revolutions in 1917 presents some difficulties. In Russia the old Government had for generations been a Government of an agrarian aristocracy, which was hindering the normal development of capitalist production, restricting the political rights of the bourgeoisie, and hence had never permitted the growth of the parliamentary system, which is the most perfect political expression of capitalism. Even though there was no parliamentary system in Russia at the time when the Russian bourgeoisie proved itself incapable of taking up the reins of government, which were let fall by the agrarian aristocracy of Tsardom, nevertheless a position of stalemate was created during the summer of 1917 which bears some similarity with that facing the Labour Party to-day. The leaders of the Russian Social-

Democracy, the Mensheviks, were faced with the alternatives of carrying on the government of the country alone or of entering into an agreement with the parties of the Russian bourgeoisie, who were really by this time the advanced guards of Anglo-Franco-Belgian finance capital in Russia. I well remember the solemn pledges, given before the crowded audiences of the Petrograd Soviet by the Menshevik leaders in May, 1917, that they would secure, as a price for entering the Provisional Government with the Cadets and the party of the Moscow industrialists, State control over the banks and key industries of Russia, the liquidation of the great estates, and a declaration from the Allies of the precise objects for which they were prosecuting the war. I believe that the Menshevik leaders honestly tried to do their best to attain these ends in the Government of Kerensky, but they met with well-organised and effective obstruction from the Cadet and other bourgeois parties. Instead of leaving the coalition and forcing the bourgeois parties either to rule by a dictatorship or hand them the reins of power and rule by a minority relying on the broad masses, they stuck to their coalition. This was one of the factors which made the second or November revolution inevitable. A Socialist party here had set itself aims, found itself faced by class opposition, and instead of using its strategic position as leader of a class which was aspiring to power, it whittled away its programme on the excuse that Russia must be saved from anarchy. Even worse was the rôle played by the Mensheviks after the November revolution in the areas where the revolution did not or was not allowed by various causes to spread. In the Ukraine their local groups entered into coalition with Nationalist parties; in the Volga provinces at the Ufa conference with the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Cadets, and Czecho-Slovaks. These coalitions merely prepared the way for the military dictatorship of the Prussian generals in the first case and of Koltchak in the second.

A much closer parallel, however, to the situation which is coming in England to-day is to be seen in Germany since the war. Here we have had Governments ruling on parliamentary majorities and a balance of parties in the Reichstag which in their main outlines are not very different from the circumstances prevailing now in Westminster. Here also we have a Social-Democratic Party, which

has been called upon to play the most important rôle in the events of the last four years. Let us see how the Social-Democratic Party of Germany has used the opportunities given to it. In the elections for the National Assembly at Weimar, when its power was at its highest, it was not able to form a Government without the support of the Democrats, *i.e.*, representatives of trading and bank capital and the *Zentrum*, containing big Catholic, agrarian, and industrial interests. The German Social-Democratic leaders used the absence of a sufficient parliamentary majority for their party and the growing economic anarchy as an excuse for abandoning the most important part of their social programme, which alone would have made a beginning in stopping the anarchy in the method of production and distribution. By going into coalition with the Democrats and *Zentrum*, they had to abandon the nationalisation of mines and bank control. For this they got as a *quid pro quo* a republican constitution with a democratic administration in the State. As a matter of fact this existed only on paper, since recent events have shown that by Article 48 of the constitution a military dictatorship can be set up in Germany whenever the President of the Republic (in this case the trust magnates) thinks it necessary. The Social-Democrats have thus abandoned an economic key position, the public control of industry, and have got in exchange a purely worthless political constitution, which the present holders of the economic key position (the trusts) can turn round their fingers' ends.

Again, when the general election in June, 1920, showed that many people in Germany, who had eighteen months before voted Socialist, now voted, largely through disillusionment, for capitalist parties, and the Social-Democratic Party was returned with a smaller number of members to the new Reichstag, the leaders continued the same tactics. Dependent now on votes, not only from the Democrats and *Zentrum*, but also from the heavy industry Peoples' Party to form a Government, they were faced with the necessity either of entering the so-called Grand Coalition, which implied the abandonment of the eight-hour day, the Workmen's Council Act, and other last remnants of the November revolution, or of forming a united front with the Communists and initiating a big campaign both inside and outside of Parliament for winning

the support of the broad masses for the pure and unadulterated programme of the old Social-Democratic Party. They chose the former alternative on the grounds that only the participation of the Social-Democrats would secure a more sympathetic treatment of Germany by Poincaré, would prevent a capitulation on the Ruhr, and would restore the finances of the country. At the end of the days of the Grand Coalition the trust magnates had beaten down the German workers' wages to one-quarter of their pre-war gold value and had established the nine and ten-hour day in factories and eight in mines, while the mark was no longer quoted on the foreign exchanges. Moreover, the trusts now saw to it that the Social-Democrats bore the odium of the capitulation on the Ruhr—a capitulation which they (the trusts) had been secretly preparing for months. Then when the Moor had done his duty, the German trusts decided to set up their own military dictators. They reduced Parliament to a club, where any member of the once-powerful legislature who is not under preventive arrest in the terror now reigning in Germany can have a cup of tea and a smoke. But even then the Social-Democratic leaders had their chance. When the Enabling Bill was before the Reichstag in December last they might have brought the Government down by their hostile vote and have forced a general election on that issue. They voted for the Enabling Bill to escape a general election at which they feared the electorate might treat them even worse than in June, 1920, for their sins since that date. Thus the dictatorship of General von Seeckt became legal, and the Social-Democratic leaders now have to face a general election under the shadow of his sabre.

It may be said that in England to-day we are not faced with the alternative of coalition with the Liberals or remaining out of office, and that we will not fall into the trap as the Social-Democratic leaders have done. Nevertheless, as we take power now we are dependent on Liberal votes and will have to modify our programme accordingly. This need not necessarily be fatal to us. *It all depends on what we get in return for our temporary postponement of the capital levy.* We shall get the sole control over the administrative machine of the State. This is certainly a big asset and something more than the German Social-Democrats got, for they have always had to share that control with other parties of the coalitions. By sole

control we can do much to relieve the lot of the unemployed and initiate public works. But where shall we get the money from? The whole problem of the present trade depression and of unemployment is part of the general economic problem which no previous Government has been able to solve, not because its leaders have been incompetent, but because, standing for a declining economic system, they have been unable to take those steps which would undermine the economic bases of those who put them in their positions. The capital levy is ruled out for the time being. There is only one other means by which we can finance our schemes for unemployment. We can increase Ways and Means advances, we can float reconstruction loans and pay a good rate of interest to those who refuse to let us levy their capital, and, lastly, we can print Treasury notes. In other words, we can tread the thorny path of inflation. We could do, in fact, exactly what the industrial and trading magnates behind the Liberal Party would like us to do in their interests. They, and also the industrial group of the Conservatives, would like someone to come along and artificially raise the value of real estate and liquid assets, and depreciate the value of fixed interest-bearing securities which hang like a millstone round the neck of the country and are one of the main causes of the great trade depression. Industry might get busy again for a time, till the public began to see what was going on, and then a general flight from the pound would begin and a financial catastrophe like that which has come in Germany. If the Liberals could induce us to do this, their speculators would rake in the cash, while we should rake in the curses of all those small middle-class people and artisans who have invested their savings in housing bonds, war loan, and Co-operative banks. They are with us now—or a larger part of them are—but after this they would either turn to the Tories or, as on the Continent in countries where inflation has been rampant, become the rank and file recruits of a Fascist Movement. These are prospects that await us if we try to finance over a period of years our social schemes by inflation. We should abandon our economic key position—the capital levy—and, I may add, a measure closely associated with it, the control of the banks, and we should enter into a secret, almost unconscious coalition with the Liberals, just as the German Social-Democratic leaders entered with their

eyes open into a conscious coalition with the Democrats, and finally with the party of Herr Stinnes. But the ruin of the Socialist Movement in Germany at the present time is a terrible warning to us.

I submit, therefore, that we must not abandon our economic key position—the capital levy—for the Liberal phantom of inflation, as the German Social-Democrats abandoned their nationalisation schemes for the phantom of the Weimar constitution, which changed its form to a military dictatorship. We must use the administrative apparatus of the State in order to show that a Socialist party can and will set that apparatus in motion to replace the activities of private enterprise, which is now so obviously on its decline. Having done this, and having made the acquisition of purchasing power by the State a necessity for the purpose of financing our public works schemes, it will then be absolutely necessary to appeal to the electorate on the issue created by ourselves—capital levy and control of banks, or inflation. Then we shall not have abandoned any economic key position, but shall merely have used the present stalemate in Parliament as an opportunity for a breathing space, during which we can prepare the ground for the big fight of the future over the control of the great production and exchange monopolies of this country.

THE FUTURE OF THE TRADES COUNCILS CONFERENCE

By R. PALME DUTT

SO far there has been no public discussion in the Labour Press of the results of the Trades Councils Conference which was held at Birmingham just before the Election.

This is a pity, as, whatever our view with regard to it, there can be no question of the importance of the Trades Councils Conference as the only national meeting of the rank and file working-class forces in the country.

The omission on the part of the official Labour Press is easily comprehensible. The policy of the headquarters machine was clearly, if impudently, expressed in the paragraph sent out by the *Labour Press Service* with reference to the Conference :—

There has recently been a flood of resolutions in this sense received at Congress headquarters from local trades councils and branches of trade unions, but the General Council, of course, takes no cognisance of resolutions coming from these channels.

When bourgeois influence in a working-class movement is strong, the distinction between "official" and "unofficial" becomes strong. Anything not inspired by the machine, anything coming from the local workers on the spot, anything emanating from the working class themselves, is taboo. It is an accident to be hushed up. If weak, it is sneered at ; if strong, it causes panic. It cannot be welcomed as a spontaneous expression of the working class, because, however harmless and dutiful it may appear (and direct working-class expression is, of course, very seldom harmless and dutiful in manner, and very often strong and rude), there is no telling where it may not lead. An official group which is following bourgeois policy is afraid of all direct expressions of the working class: ". . . . local trades councils and branches of trade unions the General Council, of course, takes no cognisance of resolutions coming from these channels."

So develops a complete divorce between what is done and discussed in the working-class movement, and what is allowed to appear in the official Labour Press. The winds of controversy are stayed, or (since there is a clamour for some outlet) hitched on to some suitable kite such as the exact degree of yellowness of Mr. Blatchford. The official group live their sheltered, if suspicious, lives in an apparent monotony of unity—until the curtain is suddenly drawn aside by some such scene as the Plymouth Congress. And to the militant workers, “unofficial” and “rank and file” become the hall-marks of all virtue, and it is felt hard to believe that any official can enter the kingdom of heaven.

It is against this background in actual fact that the Trades Councils Conference must be considered. If the Trades Councils Conference were simply a meeting of certain minor organs of the movement that had happened never to have had a meeting before, no one would care twopence one way or another. But it is because the Trades Councils Conference is a potential *expression* of the workers themselves, something direct from the workers on the spot and created by the workers themselves, an integral part of the movement and yet not controllable by the machine, that all the excitement arises. Here the unfettered expression of the workers may break out. That is the fear. That is the hope.

To all who are seeking to overcome the distinction of “official” and “unofficial,” and substitute the single test and character of “working class,” the Trades Councils Conference is of supreme importance. For the Trades Councils undeniably are integral parts of the movement, and yet their Conference is not easily to be absorbed or dominated from above. Indeed, it looks as if the machine has decided that such a course is hopeless to attempt, and that the only policy is to endeavour to trample out the Conference as having no right to exist. Yet the Conference has no “unconstitutional,” sectional, exclusive character. It is open to all—all who take their part in the local movement. Indeed if any official should wish to come out as a left-wing leader he could not do better than come off his pedestal and win approval by taking up his share of local work and coming to the Trades Councils Conference on a footing of equality. The Conference lays no challenge to the sovereign bodies of the movement or claim to legislative or other

rights. It is simply a meeting place, a discussion ground, an expression of the local movements directly representing the workers all over the country.

Now if this is true, then this is the basis from which the Conference and its future must be judged. Its one single, definite value is as an *expression* of the ordinary workers. According as it is expressing the views, feelings, and desires of the workers on the spot it is succeeding or failing. It is from this point of view we need to discuss the proceedings of the last Conference and to draw any conclusions for the future.

There is at present no genuine opportunity of common expression of the working class in this country. The Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference are unable to fulfil this rôle. They are not representative in character (in the Labour Party the local movements are represented only by a tiny fraction of the votes, totalling less than a single big union, and in the Trades Union Congress they are wholly excluded); they are mainly manned by paid officials; they are machine-ridden in agenda and they make no attempt to discuss the principal problems facing the working class.

The Plymouth Trades Union Congress has recently given rise to an outcry against it as a scandalous fiasco. Yet the most significant features of the Plymouth Congress were not so much the sensational revelations which have had so much publicity as the more humdrum features common to it and all Trades Union Congresses. There has been much objection to the washing of dirty linen at the Congress. Yet on the whole the Congress is just the place where dirty linen should be washed—provided it is washed, and not just brought out in public for the purpose of scoring personal points and then put back again exactly where it was in order to stop the scandal. But the real crime of the Plymouth Congress was the utter indifference to and neglect of all the big questions facing the working class—unemployment, the attack on wages, the international position, working class disunity—and the confinement to passing a few mechanical resolutions with no serious discussion or practical intent. All the serious subjects were disposed of with fifteen-minute discussions and general inattention. All the strong feeling, all the passion and hot controversy, was reserved by these

representatives of the workers for their own dirty little jobs and posts. To the big issues facing the working class there was indifference and tepid, pious platitudes. That is the real dirt of the Plymouth Congress which nothing can wash.

Did the Plymouth Trades Union Congress represent the workers? There can be only one answer to that question. It did not represent the workers, but the workers' officials. Even an observant bourgeois reporter, such as the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, could not fail to discern this point in fact, even though he was unable to analyse its meaning.

"Jealousy of a supreme central authority," wrote the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent at Plymouth, "might not be inconsistent with harmonious relations between the different unions. Of that harmony, to judge from yesterday's proceedings, one might say there was very little. Yet the frequency of the sympathetic strike and the almost invariable refusal of trade unionists to do anything which might be called 'blackleg' labour or to handle 'blackleg' goods show that it exists."

The reporter sees the two apparently inconsistent sets of facts: he does not see that they refer to two sets of people.

In the council chamber, certain well-paid officials wrangling and brawling over jobs, poaching, and relative powers. In the docks and the yards men sacrificing their day's wages that may be all the earnings of a week to stand by their fellows.

It is two worlds, no less than the bourgeoisie and the proletariat represent two worlds. And the first world is represented at the Trades Union Congress. The second world has not yet its expression.

The second world exists: it is only its expression that is lacking. That is the dominating fact, which gives the key to the note of the Trades Councils Conference. It is often said that whatever criticism may be lodged against the conventional official elements, they are in reality only representative of the rank and file. That statement is not true, and the whole history of the past few years demonstrates its falsehood.

The history of the past few years for the British working class has been a history of worsening conditions on the one hand, and on the other of a revolt that has been smothered and suppressed. The record of the years immediately after the war is familiar and

their lesson is known. But the events of the past eighteen months, and in particular of the last spring and summer, and likely to arise again this spring, have a significance that has not been widely recognised. That significance is the re-arising of the spirit of revolt after the capitalist victory in the face of official indifference and antagonism that has refused to give it expression. Every evidence that can be traced, every sign and measure that can be recorded, has revealed a real growing mass spirit of fight and resistance against the successes of the capitalist offensive, which has been repeatedly blocked and choked by the barriers of the machine.

One ballot after another, one strike after another, reveals the workers united, determined, tenacious; their representatives hesitating, surrendering, and in opposition to them.

The silent testimony of the strike ballots, almost the sole measurable evidence of mass feeling, affords an extraordinary feature during the past eighteen months. There has hardly been a ballot that has not declared for action, for resistance, for fighting. There has hardly been a ballot that has not been disregarded.

The picture revealed by strikes is no less demonstrative. During the period in question there has taken place such a wave of strikes as has won recognition from the bourgeoisie as an "industrial crisis" of first-class magnitude. Yet throughout this "industrial crisis" there has hardly been a single official national dispute other than the Boilermakers'. It has consisted almost entirely of unofficial, local sporadic struggles, carried on at best with the passive approval of the National Union, and often in the face of active Union opposition. We find men striking and ordered back by the Union; we find men striking and fined by the Union for doing so; we find men striking and subjected to a joint battery by Union officials and the Press of censure and reproach.

Alongside of this has taken place the steadily worsening conditions, the tremendous cuts in wages, the lengthening of hours, the overcrowding and evictions, the toll of unemployment, and the "gap," which have been the accompaniment of the Union paralysis and the operative cause of the rising spirit of revolt.

This sum total makes up the situation and gives the background to the Trades Councils Conference as the only national

meeting of the workers without distinction of trade or industry and imparts to it its meaning.

First, the progressive degradation of the workers' conditions to an intolerable pitch.

Second, the growing spirit of revolt of the workers unable to find expression through the normal channels.

Third, the conspicuous failure of the official leadership to maintain even a semblance of efficiency, unity, or loyalty.

From this situation it is only a step to the inevitable conclusion—the necessity and task of a National Conference of Workers, such as at present only the Trades Councils Conference can supply. What is that task? It is to gather together the scattered and hesitating forces of the workers and face in a united way the problems that bear down upon them, to hammer out every question and show the common way forward, and to act together on the results that are reached as a united and uniting force, so helping to restore the confidence and conscious direction that has been lost from the movement.

Unless the Trades Councils Conference consciously sets itself to accomplish this task, its meeting will only be of technical interest, and the great task that awaits it will pass to other hands.

In the words of the chairman of the Conference :—

This Conference has the opportunity to supply what is the greatest need of the movement, a rallying centre to gather up a common movement that will so increase in volume and strength as to compel a new leadership in the central organs of the movement, a facing of the problems of the working class, and unification of the working-class army.

And now to come to a question. Did the Birmingham Conference last November do this?

There is no need to be afraid of the answer, No. All institutions that have in them a real historical character and growth begin by being uncertain of themselves and hesitating to assert their full power. To compare great with small. The Russian Soviets were at first content to sound only a minor key to the Provisional Government. The British Parliament for long made no pretensions to more than the subordinate functions for which it was called. And so in its own way the Trades Councils Conference may begin with a limited view of its functions.

But what is important is to recognise quite frankly and clearly at the outset what was accomplished and what was not accomplished and what mistakes were made that must be put right. This is the necessary condition of any progress.

Consider the position when the Birmingham Conference met. Two great events had brought to a head the whole general situation which has been described. The Dockers' Strike, with its heroic struggle by the men, the repudiation by the officials, and the disastrous breakaway, had suddenly thrown into high relief the menacing character of the whole position—the utter divorce of officials and men, the rising spirit of revolt, and the visible danger of passing into complete anarchy and break up of the movement through the lack of leadership. And the Plymouth Congress immediately after had suddenly displayed before the masses more vividly than ever before the pitiful bankruptcy and insignificance of those they were supposed to look to as their leaders.

The demand for something to be done was strong. The calling of the Trades Councils Conference immediately after the Congress evoked a tremendous response. In the conditions of poverty in which the mass of the Trades Councils have to work to-day, the successful holding of an unofficial Conference of over a hundred delegates, representing three-quarters of a million workers, was an amazing sign. On every side was the expectation of a lead.

And then what happened? The delegates who had come together with such difficulty from all over the country were occupied for perhaps five or six hours in all. They were occupied with an agenda which bristled with constitutional rules, amendments, affiliation fees, trade union structure, &c., &c. They were so busy with their "delete and insert" amendments, that when it came to such questions as Unemployment, Housing, Wages, and Hours, it was the *fig end* of the day and there was no time for discussion. Conventional resolutions were passed without discussion, and made no difference to anyone.

To the historian who will trouble to see in perspective the position of the working class at this moment, and who can know that many of those present were in fact among the most eager to forward the struggle of the working class, the picture will seem maddening in its futility.

There were two great discussions which occupied the principal debating time of the Conference.

One discussion was a great spectral struggle between the principles of the One Big Union and Industrial Unionism.

It is necessary to see the actual propositions in order to realise the profound basis of this controversy between Inside Out and Outside In.

One eager group of contestants demanded "one union for all workers, departmentalised in order that the workers in each industry or trade may have proper expression."

The other and victorious group demanded "one union for each industry, all under the direction of a General Council."

This was the grand controversy that occupied these modern scholastics.

The second great controversy was on the interpretation of "social" working-class organisations which were to be admitted into the Trades Councils. Glasgow held that "social" organisations meant drink clubs and should be cut out. Tolerant England was up in arms on behalf of the "social" principle. The curious foreigner who might have imagined by the terms that a great Socialist controversy was under weigh would have had to be disabused.

These were the two principal discussions to crystallise the present position and problems of the working class.

Now what was responsible for this complete defeat of any real purpose of the Conference?

Probably most delegates would agree that there were two things which might be singled out.

The first was the character of the agenda. The type of agenda which consists of a medley of cut and dried resolutions and amendments sent in by some specified date is wholly unsuitable for a big conference of the working class which is endeavouring to face living problems. With the best will in the world on the part of delegates, such an agenda stifles real discussion, and invariably produces long expenditure of time on niggling controversies in the early stages and a breakneck speed of Moved, Seconded, and Carried at the end, with no time for "mere talk" on general questions, *i.e.*, what matters. We have got to realise that this procedure

belongs to the old traditions of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress, and is just part of that throttling machinery we are out to break. We need to break it entirely and not be afraid of adopting the "Continental" plan. What we need is careful discussion with reasonable time allocated on the big issues facing the workers, and then drawing up the results of the Conference (whether through commissions or otherwise) in a form that means something and bears some relation to future action, and not in pious resolutions which repeat what we all said years ago and never needed the expense, time, and worry of a Conference at all to reach.

That is the first point. But the second goes deeper, because it is something more than a question of procedure. It is a point that characterised, not only the procedure, but the majority of the resolutions themselves, and the discussion, and indeed the whole atmosphere, and that point is the obsession with questions of machinery and structure as the principal questions facing the working class. The giant controversy between the One Big Union and Industrial Unionism was simply an example of this tendency gone mad. Does anyone imagine that this is the issue before the working class to-day?

This characteristic has marked the left-wing movement during the present period, and is in danger even of isolating it from the mass of the ordinary workers and bringing them much nearer in practice to the right-wing officials, who are also preoccupied with questions of machinery when they reflect about trade unionism in general. Always it is a question of the Congress, the Councils, the relation of the Councils and the Congress, the General Council, the Affiliation of the Unemployed, Industrial Unionism, &c., &c. All these are very good—in their place—but they are not a substitute for living issues, and can even become dangerous if they are treated so.

What is the result in practice? Remember the burden of the complaint against the Plymouth Congress. All the time consumed on petty matters, and only a quarter of an hour for unemployment, a quarter of an hour for the international situation, &c., &c. And now what happened at the Birmingham Conference? All the time consumed on machinery questions, and no time left for the resolutions on unemployment, wages and hours, housing, &c. The

parallel is too near to be pleasing. The danger of the practical approximation of the left and the right, suggested above, a way from the workers, cannot be treated as altogether fanciful.

The only lead given in the Conference was admittedly the chairman's speech: and a chairman's speech cannot do more than open up questions. Yet delegate after delegate complained that they had come looking for a lead and had found none save in the chairman's speech. This is not a satisfactory situation and must be remedied.

There is no inherent fault in the position compelling this result. The Trades Councils hold a vantage ground unique in the movement, and the men on them include many of the best, the keenest, and also of the most practical of the active workers. The hopes of the movement in Britain must be and are centred in them.

The Trades Councils must rise to their opportunities. The Trades Councils Conference should assume the position of the spokesmen of the masses of the workers, not in opposition to the Trades Union Congress, but as the complement of the official body in whose hands the power rests. It should stimulate the agitation of the Trades Councils and the workers as a whole apart from their sectional interests. We should look forward to the time when there may be a great yearly meeting, not only of the Trades Councils, but of all the foremost and class-conscious sections of the workers' movement. In the meantime the development to that stage is in the hands of the Trades Councils Conference and their Executive: and it is to be hoped that their Executive will lose no time in pushing matters forward and by the effectiveness of their preparations ensuring the unqualified success of next year's Conference as a representative conference of the workers discussing all questions that affect them.

THE NEW TREND OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

BY MANABENDRA NATH ROY

THE outstanding feature of the Indian Nationalist Movement during the last half year has been a swing to the right. The programme of militant mass-action, inseparably involved in the Non-Co-operation campaign, has been definitely replaced by constitutionalism. Every tendency of a revolutionary nature has been repudiated. The leadership of the National Congress has passed over into the hands of the upper middle class, whose programme is not to boycott the Government, but to make the way clear for negotiations which will eventually lead to a compromise with Imperialism. The object of the Congress, under the new leadership of the Swaraj Party, has been declared frankly to be the realisation of Dominion status within the Empire. The pseudo-parliamentary institutions known as the Reform Councils, heretofore boycotted by the Non-Co-operators, have been proclaimed by the new leadership to be the most useful field for nationalist activities.

Last year, when the Congress was still controlled by the followers of Gandhi, the right wing, under the leadership of C. R. Das, brought forward the demand for the repudiation of the council boycott. In the Gaya Congress of December, 1922, this resolution was defeated. The right wing, which refused to abide by the Congress decision, constituted itself into a new party within the Congress, known as the Swaraj Party, and began to agitate for the removal of the ban upon the councils.

The new party was composed of the upper middle-class elements within the Congress, and therefore counted among its ranks some of the ablest and cleverest politicians in the Nationalist Movement. The orthodox Gandhists, on the other hand, had nothing concrete to offer which could give new impetus to the movement. They could only repeat the worn-out formulas which had been found miserably impotent in the field of practical politics. By roundly repudiating the militant action of the masses, the Gandhists

had forfeited the confidence of the latter. The once-powerful Non-Co-operation Movement had become nothing but a dramatic show. Inactivity and disintegration characterised the movement at this period. Divorced from the masses, the Nationalist Movement had become once again a purely middle-class affair. Under such circumstances, it was but natural that those leaders who could give out a programme calculated to further the interests of the bourgeoisie should carry the Congress with them.

This is precisely what happened. After half a year of bitter recrimination, it was decided to call a special session of the National Congress at Delhi. This met in the middle of September and gave its verdict in favour of the Swaraj Party. The ban on the councils was raised, and the Congressmen were allowed to contest the coming general elections. This constituted a complete victory for the upper middle class, which is very closely connected economically and ideologically with the big capitalists and landlords, and signalled the defeat and demoralisation of the petty bourgeoisie which had led the Non-Co-operation Movement. The victory of the Swarajists was all the more decisive inasmuch as most of the outstanding figures of the Gandhist wing, which stood for the continuation of the council boycott, came to an open or tacit understanding with the right wing. Mohamed Ali, the chief lieutenant of Gandhi and leader of the Khilafat Movement, himself called upon the Congress to sanction the removal of the council boycott. He even intimated that he did so with the authority of Mr. Gandhi.

The Special Congress at Delhi marked a turning-point in the entire movement. The petty bourgeoisie, which did not find its own interests reflected in the new programme, could not agree with the new leaders, neither could it develop a programme of its own which might command a hearing in the Congress. Had the petty bourgeoisie been bold enough to revive the original Non-Co-operation Programme with full consciousness of its revolutionary significance, they might have re-captured the leadership of the Congress. That is to say, they could have held their own only if they had had courage enough to fall back upon the masses, in order to fight the right wing.

But this is too much to expect from the petty bourgeoisie.

It, however, remains a fact that this element, dissatisfied with the Delhi decision, provides a fertile field for the propaganda of revolutionary nationalism.

The two months following upon the Delhi Congress were marked by the election campaign for the new Reform Councils, this campaign being the only sign of nationalist activity. In view of the fact that the six million people constituting the Indian electorate, out of a population of three hundred and twenty million, belong to the propertied upper classes, rich intellectuals, and peasant-proprietors closely related to the landlords, those seeking election could not but commit themselves unequivocally to the defence of the interests of these elements. Therefore, the election campaign has brought out clearly the true nature of the Swaraj Party, which to-day controls the leadership of the National Congress.

Cleared of all the froth and foam of sentimentality with which Mr. C. R. Das originally clothed it, the programme of the Swaraj Party (and therefore of the Congress) has for its main planks : (1) Dominion status; (2) Parliamentary opposition, with a view to forcing the Government to negotiate with the " representatives " of the nation; (3) Protection of private property and development of native capitalism; (4) Defence of the landed aristocracy; (5) Protection of the Native States; (6) Decentralised government.

The methods proposed for the realisation of this programme are eminently bourgeois. Constitutional opposition has become the main pivot of the movement. The plan is to capture a majority of the elective seats, then to bring in a resolution on Self-Government. If the Government rejects the resolution, a policy of obstruction will be adopted to make government through the councils impossible. This all sounds quite plausible until we examine the facts. First, the Swaraj Party, though scoring notable victories in the elections just terminated, have failed to capture more than about a third of the seats. The conquest of a majority, upon which hangs the success of the entire plan, will be possible only when the bourgeoisie as a class stands solidly behind the Congress, that is, when the Congress has become quite frankly the representative of the upper classes. Secondly, a parliamentary majority, even when secured, will be of no avail unless the Congress is ready with a plan of extra-parliamentary action at the time when,

as is inevitable, its resolution is rejected. The two cannot go together because extra-parliamentary action implies a revolutionary movement based on the masses—a movement which will not be tolerated by the bourgeoisie. Therefore, the logical evolution of the new Congress programme will be full-fledged constitutionalism, which means going back to the stage which existed previous to the inauguration of the Non-Co-operation campaign in 1919.

Though the Swaraj Party has failed, in the recent elections, to secure anything like a majority, a number of its candidates have gained seats at the expense of the prominent moderate and loyalist leaders. The men at the head of the Swarajists could not have had any illusions about the results of the elections; they knew quite well that they could not obtain a majority by themselves. Therefore, already before the election campaign was fully begun, they sought coalition with the left wing of the Liberal Party—the former leaders of the National Congress and representatives of the big bourgeoisie and progressive landlords.

Although such a coalition has not been formally accomplished, the parliamentary fraction of the Swaraj Party will be strongly diluted by out-and-out bourgeois members, who have been given the stamp of the Party during the elections in spite of the fact that most of these men never took any direct part in the Nationalist Movement. Their adhesion has been bought at a rather high price, since they do not subscribe to the tactics formulated by the Swarajists. In order, therefore, to retain them in its fold, the Swaraj Party will have to modify its parliamentary tactics. Thus the plan of “wrecking” the councils, of which so much has been talked, becomes totally problematical, since first of all there is no Swarajist majority, and, secondly, those who have been elected as Swarajists do not all unanimously subscribe to these tactics. What then can be left to the Congress led by a party in such an equivocal position, but to become, for all practical purposes, a party of the bourgeoisie, given over to constitutional agitation with the object of driving a bargain with Imperialism?

This shifting of the Nationalist Movement on to purely bourgeois grounds leaves the lower middle class and the masses out in the cold. But unrest is still acute among these elements, and the cause of this unrest cannot be removed short of a complete

revolution. With the shattering of all its illusions, one after another, the petty bourgeoisie is in a pitiable condition; but there is a large unruly element within its ranks, the element which was the original vehicle of revolutionary expression in this country during the first period. These are the de-classed intellectuals, with absolutely nothing to lose but their prejudices. The collapse of the Non-Co-operation Movement and the reversion of the Congress to the old methods of constitutionalism have thrown these revolutionary elements back on their own resources, which, however, are not very great. They have returned to terrorism, which time and again has proven itself futile.

But the idealism and determination of this element are undeniable. Given a well orientated political leadership they are sure to give a better account of themselves. In view of the intellectual backwardness of the masses, it becomes historically necessary that the initial leadership of a truly emancipatory movement should come from these de-classed intellectuals. The cadre of a working-class party must be recruited for some time from its ranks. The clarification of the class-character of the Congress has made this task easier. The rapid development of bourgeois nationalism is dissipating many reactionary social and economic doctrines, which have until now confused the vision of the lower middle class of India.

Along with its contemporary, the Non-Co-operation campaign, the Khilafat Movement has also died of inanition. The dangerously reactionary tendencies embedded in this movement gradually paralysed its superficial political efficacy, and since last year led up to the religious and communal conflicts that have of late assumed such serious proportions in India as to put the nationalist leaders at their wits' end. Particularly in the northern provinces, where the Moslem population predominates, communal conflicts have become a veritable civil war, which is backed by the reactionary elements of both communities and deftly encouraged by the Government.

This logical development of the extreme fanaticism aroused by the Khilafat Movement led to the organisation of the All-India Hindu Sabha, in which all the reactionary tendencies of the Hindu community are crystallised. The avowed object of this Hindu organisation is the defence of its own community. Many prominent

Congress leaders take an active part in supporting this reactionary Hindu movement—a fact which has given a handle to the Moslem clergy, landlords, and loyalist officials in their attempt to show up to the Moslem masses the “irreconcilable” hostility of the Hindus. A spirit of fanaticism, fomented by intense agitation for the defence of religion and social traditions, such as the Khilafat Movement called forth, can be easily diverted in any direction from which the attack upon religion is alleged to emanate. The Khilafat Movement has thus degenerated into a revival of the acute rivalry between the two great Indian communities. The result, so far as the Nationalist Movement is concerned, has been disastrous.

On the other hand, the bottom has been knocked off the Khilafat Movement as such by the march of events in Turkey. When the news filtered through that the Turks, who have been held up as custodians of the Khilafat, have themselves repudiated this antiquated institution, the task of maintaining the enthusiasm of the Indian Moslems on this issue became more and more difficult. Then it is not generally realised that very few of the real leaders of the Moslem community adhered to the Khilafat campaign. They merely “lay low” until the enthusiasm of the masses, aroused by quite other causes than the “Khilafat wrongs,” but exploited by Khilafat enthusiasts, had subsided. These leaders have now started a campaign in favour of reconciliation with England. They have revived the old arguments, namely, that Moslems are in a minority in India, and that self-government on the principle of popular representation will put them under Hindu supremacy. Therefore, they argue, Moslem interests should be treated as a separate issue. Attempts made to revive the All-India Moslem League, which was a rival organisation to the National Congress until its absorption by the latter after the Lucknow Compact of 1916, are but other indications of the exceedingly shallow foundation upon which the “Hindu-Moslem unity” (founded upon the Non-Co-operation-Khilafat agitation) rested.

The leaders of both communities stand dismayed at the turn of events, which anyone with an ounce of foresight might have foreseen. Being unable to find a solution, they evade the issue, while the bitter communal conflict eats into the very vitals of the Nationalist Movement. The only solution of the present impasse lies

in the total abolition of separate communal organisations, such as the Khilafat and Hindu Sabha, and placing the agitation among the masses more on a nationalist than on an extra-nationalist or communal basis—more upon the economic struggle than upon religious fanaticism. It is only by pointing out the identity of their class interests, as distinguished from sectional or communal ones, that a real and permanent unity can be established by the Indian masses.

This fact is strikingly demonstrated by the development of this semi-agrarian, semi-religious movement of the Sikhs in the Punjab, which developed as a local or rather a provincial issue, due to the failure of the National Congress to place it on a nationwide basis. In this case, too, the bourgeois leadership sabotaged at every step the revolutionary tendencies of the movement, thereby seriously weakening its immense potentialities. The Sikh peasantry responded to the cry for "Reform of the Shrines," in the hope of gaining access to the temple lands. The Shrine Reforms Committee, controlled by the lay landlords (as distinguished from the clergy they were seeking to oust from control) and capitalists, did its best to confuse and sidetrack the dynamic forces of mass action that underlay and gave strength to the entire movement. While the rank and file were demonstrating their firm determination to carry on the fight to a finish, the Committee entered into negotiation with the Government and the Shrine authorities. Hoping to arrive at a compromise, the Committee suspended practically all militant activities, whose efficacy had been the only means of inducing the Government to negotiate. The latter was not slow to seize upon this internal weakness of the movement and rebuffed the Reforms Committee's overtures towards an understanding.

The result was a schism in the movement. The most militant section launched on a premature campaign of violence, which could only take the form of spasmodic and entirely ineffectual terrorism. The Government came down upon this element with the heavy hand of repression. On the other hand, its attitude towards the other elements in the movement likewise stiffened. The Reforms Committee started once more a campaign for mass demonstrations against the action of the Government. The latter replied by

declaring the whole movement to be illegal and putting it under ban. More than three hundred of the most prominent Sikh leaders were arrested, including all the members of the Reforms Committee, while the organs of extremist Sikh opinion were suspended and their offices closed. The Government dared to take these drastic measures, which met with little or no opposition from the Nationalist Movement, because it judged the situation correctly. The National Congress, torn by communal and factional strife, was not in a position to come to the aid of the Sikhs; even had it been strong enough to do so, it had never understood the revolutionary significance and potentialities of the Sikh Movement, and would have opposed them, had it done so, even as it opposed the mass movement that threatened to overwhelm the constitutionalism of the Non-Co-operation Movement. Under no conceivable circumstances will the Congress, as at present constituted, subscribe to the slogan of "Land to the Peasant," which is the only objective cry for the Sikh Movement if it aims to hold its own against Government persecution and to realise its programme of Reform of the Shrines.

The programme of political independence, placed before the National Congress last year and repudiated by its leaders, has been taken up by a considerable section of the left wing, and a definitely worded resolution brought before the provincial conference of the United Provinces this year, defining the Congress objective as being "complete independence from all foreign rule," was adopted by a large majority. A study of the nationalist Press makes it clear that the ideology of the Indian movement is undergoing great changes towards the Left, no less than towards the Right. While until recently the programme of the National Congress was characterised by vague generalities about "Swaraj," to-day there is no political party in the country worthy of the name that does not contain clauses in its programme concerning the social and economic welfare of the masses. In every province, large masses of the petty bourgeoisie are looking for a new leadership. The slogan "Alliance with the Workers and Peasants" is rapidly gaining ground. A prominent Congressman, in moving the resolution on Labour Organisation in the Provincial Conference just referred to, came out openly and denounced the National Congress as the organ of the

bourgeoisie, and called upon the revolutionary nationalists to throw in their lot with the masses. An ever larger body of opinion in the country holds to the idea that mere political freedom, without a complete social and economic revolution, will be a meaningless and futile phenomenon.

Thus the struggle against Imperialism is ever widening, and the element of class-conflict is being ever more clearly revealed and developed within the framework of the Indian body politic, as the political ideology becomes clarified and the Nationalist Movement divides itself into two streams—one “constitutional” and compromising; the other, by dint of economic pressure, ever more revolutionary and uncompromising in its struggle against a two-fold enemy, Foreign and Native Capitalism, which tend to unite in the end. Upon the future development of this struggle, and its ultimate outcome, hangs the fate of the three hundred millions of the Indian proletariat and peasantry.

THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN GERMANY

By S. K.

FIVE years ago the small but determined group of Spartakists made an heroic attempt to transform the German revolution of November 9 into a real proletarian revolution. They were defeated, their leaders murdered, their followers pitilessly massacred. To-day, their murderers cannot but realise that they have led the labouring masses of Germany to catastrophe.

Five years ago all power lay before the German workers. If only they had taken all power into their hands, transformed all the machinery of State to their needs—Luxembourg and her friends showed them the line to follow—to-day they would not look on helplessly while they are robbed of the last remnant of their short-lived victory.

The days have passed when proud German Social-Democrats could be sarcastic about the Russian Communists "preparing the way for a military dictatorship." They were very bad prophets, for we have a Labour Government in Russia which day by day is increasing in importance, both at home and abroad, whereas Germany is under the dictatorship of General von Seeckt, and his fellow generals, taking their orders from the industrial magnates.

Still, however terrible the position of the masses in Germany to-day, the class struggle is just entering a new phase, which promises well for the workers. The workers of Germany to-day are quite different from the workers who remained indifferent to the calls of "Red Rosa." Their childish belief in the miraculous power of the Social-Democratic leaders, who were to lead them by a comfortable, dangerless way to Socialism, disappeared long ago. And the indifference into which they have since fallen is now giving way to that creative activity which will prepare them for the coming hard fight.

There is no need for any Bolshevik agitation to teach them the bitter truth about the democratic fallacy. They have tried the rule

of every party—with the sole exception of that of the Communists—and are now in a state of oppression which is worse than at any period of the Hohenzollern autocracy. Politically, they are at the mercy of the military governors ; in the industrial field the doors of the factories are closed for them, even if they are willing to work for starvation wages ; and their families are standing in long queues before soup kitchens provided by charitable organisations. This is not a famine caused by natural disaster ; it is the consequence of a political disaster. The victors are living in luxury, whilst the defeated are decimated by starvation, disease, and persecution.

Germany presents a pitiful scene to-day, and reading the descriptions by impartial visitors will move the strongest man to tears. But when one is thinking over the disaster, it is impossible not to come to the conclusion that it could not be otherwise. There were and there are only two ways to solve the reparations problem : either Labour must make the capitalist pay for the destruction wrought by war at home, and pay also reparations to the victors so long as the military and international situation necessitates, or else the capitalists will force the workers to satisfy both the capitalist class at home and abroad.

There is no third way. When German Labour tried to find some other way, which would satisfy workers and employers and the victorious Entente, they were only preparing the way for the industrialists, who are less scrupulous in their methods.

The people who are in power to-day in Germany are the class-conscious bourgeoisie. It is really ridiculous to see the Social-Democratic old woman lamenting that she did not use the same weapons against Bavaria that they have used—with the silent consent of the Social-Democrats—against Red Saxony and Thuringia.

If Scheidemann and Müller do not see the difference, Stresemann, Stinnes, and Seeckt can easily distinguish a bourgeois reactionary State from one ruled by a Labour government including Communists.

The bourgeois politicians will not oblige the Social-Democratic leaders by massacring the Fascisti or any other reactionary organisation. These are all arming, whilst Saxony and Thuringia are

occupied by military forces and the whole Communist movement is driven underground by the Emergency Law passed by the German Parliament.

As in their internal policy, the present dictators of Germany follow a logical class policy in international affairs. So long as they can come to an understanding with the French bourgeoisie, they do not mind a bit if France remains in the Ruhr for a few more years to come. Occupation, if directed against the workers, is not at all objectionable to Stinnes and von Seeckt. On the contrary, they ought to be grateful to the French army for helping them to oppress the workers, carrying through the re-introduction of the ten-hour day, &c., whilst the German army is keeping down the revolutionary workers of Saxony and Thuringia. Stinnes had declared, long before the occupation of the Ruhr, that an agreement must be arrived at between the French and German industrial magnates, even at the price of the occupation of the Ruhr.

There can be no doubt about it : the most important capitalist circles in Germany and France desire a close collaboration between the capitalist classes of the two countries. Of course, there are other industrial groups, and even more the military cliques, who are dead against an economic alliance which would end the thousand year old feud between the two countries (and thus spoil the business of these interested patriots).

And apart from this, it is not an easy task to agree on the terms of the industrial collaboration. The capitalist system alone, based on rivalry and not collaboration, makes it very difficult to arrange an enormous financial and industrial deal, such as is contemplated, to mutual satisfaction. France, stronger in military matters, naturally seeks to perpetuate her hegemony in Europe by dictating terms which would make Germany practically a colonial State, with millions of slaves subjected to the dual exploitation of their own industrial chieftains and of the rulers of France. On the other hand, the German industrialists, though ready to make very considerable concessions, demand an equal status and an equal share of profits in the new partnership.

It is easy to see that such collaboration as the Germans demand would be so advantageous to German capital as to soon endanger the safety of France. For if the German capitalists are willing to

collaborate now with French capitalists on a 50 per cent. basis, that does not mean that to-morrow, if they feel strong enough, they will not start a new war to secure all the 100 per cent. profit. I cannot share the opinion held by many writers that, because the Germans failed to secure the French ore fields and the French, on the other hand, have not been successful in getting hold of the Ruhr coal and coke, it naturally follows that the two will easily agree on a plan of co-operation, or that this co-operation will be of a lasting nature. As I have said above the capitalists are trying hard to come to such an understanding. Before the Rathenau-Loucheur agreement, and still more since then, numerous attempts have been made towards such an understanding. Will they be much more successful this time? I doubt it very much. I think that some kind of temporary agreement will be arrived at, but nothing definite and final. Both parties are playing for time. The recent elections in Great Britain and the coming elections in France leave the situation so open that neither of the parties wish to bind themselves to an agreement which must give less than their exaggerated expectations.

It would be interesting to examine the economic position of both countries, which is of vital importance in the development of these negotiations, but this is hardly possible in the limits of a short article. The recent fall in the value of the franc clearly shows the financial difficulties France has to tackle, whereas the immense unemployment in Germany is an eloquent proof of the German industrial crisis. Obviously, something has to be done to restore confidence in the franc and give work to the millions of German unemployed. Though both depreciation of currency and unemployment are affecting first and foremost the wage-earners, they are a considerable danger to the ruling classes also. In view of this danger we might see very soon French and German capitalists shaking hands and coming to some sort of agreement, which, in my opinion, will not operate for very long.

What are German workers doing in face of these events? What is their policy against starvation, unemployment, long hours, dwindling wages, and political persecution? How do they view the coming agreement between French and German capital? As already stated the German working class as a whole is impotent

to repulse the capitalists' attack, raging along the whole front. They have been rendered impotent by their short-sighted leaders, who in their vain attempt to please the bourgeoisie have split German Labour, disarmed the proletariat, and allowed the capitalists to grow more powerful than ever they have been. But it would be incorrect to believe that German Labour is out of action. In spite of the hunger, desperate strikes follow one another all over the country, forgetting all the traditions of the once great Socialist Party the thousands of workers united in the Socialist Party of Germany are organising a revolutionary left wing or leaving the party in order to join the Communists, and notwithstanding the Emergency Law the outlawed Communist Party of Germany is doing wonderful work in organising the revolutionary proletariat.

This is a very important aspect of the German situation, and it is worth while to look a little more closely into the nature of these working-class activities. Without being unduly optimistic, it is safe to say that though the complete victory of Capital brought endless suffering to the working class, it has also created the solid basis for a United Front of the proletariat.

There have been joint demonstrations before, but, immediately the occasion which brought the workers together was over, the workers separated anew and opposed each other in bitter controversy about Labour tactics. This happened after the Kapp "putsch," after the murder of Rathenau, &c. But now, when democracy is not existent even in name, when the eight-hour day has gone the way the other Labour successes had gone before, when the imposing edifice of the workers' organisations and of labour protection, built up in sixty years, has collapsed under the boots of General von Seeckt, there is hardly a worker left who believes that "the Communists are their worst enemies."

The gulf separating the Social-Democratic worker believing in democratic methods and the Communist worker organising direct revolutionary action was bridged when, with the support of the Social-Democratic parliamentarians, the late German Parliament passed the Emergency Laws. Since then, under the pressure of disastrous conditions, many former Social-Democrats have crossed the bridge to the Communist camp, and many more of them have remained in the old party only in order to press for

the co-operation of the whole party with the Communist Party of Germany.

Passing over the sporadic strikes, which are a desperate attempt to hold up the avalanche and cannot result in Labour victories in the present relation of forces, the activity of the left wing of the Socialist Party attracts our special attention. A number of districts have severely censured the policy of the Party Centre and parliamentary fraction. On numerous occasions members of the Socialist Party have come out to demonstrate with the Communists, in spite of police prohibition.

That the Social-Democrat rank and file do not want any more coalitions with the bourgeoisie was shown very clearly at the formation of the last Thuringian government. On the fourth of January a new coalition government was formed in which, under the premiership of the Social-Democrat Heldt, representatives of the bourgeois parties (Democrat and People's Party) also took part. This was a direct breach of the decision of the last district congress of the Socialist Party, and only twenty-five members of the Landtag fraction supported the government. The minority of fifteen issued a declaration explaining why they dissented. The District Congress of the party took place two days afterwards, and by a large majority endorsed the policy of this minority, demanding the resignation of the government and a dissolution of the Landtag. But the government did not resign, and the twenty-five have appealed to the Party Congress, which will be held on March 30 in Magdeburg.

The above is one example of the fact that the unity of the United Social Democratic Party of Germany only exists now in the title of the party. Groups within the party have been formed all over the country, and the fight between the Right and the Left wing does not end in mere discussions. Both fractions are acting at times quite independently of the party apparatus, and it is visible to all that this apparatus, once so firm and disciplined, is now in the way of disintegration.

A still more important factor in the development of the class struggle is the progress made by the Communist Party. There is every reason to believe that the Communists are stronger than they have ever been before. Driven underground by the military

dictators, their offices closed, their press suppressed, they did not lose their contact with the working masses. On the contrary, they are nearer now to the masses than before. The basic unit of the party has been transferred from the local group into the factory group, and there is no factory or any unemployed body where members of the Communist Party are not present to represent their party and influence the workers towards Communist policy and revolutionary action.

Illegal handbills and newspapers are printed in sufficient numbers to reach party members and sympathisers, and after some initial difficulties it seems as if the party machinery is functioning all right, in spite of the new illegal status to which it has had to adapt itself. A sign of its activities is that members of the legal Socialist Parties are still flowing into the Communist Party.

But it would be false to declare that a Communist revolution is at hand in Germany. The disintegration of the old mass party of the workers is well advanced, but the organisation of the new party of the masses is not strong enough yet to start the fight against the military dictators.

The class struggle has become much sharper since the middle parties have cleared the way. The middle class, represented by the parties of the Democrats and Centrists, have gone over to the victorious capitalists, and the Social-Democrats have been simply cleared away from the political arena. The capitalists have strengthened their position to such a degree that they think they can dispense with the services of the Social-Democrats. The only parties remaining for the next round of the political fight are the united bourgeoisie backed by the military machinery and numerous independent fighting units, and the Communist Party organising the proletariat under its generalship.

Both parties are following a clear class policy, are determined in action, and understand what the fight is for. So far as present strength is concerned, the capitalists are decidedly stronger; but their prospects for the future are in no way favourable. Though they have stabilised the mark, the collapse of their financial machinery cannot be delayed much longer. Though they have lengthened the working day, thanks to the enormous number of unemployed and the starvation of the masses, the evil of unemployment will

soon prove disastrous for them. And the recent left-wing orientation in international politics is not a hopeful sign for the German dictators.

On the other hand, the Communists are in a much more favourable position so far as the future is concerned. They have to fight against tremendous odds at the present moment, but their organisation is getting to be equal to the occasion ; the unemployed masses are coming under their leadership, and the international situation is growing more favourable towards the formation of a workers' government in Germany. Though a Labour government in Germany means much more than a Labour government in this country, the latter would never send armies to strangle the German revolution, and might even hold in check the French imperialists. And Russia is becoming a formidable power, for the alliance of which all countries are contending at present.

Looking at such prospects, we very nearly forget the terrible happenings of the present. The way of the proletariat to power is not an easy one. But the German proletariat must surely have passed through the worst part of its journey during the past five years.

THE LIMITS OF LABOUR POLICY

By J. L. MAHON

A LABOUR government would have a more difficult task than any other party government ; and the difficulty is not of a kind that can be overcome by bringing greater talents and virtues to the application of the same methods.

There is the old problem that capitalism has presented to society for a hundred years with intervals in which its urgency abated ; but it returns greater in magnitude, more prolonged in duration, more menacing in its demand for solution. Familiarity with the unemployed problem seems to have bred contempt for it in some quarters.

The Labour Party policy, as indicated in the election manifestos and speeches of its leaders, may be summarised as : (1) more relief work, (2) more State stimulation of capitalist industry, and (3) a more diligent search for extended foreign markets. Or, in a single phrase, forced lubrication of the capitalist system.

The new feature in the Labour policy is an extension of home demand for labour by a reconstruction of the great plants for generating light and power and for transport. Admitting (for the sake of argument) that this work should, on technical grounds, be done on a scale that would employ some substantial proportion of a million workers the question arises : What would be the economic effect of its successful progress ? The answer can only be in the alternative form, viz., in a capitalist economy the effect will be more unemployment ; in a socialist economy the effect would be a general reduction of the hours of labour or an increased distribution of wealth, or both in part.

When the Labour leaders felt the need for some new proposal they still looked for it inside the bounds of the capitalist system. If they are right in doing so they must be wrong in denouncing capitalism—however vague and general may be the terms of their denunciation.

A Labour policy must be based on an understanding of the

economic limits of the capitalist system. To illustrate : when engineers are called upon to devise means of dealing with a new development they do not assume that a mere extension of scale or increase of speed of the known means will answer. There are certain laws of stress, speed, temperature, &c., which limit effective construction. If the new demands infringe these limits the whole problem must be reconsidered.

The solution of the problem is not limited by natural laws or conditions. There is no lack of natural resources, and the existence of unemployed labour side by side with these resources reduces the problem to a question of the direction or management of the labour of society. When tools, machinery, and general equipment are also in idle superabundance the problem is still more narrowed. It is not lack of education or of low temperature carbonisation. The limits are economic ; or, in plain words, the general scheme of managing the labour and distributing the wealth of society is at fault.

The evils to be remedied are produced by leaving the direction of the labour of society to private enterprise. So long as Capitalism can expand by new investments abroad, it employs labour to make the machinery and material elements of those investments. This, however, soon aggravates the evil by setting up a flow of imports in payment of the profits on the outside investments. When this stage is reached the whole problem must be reconsidered—if only as a means of preventing social anarchy. A Labour Government must establish control over the operations of private enterprise and its measures of relief must tend steadily and not too slowly towards the creation of a Socialist system of economy. The old machine may be kept running, but it can never overtake the work which has already reduced its speed.

Lord Inchcape sees the problem only as the “ consummate folly ” of the wage earners. “ There is a possible remedy for unemployment . . . in the hands of the trade unions. If they would stand aside with their rules and regulations as to minimum rates of wages, restricted hours of labour, and limited output and give economic conditions free play for a year or two.” And he goes on to say, “ I do not share the apprehension in which many people regard the possible advent of the Labour Party to power ”

and then to the usual threat that any interference with capitalism "would have instant and terrible reactions upon the workers of the country."¹

Lord Inchcape's power must of course be over all party governments and in cases other than the Labour Party he must be able to exercise it quietly, without using public threats. This power is the anti-social concentration of financial power in the hands of a few men in the City of London who hold no public office or lawful authority. It may be well to describe in summary fashion the means for producing "instant and terrible reactions upon the workers of the country" if financial dictation is resented.

Within a week the bankers, who act as and for the money lenders, could throw the government administration into confusion. Their power to do this is in a contrivance known as the "floating debt." This debt varies at present from six to eight hundred millions as a total. It is represented by Treasury Bills of three months' duration. These bills are in weekly lots, so that about forty million pounds are due for payment each week. They cannot in fact be paid and are not intended or expected to be paid. A new lot replaces the old and by this continual renewal the bankers reap a weekly crop of profit termed "discount" and keep a rope round the neck of the Government. The Labour Party Government must put its head in the noose or find a new method of dealing with the bankers. The bankers can demand payment for the due bills and refuse to tender for the renewal of them. In that event the Treasury must print currency notes and pay the bills. Inflation of currency then develops and "instant and terrible reactions" leading to the state of German finance and trade sets in. The act of "inflation" is attributed to the Government, but it is an act forced on them by the bankers.

The effect of this weapon is all the greater because the use of it is always in the discretion of the bankers and the Government has no reply or defence except currency inflation. The bankers can play with the noose, or tighten it severely, or use it one week and be merciful the next, or draw it taut week after week, till the country is thrown into anarchy.

The War Bonds are the heavy artillery devised to supplement

¹ *Times*, December 13, 1923, p. 12.

the machine guns of the floating debt bills. These bonds fall due for payment year after year in batches of hundreds of millions. As they also cannot be paid new bonds are issued and the bankers can extort larger amounts. These are "conversions." Within the last two years the National Debt was increased by over £130,000,000 by converting £100 bonds into bonds of over £130. While the Labour Party is talking about a capital levy the money lenders are imposing a capital levy. Payment in cash may be demanded for these bonds. The bond holder has an option to convert, but the Government has no option. Payment again can be made only by printing more currency notes and causing "instant and terrible reactions." The bonds are like the bills in one point: they extract a large profit and extract it in such a way that the money lenders have always a rope round the neck of the Government.

This money-lending tyranny has a similar hold on industry. Circulating capital can only be borrowed from the banks in the combine and fixed capital through firms of financiers. Competition is practically at an end. The State grants of money for trade and capital "facilities" are not, as generally represented, made by the Government. The money is first arranged for on the market by the borrower on such terms as the financial worthies think proper. The public Treasury guarantees the payment of interest and repayment of principal—bearing the loss, if any, and getting none of the profit, however large it may be. The effect is that both the employer and the State are fully in the clutch of the money lenders. An important secondary effect of monopoly in those transactions is that the bankers have a practical veto in the development of material capital and on the operations of the great mass of mercantile capital in foreign trade. They can throw business into the hands of combines as against individual companies or to some combines as against others. They could also produce a stoppage of industry to bring a Labour Government to reason.

The re-destruction of Europe is in the same hands. German and British capital are to be interwoven—and already are largely in that condition. But the neck of the German State must be decorated with a rope of the pattern worn by the British State. The reparation debt is to be fixed at £2,500,000,000 and

transferred to an international financial ring for half that sum. By this operation the Allied Governments will get £1,250,000,000 and Germany will owe £2,500,000,000 to the financial ring. Germany will pay interest to the ring equal of 10 per cent. on the actual loan. After paying about £8,000,000,000 in interest in about forty years Germany will still owe the £2,500,000,000 and be where she started. The German Government, Republican or otherwise, will be controlled in all its finance by an International Committee, representing the united money lenders of Britain and Germany. The other Allies will be paid off, partly by inter-debt adjustments. That is the British plan of January, 1923; never challenged or even mentioned by the Labour Party leaders and repeatedly re-affirmed by the British Government. The negotiations include a provision that time shall, if necessary, be granted to the German Government (or the arrangement bearing that name) to force reduced wages and increased hours on the German workers. This "British" plan is, of course, the bankers' plan. The Labour Government must carry out this plan or incur "instant and terrible reactions upon the workers."

The Labour proposals for reducing food taxes and middle-class income tax and raising the "purchasing power" of wages will come to nothing. What capitalism gives to the wage-earner with one hand it takes away with the other. Its left hand always knows what the right hand doeth. If low prices ever come, low wages will quickly follow. If minimum wages are fixed by law, prices will rise. If both wages and prices are to be fixed by a Labour Government against capitalism and its trusts and rings, that Government will soon regret that it did not adopt the easier way of managing the national production without capitalist help.

The sum of the problem is that capitalism has all but fully blossomed into its pure Usury phase in less than ten years. The process was normally in operation before the war; but the war difficulty was seized on by the bankers to hasten the development at high speed. It was not wealth that was accumulated during the war as many, including some Labour Party leaders, have said. It was debt—a claim on the products of labour for all the years of the future, if we submit to it. When the money advanced has been repaid tenfold it will still be owing as in the beginning.

Lest any innocent say that the Labour Party leaders intend to grapple with this tyranny I will quote their words :—

It is well to remember that the war debt was a voluntary bargain.

No Government deserves the confidence of the country . . . unless its undertakings . . . are honourably and scrupulously observed.

Slum clearances, road improvements, public lighting, water, and transport undertakings, drainage schemes . . . would become absolutely out of reach.

The weakening or the destruction of public confidence in the financial integrity of the Government must re-establish the reign of the private capitalist in every branch of the national life.

These extracts are taken from a written report,³ prepared during twelve months' deliberation, and approved by the national executive of the Labour Party. In the words quoted and more elaborately in the context assurances are given that the new financial power which the money lenders have imposed on the country in the last few years is based on sacred contracts which a Labour Government will " honourably and scrupulously " observe.

If that is correct all Governments are only puppets in the hands of the bankers, who, as agents of the money lenders generally, constitute the real Government. The sacred contract has, however, one redeeming feature. It does not stipulate that the Labour Party is to form a puppet government. We can at least demand that the money lenders shall conduct the government openly and produce such " instant and terrible reactions upon the workers of the country " as they think desirable in their own name.

The first duty of a Labour Government is to free public life from the menace of this financial power.

³ The Labour Party: Report of the Executive Committee, 1923, p. 129.

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RUSSIA

The Discussions in the Communist Party

THE discussions in the Russian Communist Party during the past three months have evoked a remarkable interest in the columns of the bourgeois Press of Europe. From the Riga correspondent of *The Times* to the leader-writer of the *Berliner Tageblatt* there has been the same eagerness to register what appears to be a split in the enemy's camp. The vehemence of the discussion has misled these observers. A more correct view was that of the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, who pointed out that this vehemence was a sign of the vitality of the Party, and poured ridicule on the wild hopes of a "decay" of the Soviet power. Nevertheless, it is not enough to describe the point at issue, like the *Daily Herald*, as "the relaxation of the iron discipline and the rigid central control of the revolutionary years," and as a struggle of the "Young Guard" versus the "Old Guard." These questions are incidental to, and, indeed, arise out of, the main question—what is the position of the Party with regard to the present situation in Russia, that is, with regard to the struggle of the Workers' State on the economic front which was introduced by the New Economic Policy nearly three years ago?

It may be well to recall the words of Lenin, written early in 1921, on the introduction of the N.E.P. He wrote :—

Is it possible to combine and to have side by side a Soviet State, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and State Capitalism?

The whole question, theoretically and practically, lies in finding the correct means of properly guiding the inevitable (to a certain extent and for a certain time) development of Capitalism along the path of State Capitalism, and what conditions to establish and how to secure in the near future the conversion of State Capitalism into Socialism.¹

This is still the fundamental issue confronting the Soviet Republic and its directing force, the Communist Party. And it is the issue underlying the present discussions.

With the peculiar dangers and difficulties of the N.E.P., and the new tasks this policy has set before the Communist Party, these discussions were bound to come; and they come naturally after the first year and a half of unfettered

¹ *The Meaning of the Agricultural Tax*, THE LABOUR MONTHLY, July, 1921, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 28.

economic development, when the civil war and the famine have been finally liquidated.

During the civil war and the period of "military Communism" the internal organisation of the Party was of necessity centralised to the last degree. Party officials were appointed from above, and all important decisions came down from above. There was a rigid central control and direction right through the Party. This has been continued through the first three years of the N.E.P. There can be little doubt that it was very necessary to do so, when the Party had to defend the foundations of the Workers' State against any possible encroachments of the "new capitalism." But to-day, after three years of the "new capitalism," those foundations remain unshaken and the Workers' State is more firmly established than ever.

On the economic side the chief present difficulty is the serious lack of correlation in the development of industry and agriculture. For while, owing to the good harvest, agricultural prices have slumped heavily (*i.e.*, the purchasing power of the vast mass of the population, the peasantry, is seriously diminished) the price of industrial products has mounted steadily. This phenomenon has been graphically described by Trotsky as the "shears"—the two blades, agricultural prices and industrial prices, moving further and further apart. The problem is to bring the blades together, to establish a price equilibrium between industry and agriculture. This demands, on the side of industry, that the "State Economic Plan" shall become a reality, that there shall be national and unified economic direction. At the Twelfth Congress of the Party, in April, 1923, Trotsky emphasised these points in his "Theses on Industry." In those "Theses" also he declared that—

the Party must clearly realise that at the present constructive-economic period of the revolution its most fundamental work lies in guiding economic activity in the basic points of the Soviet process of construction.

This "most fundamental work" can only be successfully carried out if the internal life of the Party is vigorous, if the spirit of initiative among Party members is fully developed, and the contrary bureaucratic spirit effectively combated. The position at present is that the rigid central control of the Party has tended rather to the development of bureaucracy. Party members have grown accustomed to receive instructions from the higher authorities of the Party, and to be more or less completely absorbed in the daily task of carrying out these instructions. As a result, they have to some extent lost the capacity to grapple with the new problems which are continually arising in the course of development of the N.E.P. On the other hand, the non-party workers, owing to the improvement in wages and conditions, and the resultant demands for more education, political and cultural, and better organisation, are in some cases more advanced than the mass of Party members.

Zinoviev opened the discussion in an article entitled "The New Tasks of the Party," published in *Pravda* on November 7, 1923, the sixth anniversary of the Revolution. He emphasised the points already alluded to above, laying special stress on the need for getting the non-party workers, who in many cases

* THE LABOUR MONTHLY, July and August, 1923, Vol. V, Nos. 1 and 2, pp. 19-29, 95-104.

possess greater technical and administrative skill than Party members, into the ranks of the Communist Party. It is, therefore, necessary to "speed up," as it were, the internal life of the Party, to turn the rigid military machine of the civil war into a flexible instrument more suited to the present more complex struggle in the field of economic construction.

Preobrazhensky, in reply, in *Pravda* of November 28, argued that Zinoviev had not directed attention to the problem itself. It is necessary, he said, to discover whether the fundamental lines of Party policy, so far as organisation and the internal affairs of the Party are concerned, have been correct during the N.E.P. or not. To this he replied in the negative. In order to meet successfully the complex and rapidly changing situation created by the N.E.P.

It would have been necessary to create in our organisations an internal life other than that of the period of armed struggle . . . military methods must be liquidated . . . every member should be able to participate more actively and more consciously in the decisions of the Party.

Preobrazhensky, in short, declared that the Party needed a final transition from the methods and organisation of the civil war period to what is called in the Russian Communist Party "labour democracy," *i.e.*, freer elections of officials and committees (particularly in the units of the Party, the factory nuclei) and opportunity for preliminary discussion in the localities of important Party questions. At the Tenth Congress of the Party (March, 1921) resolutions on "labour democracy" had been passed, but had remained a dead letter. The matter came up again officially at the October (1923) full session of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Party, which—

approved entirely the proposals of the Political Bureau concerning the realisation of democracy within the Party, as well as the reinforcement of the campaign against luxury and the demoralising influence of the N.E.P. over certain elements in the Party.

Trotsky has written a letter condemning bureaucracy within the Party, and analysing its dangers. This letter definitely aligns him with the opposition.*

The slight anxiety of the "old" Bolsheviks with regard to democracy within the Party has been expressed by Kalinin. In a speech he said :—

Let us not forget that the essential thing is not democracy, but the maintenance of the conquests of the revolution. We have conquered and, it is said, "the victors are never judged." Perhaps: but this specific fundamental quality of the Bolsheviks, the recognition of authority, has also contributed to our victory. Now we wish at all costs to maintain this quality, acquired by decades of experience and struggle.

Kamenev also uttered a warning. He wrote under the heading "What We Must Not Do" :—

We must not arouse one section of the Party against another. We must not substitute the breaking-up of the Party machine to its necessary repair and renewal. We must not replace the difficult and delicate work of the selection of candidates for office by the slogan "dismissal of nominees."

*Extracts from this letter are held over this month for lack of space.

Arising out of the vigorous polemic on bureaucracy, democracy within the Party, and so forth, has come the question as to whether it is permissible to form groups or fractions within the Party. On this point the discussion has been even violent : in particular, the opponents of the "opposition" have accused them of forming an illegal fraction within the Party. The "opposition" have denied this charge ; and there does not seem to be any serious basis for it. The mass of polemic is already so vast and so recondite, especially on this question of groups and fractions, that it is almost impossible to disentangle the real truth of the matter. The clearest statement appears to be that of Boguslavsky, contained in a letter to *Pravda* :—

I consider as absolutely inadmissible the existence not only of fractions, but of any groups having a discipline of their own distinct from that of the Party as a whole. Nevertheless, the intervention of two, three, or more comrades, on one single question, on which they have the same opinion, cannot and should not be considered as a sign of the existence of fractions or groups.

The most outstanding feature of the discussion so far has been the unanimous adoption of a long resolution on Party Organisation by the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission, at their joint session on December 5. This resolution will go before the Thirteenth Congress, which is being held this month (January). It is unfortunately too long to quote in full : we hope to reproduce the most significant portions next month. In the resolution the approach to the view point of the "opposition" is very noticeable. The first two sections of the resolution are occupied with an analysis of the position of the Party under the N.E.P., and of its relations with the non-party masses of workers. It continues with detailed proposals of "immediate steps for realising labour democracy," the tasks of the Party Control Commissions, the Party and economic work, and, finally, the participation of the masses in the work of the Party.

The latest development is that at the Moscow Provincial Conference of the Communist Party on January 9, the following declaration was made by Preobrazhensky :—

The one fact that the Central Committee has adopted unanimously the resolution on the internal position of the Party has deprived the opposition of four-fifths of its arguments . . . The opposition recognises the present position of the Central Committee as essentially correct, and it simply proposes certain changes in formula which, in its opinion, are more exact.

The conference passed a vote of confidence in the Central Committee by 325 votes to 61.

BOOK REVIEWS

A NEW CHAPTER IN THE WORLD REVOLUTION

Germany in Transition. By M. Philips Price. (Labour Publishing Company, London. 5s.)

... the autumn months of 1923 marked a turning-point in the history of Germany, and, through Germany, in the history of the whole of mankind. The German proletariat is turning with trembling fingers the most important pages in the history of the world struggle of the working class. The hour is about to strike. A new chapter in the world proletarian revolution is about to begin.

THUS Zinoviev in the *Communist International*. There were days when we would have taken words like this to mean: "This, then, is the moment of crisis, the next will be the moment of the Revolution"—thinking of the workers of Germany as inspired and united, ready for the simple task of "striking the blow" to end the tyranny of capitalism. But we have learned since then, and, in many matters, Germany has been our best teacher.

This new chapter will be yet another stage of our schooling—and it shows every sign of being a long one. In this stage we shall have the imperialist capitalism of Britain, France, and America, its designs for preparing Germany for economic vassalage approaching fruition, entering upon the task of exploiting the new colony. Financial "stabilisation" and loans have already become the subjects of discussion, rather than how to get cash out of Germany. And the basis upon which the "stabilised" structure will rest, the material with which its machinery will work, to produce the profits which will reward the foreign investors, is, of course, the German proletariat—starved, sweated, and over-worked. In this stage, therefore, the German workers enter upon a keener economic struggle than heretofore, and, in fighting their employers, they will be fighting a world league of finance capital. They will have to meet—they are already meeting—a fiercer attack on their organisations, trade union and political, than ever before. By cajolery, and by the bludgeon, they are being robbed of the last relics of their gains in the revolution of November, 1918, and the machinery of the law is at work to wreck the organisations which might preserve to them those gains—such as a fixed working day—as well as to proscribe and suppress their revolutionary parties.

It is, then, a stage of hand-to-hand struggle, a "bar nothing" fight; one in which, surely, none of the illusions which have hitherto blinded many of the German workers and their leaders can survive. The German worker has been brought to the position of paying all for the salvation of—what? For a system which he now knows supports nothing but a class which is leagued with "enemy" capitalists for his exploitation.

How is the German working class going to face this situation? How will it wage war with this world league of plunderers? That is a question of as great importance for us as for our German comrades. It can only be answered by

careful remembrance of the struggle of the past four years. It is, therefore, an event of importance that M. Philips Price should, at this moment, have published some of the results of his years of observation in Germany.

This is the first time that an English writer has reviewed the events of the German Revolution and the subsequent four years, and analysed them, from a Marxian point of view. The result is inspiring, and we say this deliberately with a full recollection of the terrible implications of the situation which we have endeavoured to indicate in the opening of this review. There were high hopes in great masses of the German people in November, 1918, and now there is widespread depression. How, then, can the story of the intervening years be inspiring? It is so because, while the story shows the illusory nature of the grounds on which the hopes of 1918 were based, it shows also that there has been throughout a body of people in Germany, growing in numbers and knowledge, despite treachery and murder, which has read the story as it was written and has understood it. And the story also shows how inexorable is the coming of that moment when the very actions of the capitalist exploiters themselves will lead the workers to overthrow them—and to follow the lead of those who have been learning and teaching.

In the final sentences of his book Mr. Price says:—

The victory of the Revolution in the future is the only guarantee to the independent existence of the German State, and of an un-enslaved German working class. Its second defeat, on the other hand, will mean decay of German civilisation and the reversion of Central Europe to barbarism . . . The aversion of the danger is only possible if, in the near future, the united working-class front is established in Germany. In its creation the German Communist Party is called upon to play a most important rôle.

What is this Communist Party? It is the product of the labours of that little band, the *Spartakusbund*, whose leaders, Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht, called together the first congress of the Communist Party of Germany in December, 1918, in Berlin, while the workers were fighting the reaction let loose by the Social-Democrats. In the programme adopted by that Congress there occur these passages:—

The proletarian revolution is the death-bed of slavery and oppression. For this reason all capitalists, Junkers, members of the petty middle class, officers, and all those who live on exploitation and class hegemony, will rise against it to a man in a struggle for life and death. . . .

The class of capitalist imperialists exceeds all its predecessors in undisguised cynicism, brutality, and meanness. It will defend its most sacred profits with tooth and nail. . . . It will rouse heaven and hell against the proletariat. It will mobilise the peasantry against the towns, the backward elements of the working class against the Socialist advance guard. . . .

The fight for Socialism is the most gigantic civil war in history, and the proletarian revolution must prepare the necessary defence for this war. It must learn to use it, to fight, and to conquer. This . . . is what is known as the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. This, and this only, is the true Democracy.

A few weeks after this manifesto was issued, Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht had been murdered by reactionary officers masquerading as protectors of the Republic. A few months later, thousands of workers had been slaughtered by White Guards organised by Noske, the Social-Democrat

Minister of War, because they were organising in Workers' Councils and were striking for demands which threatened the Entente which Social-Democracy was establishing with Capitalism. Three years later, while the "enemies" of Germany were invading the Ruhr to seize "pledges" for the payment of reparations, German capitalists, taking long views into the future, were negotiating with these "enemies" for advantageous terms upon which both sides might exploit the subjected working class of Germany for profit. And, at the same time, the very words of the manifesto were being fulfilled, for the Fascist organisations, the subsidised catspaws of Capitalism, were striving to enrol the peasants and workers of southern Germany in fighting bands against the revolutionary working class.

Four years later, and the unmasking of Capitalism, and the fulfilment word for word of that manifesto of December, 1918, are complete. The cynicism and brutality of the Capitalist Imperialist class has become a slave-master's lash, which every German worker feels, and from which he knows no respite. That is his goal—and whither is it driving him?

From that small *Spartakusbund* of 1918 has grown a Communist Party of 300,000 members or more.

But it has not been a simple and steady growth, in which disillusionment has been followed by immediate putting forth of revolutionary wisdom. The German Communist Party has been sadly afflicted by that "infantile sickness" which Lenin diagnosed. Price shows this clearly enough. In a few words he puts the futile revolt of March, 1921, in a clear light. "A purely local issue, on which it was impossible to arouse the rest of Germany, was artificially expanded into a national issue, with, of course, disastrous results." That, and other errors, proved that the German working class had not yet found revolutionary leaders who understood the nature of the battle they had to fight. But now, when, as we have said, the fight has become uncompromising, there is only one party in Germany which insists steadily on the all-important point—the united front of the working class.

We have mentioned Social-Democracy in passing. There must be many members of the British Labour Movement to whom the shame of the German Social-Democratic Party is still a mystery. It was, in pre-war days, the greatest of all Socialist parties. It was regarded as a model of efficiency. Its members knew of the theories of Marx, which was a rarity in England. There was a thrill in the fact that Socialists took the reins of Government in November, 1918. How is it that now the Social-Democrats have no claim to the leadership of the German working class? Whoever still seeks an answer to this question will get it from Price's book. He will find ample proof that Social-Democracy is powerless and discredited, and he will find the reasons told in such a story that one might hesitate to believe, were it not told largely in the words of supporters and tools of the capitalists and their Social-Democratic allies. For that is the part played by the Social-Democrats in the Revolution of 1918 and onwards—the part of subservient allies to the bourgeoisie which, bent on winning the last round of its fight with the Junkers, who, as survivals of feudal landlordism, hindered the full development of capitalist imperialism, was nevertheless thoroughly awake to the necessity of crushing the workers' movement towards revolution. Right nobly did the Social-Democrats serve

the bourgeoisie to this end. The words of one reactionary, Rudolf Mann, an officer in the notorious Ehrhards' marine brigade must suffice. When Noske, early in 1919, was forming his White Guards for the suppression of the Factory Councils and the crushing of strikes, Mann wrote of him: "It was his service that he put the right men in the right military posts, gave them complete authority and abundant money for their work. The volunteer corps were expensive, but this was the only way to create a centre of authority. Without this, the Revolution would have overwhelmed Germany."

And later we find a Social-Democrat leader, Anton Fischer, taking money from a foreigner to help this White Guard organisation, and to "put out placards and organise speakers to counteract the work of Lenin and the Spartakists."

Once more let us recall that, four years later, a dictatorship of Capitalism exists in Germany, which is forcing the workers to work longer hours, to take less pay, to the benefit of the world league of capitalists. What German worker can remember the record of the Social-Democrats, while they held power, and feel anything but contempt for them? This is surely the bitterest of all the chapters in the history of the past four years. But it explains much, and it is necessary to that process of learning which, as we have said, is the way to the building of a real revolutionary army.

The Social-Democrats were the victims of illusions about the possibility of working for reform inside the capitalist system. That is their downfall in Germany. But it is the capitalists, and not they, who have proved this to be an illusion. This is made clear in Mr. Price's admirable section on the Versailles Treaty, which is too detailed to be summarised here. But the deduction may be put in very few words. The new fields for exploitation, which were the objects of the war, are the flesh and blood of Germany's workers. They will pay reparations; they will provide profits for the surplus capital of British, French, American, and German financiers. That is why they will realise that there is no "reform" under capitalism for them, and why their backs are already turned on Social-Democracy, and their faces towards Revolution.

W. M. H.

THE BOURGEOISIE LOOK AT THEMSELVES

Babbitt. By Sinclair Lewis. (Jonathan Cape.)

The Death of Ivan Ilytch. By Leo Tolstoy.

IT was Bernard Shaw who said that the much-praised works of the Russian dramatist Tchekov were a study of the English middle class, "the same nice people, the same utter futility"; and proceeded to call his own *Heartbreak House* "a fantasia in the Russian manner on English themes." No one doubts that this is just or that there exists a European middle class. But some may still imagine that the rising bourgeoisie of America are different, that they are still vigorous and have some meaning in their lives. Mr. Sinclair Lewis comes along to tell us that these imaginations are vain, and that in America there is not merely the same futility but futility standardised and unvarying.

Babbitt is a real estate agent who lives in the growing city of Zenith. There are Zeniths all over the United States and hundreds of *Babbitts* in each.

He differs in no way from other minor profit-makers all over the world, except that his house is full of American gadgets, made of metal and kept quite clean, and that he runs down in his proud little car (he is one of twelve million such owners) to his futile office in the morning. It is a fascinating book, all the more so that, when you have read a chapter wherein Babbitt and cronies exchange the same old pleasantries or heavily repeat with a proud sense of original thought all the stock prejudices of the middle class, you know that in London anywhere you can find exactly the same thing happening. In any city restaurant you can hear them, after their second whisky, voicing one after another exactly the same machine-made opinions. The faithful description of the lives of Babbitt and his friends is good because it is faithful. But the real interest comes when Babbitt, dimly realising the futility of it and groping for an escape, is ruthlessly hurled back by the social and business pressure of his peers. There is no escape for Babbitt. Then is made clear the power of class over any except the most ferociously self-willed and independent of its members. He was born Babbitt and he will die a Babbitt. "Change of Heart" be damned!

Tolstoy is much more terrible. *The Death of Ivan Ilych* has never been read eagerly, like *Babbitt*. Where the American has merely comic perplexities and doubts, the dying Russian lawyer looks back on his life, sees at it were the whole life of the middle class, and, knowing that his soul will shortly be required of him, is driven into a despair that nothing lightens. The reader walks in darkness, and when Ivan Ilych begins to scream, that terrible scream that lasted through three days and nights until his death, you almost feel you must stop your ears. But there is one being who lives on, really living. The peasant boy, Gerasim, whom Ivan would have to tend him in his weakness, brings in a fresh atmosphere from the peasant fields. The world is not made up of Ilych and his kind.

Nor is America made up of Babbitt and his kind. In the background of the futilities of Zenith there are processions of women just dimly visible, there is a fear of "Reds," there are starving bands of strikers. Vergil Gunch and the others may rescue a Babbitt from straying into a kindly feeling towards the proletariat. But they will not be able to rescue themselves or their class when that proletariat awakens; and when by a transformation scene the background to these futilities advances, no longer dimly visible but filling the whole stage.

R. P. A.

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NOTES of the MONTH

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Walls of Ignorance—A Play and a Moral—The Outlook for
England—Lenin and Marx—The Spirit of Leninism
—The Tactics of Leninism—The Teachings
of Leninism—Lenin and the Future*

TO write of Lenin in English is like a barbarian endeavouring to describe a civilised man. The very atmosphere and language is so soaked in conventional and insincere relics of bourgeois thought in decay that it is almost impossible to drive through them to the profoundly simple and tremendously significant things for which Lenin stood. In all the tributes that have appeared in his memory in English, and there have been many not lacking in goodwill and sincerity, there has been something unreal and unconvincing, as if the stale counters of tribute to a "great man" or "great leader" (compared according to fancy with a Cromwell or a Cæsar or a Napoleon) were being brought out once again, or, where there has been any attempt at an alternative to this, as if the great achievement were an innovation in political theory or institutions. In the light of any sense of the gigantic historic change in human development that is taking place in our day, and of the part of Lenin in it, there is something pitiful in this inadequacy. It is a weakness that is too great to be the individual weakness of this or that writer; its very universality makes it a symptom of a deeper lying condition. It is the real inadequacy of the savage's thousand-word vocabulary to express the true content of a play of Shakespeare save in a child's summary of the plot. It is the failure of a social epoch to understand or express the next, when confronted with it.

FOR in a profoundly true sense the civilisation of Western Europe and America, not merely the outer shell, but the whole thought and expression, is barbarous in relation to the real forces that are making the world—barbarous in the strictest and most primitive sense, that is, ignorant, unconscious, and self-centred, without historic sense or understanding. This is not merely

a question of the philistines ; it is the "intelligent," "educated," "well-informed," "advanced" opinion that is the most plainly barbarous. The coarsely practical leaders of the bourgeoisie are in comparison consciously aware of the world forces with which they have to deal. But the intellectual expression of the bourgeoisie, which dominates in the West not only liberal opinion but also the "socialist" movement, is no longer capable of living in the present and has not been since the time of Marx. The world war first made plainly visible to all this complete intellectual bankruptcy of all sections of bourgeois society, equally militarist and pacifist. But if the world war was the crisis which laid bare the situation, the Russian Revolution was already the new chapter of world history advancing forward and leaving behind the whole framework of bourgeois thought. From that moment bourgeois thought was turned in upon itself in sterility, its little war-time dreams of social reconstruction left shattered in fragments on the ground by the harsh blows of reality, and itself left gazing with wondering incomprehension at the nightmare of the post-war world or clinging with desperate devotion to some abstract shadowy wraith of a League of Nations or similar shibboleth to soothe its pain. In the events in Russia it could only see at the most a gigantic social "experiment," and in Lenin a "ruthless" but "fascinating" and "masterful" figure. This pathetic helplessness and futility before the march of world events is only the culminating expression of the mental and moral bankruptcy of the non-Marxian world, the visible picture of which Shaw drew with such devastating bitterness of heart (for he himself is part of it) in *Heartbreak House*.

MARXISM is to the Western world a book closed with seven seals. How, then, shall they understand Leninism which carries Marxism a whole age forward? If they have not known that merciless social self-analysis which is Marxism to prepare their minds, how shall they understand that consequent positive power and certainty of action which is Leninism? It is better to leave them to their schoolbook admiration of Lenin as a "Cæsar," a "Cromwell." But the workers must understand, or perish. They are already groping their way towards an understanding under the hard pressure of events.

But there can be no complete understanding without theory: and that theoretical clearness which should be within reach of every thinking and inquiring worker does not yet exist in this country. Instead, the theory of the working-class movement is still derived from bourgeois sources—from Keynes, Russell, Angell, Cole, Brailsford, Hobson, &c.—and among even the most intelligent savants of the bourgeoisie there is not so much as a notion of the A B C of Marxism, that is to say of the simplest elements of the working-class position and of the forces of society and history. It is still possible for a Bertrand Russell to produce as a witty reply to the Materialist Conception of History the suggestion that not even a supporter would agree that the theory was only a reflection of Marx feeling cold and hungry in the British Museum. It is still possible for a Keynes to announce with all the brilliance of a new discovery the self-destructive processes of capitalism, and to believe that he has found something unguessed at by the crude and “bloodthirsty” notions of Marxism. “Perhaps it is historically true that no order of society ever perishes save by its own hand. In the complexer world of Western Europe the Immanent Will may achieve its ends more subtly and bring in the revolution no less inevitably through a Klotz or a George than by the intellectualisms, too ruthless and self-conscious for us, of the bloodthirsty philosophers of Russia.” That sentence deserves to stand as a monument of the noble savage who by a bound of intuition reaches out of his own genius to some shred of modern civilised knowledge, although unable to express it save in his own queer fetichistic language—Immanent Will, &c. But when such is the state of knowledge among the most brilliant of the barbarians, what is to be hoped of those who have to depend on them for their understanding?

RECENTLY there appeared a play from Czecho-Slovakia which received a vogue of attention and discussion—*R. U. R.* by Karel Capek. That play and its reception abroad and here afforded in many ways an interesting index of stages of development in different parts of Europe. The play itself was a typical expression of post-war Central Europe. Under the guise of the awakening to consciousness of a race of machine-men or Robots, created for labour, and their slaying of their creators, he

presented the revolt of the proletariat. The play was strangely and revealingly unequal. The first part (the part which has already taken place in Central Europe) was strong. The rule of the bourgeoisie and its sophistries, the long dumb servitude of Labour, the first fussy efforts of bourgeois liberalism (the "Humanity League" lady) to awaken their soul, the gradual real stirring and straining of the giant after consciousness, the first helpless paroxysms of anger and indignation without expression, the slow painful learning of discipline and sacrifice and collective power, the degradation of the bourgeoisie and their division between policies of coercion and corruption, the poison and suspense of the whole atmosphere, the raising of the standard of revolt and the transformation of the harmless bourgeois individuals into mad demons of white terror, shooting and drinking in alternate fits of panic and exultation—all this was depicted with rapid power. But thereafter the play broke down. The author could see the new force that was rising; but he could only see it from outside. He could not see from within it, ahead to the secrets of its own future creation. For his play the moment of tragedy was the slow extinguishing of the lamp of the old civilisation. Beyond that for a solution he could only hark back to a reversion and a repetition—the threadbare re-discovery of individual romantic love like a nineteenth-century comedy drama. This pathetic collapse was one of the most significant features of the play. For it made it a veritable picture of Central Europe, that has trembled on the very edge of revolution and shrunk back in fear to ineffectual commonness. It was not a great play, but it was a revealing play. But when this play was acted in London, nine-tenths of the criticism and discussions centred on the conception of the "machine-man" to do all the work (as if it were a dramatisation of Lytton's *Coming Race*) and the remaining tenth saw only a picture of the coming cataclysm.

IT is this universal unconsciousness which is the most terrible fact in modern England. For on the Continent of Europe there is at least a certain standard of realist seeing what is happening in the world, such as can develop, is already beginning to develop into a common mass understanding. And America, which is as stupid and primitive in its conventional outlook as England, has at

any rate at present limitless reserves of fat, in the shape of untapped wealth and territory, to enable it to continue to be stupid for some time without paying the cost. But England enjoys neither of these positions, and therefore the outlook for England is terrible. The old monopolist position of industrial and financial supremacy, of the workshop of the world and of unchallenged empire and easy tribute, is gone for ever. And the new understanding of conditions to-day and the future of development is not yet come. Neither in the bourgeoisie nor in the proletariat is there any beginning of awareness. Alike in bourgeois and proletarian politics the old conventional watchwords of before the war still reign. In the face of the gigantic economic crisis of after the war, all the old pills from Protection to Social Reconstruction are produced. And meanwhile the suffering and decline go on to future starvation. The penalty of ignorance is never remitted or forgiven. The need of Marxism, of Leninism, in England, as in all the world to-day, is not the need of a particular theory or creed. It is a social need, the need of a practical understanding of world conditions and the future line of human development.

IT is this practical understanding, this union of understanding and action in the world sphere, which is the most characteristic mark of Leninism. Leninism is social thinking in action. What Marx saw, Lenin achieved. Marx taught the working class to think ; Lenin taught them how to fight and win. Marx showed how to understand history ; Lenin how to make history. Without Lenin, Marxism, in the hands of his successors, would have degenerated into a pedants' creed, covering the grossest actual corruption and opportunism on the one hand, and the sterile emptiness of revolutionary formulas on the other. Lenin brought back to Marxism the spark of life and struggle, which had been the first principle of Marx himself, and made it live again in terms of our own day, in terms of imperialism and world war, of economic crisis and the modern labour movements, of the seizure⁹ of power, of parliament and soviets, and the first workers' State. Leninism is the realisation of Marxism in our own day. Between them, Marx and Lenin are the architects of the new world order which is

beginning, and at whose birth we are assisting all over the earth. Through all the turmoil of the post-war world, through all the scramble and confusion of narrow, grasping imperialisms and financial and diplomatic intrigues, the one great positive force working consistently for world ends has been and remains the Communist International, the creation and embodiment of the spirit of Lenin and all for which he stood.

WHAT was the content of Lenin's teaching? It is easier to analyse the content than to convey again the spirit and the secret. For the greatest gift of Lenin to the working-class movement was the new spirit he brought into it and kindled within it all over the world. To movements grown old and dull and paralysed under the long-drawn corruption of imperialism, forgetful of their original aims and impulse, overlaid with dead inheritances, lost and befogged in a maze of detail and the trickeries of bourgeois machinery, with their leaders corrupt or petty and the workers despairing or apathetic, Lenin brought back the spirit of the revolution; he kindled anew within the breasts of millions of workers and peasants all over the world the resolve to struggle for great ends and defeat the miseries of human life, the power to lift up their eyes and go forward without fear, the determination to overcome all obstacles and achieve, the courage and clearness and confidence of Marxism in action, the spirit of victory. But the secret of Leninism is only to be learnt, not from principles, but from the problems of the daily struggle as he waged it and as it continues to be waged; the knowledge and power to estimate social forces for action, to advance and to retreat; the whole new and hitherto uncharted science which in the thirty-five years of his fighting life and the twenty volumes of his writings he was daily elaborating and revealing—the tactics of the revolution.

THE tactics of the revolution is not for fools; and it may safely be prophesied that as much fantastic and debasing use will be endeavoured to be made of the principles of Leninism in the future as has been made of the principles of

Marxism in the past. Hideous things will be proclaimed and advocated in the name of Leninism. All the traitors to socialist principles will endeavour to hide themselves behind the shadow of the man who was bigger than formulas. The audacious compromises of an indomitable fighter will be made the excuse for the dirty compacts of petty bargainers and timid self-seekers. Already the vultures have gathered around. The very types and characters whom he flogged and lashed without mercy in his formidable polemics, the parliamentarians and tricksters, the centrists and opportunists, have already begun to endeavour to claim him as their own, have begun to canonise him as they canonised Marx. Those who began by denouncing him as a fanatical doctrinaire end by acclaiming him as a hero of compromise. Their object, beneath their contradictory statements, is in either case the same : to cover up their own shameful policies. Let the Revolution beware. As against the treatment meted out to Marx, Lenin has this advantage, that he has left behind him a powerful and united organisation to carry on his fight, a union of the revolutionary workers all over the world, the Communist International, which exists to maintain the struggle for which he gave his life.

BUT against such traducers even the formal content of Lenin's teaching may be recalled. It may be recalled most easily by considering where socialism stood as Marx left it and how Lenin carried it on. Marx had revealed the dominant rôle of the class struggle in hitherto existing social relationships ; he had laid bare the character of capitalist production and exploitation, and its development to increasing concentration and larger and larger scale anarchy and crisis ; he had established the rôle of the organisation of the working class developing in its at first unconscious struggles the new society in the womb of the old, and raised the challenge of the international organisation of the workers across all national and racial frontiers ; and he had pointed finally to the inevitable catastrophe of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class, leading to the new society of social production and endeavour which would end the reign of class struggle and begin the history of civilised humanity.

All this Lenin carried forward to the new period which followed on the death of Marx, and translated into precise and concrete terms of our own day, adding a clearness and vividness of immediate struggle which could not be present in the first elaboration of the general principles before the conflict was ripe. He showed the realisation of the class struggle in the final stage of civil war and the destruction of the state power of capitalism and its replacement by the workers' state. He showed the culmination of capitalism in imperialism, the accompanying concentration of economic and political power, the new rôle of the subject populations in Asia and Africa, the new problems presented to the world working class, and the final completion in an inevitable chain of world war and revolution. He showed the realisation of the final catastrophe of capitalism in world war, the consequent tasks of the International, and the historic moment of revolution. He showed the concrete form of the revolution in the seizure of State power by the workers' own organisations of the type of the workers' councils or soviets. And he showed the supreme necessity both before and after the revolution of a single disciplined revolutionary party of the workers to unite the working-class struggle in all its aspects and concentrate it on to the supreme political struggle with the single, disciplined, united organ of bourgeois power, the State, and the establishment and maintenance of the workers' State. All this Lenin showed, and at the same time that he showed he fought and achieved. He built with his own hands from the tiniest foundations the revolutionary party of the Russian workers which led the way for the world. He raised alone the standard of working-class revolt in the universal collapse of European socialist treachery and opportunism and pacifism in the world war. He hewed out the path of the first working-class revolution to the seizure of state power and the realisation of the first workers' state. He stood at the head in maintaining the first workers' state against the universal attack of world imperialism and counter-revolution. He rallied the workers of the whole world to the revolutionary struggle, and left behind him his monument in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics covering one-sixth of the territory of the world and the Communist International uniting the militant workers of every land

TO anyone surveying Lenin's record of thought and action it is clear that he represented more than a personal force, that in all his speeches and writings and deeds he was the expression of all the deepest inner force of the revolutionary working class all over the world, and that this is the secret of his power. He was the expression of the greatest need and of the greatest driving force of our age. That Materialist Conception of History, that supreme social consciousness overstepping all the limits of individual greatness and smallness and pointing the equal way for all to what must be achieved, that mighty conception which Marx first proclaimed, and proclaiming ended for ever the reign of all the old individual, romantic, and subjective philosophies and politics—that conception he embodied as a living personal force acting in world history. He was the working class in action, with all the shackles and fetters fallen : he was the spirit of the future age living and acting to-day. And, therefore, the workers of the whole world do honour and will do honour to him, because in doing so they do honour to all that is most real and most imperishable in themselves and their own future.

R. P. D.

RAMSAY MACDONALD AND THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL

By N. LENIN

This article by Lenin, now for the first time published in England, was written in reply to an article by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald that appeared in l'Humanité, then the organ of the French Socialist Party, on April 14, 1919. The Second International had held its first post-war Conference at Berne, in February of that year; and the First Congress of the Communist International had taken place in March. In order to enable our readers to appreciate fully Lenin's criticism of the tendencies represented by Mr. MacDonald, we reproduce in full, herewith, the latter's original article:—

It has been the ill fortune of the Socialist movement, both in its national and in its international policy, to be the prey of tendencies towards division.

However, it is not a bad thing that there should be shades of opinion and variations in method. Our Socialism is still in the experimental stage.

Its general principles are fixed, but the way best to apply them, the methods which will bring the triumph of the revolution, the manner in which the Socialist State should be constructed, are still questions for discussion, on which the last word has not yet been said. A profound study of these questions will bring us to a greater appreciation of the truth.

Extremes may conflict with each other, and their conflicts may serve to strengthen the conceptions of Socialism, but the evil begins when the one regards the other as a traitor, as a believer who has fallen from grace and on whom the Party should close its doors.

When Socialists are possessed by a dogmatic spirit comparable to that which formerly in Christianity preached civil war for the glory of God and the destruction of the Devil, then the bourgeoisie can live in peace, for the period of its domination is not yet over, whatever local or national Socialist successes may be gained at the moment.

To-day our movement has unhappily encountered another obstacle. A new International has been founded at Moscow.

I regret it very much, for at the present moment the Socialist International is sufficiently broad to include all forms of Socialist thought, and, in spite of the theoretical and practical controversies raised by Bolshevism, I see no reason why the Left should separate itself from the Centre and form an independent group.

We must first remember that we are still in the period of the Revolution's infancy. The forms of government resulting from the political and social destruction of the war are not yet tested and are not definitely fixed.

The first sweep of the broom always seems remarkable, but one is not sure of its effectiveness.

Russia is not Hungary, Hungary is not France, France is not England, and to split the International over the experience of one nation shows a criminal narrow-mindedness.

Moreover, what is the value of the Russian experience? Who can speak of it? The Allied Governments are afraid to let us go and find out for ourselves. But two things we do know:—

The first is, that there was no plan carefully thought out for the Revolution made by the present Russian Government. It developed with the march of events. Lenin began the attack on Kerensky by demanding a Constituent Assembly. Events led him to suppress this Assembly. When the Social Revolution took place in Russia, no one thought that the Soviets would play the part in the government that they have played.

Consequently Lenin correctly exhorted Hungary not to imitate Russia slavishly, but to let the Hungarian Revolution develop along its own lines.

The changes and developments in the experiments we are at present witnessing must not at any cost bring a split in the International.

All the Socialist Governments need the aid and the counsel of the International. The International needs to watch over their experiments with a careful eye and an open mind.

I have just heard from a friend who has recently seen Lenin that no one criticises the Soviet Government more freely than Lenin himself.

If the disturbances and the revolutions after the war do not justify a split, is it justified by the attitude of certain sections of Socialism during the war? Here I candidly confess that the reason may seem more cogent. But if there is really a reason for a split in the International, the Moscow Conference put the question in the worst possible way.

I am one of those who hold that the discussion at Berne on war-responsibility was *only a concession to non-Socialist public opinion.*

Not only could no judgment of any historical value (though it might have had some political value) have been pronounced at Berne, but the subject itself was not approached as it should have been.

A condemnation of the German majority (which it fully deserved and which I should have been most happy to support) could not have been an exposure of the origins of the war.

The Berne debates brought no frank discussion of the attitude of the other Socialists towards the war.

They gave no formula for Socialist conduct during a war. All that the International had hitherto said was that in a war of national defence Socialists should unite with other parties.

Under these conditions whom were we to condemn?

Some among us knew that what the International had said meant nothing and was not a practical guide for action.

We knew that such a war would end by an imperialist victory, and, without being either pacifists, in the ordinary sense of the word, or anti-pacifists, we pursued a policy which we thought to be the only one compatible with internationalism. But the International never prescribed this policy for us.

That is why, when the war began, the International collapsed. It had no authority, and laid down no law by virtue of which we could to-day condemn those who honestly carried out the decisions of the Congresses of the International.

In consequence the position we must adopt to-day is as follows: instead of making a split over past events, build a really active International which will protect the Socialist movement during the period of revolution and reconstruction, through which we are about to pass.

We must re-establish our Socialist principles. We must lay the solid foundations of International Socialist policy.

After this, if we find that we are in essential disagreement over these principles, if we do not see eye to eye as regards liberty and democracy, if we have definitely divergent views about the conditions in which the working class can exercise power, if the war has tainted certain sections of the International with imperialism, then the split can take place.

However, I do not think that such a calamity will occur.

Consequently I regret the Moscow manifesto as being at least premature and certainly useless, and I hope that my French comrades, who have borne with me the calumnies and sorrows of the last four tragic years, will not, in a moment of impatience, contribute to the destruction of international solidarity.

Their children will have to re-construct it if the working class is ever to rule the world.

J. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

THE author of this article, as the reader can see, attempts to prove that the split is superfluous. As a matter of fact the very opposite is proved by the reasoning of Ramsay MacDonald, typical representative as he is of the Second International, and worthy colleague of Scheidemann and Kautsky, Vandervelde, Branting, and the rest of them.

Ramsay MacDonald's article is the best example that could be given of that smooth, melodious, banal, and socialist-seeming phraseology which serves in all developed capitalist countries to camouflage the policy of the bourgeoisie inside the Labour Movement.

I

Let us start off with a point which is perhaps the least important, but which is, on second thoughts, particularly characteristic. The author, like Kautsky (in his brochure *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*), repeats the bourgeois lie alleging that the part played by the Soviets in Russia was not anticipated; alleging also that the Bolsheviks and myself only began the fight with Kerensky in the name of the Constituent Assembly.

Now that is a bourgeois lie. In reality, as early as April 4, 1917, on the first day of my arrival at Petrograd, I put forward theses demanding a Soviet Republic and not a bourgeois Parliamentary Republic. I repeated that on many occasions during the Kerensky period both at meetings and in the Press. The Bolshevik Party made a solemn and official declaration to this effect in the resolutions of its conference of April 29, 1917. Not to know this means *not to wish to know* the truth concerning the Socialist revolution in Russia;

not to wish to understand that a bourgeois republic in conjunction with a Constituent Assembly represents a step forward in comparison with the same kind of a republic *without* a Constituent Assembly; whilst a Soviet Republic means two steps forward in comparison with the above. To fail to see this is to close one's eyes to the difference between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

To call oneself a Socialist and yet not to be able to see this difference two years after the question came to the fore in Russia, and a year and a-half after the victory of the Soviet revolution, is (in MacDonald's phrase) to remain obstinately a prisoner of "non-Socialist public opinion," that is to say, of bourgeois politics and ideas.

A split with such people is necessary and inevitable, for it is impossible to accomplish a Socialist revolution hand in hand with those who incline towards the bourgeoisie.

If "leaders" such as Ramsay MacDonald, Kautsky, and others have no wish to overcome even the little difficulties which would be presented by a study of the documents concerning the attitude of the Bolsheviks to the Soviet Government, and concerning the question as it appeared on and after November 7, 1917, would it not be ridiculous to expect of such men readiness and ability to overcome the incomparably greater difficulties of the struggle for a Socialist revolution?

None so deaf as those who will not hear.

II

Let us pass on to the second out of the numberless lies of which Ramsay MacDonald's article is full to overflowing; for it certainly contains more untruths than it does words. This second lie is, moreover, almost the most important of all.

Ramsay MacDonald asserts that up to the war of 1914-1918 all that the International said was to the effect that "when war assumes the character of a war of national defence, Socialists should unite with other parties."

Now that is a monstrous and revolting perversion of the truth.

Everybody knows that the Basle Manifesto of 1912 was unanimously accepted by all Socialists, and that of all the documents

of the International this is the only one which refers directly to this war between the two groups, English and German, of imperialist robbers, a war for which the preparations were obvious to us in 1912, and which actually broke out in 1914. It was concerning this very war that the Basle Manifesto laid down three fundamental truths; in remaining silent about these MacDonald commits the greatest crime against Socialism, and proves the necessity of a split with men of his type. In reality such people serve the bourgeoisie and not the proletariat.

These three truths are as follow:—

(1) The war that is threatening the world can in no way be justified by a shadowy "interest of national defence."

(2) It would be a crime on the part of the workers to shoot one another in such a war.

(3) War leads to the proletarian revolution.

By "forgetting" these three basic root axioms (notwithstanding that he had endorsed them prior to the war), MacDonald in fact goes over to the service of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, and thus shows that a split is imperative.

The Communist International will not unite with Parties which do not wish to acknowledge these truths and which are not capable of proving, by their actions, that they are steadfast, ready, and able to impress these truths on the conscience of the masses.

The Versailles Peace proved even to the deaf and to the blind, proved even to the mass of the short-sighted, that the Entente was and is an imperialist vulture as bloody and as terrible as Germany. To fail to see this is only possible either to those hypocrites and liars who consciously pursue a bourgeois policy in the Labour Movement, who are direct agents and servants of the bourgeoisie ("Labour lieutenants of the capitalist class," as the American Socialists call them), or to people who are the slaves of bourgeois ideas and influence to such an extent that they are Socialists only in words, whilst in reality they are petty bourgeois philistines and hangers-on of capitalism. The difference between the first and second categories is important only from a personal point of view, that is to say, from the point of view of the criticism directed against any John or Peter, social patriots in no matter what country. As far as politics are concerned, that is to say, from the point of

view of the relations between millions of people, between classes, this difference is absolutely unessential.

Those Socialists who, during the war of 1914-1918, did not understand that this war was criminal and reactionary, that it was a war of rapine, in which both sides pursued imperialist aims, are social patriots, *i.e.*, they are Socialists as far as words are concerned, but patriots in deed; they are friends of the working class only in words, in reality they are the lackeys of their "own" national bourgeoisie, assisting the latter to deceive the people by depicting as "a national war," "a war of liberation," "a war of defence," "a just war," &c., the war between the two groups of English and German imperialist bandits, both *equally* foul, *equally* mercenary, *equally* bloodthirsty, criminal, and reactionary.

Unity with the social patriots is treason to the revolution, treason to the proletariat, treason to Socialism, because it means unity with the *national bourgeoisie* of one's "own" country *against* the unity of the *international* revolutionary proletariat; it means, in a word, unity *with* the bourgeoisie *against* the proletariat.

The war of 1914-1918 has finally proved the truth of this. He who has failed to understand this had better stick in Berne with the yellow "International" of the social traitors.

III

Ramsay MacDonald declares, with the entertaining *naïveté* of a parlour Socialist, who speaks in the air without the least conception in the world that his words have a serious bearing, without in any way understanding that *words compel action*—"At Berne a concession was made to non-Socialist public opinion."

Just so! We consider the Berne "International" altogether yellow, false, and perfidious, for the whole of its policy is nothing but a "concession" to the bourgeoisie.

Ramsay MacDonald knows perfectly well that we have established the Third International and have broken unreservedly with the Second because we have become convinced of the desperate and incorrigible state of the latter as well as of its rôle as the handmaid of Imperialism, and as a means for spreading bourgeois influence, bourgeois lies, and bourgeois corruption within the

Labour Movement. If when wishing to discuss the Third International, Ramsay MacDonald evades the heart of the matter, beats about the bush, uttering empty phrases and omitting to say what should be said—then he is committing an error and a crime. For the proletariat needs the truth, and there is nothing more harmful to its cause than a plausible, respectable, ordinary lie.

The question of Imperialism and of its *relation* with opportunism within the Labour Movement, and with the betrayal of the cause of the workers by their own leaders, has been put a long, long time ago.

During a period of fifty years, from 1842 to 1892, Marx and Engels constantly emphasised the fact that owing to England's peculiar economic position (her colonies, monopoly of the world market, &c.) the upper strata of the working class of that country had gradually come to occupy almost as privileged a position as the bourgeoisie. In the seventies of the last century Marx won for himself the hatred—which did him honour—of the heroes of the "Berne International" of those days, that is to say of the opportunists and reformists, because he had branded many leaders of the English trade unions as men who had sold themselves to the bourgeoisie, or who were paid for the services they rendered to the bourgeoisie from within the Labour Movement.

At the time of the Anglo-Boer war, the English Press had already put with the greatest clearness the question of Imperialism as the newest (and last) stage of capitalism. If my memory does not deceive me it was no other than Ramsay MacDonald himself who then left the Fabian Society, that prototype of the Berne International, that nursery and pattern of opportunism, which Engels with brilliant force, clarity, and truth in his correspondence with Zorge called "Fabian Imperialism." "Fabian Imperialism" was at that time a current expression in English Socialist literature. If Ramsay MacDonald has forgotten this, so much the worse for him.

"Fabian Imperialism" and "Socialist Imperialism" are one and the same thing. It is Socialism in word and Imperialism in deed. *It is the transformation of fully developed opportunism into Imperialism.* To-day, during and after the war of 1914-1918, this

phenomenon has become universal. The failure of the yellow Berne International to understand this is the result of its extreme blindness and constitutes its greatest crime. Opportunism or reformism inevitably developed into Socialist Imperialism or social patriotism, with world-historical significance. For Imperialism brought to the fore a group of very rich, highly developed countries, who plunder the whole world, and whose bourgeoisie is able, by that very fact, to buy with the surplus of its monopolist profits (for Imperialism means monopolist capitalism) the upper strata of the working class of these countries.

Only complete ignoramuses or hypocrites, who deceive the workers by repeating commonplaces on capitalism, concealing in this way the bitter truth of the passing of the whole of one Socialist tendency to the side of the Imperialist bourgeoisie, can fail to see the economic inevitability of this fact.

Two indisputable conclusions are to be drawn from this fact:—

The first conclusion is that the Berne "International" is in fact, by virtue of its actual historical and political rôle, independently of the goodwill and the innocent desires of such and such of its members, an organisation of agents of International Imperialism, acting in the midst of the working class, infusing the working class with bourgeois influence, bourgeois ideas, bourgeois lies, and bourgeois corruption.

In countries of long-standing democratic parliamentary culture the bourgeoisie has acquired the fine art of acting, not only by violence, but also by means of deceit, bribery, and flattery. The "banquets" to the British "Labour leaders" (*i.e.*, those lackeys of the bourgeoisie entrusted with the task of fooling the workers) have become notorious, and have even been mentioned by Engels. Clemenceau's "charming reception" of the Socialist-traitor Merrheim, the amicable reception of the leaders of the Berne "International" by Entente Ministers, &c., are facts of the same order. "You train them and we shall buy them," said a clever English woman capitalist to the Socialist Imperialist Hyndman, who related in his memoirs how this woman (more clear-sighted than all the leaders of the Berne "International" put together) appreciated the efforts of the Socialist intellectuals in "training" Socialist leaders who came from the working class.

/ When, during the war, the Vanderveldes, Brantings, and the whole band of traitors held "international" conferences, the French and British bourgeois papers remarked sarcastically, but with much justice: "These Vanderveldes suffer from a kind of tic. Just as people suffering from this nervousness are incapable of uttering a phrase without being subject to a strange twitching of the muscles of the face, similarly it is impossible for Vandervelde to make a speech on politics without repeating, parrot-fashion, such words as internationalism, socialism, international solidarity of the workers, proletarian revolution, &c. Let them repeat any kind of sacred formulæ they want, so long as they help us to lead the workers by the nose and work for our, capitalist, interest in the carrying on of the Imperialist war and the enslavement of the workers."

The French and British bourgeoisie are at times extremely clever and are capable of appreciating to a nicety the servile rôle played by the Berne "International."

On a certain occasion Martoff wrote: "You Bolsheviks slander the Berne International. Yet 'your' friend Loriot is one of its members."

Now this is the argument of a scoundrel. Everyone knows that Loriot is openly, loyally, and heroically fighting for the Third International. When in 1902 Zoubatoff organised Labour meetings at Moscow for the purpose of fooling the workers with "police Socialism," a working man, by the name of Babushkin (whom I had known since 1894 as a member of the same Petrograd Labour group as myself, and who was in 1902 one of the best and most loyal members of the group known at that time under the name of "Iskra" (the Spark). He was shot in 1906 in Siberia by Rennenkampf), was a *constant frequenter of the Zoubatoff meetings*; his aim was to fight the Zoubatoff propaganda and to save as many workers as possible from its formidable clutches. Well! Babushkin was as little a follower of Zoubatoff as Loriot is an adherent of the Berne "International."

IV

The second conclusion is this. The Third (Communist) International has been established for the very purpose of preventing so-called Socialists from getting on in the world by *verbally recog-*

nising the revolution, which is precisely what Ramsay MacDonald does in several places in his article. Verbal recognition of the revolution, a recognition which was in reality a perfect screen for petty bourgeois policy, incurably opportunist, reformist, nationalist, this was the capital offence of the Second International, and this is the evil against which we are conducting a life-and-death struggle.

When we speak of the Second International as being dead, after suffering a shameful bankruptcy, we mean to say that opportunism, reformism, petty bourgeois Socialism have become bankrupt and are dead. For the Second International has one historical merit: it has made one immortal gain, which no class-conscious worker will ever give up, viz., the establishment of mass working-class organisations (Co-operatives, Trade Unions, and political parties) as well as the utilisation of bourgeois parliamentarism, and generally all the institutions of bourgeois democracy.

To defeat opportunism, which was the cause of the ignominious death of the Second International, and to assist effectively the revolution, the approach of which is recognised even by Ramsay MacDonald, the following must be done:—

First : All propaganda and agitation must be directed towards revolution as opposed to reforms. This distinction must be systematically made clear to the masses, both theoretically and practically, in every instance of parliamentary, co-operative, trade union, and other work. There must be no refusal (except in rare special cases) to make use of parliamentarism and all the "liberties" of bourgeois democracy. Reforms must not be renounced, but should be looked upon *only as subordinate issues* in the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. Not one of the parties of the Berne "International" satisfies these demands. Not a single one of them even evinces an understanding of how *all* propaganda and agitation must be directed towards making clear the *difference* between reforms and revolution, and of the necessity for the most strict and constant preparation, both of the Party and of the masses, for revolution.

Secondly, it is necessary to combine legal and illegal work. This was taught by the Bolsheviks at all times and particularly during the war of 1914-1918. It was ridiculed by the despicable opportunist heroes, who in their self-satisfied manner praised the

“legality,” the “democracy,” and the “freedom” of the West European countries, of republics, &c. At the present time only avowed scoundrels, who deceive the workers by phrases, can deny that the Bolsheviks have been proved right. There is not a single country in the world, even the most advanced and “freest” of bourgeois republics, where there is not a reign of bourgeois terror and where agitation, propaganda, and organised work for the Socialist revolution is not prohibited. The party which up to now has been unwilling to recognise that this is so under bourgeois domination and which fails to carry on systematic *illegal* work all along the line, in spite of bourgeois laws and bourgeois parliaments, is a party of cowards and traitors who deceive the people by only recognising the revolution in words. Such parties have a place marked out for them in the yellow Berne “International.” No place will be given them in the Communist International.

Thirdly, a ruthless struggle must be carried on in order to clear right out of the Labour Movement those opportunist leaders who showed their true characters before and especially during the war in politics and particularly within the Trade Unions and Co-operatives. The theory of “neutrality” is a false and mean subterfuge which helped the bourgeoisie to bulldoze the masses during the war of 1914-1918. Those parties which verbally assert that they are in favour of revolution, but which do not in fact carry on a relentless struggle for the supremacy of the one genuinely revolutionary party in all working-class organisations—such a party is a party of traitors.

Fourthly, it is not enough to condemn Imperialism in words with the fixed intention not to conduct a revolutionary struggle for the liberation of the colonies (and the dependent nationalities) enslaved by their Imperialist bourgeoisie. That is hypocrisy. That is the policy of “Labour lieutenants of the capitalist class.” That party—English, French, Dutch, Belgian, or any other—which is opposed in words to Imperialism, but which does not in fact carry on the revolutionary struggle within “its own” colonies for the purpose of overthrowing “its own” bourgeoisie, which does not systematically and in every possible way assist the revolutionary work which has already begun in the colonies, which does not provide the colonies with arms and literature for the work of the

revolutionary parties—that party is a party of cowards and traitors.

Fifthly, a phenomenon typical of the parties of the Berne “International,” and which is the height of hypocrisy, consists in recognising the revolution in words, and parading this recognition before the workers in pompous phrases, whilst as a matter of fact they behave in a purely reformist manner towards the first signs and manifestations of revolutionary development, such as all mass movements which by smashing bourgeois law take on an illegal character; for instance, mass strikes, street demonstrations, soldiers’ mutinies, meetings among the troops, the distribution of leaflets in barracks and camps, &c.

Ask any one you like of the heroes of the Berne “International” whether his party is conducting this kind of systematic revolutionary work. He will answer either by evasive phrases, seeking to hide the absence of such work, and making obvious the defects of organisation and the lack of machinery for such work, the inability of his Party to carry on such work, or he will declaim against tolerating “Putschism,” “anarchy,” &c. It is just this which constitutes the treason of the Berne “International” to the working class; just here is its actual transition into the camp of the bourgeoisie.

All these rogues who call themselves leaders of the Berne “International” are overflowing with assurances of sympathy for revolution in general and for the Russian revolution in particular. But only hypocrites and fools will fail to understand that the exceedingly rapid progress of the revolution in Russia is in direct *relation* with the work carried on for many years by the revolutionary party precisely in the direction mentioned above; whilst during whole years a systematic illegal apparatus was being created for leading demonstrations and strikes, for carrying on work amongst the troops; whilst the Party studied in detail the methods of the struggle, and created a literature summarising its experiences and bringing up all its members to regard the revolution as necessary; whilst finally it prepared leaders of the masses who were ready to act when the time came, &c.

V

The most profound and deep-rooted differences, which sum up all that has been said above, and which explain the inevitable

character of the relentless struggle—both in theory and in practical politics—of the revolutionary proletariat with the Berne “International,” are aroused by the two questions of the transition of the Imperialist war into civil war and of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The enslavement of the Berne “International” to bourgeois ideology is revealed nowhere better than in the fact that not having understood (or having no wish to understand, or pretending not to understand) the Imperialist character of the war of 1914-1918, it has not grasped the inevitability of that war turning into a civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of all the highly developed countries.

When, as early as November, 1914, the Bolsheviks pointed out that this was inevitable the philistines of every country retorted with senseless scoffs, and among these philistines were found all the leaders of the Berne “International.” To-day the transformation of the Imperialist war into civil war has become a fact in a number of countries (not only in Russia, but also in Finland, in Hungary, in Germany, and even in neutral Switzerland), whilst the development of civil war is to be observed and is palpably evident in all the leading countries without exception.

To pass this question over in silence at the present time (as Ramsay MacDonald does) or to evade it by means of mealy-mouthed conciliatory phrases (as do Messrs. Kautsky & Co.) amounts to a direct betrayal of the proletariat, to an actual going over to the side of the bourgeoisie. For the present leaders of the bourgeoisie have long ago understood the inevitability of civil war; they are making preparations for this war, and are strengthening their position admirably, carefully according to plan. With all its strength, with incomparable energy, intelligence, and boldness, hesitating at no crime and condemning whole countries to starvation and extermination *en masse*, the bourgeoisie of the whole world is getting ready to crush the proletariat in the civil war which is approaching. Yet the heroes of the Berne “International,” fools, hypocrites, and pedants that they are, repeat *ad nauseam* their old, antiquated reformist story! No spectacle could be more disgusting, more repulsive.

The Kautskys and the MacDonalds threaten the capitalists with

revolution, they intimidate the bourgeoisie by means of civil war in order to obtain concessions from them, on reformist lines. This is what all the writings, all the philosophy and all the politics of the Berne "International" amount to, in sum.

We observed these despicably servile methods in the year 1905 in Russia on the part of the liberals (Cadets), as well as in 1917-1919 on the part of the Mensheviks and "Socialist Revolutionaries." The slavish minds of the Berne "International" never dream of *educating* the masses to a sense of the inevitable necessity of *defeating* the bourgeoisie in the civil war, nor of directing all policy towards this end, of stating, elucidating, and deciding all questions from this point of view, and from this point of view only. It is because of this that our sole aim should be to relegate once and for all these impenitent reformists (*i.e.*, nine-tenths of the leaders of the Berne "International") to the rubbish heap of the hangers-on of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie needs hangers-on of this kind, to whom it can confide a section of the working class and who in speeches on the possibility of reformism can whitewash the bourgeoisie, thus throwing dust in the eyes of the people and turning them aside from revolution by drawing beautiful pictures of the possibilities and the delights of the reformist method.

All the writings of Kautsky as well of our own Mensheviks and "Socialist Revolutionaries" amount to such a picture, to the snivelling whine of the cowardly, comfortable, middle-class citizen, who is afraid of revolution.

It is not possible here to repeat in detail the basic economic causes which have made any other but a revolutionary road impossible, which have made the solution of the questions set before us by history impossible save by civil war. This is a topic to write about, and one upon which volumes will be written. If the Kautskys and other leaders of the Berne "International" have not understood this one can only remind them that ignorance is less removed from truth than prejudice.

For the workers, ignorant but sincere, and the adherents of the working masses understand more easily to-day, after the war, the inevitability of revolution, of civil war, and of proletarian dictatorship than do Messieurs Kautsky, MacDonald, Vandervelde,

Branting, Turati, *et hoc genus omne*, crammed as they are with over-learned reformist prejudices.

One of the particularly graphic proofs of the growth of revolutionary consciousness among the masses, which is to be observed everywhere, may be found in the novels of Henri Barbusse: *Le Feu* and *Clarté*. The first of these has already been translated into all languages and, in France, had a sale of 230,000 copies. The conversion of a totally ignorant man, smothered in the vulgar ideas and prejudices of the masses, into a revolutionary, simply under the influence of war, is portrayed with unusual force, talent, and truthfulness.

The mass of the proletarians and semi-proletarians are with us and are coming over to our side not only every day, but almost every hour. The Berne "International" is like a General Staff without an army, which will collapse like a house of cards if only it is completely exposed in the eyes of the masses.

Throughout the whole of the Entente bourgeois Press the name of Karl Liebknecht was used during the war to deceive the masses, in order to represent the French and English Imperialist bandits and looters as sympathising with this hero, "the only honest German" as they used to call him.

To-day the heroes of the Berne "International" sit in the same organisation with the Scheidemanns who instigated the murder of Karl Liebknecht and of Rosa Luxemburg; the Scheidemanns who have been playing the rôle of executioners of the working class, who have done hangman service to the bourgeoisie. As far as words are concerned they make a hypocritical attempt to "condemn" Scheidemann (as if this "condemnation" could alter things in any way). In reality they remain in the same organisation as these murderers.

In 1907 the late Harry Quelch was expelled from Stuttgart by the German Government for having called a meeting of European diplomats a "thieves' kitchen." The leaders of the Berne "International" are not only a conference of thieves, they are a conference of foul murderers.

They will not in the end escape the judgment of the revolutionary workers!

VI

Ramsay MacDonald treats the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat in a supercilious manner, just as if it were a subject entering into a discussion on liberty and democracy.

Enough! It is time to act! Discussions are now out of place!

The greatest menace of the Berne "International" lies in its verbal recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. These people are ready to recognise and endorse anything so long as they remain at the head of the Labour Movement. Kautsky now declares that he is not opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The French social-patriots and "Centrists" have also endorsed a resolution in favour of proletarian dictatorship.

These people do not deserve the least confidence.

What we want is not verbal recognition, but a complete rupture *in fact* with the policy of reformism, with the prejudices of bourgeois liberty and bourgeois democracy, and the actual application of the policy of the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. Attempts are being made to recognise in words the dictatorship of the proletariat, with a view later on to introduce furtively the "will of the majority," "universal suffrage" (as Kautsky notably does), bourgeois parliamentarism, renunciation of the complete destruction, extirpation, and demolition of the whole bourgeois State machinery. These new subterfuges and evasions are most of all to be feared.

The dictatorship of the proletariat would be impossible did the majority of the population not consist of proletarians and semi-proletarians. Kautsky & Co. are endeavouring to falsify this so as to make a "majority vote" necessary, in order that the dictatorship of the proletariat may be "regularised."

The ludicrous pedants! They have not yet understood that the franchise, within the limits of the institutions and according to the usages of bourgeois parliamentarism, is *part* of the bourgeois State machinery, which must be smashed and destroyed from top to bottom in order that the dictatorship of the proletariat may be realised as the transition stage from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy.

They do not understand that when history places the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat before us, the question is

decided not by voting but by civil war, as, generally speaking, *all* serious political questions have been decided.

They do not understand that the dictatorship of the proletariat is the power of *one* class taking the whole of the new State machinery into its hands, overthrowing the bourgeoisie and neutralising the whole of the petty bourgeoisie, the peasantry, and the vague masses of the general population and the intellectuals.

The Kautskys and the MacDonalds acknowledge the class struggle in words, but in actual fact they forget about it at the most decisive moment in the history of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat: at the moment when, having seized State power and being supported by the semi-proletariat, the proletariat by means of this power *continues* the class struggle, to carry it on right up to the complete *abolition of classes*.

Like true philistines, the leaders of the Berne "International" repeat bourgeois-democratic catch phrases on liberty, equality, and democracy, without perceiving that what they repeat is just the debris of the idea of free and equal *ownership of commodities*; not understanding that the proletariat needs State power not for "liberty," but in order to *crush* its enemy, the exploiter, the capitalist.

The idea of the liberty and equality of the owners of commodities is as dead as capitalism itself. It is not given to the Kautskys and the MacDonalds to resuscitate it.

What the proletariat needs is the abolition of classes; this is the essence of proletarian democracy, of proletarian liberty (freedom from capitalism, from the exchange of commodities), of proletarian equality (not the equality of *classes*—a commonplace over which the Kautskys, Vanderveldes, and MacDonalds all go astray—but the equality of the workers who *overthrow* capital and capitalism).

So long as classes exist, the liberty and equality of classes is a bourgeois deceit. The proletariat seizes power, becomes the *dominant* class, destroys bourgeois parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy, suppresses the bourgeoisie, suppresses *all* the attempts of *all* the other classes to return to capitalism, and gives *real* liberty and equality to the *workers* (which is realisable only by the *abolition* of private property in the means of production), gives them not

only the "right" to enjoy, but also *real* enjoyment of that which has been wrested from the bourgeoisie.

He who has failed to understand that this is the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat (or what is one and the same thing, of the Soviet Government, of proletarian democracy) will have read this article to no purpose, and will continue to use the word liberty in the sense of liberty in general, of bourgeois democracy.

It is not possible here for me to develop this theme in more detail. I have already fully dealt with it in my brochures, *The State and Revolution* and *The Proletarian Revolution and Kausky the Renegade*. I can finish now by dedicating this article to the delegates of the Lucerne Congress of the Berne "International."

July, 1919.

LENIN

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

“Im Anfang war die That.”—GOETHE'S *Faust*, Part I

IN the panorama of the Russian Revolution one peak towers above all others and that is the personality of Lenin. Writers in the capitalist Press of all Europe and America recognise this fact. But how do they interpret Lenin? They write of him as of the master brain who, by a combination of genius and ruthlessness brought about the great change in Russia. Die-hards on Russia, like *The Times*, in their frantic endeavours to obstruct recognition, have for months been arguing as if the whole fate of the Soviet government hung on the life of Lenin and that because of his death the whole Soviet regime will collapse like a pack of cards. That may be the extreme type of this kind of journalism, but even the more moderate writers, who have no axes to grind, assume that the Russian Revolution was largely the work of somebody.

Men and women can, I think, be divided as regards their attitude on such subjects into two categories. There are those who trace great social and political events to personalities and those who trace them to the working of the laws of matter and energy in human affairs. One school of philosophy regards change as due to some agency acting independently of the flow of cause and effect. As the inspirer of liberal individualism, Kant idolised the personality. He held that natural phenomena were only what the individual made them. The elements of nature, independent of Man's interpretation of them, or the *Ding an sich*, did not exist for him. And we find this train of reasoning on modern economic and social problems widespread even to-day. Bourgeois ideology is saturated with it. Pacifist and even Socialist thought is affected by it. The Kaiser caused the war, say some, Poincaré and the Tsar, say others. Clemenceau caused the chaos of the peace by the Versailles Treaty. In the same line of thought it follows that Lenin made the Russian Revolution.

Then there is the other outlook. It is expressed in general terms in the words of Hegel: “Everything exists; yet it does not

exist, for it is always in a state of creation and disruption." And again, as Hart puts it : "Chance has no more part in psychology than it has in physics. Every thought that flits through the mind, however casual or irrelevant it may seem to be, is the only thought which can possibly result from the various mental processes which preceded it." And these mental processes are determined, say these, by the material conditions under which men and women get their living and which are always changing in an inevitable direction. This does not mean that all human effort is vain or that the march of economic progress emancipates men from the necessity of struggle. This view of life postulates that material conditions include not merely instruments and tools of production but the knowledge of how to use them and the ideas which arise from the experience of their use.

With a knowledge of these two mental outlooks the characters of men are more easily explicable. One man with the Kantian outlook may acquire the highest knowledge, let us say, in one branch of science, but his brain is divided into water-tight compartments and in another sphere of life he may be a fervent Catholic or an ardent patriot and believer in the stability of the present order of society. Such types of men became prominent in the public eye during the war. They were the brilliant men who had explored all avenues in one part of the hall of Wisdom, but who became little men and flag-waving babblers in times when the roof of the hall was falling in. On the other hand the man, who has sufficient nerve and physical strength to take the initiative in urging his fellow-men forward, but who adapts his thought and actions to his environment, is really a great man. Such types of men only appear in public life in times when the stream of social progress is flowing rapidly. He is the rational man, who, as the writer in the Plebs text book of Psychology puts it (p. 83), "fearlessly drags into the light all mental elements contributing to his opinions ; whose associations are strong enough, numerous enough, and sufficiently organised in systems to reinforce these tendencies which harmonise with the reality principle . . . and to inhibit those which appeal to the pleasure principles, *i.e.*, to the gratification of instincts without regard to the consequences by which that gratification is followed in the world of reality." This type of man was personified in Lenin.

It can be observed in Nature that when glaciers and ice sheets are in retreat they leave behind them debris and chains of lakes. On the debris arctic flora soon appear, into the lakes fishes soon find their way. How they get there is often a mystery, but once the environment, created by the action of the ice, is prepared, the plant and animal life are there. So with human affairs, which are only a part of Nature. When the equilibrium of the class balance is disturbed by the decay of one class and the rise of another, individuals will appear describing to their fellow men what is happening, pointing the moral and showing the way by which the new equilibrium can be attained. First comes the act of transition, spontaneously provoked in society by its own internal process. Then comes the word of the teacher and leader to make further progress easier. It is not correct to think with the first chapter of St. John that "In the beginning was the Word." The truth can be found in the words which Goethe puts into the mouth of Faust: "*Im Anfang war die That*"—"In the beginning was the Deed."

Those who accept the determinist outlook will challenge the whole conception of human history as understood by the liberal and metaphysical school. They will, for instance, not attribute the spread of Christianity to the words spoken by Christ, but to the actions and counteractions of social forces within the Roman Empire at that time, to the conflict between a declining ruling class and the exploited communities of the Roman colonies, creating on its economic sub-soil a spiritual groundwork fit to receive the words spoken by Christ. They will not attribute the Reformation in England to the whims of Henry VIII, but to conditions which made it possible for ships to sail from London to Flanders laden with wool from the English sheep ranches. They will see in the Napoleonic wars not Bonaparte's lust of conquest but the conflict between the remnants of feudalism in Central Europe and the rising bourgeoisie of France. They will be less inclined to wax enthusiastic over the personalities of Garibaldi and Mazzini and will see in the Italian wars of independence the struggle between the West European industrial and trading capital with the decaying feudalism of the Eastern Roman Empire. They will see in the cause of the American civil war not the Northerner's hatred of slavery,

voiced by Abraham Lincoln, but the desire to break the Southern landlords' monopoly of the labour market and to make the slaves "free" to work in the sweating dens of what subsequently became the American Steel Corporation. And lastly they will see in Lenin, not the man who set up the Soviet Republic of Russia, but the man who told the Russian workers and peasants what they were unconsciously doing in 1917 and what further steps they would be driven by the iron law of the class struggle to take.

The first time I ever set eyes on Lenin was at the first All-Russia Conference of Peasants' delegates in the Narodny Dom at Petrograd in May, 1917. It was about eight weeks after the food riots in the capital had caused the Cossacks to join the workers and had demonstrated the incapacity of a government monopolised by an agrarian nobility to run a State engaged in a modern war. In the beginning was the deed which caused Tsarism to fall, purely destructive and negative in its effect, unless followed by another. Following the deed must, therefore, come the clarifying word. The peasant delegates had gathered from all parts of Russia to decide upon their attitude towards the provisional government and the Petrograd Soviet. They had been summoned by the Socialist Revolutionary Party, which nine-tenths of them looked upon as their party by tradition. I heard the Socialist Revolutionary leaders expound an agrarian programme—expropriation of landlords, "the land for the people," "liberty" for the peasants, and other vague phrases. The great assembly of bearded peasants and callow youths from distant villages of the great plain listened and applauded. They saw in these thoughts the next step towards fulfilling the task which they had begun eight weeks before. On the third day of the conference I arrived late and found a short, thick-set man with a bald head speaking and was told that it was Lenin. I knew nothing about him except that I had heard from Cadets and from the foreign colony in Petrograd that he was a dangerous German spy who ought to be arrested. My own mind was at that time a mixture of anti-militarist pacifism and Fabian collectivism with remnants of my Manchester Free Trade family tradition still floating about. I listened to Lenin and the only part of his speech which stuck in my memory was that in which he strongly attacked the view that peasants, as such, were a class, or

that they could solve the agrarian problem without the help of the town population. Were there not also classes in the villages, he said, having conflicting interests with one another? Are there not classes in the towns which can find allies in the villages? Lenin was weakly applauded and was followed by a Socialist Revolutionary speaker who strongly attacked his whole position. I left mystified. Were the Russian peasants a class to themselves; was an alliance between town and village possible? I was wondering. The peasant congress decided for the Socialist Revolutionary view, that the peasants could solve the agrarian problems themselves. The Socialist Revolutionaries' word had been taken to crown the deed of February 27, 1917. Lenin's word had been spoken, but the time was not yet ripe for it to bear fruit. He was at best a dreamer, an agitator, a crank, wrote the ink-coolies of Petrograd after the congress, at worst an agent of the Kaiser.

Four months later I was staying in a distant village in the Samara province. I was squatting on the ground one Sunday afternoon with a crowd of peasants round the common barn and was watching a meeting of the "selsky skhod" or village Soviet. It had been summoned to consider how to divide the latifundias of the lord of the manor, who had just fled to the Crimea. The first stage of the agrarian revolution had already been carried through in this district. The peasants were supreme. What was to happen now? By the close of the meeting it was clear that the Soviet could come to no unanimous decision. Some wanted division of land according to the number of horses possessed by a peasant family, some according to the number of "souls" (persons) in a family. The village was beginning to split up into those who had been successful wartime speculators and those who had been unfortunate and had been left in the lurch. Then I remembered Lenin's speech at the peasants' congress and pondered over his words. Would a new deed follow upon his word?

Six months later I was travelling in a train crowded with "sack-carriers" and workmen from the towns, seeking food in the villages. In several rural stations which we passed "committees of the poorer peasants" had been formed to control the requisition of food in the village, regulate the land distribution in the interests of poorer peasants and the trade between town and country. The

workmen of the towns had acted, were forcing their way on to the land, and were finding an ally in the poorer peasantry. The second phase of the agrarian revolution had begun. The Socialist Revolutionaries' dream was fading. The class struggle was penetrating the village. The masses had acted as Lenin had said they would act. In the beginning was the deed. Who was to speak the word in explanation to prepare for the next step?

Soon after I attended a meeting of the Moscow Trades Council and Soviet. Lenin, now president of the Commissars' council, was the principal speaker. His thesis was "the next problem before the Soviet power." We all listened spell-bound, not to his oratory, for he had none, but to his astonishingly lucid exposition in simple everyday Russian of what was in his opinion the next practical step for the people to take. I saw the eyes of peasants sparkle, and smiles of joy creep over the faces of workmen, as Lenin said something which they had evidently been unconsciously thinking for weeks past. The alliance between the workers of town and village was the only solid basis for the Revolution, he said. Only those key industries must be nationalised which the town workers could run and work, so as to provide cheap goods for the peasants in return for which the towns would get food. If in the process the town workers must leave some subsidiary branches of industry to private enterprise for a time and call to their aid experts trained in the ideology of capitalism to teach them how to trade and keep accounts, they must not be afraid to say so and act accordingly.

But there were differences of opinion in the Russian Communist Party on Lenin's thesis. Some thought it too opportunist and began to predict an early victory for the counter-revolution if the experts of capitalism were recalled to assist in reorganisation of proletarian-controlled key industries. The wars of the intervention, however, came and complicated the issues. Foreign finance capital by its attack on the Russian Republic stabilised for a time "military communism" and artificially enlarged the scope of the nationalised industries to include general rationing of the products even of small crafts and village husbandries. But when the war was over, the military necessity was gone. The villages began to chafe under military communism. Doctrinaires in the Russian Communist Party would not see that a dangerous

psychical moment was approaching and were dreaming of stabilising military communism in peace time. It required a big man to tell his party comrades that they would drive the Revolution to destruction if they persisted. And as a matter of fact it was not Lenin who made the economic policy, but the Kronstadt revolt and other actions of the masses which enabled him to persuade his colleagues of the necessity of a tactical retreat. The New Economic Policy was only the fulfilment of Lenin's thesis on "the next problem before the Soviet power" which I had heard him expound in Moscow three years before. Lenin had correctly interpreted the feeling in the villages. He saw that the town workers must for the present be content with the nationalisation of the key industries only and must leave the trade in commodities free to private enterprise and to the peasant co-operative societies. But in order that this should be plain to all the Kronstadt revolt was necessary. Once more in the beginning of this new phase in the Russian Revolution was the deed. "*Im Anfang war die That.*" Lenin's words had correctly interpreted the significance of that deed.

I have refrained from describing personal interviews which I had with Lenin during the Revolution, because I think they are less interesting than his writing and public utterances, many of which have never been published and can only be found in the contemporary Russian literature of the early phases of the Revolution. They show that Lenin's greatness was not only personal charm and simple manner, but his almost uncanny capacity to forecast events and to see the obvious step to take in a chaotic situation. His whole public life was a living example of the truth of the Marxian, determinist outlook on history and politics. He watched for the actions of the masses, spontaneous and springing from below, those symbols of the underground class struggle in the declining period of capitalism. And when they appeared, he explained them and showed what thought must come into the minds of men in order that those actions should bring the fruits of reality. And he hammered at the public till those thoughts were absorbed and its mind prepared for the next action, which it, not Lenin, would inevitably make. He was the guide, philosopher, and friend to all working-class movements throughout the world, but he did not, he could not, make them.

“ Like as the waves upon the pebbled shore, so do our minutes hasten to their end.” The grave under the Kremlin walls shows that one wave, greater than the rest, has spent its force. But others will follow. And those who come after Lenin will also profit by the accumulated store of his vast natural wisdom and will continue to strengthen the alliance between the workers of towns and villages both in the Russian Republic and elsewhere in the world. And the secret of their strength will be, as was the strength of Lenin, that they strive in Swinburne’s words:—

“ To be men with their might,
To grow straight in the strength of their spirit
And live out their lives as the light.”

TOWARDS A NEW POLICY.—III

By WILL LAWTHER

(Of the Durham Miners' Association and the Labour Party National Executive)

(The first article, "Towards a New Policy," was written by W. H. Hutchinson, of the Engineers and Labour Party Executive, in the January number of THE LABOUR MONTHLY; the second by George Hicks, of the Builders and the Trades Union Congress General Council, appeared in the February issue. The fourth article will be by Robert Williams, of the Transport Workers and the Labour Party Executive, and will be published next month.)

EVERY few years (and in some industries the periods are shorter), new movements spring up, manifestos are scattered broadcast, all urging the same object, in varying degrees, as others that have appeared before them, of the quickest steps to be taken in the securing of some concession that is necessary for a particular section of organised industrial workers. Whether the concession sought be wages, hours, or some other improvement in the conditions of the industry concerned, "Forward" movements, "Next Steps" and so forth have set the pace. None of them have failed, they have in each and every instance been landmarks demonstrating what the pioneer could do. And at that particular moment, when a new departure has been made, of a break with and a change from the old policy, the "new" has been hailed as the supreme discovery.

And yet after the new movement has had its vogue, something further has been discovered, and that is that no progress has been made.

The failure to go ahead one step further has oftimes, except when the concession has been a reduction of hours, meant that no tangible gain has been made. That theory is found to be correct in the light of the facts (as revealed by the various books issued by the Labour Research Department) in all the key industries, which

give positive proof of the "hold" on industry, the profits made, and the magnitude of the task that lies before any movement that seeks a change, either industrial or political.

Following the good example set by the previous contributors to this series, no good purpose will be served by dealing at any length with the failings of the past. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

To-day we have to face the facts as never before, and it is generally agreed that no single industrial organisation can defeat the powers that it is organised against. In nearly every industry within recent years, stirring fights have taken place, heroic struggles have been carried through, and the end has been, that terms have been accepted that in the main fell far short of the original demands. "The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak."

Success, therefore, for any industrial organisation, is conditional on a more perfected and efficient machine, functioning as never before. And the term functioning means something more than merely the laying down of tools and the folding of arms.

For example, to-day the Miners' Federation is within a few weeks of ending their present wages agreement. Apart from proposals that were made to the coalowners last year, the bulk of the members of the M.F.G.B. have no knowledge of what are likely to be the new demands, whether a new "pool" is to be found or formed, or what. Whatever the failings of the present agreement in the mining industry may be, those who have worked under it for starvation wages ought to have been consulted as to the new agreement.

There is a feeling amongst the miners that, having regard to the available returns of the production of coal since 1919, the six-hour day as promised in the Sankey award ought to be conceded with any new wages agreement. This would likewise fall under the heading of "possible" concessions. The same applies to the abolition of royalty-rents and way-leaves, to which a majority of the present House of Commons (*i.e.*, Labour and Liberal and even some Tories) are agreed. There is undoubtedly a strong feeling that these demands should be taken up. But will they?

Here in this immediate instance is an example of that failure to have actual touch and contact with the membership, which is

a possible source of the apathy that eats its way into the heart of organisations.

There is a tendency too that might as well be faced at once, because of the harm that may be done to both the industrial and political sides of the movement. We refer to that feeling that because a Labour Government is in office, industrial demands should be dropped. Whosoever will may cherish that ideal, but "reality" will teach them the contrary. While no one is going either to deny the tremendous problem that lies ahead of the Labour Party or to indulge in the day-dreams that one prominent Labour propagandist did, *i.e.*, "that the workers should receive the whole of their losses in wages during the last two years back again," on the other hand there can be no question that those who have both worked and voted for Labour in industrial centres do cherish the hope that something more tangible than sympathy will be shown in industrial struggles, or in attempts to improve their industrial status.

Of the stating of the problems there can be no end. Where and along what lines lie the possible solution.

One remembers vividly, the enthusiast who jumps up at active trade-union branch meetings, and, at district conferences of organisations, when confronted with the solving of some problem, moves: "That this meeting calls upon the Trades Union Congress to do this, that, or the other, &c., &c.;" and believes that if only his resolution were carried and acted upon, then the end of our difficulties would have been reached. The experience of the last few years have shattered his illusion, and to-day the needs of the hour have decreed that not exactly elsewhere, but with some other source or sources, combined and not yet tapped, must the solution be found. Briefly we indicate where some of the remedies may be found pending the hammering out of the points that are raised here, and have been indicated previously.

(1) There is a need for a thorough overhauling of the local machinery in industrial organisation. It ought to be impossible either now, or in the future for any section of workers to be under any misapprehension as to the grievances that any section of workers are suffering from, or fighting against. And the only possible machinery to do that work effectively are the Trades Councils. The

argument that the local Labour Parties supply that need will hardly be taken seriously by those who take an active part in their work, or know their constitution. Moreover, the work of the local Labour Parties in the main is directed to the question of the organisation of municipal and parliamentary affairs. It is not a difficult matter to have a combination, but both sides desire attention. Indications have been given of the need and possibility of linking up with the Trades Union Congress, similar to the method of local Labour Parties.

(2) No industry should be without its newsheet, wherein full facilities could be given for the discussion and ventilation of those subjects that affect the man or woman in their industrial life. Several organisations have accomplished this, yet the largest, the Miners, have no journal of their own. It is to be hoped that the new journal, the *Mineworker*, will develop sufficiently to meet this need. Even from an official point of view, steps along these lines would go a long way towards removing many of the misunderstandings that exist to-day, and would, as a matter of fact, have a political reflex, as facts in relation to the particular industry given at conferences to a selected few would be read by all.

(3) We have already elsewhere dealt with the need for an overhauling of the machinery of the Trades Union Congress, and the functions of the General Council generally ; the only criticism that has been made thereon (and by a rank-and-filer, too !) is (a) that the members would not give power to deal with all matters affecting industrial workers (maybe because it would never be used !) and (b) that the membership are not interested in any change !

(4) We have refrained from dealing in a general sense, apart from the industry we are connected with, with that high-sounding theme, "What the workers want !" There must have been thousands of leaflets, pamphlets, and books, issued on that topic. Some from the players in the field, and some from the spectators.

The immediate demands are fairly well-known. Each industry has in the past tabled its own idea of its requirements without consulting the members of other organisations. If one has succeeded, then the others have followed, if failure has been the lot of the pioneer, then the owners of capital have seen that the others, too, followed their fellows trade-unionists on the downward path.

What is wanted is a common programme. It does not matter so much what is demanded so long as it is a common programme.

(5) The immediate and urgent requirement is for the initial steps to be taken in the summoning of those who in every industry feel that to-day is the day of salvation, for the free, full, and frank discussion of the problems here only briefly dealt with. To accomplish this ought not to be a superhuman task. Sooner or later it has to be done.

LABOUR TASTES POWER

By R. PAGE ARNOT

THE Labour Government did not come as a shock to anyone except the mob of titled ladies and Stock Exchange speculators and their hangers-on.

Over a year ago the certainty of a Labour Government, the conditions under which it would take office, the sort of legislation it would be able to put through, everything in fact except the actual date of its advent, were pretty accurately known and prepared for. Writing eight months ago in the June issue of the *LABOUR MONTHLY*,¹ I found it possible—as many others found it possible—to deal with the approach of the Labour Party to power as an actual process soon to be completed. It was possible then to make several prophecies and to predict the sort of situation that has now arisen, such as the Labour Government entering into office with a three-Party system in the House of Commons, a government without a clear majority and, therefore, depending on Liberal votes, fettered to such measures as the Liberal Party would be willing to approve.

To gauge what is going to happen in general terms, in abstract terms of political development, does not mean, however accurate, that the business of the observer is simply to say, "I told you so." No one but a political fool would fall back on "I told you so." Even where events most accurately fit in with predictions all sorts of unexpected features are revealed, and the event with all its attendant features must be studied afresh without any thought of whether it was expected or unexpected.

The Labour Party is now in office. What does this mean? Does it really mean nothing more than a parliamentary change over and a government existing on sufferance? No, it means something much more. Firstly, it means that a definite feeling of despair and deadlock has been reached amongst the old governing classes, a deadlock which at any rate affects the economic system of British capitalism.

¹ Volume IV., No. 6, pp. 329-339

Secondly, it means the decomposition of the petty bourgeoisie as an element permanently attached to one or other of the old Parties, as they have been in the last sixty years. It means a reforming and regrouping of the petty bourgeoisie around a Party which they feel will in some way represent their interests, have regard for their grievances and voice their sentiments as neither the Tories nor the Liberals have effectively done since the epoch of Gladstone.

Thirdly, and most important, it means the awakening of the working class and the beginning of the end of capitalist politics in Great Britain.

But it does not mean, on the other hand, the decomposition or enfeeblement of the bourgeoisie. They are in a difficulty, it is true, but they are by no means finished. Nor does it mean that the small shopkeepers, small traders, workers on their own, farmers, small professional men and so forth have all swung over to follow the lead of the working class; on the contrary, any swing over that shows itself will be in the direction of the working class accepting the outlook and limiting their aims to the policy of the petty bourgeoisie. Lastly, it does not mean that the working class have finally forsaken capitalist politics; there still remains the danger of a re-action to a belief in either the Liberals or the Tories. That danger, which cannot be taken lightly, will become more remote, exactly according to the extent that the working class feel, in their everyday lives, that this Labour Government makes a real difference to them. If they do not feel that, then the danger will come nearer.

But apart from any detailed examination of the meaning of the change, it is obvious to everyone that this first Labour Government, if for no other reason than that it is the first, is of tremendous significance. It means a great deal in itself. On its actions there depends even more; particularly its initial actions. Its first steps, its first session, are of incalculable importance compared to any of its subsequent developments once its course is fairly set.

What is that course to be? Is there any parallel to these people, born out of the purple, suddenly becoming heirs to all the generations of parliamentary government, assuming burdens that had been borne before them by Palmerston, Pitt and Chatham,

by Bolingbroke and Walpole, even by Lord Bacon and the blessed Thomas More, taking on them duties that in the dimmer past had been Wolsey's and Becket's, now as then swearing allegiance to the King Anointed, encompassed about in all their doings by venerated traditions and habits that were old when John of Gaunt was young? There is nothing like it. There have been Labour Governments before, in a new country like Australia, in Germany after the Kaiser was dethroned. But there is no parallel or precedent to this. New to office, these men are entering on an experience where all the surroundings and all the conditions are set beforehand and in which their reaction to these conditions, their behaviour in each new circumstance is being watched with the expectancy both of alarm and hope, both amongst the ordinary middle-class people and business men who cannot entirely rid themselves of a little dread (though they will master their fears and assume that nothing extraordinary has happened), and by their own supporters who think of them as the beginning of a new epoch, an end to the past. Amongst the workers the advent and the new acts of the Labour Government are awaited, not with the same hushed expectancy that greeted Woodrow Wilson when he came to Europe five and a half years ago—men can no longer hope as they did then—but with general goodwill and reasonable expectation.

How exactly have the bourgeoisie, the governing class circles themselves, behaved towards the new men? It might have been thought that they would do everything to harass and menace them.

In the past many Socialist writers expected that the coming of a Labour Government would be accompanied by the resignations of admirals and other highly placed officials of the war services, by trouble and deadlock in the House of Lords, by refusals of the ordinary short-term loans (through which the day-to-day obligations of a government are met) on the part of the bankers, by sabotage of officials and by a terrific concerted campaign in the Press. No such thing. There was no immediate general onslaught. It is true that here and there, in spite of the general policy of the bourgeoisie expressed in the phrase "Give the new men a chance," there were interests, sections and persons, such as the Scottish

Faculty of Advocates, or if what Mr. Maxton avers is true, admirals of the Navy, who were unable to see that a policy of obstruction would do the Labour Government more good than harm, or who, seeing this, were yet not prepared to subordinate their minor interests to the interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole. That general bourgeois policy was to present the velvet glove, to make strong representations in the Press, in speeches and privately, but to do nothing overt that could be construed as wilful obstruction and sabotage.

More important than any specific question has been the creation of the right atmosphere, an atmosphere in which the appearance of goodwill and fair play on the side of the old Parties is to be reciprocated by an acceptance of the ordinary conventions of constitutional government on the other. It is expected of the new Ministers that they should, "in matters unconnected with Party," behave exactly as other Ministers of the Crown have done, that is, attend banquets, levées, receptions, dinners to distinguished personages, &c., &c. If necessary, some of these conventions may even be modified to meet any objection raised by the new Ministers. Thus, if the wearing of the customary gorgeous Court dress makes some of the Ministers feel that they would answer so to John Milton's description of attendants on Kings as "grooms besmeared with gold" then that objection will be listened to and met; the gold will be taken off the costume—and both the style and the price of Court dress made more modest. In short, no difference is to be made in the public treatment of the Labour men. Photographs are taken of them, anecdotes are told of them in the Press, their personal character and past history are good-naturedly commented upon. When the composition of the new Cabinet was declared and it was discovered that it was, what in the Labour Movement would be termed—with the exception of John Wheatley—extreme Right Wing, the congratulations showered on Mr. MacDonald for his choice were unfeignedly sincere. When the one Left Wing member of the Cabinet, John Wheatley, as Minister of Health rescinds the Poor Law Order that surcharged the Poplar Guardians, the first outcry, the way in which they showed their teeth, was the outcome of a genuine alarm at the possibility of a spread of the Poplar spirit rather than the beginning of any

concerted break in the harmonious attitude that had hitherto prevailed.

Of course, the bourgeoisie were not going to leave it entirely to persuasion and the creation of a generous atmosphere. The six weeks' delay in the resignation of the Conservative Cabinet had undoubtedly, amongst other causes, the reason that the Budget estimates for the new financial year would have been practically settled in advance, and made secure—except for minor alterations—against any sweeping changes.

Can the attitude of the Labour Movement and of the workers as a whole be described in the same detail? How exactly, can we ask, did they feel about it? The Left Wing, it is true, found it hard to stomach the inclusion of the Conservative Lord Chelmsford in the Cabinet, and even looked askance at experienced lawyers like Lords Haldane and Parmoor. But most of the leaders showed themselves wildly enthusiastic. In some cases, like Lansbury, they felt almost like counselling the workers to refrain from demanding wages increases or immediate bettering of industrial conditions so that nothing whatever might hinder the launching of the new government. It was felt that everything must be made propitious for the Labour Government, even if it meant some sacrifice in order that they might have a good start and a calm sea. The murmurs that were heard at Cabinet making time were mainly amongst those who were "in the know"; the workers themselves remained tolerant and undisturbed. They acclaimed the recognition of Russia without questioning its curious form, or being in any way agitated by the suggestion of delay; Neil Maclean and Duncan Carmichael, they felt, had shown themselves over-fearful. The news of the death of Lenin came in the week that the new Labour Government was formed; they mourned Lenin without noting anything about MacDonald's ready letter to the wife of Woodrow Wilson, and the absence of any similar letter to the wife of Lenin. In fact, the workers were not merely tolerant; they were anxious not to notice anything wrong; and not even the exclusion of Lansbury and Smillie from the Cabinet made any difference to this attitude.

Thus everything conspires to give the Labour Government a good entrance: and if it were merely a question of playing

through a part, carrying out the rôle of Ministers and Secretaries of State, "Leading the House," piloting bills through Committee and doing everything correctly as their predecessors had done, then there would be no difficulty. Labour's taste of power would give it both appetite and capacity for more.

But this is not the whole story.

Outside all this, untouchable by it, there are the terrific questions of the collapse of capitalist civilisation, the unhalting disintegration of country after country, the crushing lower and lower of the working class, the menace to all Europe of the millions of workless starving men in Germany, the permanent unemployment of over a million workers in Britain, the struggle of the peasants and workers in India. To all these things, to all these men and women, the Labour Government, installed (by leave) where Pym and Hampden stood, is but as a tale that is told. To all these souls the Labour Government, its parliamentary difficulties, its deeds and its fortunes, is something far away, outside their lives, unable to affect them for good or ill.

Is not this too pessimistic, it may be asked. Cannot the Labour Government solve at least some of these problems? Alas, no. Several of the Government speakers have pointed out that they are taking over a bankrupt concern. That would not matter if they were taking it over as liquidators of capitalism. But they are put there to carry on the business.

THE DISCUSSION IN THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

A BRIEF analysis of the discussions in the Russian Communist Party was given in *The World of Labour* in the February issue of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*. It is now possible to reproduce some of the most important documents of the discussion.

First place must be given to the exhaustive resolution on Party organisation which was unanimously adopted by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party and the Presidium of the Central Control Commission on December 5, 1923.

The resolution, after a rapid review of the position of the Party under the New Economic Policy and of its relations with the masses of the workers, comes straight to the question of a more democratic Party organisation—"Labour democracy"—

THE PARTY AND LABOUR DEMOCRACY

. . . The Party, in order to combat successfully the influence of the N.E.P. and to increase its capacity for action in every field, must proceed to a serious modification of its policy in the sense of a strict and methodical application of the principles of Labour democracy . . .

Labour democracy implies for all Communists freedom to examine and discuss openly the principal questions in Party life, as well as the election of officials and committees throughout the Party, from top to bottom. However, it does not include freedom to form fractions, which are always very dangerous for a governing Party, for they threaten the unity and stability of the government and the State apparatus.

It is obvious that the Party, a voluntary association of individuals on a determined ideological and practical basis, cannot suffer within itself the existence of groups whose ideology would be opposed to it and to the dictatorship of the proletariat . . .

. . . The directing organs of the Party must take heed of the opinions of the mass of Party members, and must not consider every criticism as a manifestation of a desire to form a fraction. They must not by such means confront conscientious and disciplined Communists with the dilemma of always keeping silence or of forming a fraction.

In any case, the Party could not be considered simply as an administrative machine: but on the other hand it could not be considered as a discussion club for all sorts of tendencies . . .

IMMEDIATE STEPS FOR REALISING LABOUR DEMOCRACY

- (1) Thorough application, bearing in mind the restrictions already mentioned, of the principle of election of officials, particularly of nuclei secretaries. No one to be nominated for office against the will of his organisation.

- (2) Submission, exceptional circumstances apart, of all fundamental questions of Party policy for the consideration of the nuclei and the mass of the members: increase in discussion-circles: no appeal to "discipline" to prevent the right of consideration of questions and the adoption of resolutions.
- (3) Attention to recruiting of new members from among the masses, especially the industrial workers.
- (4) Special care to be taken that comrades directly in contact with the Communist masses have a correct and profound knowledge of Party policy.
- (5) Party organs to report on their activity to the body electing them and to the mass of the members.
- (6) Increase in Communist education, while avoiding to give it a dry and official character, among the Party masses and especially among the Youth and among Women.
- (7) Members to be shown the necessity for mutual exchange of experiences. Organisation, around the Central Committee, and regional, provincial, and district committees, of periodical conferences of responsible Party workers in every field.
- (8) Development of information among members by means of the Press and also by visits from members of the Central, regional, provincial, &c., committees.
- (9) Development in the Press of the section "Party Life."
- (10) Half-yearly provincial and All-Russian conferences of the Party to be proposed at the next Party Congress . . .

THE CONTROL COMMISSIONS

. . . One of the important tasks of the Control Commissions at the present moment is to fight against the bureaucratisation of the Party apparatus and activity, as well as to seek out the responsible Communists who are obstructing the realisation of the principle of Labour democracy within the Party organisations of which they have the direction . . .

THE PARTY AND ECONOMIC WORK

Our Party has the inestimable advantage of possessing, from top to bottom of the ladder, members in every branch of the economic system. Their extremely wide experience should be made use of for the elaboration of a system of effective direction of economic work by the Party . . . To this end, it is necessary to bring the Communist nuclei more in contact with productive work; to demand from Communist technicians and administrators reports and regular information on their activity; to organise periodical conferences between Communists in enterprises grouped—as in a trust—in the same economic union, as well as conferences of Communist technicians and administrators with other members of the Party not engaged in economic work. The results of these conferences should be communicated to the nuclei by their representatives in special reports. It is necessary to take a much wider account than heretofore of the experience and the information of the smaller nuclei.

PARTICIPATION OF THE MASSES IN THE WORK OF THE PARTY

The institution of worker-correspondents must be supported by every possible means, and the most careful attention must be paid in order that it shall not become official and bureaucratic in character. The Communist and Soviet Press must pay the greatest attention to the claims and proposals of the masses.

In the Soviet elections care should be taken to discover new men, to secure

the election, together with Communists, of capable non-party workers, who shall be encouraged to take up active work . . .

The custom of big non-party conferences must be developed, and the developed of all sorts of voluntary associations fostered . . .

It is necessary to organise more frequently open meetings of the nuclei, and to make use of these to select *cadres* of non-party workers who will be active auxiliaries of the Communist Party.

The dangers of bureaucracy within the Party are mentioned in this resolution, and it is against these dangers that the attacks of the opposition have been chiefly directed. Trotzky has been particularly outspoken in his denunciation of bureaucracy. In one article, after pointing out that only one-sixth of the Party membership consisted of workers actually in the factory, the rest being engaged in various kinds of administrative work, in the army, studying, or rural work, he said :—

The source of bureaucracy is to be found in the growing concentration of the attention and the forces of the Party in governmental institutions and machinery, and in the slowness of industrial development.

This state of affairs must make us realise the dangers of the bureaucratic degeneration of the leading elements of the Party. It would be sheer fetishism to believe that these last, solely because they have been brought up in the best revolutionary school in the world, have in themselves an infallible guarantee against every danger of a narrowing of ideology and degeneration into opportunism. History is made by men, but men do not always make history consciously, their own included. Ultimately, the question will be resolved by two supreme factors of international importance : the progress of the revolution in Europe and the rapidity of our economic development. But to adopt the fatalistic attitude of putting all the responsibility on these objective factors would be a grave error . . .

In a letter to the Central Committee of the Party on December 8, Trotzky returned to the charge. He particularly emphasised the danger of what he called an “ ossification ” of the “ Old Guard ” of the Party—which would lead to its alienation from the younger generation, with very serious results :—

A degeneration of the “ Old Guard ” is to be observed several times in history. Let us take the most recent and most striking example : the leaders and the parties of the Second International. We know perfectly well that Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel, Singer, Victor Adler, Kautsky, Bernstein, Lafargue, Guesde, and others were the direct and immediate disciples of Marx and Engels. We know, however, that all these leaders—some partially, others totally—have, in the atmosphere of parliamentarism and under the influence of the automatic development of the party and trade union machinery, degen-

erated towards opportunism. On the eve of the imperialist war, we saw with remarkable distinctness, how the formidable social democratic apparatus, protected by the authority of the old generation, became the most powerful hindrance to revolutionary development. And we must say—we, the “Old Guard”—that our generation, which of course plays the leading rôle in the Party, is in no way forearmed against a gradual and imperceptible weakening of the proletarian and revolutionary spirit, if the Party tolerates the further development of bureaucratic methods which transform the young generation into a passive object of education, and inevitably alienate the Party machine and the mass of the membership, the old and the young. Against this undoubted danger there is no means other than a serious and fundamental new orientation towards Party Democracy with a continually increasing attraction of the workers from the workshops to the Party . . .

The present state of mind of the younger generation, which, as is quite clear to every reflecting Party member, is in the highest degree symptomatic, has been promoted precisely by these methods employed for the sake of “absolute tranquillity,” which are formally condemned by the resolution unanimously adopted by the Political Bureau. In other words, “absolute tranquillity” has itself promoted the danger of an increasing alienation between the leading Party circles and the younger members of the Party, *i.e.*, of its overwhelming majority. The tendency of the apparatus to think and to decide for the whole Party is apt to lead to the authority of the leading circles becoming based solely upon tradition. The respect for Party tradition is undoubtedly a very necessary element of Party education and cohesion; but it can be a vital factor only if it is constantly nourished and strengthened by means of an independent and active control of the Party tradition, that is to say, by the collective elaboration of the policy of the Party at the present moment. Without this activity and initiative, respect for tradition might degenerate into a purely official sentiment, into a *form without content*.

The defenders of the Party machine, particularly Stalin, accused the opposition of forming an illegal group or fraction within the Party : and round this question of groups and fractions—whether their formation in special circumstances is justified, and what exactly constitutes a group or a fraction—the real heat and vehemence of the discussion has centred.

Here again Trotzky stated the position clearly. He said :—

We are the only party in the country, and in the present period of the dictatorship it could not be otherwise. The different needs of the working class, of the peasantry, of the State machine and its administrators react upon our Party, through which they seek to find political expression. The difficulties and contradictions inherent in our epoch, the temporary disagreement of the interests of different sections

of the working class, or of the working class and the peasantry, react upon the Party through its nuclei among the workers and the peasants, among the young students and in the State machine. The various shades of opinion, the periodical differences of outlook may express the remote pressure of definite social interests, and may, in certain circumstances, form permanent groups: these last may, in time, sooner or later, take the form of organised fractions which, opposing as such the rest of the Party, are even more liable to external pressure. Such is the logical evolution of groups at a time when the Communist Party is obliged to monopolise the direction of political life.

What is the result? If you do not want any fractions there must be no permanent groups; if you do not want any permanent groups all temporary groups must be avoided; finally, in order to avoid any temporary groups, there must be no differences of opinion at all—for wherever there are two opinions, groups inevitably form. But how, on the other hand, *can* differences of opinion be avoided in a Party, of half-a-million members, which is governing the country under exceptionally complicated and difficult conditions? That is the fundamental contradiction in the very position of the Party of proletarian dictatorship, which cannot be glossed over by mere formalities.

As a final answer to the continued denunciations of the opposition as a fraction, Trotsky pointed out that—

If fractions are dangerous—and they are—it is criminal to shut one's eyes to the danger which is presented by the *conservative bureaucracy which is itself a fraction*. It was precisely against this danger that the resolution of the Central Committee was in the first place directed.

At the Party Congress, which opened on January 16, the resolution on organisation and a second resolution on economic policy (which elaborated in detail the economic points touched upon by the resolution on organisation) were carried unanimously. The opposition confined itself to reproaching the Central Committee with not carrying out the proposals of previous congresses on the subject of democracy within the Party: it also demanded a still more definite and far-reaching economic plan. A resolution was passed, with only two dissentients, declaring that the discussion, in so far as it led to an increased activity in the internal life of the Party, had been of the utmost value.

The death of Lenin, which came immediately after the close of the Congress, is generally expected to have a profound effect in closing the ranks of the Party more firmly than ever, and so making the "new policy" of democracy within the Party a success.

The World of Labour

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GERMANY

The Crisis in Trade Unionism

THE acute economic crisis through which Germany has been passing during the last few months has been reflected most noticeably in the situation of the German Trade Union Movement. The actual conditions of the workers who form that movement may be briefly summarised: wages at a coolie level, the eight-hour day in process of disappearance before the attack of the employers and wide-spread unemployment. On October 27 last an official estimate gave 19.1 per cent. of the German workers as unemployed. Further, the same report estimated nearly 40 per cent. as on short time. An *Observer* correspondent, on January 6, quoted similar official reports as estimating the number of unemployed on the "dole" at 3,500,000. In early February the number of registered unemployed was 5-6,000,000.

These conditions of extreme depression have produced a slump in union membership comparable to the slump experienced in this country since 1920-21. The union leaders have been powerless to stop this slump: and indeed there can be no doubt that their timid leadership, their lack of any forward policy, has materially contributed to the disillusionment of the worker with the trade unions, and the consequent big desertions from the union ranks.

Early in December last the financial position of many of the unions was so serious that they were compelled to reduce their staffs by 50 per cent. Several unions were not even in a position to pay salaries to the reduced staffs.

It is reported that attempts have already been made by trade union leaders to declare the trade union movement "neutral" towards all political parties. Such an attempt can only mean that, knowing the discredit into which the Social-Democratic Party has fallen among the workers, the trade union leaders are hoping to regain lost ground by creating the impression that they have broken with the Social-Democrats. The falseness of any policy of "neutrality" in Germany to-day is sufficiently obvious.

Realising the gravity of the situation, the left-wing opposition in the A.D.G.B. (the German Federation of Trade Unions) held a conference of local trade union committees at Weimar, on November 25-26, 1923. The opposition movement is centred round the Communists in the trade unions, but comprises also many left-wing Social-Democratic workers, particularly in Central Germany, and left-wing non-party workers generally. In spite of the

official denunciation of the conference as a "typical Communist manoeuvre," it was very well attended. Some 273 delegates were present, 225 of these representing 181 local committees of the A.D.G.B., and forty-two of the remainder representing various trade unions and unemployed workers' councils. Over forty local committees, who were unable to send delegates, wrote expressing their solidarity with the conference. Other reports put the number of local committees represented variously at 250 or 360.

A Committee of Action was elected to approach the Executive Committee of the A.D.G.B. with the following demands:—

- (1) An entire break with the present policy of class collaboration.
- (2) (a) Defence of the right to strike, the rights of the Factory Councils, and the eight-hour day.
 - (b) Securing of real wages on a pre-war level.
 - (c) Work or full maintenance for the unemployed.
 - (d) Defence of existing social legislation which is being threatened.
 - (e) Abolition of the tax on wages.
 - (f) The restriction of production by the employers to be combated by every possible means.
- (3) Reorganisation of the Trade Union Movement.
- (4) Immediate summons of a special Trade Union Congress to consider these demands and the most appropriate measures for carrying them out.

It was further decided that, in the event of the A.D.G.B. refusing to summon this special congress, the Committee of Action should take this task upon itself.

The conference drew up a series of detailed proposals for trade union reorganisation. We reproduce an extract from the preamble to these proposals:—

The trade organisations of the working class, founded in the period when capitalism was developing and not yet powerfully concentrated, have not developed with the same rapidity as capitalism. The employers have lost no time in creating powerful political organisations and industrial combinations thanks to which they dictate the policy of the bourgeois State and its attack on the working class. Yet the reformist trade union leaders have continually opposed any transformation of the trade unions into powerful industrial federations corresponding to those which have been formed by the capitalists.

The frightful situation in which the working class finds itself at the present moment forces on us the imperative duty of re-forming the German trade unions into fighting organisations, following this principle: reorganisation of the whole trade union movement from top to bottom, on a basis of democratic centralisation. There must be firm discipline, and full authority freely granted to a central directing body of the workers' struggle. Industrial federations must be formed on the basis of one federation for each industry, with all its factories and workshops.

It is proposed that all the workers at any given factory shall be members, irrespective of grade or craft, of the appropriate Industrial Federation: but within the federation there shall be craft and grade sections for the consideration of special problems and interests. The basis of organisation is to be the factory or works council and the factory delegates (shop stewards).

While putting forward these proposals for trade union reorganisation, the conference made it quite clear in its manifesto that they were only a means to

an end; and that until the German workers had seized power there could be no real or lasting improvement in their position.

The A.D.G.B. Executive has refused to summon a special congress, and the opposition are accordingly making preparations for summoning it themselves, as already decided.

All over Germany the Weimar Conference has given rise to intense discussion among all sections of the workers, and the programme set forth has received general support. All the organisations represented at Weimar have ratified the conference decisions. Throughout the Ruhr, the Rhineland, and Westphalia, the local trade union committees have rallied to the Weimar programme. The same is reported in Central Germany. From industrial centres everywhere in Germany, such as (to name but a few) Kiel, Stettin, Friedrichshafen, Cologne, Darmstadt, come similar reports. At a big Rhenish-Westphalian Works Councils Congress, attended by 1,000 delegates, held at Solingen on December 16, the Weimar programme was unanimously adopted. In Berlin the printers, the metalworkers, the butchers, the woodworkers, have declared themselves for the programme.

The adoption of the Weimar programme has coincided with numerous opposition and Communist successes in Trade Union elections, as for instance in the Essen Metalworkers' Federation and the Düsseldorf, Münster and Elberfeld woodworkers. In the case of the Essen Metalworkers it is reported that the membership of the Federation has increased, under left-wing leadership, by something like 100 per cent. in the last few months.

With the growth and spread of the opposition movement, the leaders of the A.D.G.B. are resorting to the old tactics of exclusion. Already it is reported that the Solingen local committee has been excluded, and also that all trade union organisations which took part in the Solingen Works Councils Congress have been ordered to disavow the Weimar programme, under pain of exclusion. It is expected that the A.D.G.B. will threaten to exclude all unions and local committees taking part in the special congress which the opposition is preparing to summon.

On January 20 a meeting of the National Council of the A.D.G.B. declared that the Trade Union opposition was simply a Communist intrigue to split the movement. It followed up this declaration by approving the exclusion of the Remscheid local Trade Union Committee, on the ground that it had a Communist majority. Further, it was decided that any Trade Union organisation which took its stand with the opposition should be *ipso facto* excluded from its Union and from the A.D.G.B.

FRANCE

Communist Congress

THE Third Congress of the French Communist Party was held at Lyons from January 20-23. There were 148 delegates present representing eighty-four local Party Federations. No membership figures were given in the published reports, but a hostile source gives 30,000, which may be taken as an underestimate.

This Congress was the first held since the "purification" of the Party in the winter of 1922-23, after the Fourth World Congress of the Communist

International, when the old "Socialist" politicians and intellectuals, typified by Frossard, left the Party.¹ The reports showed that as a result of the purification the Party had greatly strengthened its position, both as regards its internal organisation, and also as regards its influence among the French workers.

A vigorous campaign against the Ruhr occupation had been carried on throughout the year, and the Party had suffered considerable persecution at the hands of the Government as a result. The agitation for an amnesty for political prisoners had been effective in forcing the Government to release André Marty, the leader of the famous Black Sea mutiny in 1919. Close contact had been maintained with the revolutionary German workers.

Pierre Monatte, reporting on the Trade Union question, declared that, while a good beginning had been made, the Party was still only just beginning work in the Trade Unions. It was essential to work for the re-union of the Trade Union movement, and also to open a campaign for organising the masses of unorganised workers. He stated that, while both the reformist C.G.T. (General Confederation of Labour) and the revolutionary C.G.T.U. (Unitary Confederation of Labour) between them only comprised 800,000 members, there were 12,000,000 workers in France: 7,000,000 workmen, 3,000,000 working women and 2,000,000 agricultural workers.

On the side of organisation the discussion turned chiefly on methods of ensuring better contact between the Party centre and the localities, and also on the proposal for the re-organisation of the Party on the basis of workshop nuclei.

Reports were also given on work among the peasantry and the Co-operatives and also on the Colonial question. The circulation of *l'Humanité*, the central organ of the Party, increased by 50,000 during the year, and is now stabilised at about 200,000.

The chief political discussion centred on the part to be played by the Party in the general election which is due this May. To the demand for a "Left-wing" coalition (*Bloc des Gauches*) against Poincaré and the reactionary *Bloc National*, the Party has replied, and the Congress unanimously confirmed their reply, with the demand for a workers' and peasants' coalition (*Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan*) against all bourgeois parties, whether nominally "Left" (*i.e.*, Liberal) or reactionary. The danger of preoccupation with elections and Parliament leading to reformism was fully discussed. As a precaution against this it was decided that nine-tenths of the Party candidates should be either workers actually engaged in industry or working peasants. No Party official or member of the staff of *l'Humanité* is to be eligible as a candidate, save in exceptional cases.

On the question of "electoralism," as it is called, the view of the Congress was well expressed in the letter sent to the Congress by the Communist International:—

For the reformists, Parliament is the chief instrument for improving the system, it is the chief means of progress . . . For Communists, Parliament is an expression of class antagonisms. It simply records external happenings, and serves to disguise the exploitation of the masses with democratic phraseology. Parliament is an instrument used by one class to oppress another. The Communist only enters it to aid from within the extra-parliamentary struggle . . .

¹ THE LABOUR MONTHLY, February, 1923, Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 121.

Elections are only of importance for us in so far as they enable us, whilst the excitement of them is affecting millions of the population, to make ourselves better understood, to impress our demands and our programme more profoundly on the masses, to increase the popularity of our slogans.

In pursuit of the policy of the *Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan*, the Party had already, on December 17, 1923, addressed a letter to the French Socialist Party, which concluded by placing the following alternatives before the Socialist Party:—

Either with the Communist Party, in order to establish a united struggle of the working class against the whole of the bourgeoisie, whether "Right" or "Left,"

Or with the Radical Party against the Communist Party, which absolutely refuses to practise class collaboration.

It is for you to decide whether fighting unity of the working-class is possible, by breaking off all collaboration with the liberal bourgeoisie, by cancelling the agreements already arranged, and by stopping all participation in the Press and in the meetings of the *Bloc des Gauches*.

No reply to this letter was received. Accordingly the Congress agreed to send a second letter to the Marseilles Congress of the Socialist Party, in which the Communist Party laid down three essential conditions for the realisation of the *Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan*:—

- (1) That the *Bloc* must be realised nationally, and not simply according to local interests.
- (2) That members of the Socialist Party must break *individually* with the *Bloc des Gauches*, stop writing in its Press, &c.
- (3) That the Socialist Party should assist the Communist Party in endeavouring to re-unite the Trade Union movement.

Socialist Congress

The Congress of the French Socialist Party met at Marseilles from January 30 to February 3. The Party treasurer reported that 47,980 membership cards had been issued during the year, which presumably represents the nominal effective membership of the Party.

A pessimistic report was delivered on the position of the official organ of the Party, *Le Populaire*. This paper has only 6,500 subscribers, and its total circulation is not much more than 10,000; to keep it going at all, heavy subsidies are necessary. The previous Party Congress had guaranteed a subsidy of 370,000 francs, but so far only 175,000 francs had come in, and the paper found it necessary to obtain financial assistance from the Labour and Socialist International.

In the discussion on the International Longuet complained of its lack of activity. He was answered by Grumbach, a notoriously right-wing member of the Party, who said:—

Our International is not and cannot be other than an atmosphere, rather than an instrument for immediate action. It is a Socialist League of Nations, and is paralysed by this fact, but it is a beneficent paralysis.

The question of electoral tactics occupied the first place in the Congress discussions. The chief need was held to be the overthrow of the *Bloc National*, and with this in view the discussion turned on the problem of electoral arrangements with the Liberals—the Radical and Radical-Socialist Parties. Opposition to any coalition with the Liberals found, in the words of the *New Leader*,

“only the briefest and slightest expression.” The general feeling of the Congress was in favour of an electoral coalition with the Liberals, but maintaining the independence and integrity of the Party programme.

Extreme Right-wing members of the Party, such as Grumbach and Paul Boucour, pointed out that in the long run an electoral coalition of this sort must involve a parliamentary alliance and even a coalition ministry. They regarded these eventualities favourably, and further desired a common electoral programme. Léon Blum replied that :—

The Socialist Party cannot abandon the sacred trust of doctrine that its ancestors have left it. It cannot cease to be an opposition party if, after the elections, a purely Liberal government comes into power.

However, he followed this by immediately remarking that :—

Socialist support will not be wanting for a government of the Left which acts vigorously against the Right, except in so far as such a government begins to lack reforming energy.

The Communist Party's invitation to form the *Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan* was rejected : though in the final resolution on electoral tactics, which was passed unanimously, it was agreed that, in certain localities, where such an arrangement would be more likely to defeat the *Bloc National* than an arrangement with the Liberals, the Socialist Party was prepared to enter into an electoral alliance with the Communists. As the conditions set forth by the Communist Party (see above) preclude the possibility of such local arrangements, it is clear that the effect of the resolution will simply be to create an electoral coalition with the Liberals—a coalition “without a common programme” for the purpose of overthrowing the *Bloc National*.

It is interesting to note that the Congress published a manifesto “To the Democrats and Workers of France,” and that one delegate (a well-known co-operator) declared that :—

The role of the Socialist Party is to attract the votes of those middle class elements who are becoming proletarianised, though it should remember that it is the party of the working class.

BOOK REVIEWS

OIL AND WORLD POLITICS

The Oil Trusts and Anglo-American Relations. By E. H. Davenport and Sidney Russell Cooke. (Macmillan & Co. 7s. 6d.)

The World Struggle for Oil. By Pierre L'Espagnol de la Tramerye. Translated by Leonard Leese (George Allen & Unwin. 8s. 6d.).

IN the year 1920, François Delaisi, a brilliant French journalist of the left, wrote a book called *Le Pétrole*, afterwards translated into English under the title *Oil: Its Influence on Politics*, in which he maintained the thesis that the national interests of France were endangered by her alternate dependency on American and British oil combines, and that in particular the San Remo oil agreement of April, 1920, had completely placed the French nation at the mercy of the English bourgeoisie. This thesis he maintained with much brilliance and a pleasing literary style. It was the thesis already set forth by Aristide Briand in the French Chamber some months before in his agonised speech on "The Oil of Mosul."

The book, in spite of a considerable number of inaccuracies, obtained considerable vogue, and so far working class students of oil in this country have largely had to depend upon it. The two new books published this winter, while they are themselves obviously influenced by Delaisi, are not very likely, simply because of their high price, to alter much the views spread by his book. Nevertheless, they contain a certain amount of information of one kind or another. Apart, however, from the sixty-five valuable pages of appendices contained in the book by Messrs. Davenport and Cooke, the information must be taken rather carefully. The authors are obviously biased. Messrs. Davenport and Cooke consider Delaisi as a malicious traducer of the British oil interests, while M. de la Tramerye carries the French nationalism of Delaisi into extremes of sentimentality. Thus, for example, in his first page we find "Britain with her usual foresight, &c. . . . France alone remains behind, hesitates, changes her mind, and allows herself to be despoiled, not only of the regions of Mosul . . ."

In the end the nationalism of the Frenchman, a University hireling, becomes even more trying than the low calibre irony with which the British book is written. The British authors are further concerned to show that the Government ought to sell the Anglo-Persian Oil shares; and, indeed, their book appeared in a very timely way just when that proposal was being pushed a few months ago. Both books are politically valueless. There has not so far appeared any book on oil written from a working class point of view.

What exactly is the significance of the oil trusts? It is that they are imperialist monopolies constituting a sharply defined factor in the complex of capitalist interests that make up a modern imperialist power. I say clearly defined because in this case almost more than in any other (since the collapse of the simple form of finance-capital of the German bourgeoisie prior to the war), it is possible to see exactly the part played by this particular factor, to estimate its resources in finance, in raw materials, in power of transportation and marketing, to apprehend exactly on what occasions and for what purposes the statesmen and politicians are its puppets and mouthpieces. Besides this, its

unconcealed world-wide trustification have raised up against it the enmity of the small producers and representatives of a vanishing competitive capitalism. This enmity, it is true, has not stayed the onward march of the trusts, but it has resulted from time to time in public enquiries, commissions, and even anti-trust laws, all of which have thrown a fierce light on the operations of the oil companies.

The concentration of capital in each of the trusts reaches enormous figures, amounting in the case of the Standard and the Royal Dutch-Shell group to hundreds of millions of pounds. With these resources and with the banks and financial houses such as N. & M. Rothschild & Co. behind them they constitute so powerful a section of the finance oilgarchy that they can afford to laugh at all competitors. It is true that in the case of America, particularly when new fields like the Mid-Continent field and the Huntingdon Beach in California are opened up there is a rush of "wildcat" producers comparable to the gold rush to Klondyke thirty years ago. But these producers are merely oil peasants who must pay through the nose for pipe line transportation, refining, and marketing services, all of which are in the hands of the trusts. It is an actual advantage to the trusts that oil prospectors should sink money and develop fields for them to enter into possession thereof. For the trusts reap where they have not sown. Similarly the so-called "independent" marketing companies are simply cattle being fattened for the slaughter.

The surplus capital of the oil groups is continually being invested in exploration and opening up of oil fields all over the world. To say "opening up" is rather an overstatement. Many of the fields are simply acquired and held for the future. Opening up would mean a lowering of price; and none of the oil trusts forget the maxim of John D. Rockefeller that it was the business of an oil refiner to be able to maintain a steady price irrespective of supply or demand. Through this restriction of production all consumers of oil (eventually the working class) are grossly robbed.

With this necessity for keeping up the price of oil—necessity from the point of view of maintaining enormous profits—it might seem likely that one single international oil trust for the whole world would be evolved, that the fixing of prices in agreement would lead bit by bit to a complete disappearance of rivalry. It is not so. In the strict sense of the word there can be no such thing as an international oil trust so long as there are rival imperialisms. Temporary agreements there may be about prices, about markets, about spheres of influence and rights to bore in mandated territories, but these agreements will be limited, temporary, and precarious. The clash of interests of these imperialist monopolies continually emerges.

Not only are they a powerful factor in the struggles between the imperialist powers; but in the one case where the workers of the world control the oil, in the Trans-Caucasian Republic, constituent of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the struggle to exploit that oil field broke up Genoa, the only full conference of the European States that had been held in the last forty years.

But it is not in their bickerings at Genoa or Lausanne that their sinister power is obvious. There it appears mere rapacity. It is when this rapacity compels the Government of the United States to take measures than can only be backed by force, when the British Government, no step behindhand, is compelled

to answer these measures and to back its answers with preparations of military force that the real significance of the oil trusts appear. The clash of interests is so clear, that the duty of Governments to back up its own robbers seems equally clear, and even more clear the duty of the workers to kill one another in defence of these interests. The lesson is, not simply that the rivalries of the great powers lead to an explosion, but that each fully developed imperialist trust is inevitably a driving force towards the next world war. R. P. A.

FIT TO BURN

Fit to Govern! By "Iconoclast." (Leonard Parsons. 2s. 6d.)

ELSEWHERE in this issue of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* is published a memoir of a great Socialist, in which Philips Price, while telling us much of the historic working-class revolution that Lenin led, omits to describe the colour of Lenin's eyes.

Such omissions do not occur in "Iconoclast's" study of some lesser Socialists. The eyes of the President of the Board of Education "have still the blue keenness of a boy's;" the First Commissioner of Works has a "mild eye;" the aggressive vitality of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster "speaks . . . in the glance of his eye;" the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Admiralty is "clean-looking, bright-eyed;" the Attorney-General has "thick dark eyebrows that over-arch his remarkable, dominant eyes;" the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies is "clear-eyed;" the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health has "striking, pale eyes," while the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Labour is "bright-eyed, with an alert tilt of head, a humorous curl of lip, and a noble sweep of brow—she often reminds one of a bird." And indeed this little volume rather reminds one of an aviary, where twenty-eight Labour Ministers may be observed flitting busily past the public view.

Labour leaders have now no longer need or occasion to present the publishers with miscellanies expounding "What We Want and Why." That period is passed, and it is now the turn of the sycophantic scribes to tell a wondering world "what they're like and how." The philosophy underlying this familiar literature is amply expressed by "Iconoclast" in the introduction to her new book where she states that the Labour Party "was brought into being mainly as the result of the work of J. Ramsay MacDonald." Happy the middle-class intellectual who can see a Labour Party ("its new constitution cleared of any special class basis") as the creation, not, of course, of a workers' movement, but of one heroic man to whose glory it shall for ever testify. Such a party with such a man passes the supreme test implied in the title to this book:

. . . a Party becomes fit to govern when it throws up a leader recognised, inside the House of Commons and outside, as possessing the qualities of character, will, and intellect that enable him to speak not for a Party but for the nation. Throughout Europe, Mr. MacDonald is accepted as such a leader.

"Iconoclast" takes full journalistic advantage of the individual romantic interest provided by those Labour Ministers who "were born into poverty and escaped from it," and she tells thrillingly of such wonders as Mr. Clynes' "exceptionally sensitive feeling for words," whatever that may mean. They

are apparently a faultless crew, except Mr. Shinwell ("the most effective lieutenant MacDonald had in the internal fight against Communism"), who must learn to "control his temper," and the "amazingly clever" Mr. Thomas, who has his "little foibles" and "may be vain," but

the left wingers, who had previously said the harshest things about him, were conquered, as those who came up against him generally are, by the skill, geniality, vim, and good sportsmanship with which he conducted them through the all-night sitting on the Army Annual Bill.

Then there are those others "born and educated in comfort who believe that their own advantages can be generalised." They include General Thomson, whose "slight frame is tense with energy," Sir Patrick Hastings, who has "slim, silk-stockinged ankles" and "was one of three men who out-distanced all the rest of the Bar in terms of the fees they were earning," and Lord Arnold who "may be said to represent the 'City' in the Labour Ministry."

This last sentence offered with complacency indicates the same mentality that leads "Iconoclast" to rejoice in her belief that "MacDonald's opposition to Communism killed it in Britain and, ultimately in the Internationale," and in her knowledge that Mr. Snowden "saw Bolshevism as tainted to its roots."

"Iconoclast" damns with intended praise. Thus, Mr. F. W. Jowett, when he first came into the House of Commons, "took to his new environment as a duck takes to water; became in many respects the ideal private member." Or again, of Mr. Ben Spoor: "It is not for nothing that a man acquires personal popularity in the House of Commons." It is not. And neither is it for fighting unremittingly the battles of the working-class.

Such is the picture of the men, who, in the words of the *Topical Budget*, quoted proudly by "Iconoclast," have achieved "a revolution as important as that of Magna Charta." It is strange that so great a revolution should call forth no nobler tribute than "Iconoclast's" hurried hero-worship.

The book (rushed through the press within four weeks of Labour's accession to office) teems with enthusiastic errors, such as the assertion that Mr. Ammon, on the L.C.C., "defended Sunday games with the ardour of a keen cricketer," when, in fact, with all the fervour of a profound christian (as "Iconoclast" would have said, had she known) he voted against them.

The Cabinet may live up to "Iconoclast's" expectations. But it would take the Labour Movement a long time to live down such an effusion as *Fit to Govern!* were it to be widely circulated, and the Government's publicity agents might do well to remember that the credit of even worthy individuals can be damaged by biographers who debase the value of their criticism with inflated adulations.

A. E. E. R

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- The People's Year Book, 1924.* Prepared by the Co-operative Press Agency. (Co-operative Wholesale Society, Manchester; Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society, Glasgow. 3s., cloth; 2s., paper.)
- The Birthright of Man.* By Henry Lowenfield. (Leonard Parsons, 3s. 6d.)
- Why Russia Should be Recognised.* By W. P. Coates. With a Preface by Charles Trevelyan, M.P. (National "Hands off Russia" Committee.)
- Education in the Factory.* An account of the educational schemes and facilities at Cadbury Brothers, Limited. By R. W. Ferguson, B.Sc., A.R.C.S. (Publication Department, Bourneville. 6d.)
- Russische Erzählung.* Volume II. By L. Ssejfulin, V. Tamarin, A. Jakowlew and W. Iwanow, with illustrations by Karl Holtz. (Carl Hoym Nachfolger Louis Cahnbley, Hamburg.)
- Probleme der Deutschen Revolution.* By G. Zinoviev. (Carl Hoym Nachfolger Louis Cahnbley, Hamburg.)
- Rapports entre L'Internationale Syndicale Rouge et l'Internationale Communiste* (Librarie du Travail, Paris. 50c.)
- L' I.S.R. et l' Unite Syndicale.* By A. Hercllet. (Librarie du Travail, Paris. 75c.)
- Les Anarchistes et le Mouvement Syndicale.* By Andres Nin. (Librarie du Travail, Paris. 50c.)
- Birthright.* By Prof. T. L. Vaswani. (Ganesh & Co., Madras. Rs. 1.)
- The Threefold Commonwealth.* By Rudolph Steiner. (Anthroposophical Publishing Company, 2s.)
- The Inversion of Science and a Scheme of Scientific Reformation.* By Frederick Soddy, M.A., F.R.S. (Hendersons. 6d.)
- Robert Owen: A Biography.* By Frank Podmore. With forty-six illustrations and facsimiles. (Allen & Unwin. 16s.)
- The Treachery of France.* By C. J. C. Street, M.C., O.B.E. (mil.). (Philip Allan & Co. 5s.)
- Wm. F. Dunne's Speech at the Forty-third Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labour, Portland, Oregon, 1923.* *Labour Herald* Library, No. 9. (Trade Union Educational League, Chicago, Illinois. 5 cents.)
- The Rule of the Land.* Being a reprint of Chapter 17 from *The Problem of the War and its Solution.* By John E. Grant. (Commonwealth Land Party. 3d.)
- The Restoration of Hope.* By R. L. Outhwaite. (Commonwealth Land Party. 2d.)
- Gandhi and Non-Violent Resistance: the Non-Co-operation Movement of India.* Gleanings from the American Press compiled by Miss Blanche Watson, of New York City. (Ganesh & Company, Madras. Paper cover: Rs. 2.8.; England, 3s. 6d.; cloth: Rs. 3.)
- The Mass Strike: the Political Party and the Trade Unions.* By Rosa Luxemburg. Translated by Patrick Lavin. With a Preface by M. Boruta. (Marxian Educational Society, Detroit, Michigan. 25 cents.)
- State Socialism After the War: A Retrospect of Reconstruction After the War, Embracing a Greater Democracy and Founded on the Teachings of Christ.* By Thomas J. Hughes. (John Bale, Sons & Danielson. Second revised edition. 4s.)
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NOTES of the MONTH

Education—Propagandists and Statesmen—Poisonous Phrases—Office and Power—Burking the Issue—The Real Issue—Class versus Class—The Logic of Statesmanship—The Credit and Debit Fallacy

THE political education of the British working class is proceeding very fast. Every day of the existence of the Labour Government, every question that arises, whether of armaments, Empire, foreign policy or strikes, is forcing home real issues that cannot be escaped, is driving every leader, great or small, and every party into the limelight of positive decision, and is smashing with deadly blows the old atmosphere of vague uncritical acceptance of general principles and eloquent ideals. It is easy to talk anti-militarism and anti-imperialism. It is another thing to know what the acceptance of these means in class terms, and to be ready to shoulder the consequences. This is the lesson that is being driven home to many sore heads and sad hearts. It is a favourite phrase of the idealists that Education is the greatest need of the workers. It is certainly Education that they are receiving now—not the vague and beautiful education of “conversion to socialism,” but the real education of experience, the education of facts.

“**Y**OU cannot,” declared the Empire Secretary in a recent speech, “have men assuming the reins of Government, brought face to face with the grave responsibility of determining the defences of an Empire like ours, brought into daily and hourly contact with the facts and realities of Government—you can never again drive those men to the mere propaganda stage.” This statement, which might have aroused indignation and denial a few months ago, would now be widely accepted as correct; and it is a measure of the gulf that has been crossed. It is indeed profoundly true—though not exactly in the sense in which the speaker intended it. For the fissure of which Mr. Thomas and

his colleagues are becoming conscious is not a fissure between administration and propaganda. It is a fissure between class and class.

IT is necessary to take the position very simply and clearly, because it is causing much bewilderment and confusion ; and all the stock phrases with which practical politicians have hypnotised their audiences since the beginning of things are being successfully passed across an innocent and puzzled movement. "Labour is in office, but not in power." "We must do as the majority of the nation wishes." "Our duty is to carry on the King's Government." "In an imperfect world it is necessary to weigh gains against losses." How trippingly the poisonous phrases run off the tongue to cover up any slime of imperialism, sycophancy, and corruption. And the picture is rendered all the more misleading because it is portrayed in opposition to a small group of "idealists," who are depicted as insisting on going into the wilderness, who refuse to compromise on principle and who serve to save the conscience of the party, either as noble Quixotes or unpractical visionaries, according to the taste of the observer.

LABOUR is in office, but not in power." On this it is only necessary to ask two questions. The first is : would Labour with a parliamentary majority have acted very differently *in the points at issue* from Labour as it is with a minority ? Would it not have just the same built the cruisers, shot workers in India, tried to smother strikes in the interests of the community, &c., &c. ? The answer is that of course it would, because this action is in accordance with the principles of the present Labour Ministers (defending the Empire, carrying on the King's Government, &c.). This answer can be subjected to a simple test—the use of cruisers. Labour was not compelled to build the cruisers because it was a minority ; for the Liberal vote against, combined with the Labour vote, would have secured rejection : but Labour built the cruisers because it believed in building them, and its vote was decisive in securing this adoption. In other words the minority argument will not work in just those matters which are in controversy.

THE second question is even more fundamental. Is there any measure or betrayal so gross that it could not be carried by this principle of "in office, but not in power"? Is there any limit to its application and, if so, *what measure determines that limit?* It is clear that the logical application of the principle would result in a complete determination of policy by the Capitalist majority and execution by the Labour minority. However, not even the most determined advocate of this principle (or rather apology for the absence of a principle) has advocated this. The fact is that this supposed explanation disappears on examination and is seen to run away from the real issue. The real issue applies equally to any Labour Government, majority or minority, and only the more strongly in the case of a minority government, because of the danger of its becoming a catspaw of the capitalist majority.

WHAT is that issue? It is the issue facing any social democratic party, the issue that there are only two sides of the class struggle and every positive action must be on one side or the other. This is the issue which drove the Mensheviks to find themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with the White émigrés against the Russian workers and peasants. This is the issue which drove the German Social Democrats to find themselves putting guns in the hands of the old Junker officers to shoot down the German workers. This is the issue which is driving the British Labour Government the full length of Imperialism because they will not journey the path of the Revolution. None of them like their jobs, but they have to do them. The choice is not between a beautiful ideal "democracy" and the ugly outlines of the class struggle. The choice is between the direct service of aggressive imperialism and capitalist dictatorship (Jaito, Sudan, Air Force expansion, application of Emergency Powers Act in strikes, &c.) and the service of the working class. Every positive act of a Government has to make that choice one way or the other (as Lansbury pathetically remarks, there are only two Lobbies). One class or the other must rule. So long as the capitalist class is in actual power and possession, no Labour Government can rule. A Labour Government can only serve as an instrument of attack

against the capitalist class. If it is not used for that, it becomes at once an instrument of defence of the capitalists against the workers.

IT is not a question of moderation versus extremism, of idealism versus practical politics. It is a question of class versus class. Therefore the casuistical arguments of the I.L.P. "practical" pacifists in favour of the cruisers and airships ("We are in favour of the Armaments Extension Programme because we are not Tolstoyans or Doukhobors"—this argument has actually been used by Angell in the *New Leader* and Johnston in *Forward*) fall to the ground. It is no more relevant than the pretence of "national defence" as a justification for the imperialist war. Does it then follow from not being a Tolstoyan or Doukhobor that you must shoot Indian textile workers in Bombay or build cruisers—declared by naval experts to represent a revolution equivalent to the Dreadnought in battleships when your existing strength is 50 and 20 against your nearest rival—or concentrate your naval powers in the Mediterranean, build aeroplanes to police Irak! For these are the questions at issue, and not the ethics of non-resistance. I.L.P. spokesmen have continually declared that their objection to the Bolsheviks is an objection to the use of force. It is now, however, clear that their objection is not to the use of force, but only to the use of force on behalf of the working class. They are prepared to accept the use of force on behalf of capitalism and imperialism. Their objection to the Red Army is not that it is an Army, but that it is Red. This is a fact which the working class will not forget. Pacifism, so long as it remained innocent seeming humanitarian pacifism, might court their unsuspecting suffrages. But when Pacifism drops its cloak and appears as simple White Guardism, it is another matter.

IN every question that has arisen the logic of this choice reveals itself. In relation to the Empire, it means the "second Amritsar" of Jaito, the repulsing of the Nationalists, the exclusion of Horniman, the treason trial of the Indian Communists for forming "workers and peasants associations" with an "economic programme," the voting of millions of public money to the Sudan

exploitation company, paying 35 per cent. In relation to foreign policy it means the acceptance of Versailles and the repudiation of the International. In relation to the workers' struggle at home it means the repudiation of responsibility for the workers' struggles, the imposition of the Emergency Powers Act machinery, the maintenance and support of anti-labour secret service spying and police and the public advocacy of industrial arbitration and peace. "Men faced with these responsibilities can never again become the indifferent propagandists that they were in the past. They must remain for all time responsible politicians keeping only in mind the great interests of a great country."

IT is often argued that a profit and loss account should be struck over the Labour Government, and gains should be set against losses. In this way gains would include the Recognition of Russia, the abolition of the Gap, the extension of Uncovenanted Benefit, and the partial triumph of Poplar. No argument could be more fallacious. An analogy will make this clear. During 1906 to 1914 the Labour support of the Liberal Government was often defended on the ground that the Liberal Government, even though involving much that was unsatisfactory, could achieve certain definite results for the workers. And the fact in the argument was true : only the argument was wrong. The Liberal Government undoubtedly was able to achieve important gains for the workers in the Trades Disputes Act, and reforms which the workers felt as real ones, such as the Old Age Pensions. But the significance of the Liberal Government lay, not in the reforms that were carried, but in the imperialist foreign policy of war that was being prepared. The big issue was the real class issue : the rest were sideshows. So to-day. The big issue is imperialism and war ; if the bourgeoisie can use the Labour Government on these, it will let any number of minor reforms go through in order to keep the workers' attention occupied and pleased. We cannot afford to make the same mistake again. No amount of reforms can touch the two vital issues : the one, imperialism and war ; the other, the economic situation. Only a strong class policy can deal with these.

R. P. D.

INDIA AND THE BRITISH LABOUR GOVERNMENT

By MANABENDRA NATH ROY

(M. N. Roy, whose activities on behalf of the Indian working class are well known to the Labour Movement of the whole world, is at present under trial in his absence by the British authorities in India. The charge is one of "conspiracy against the sovereignty of the King Emperor" and his crime is to have advocated the organisation of a mass party of workers and peasants in India. We hope that all readers of the LABOUR MONTHLY will take the opportunity to consider this article, the latest from his pen, and to decide whether they will allow this blow at Indian working-class organisation to take place under a British Labour Government.—Editor, LABOUR MONTHLY.)

IT is generally known that the British Labour Party came to office not by dint of its own parliamentary strength, but by the grace of the Liberals. Without the support of the Liberals the MacDonald Cabinet cannot live for one single day. In fact, Mr. MacDonald did not take the responsibility of forming a Labour Government until he was assured that the Liberals would not only vote for his amendment to the King's Speech, but would continue supporting him while in office. This invisible coalition could not be realised just for the asking. The anxiety of the Liberals to overthrow the Tories was not so strong as to drive them to put a "Socialist" Government in office instead. Mr. MacDonald had to pay dearly for this invisible coalition, which has made his residence in 10 Downing Street possible.

The price with which this very uncertain Liberal support has been purchased is very great. This fact is not generally comprehended. That section of the Labour Party which would not permit an open coalition with the Liberals would be staggered if they stopped to think how much of the Labour Programme had been sacrificed. The Capital Levy and Nationalisation of the Mines were the two planks that distinguished the Labour platform from that of the Liberals. They have been unceremoniously rejected as outside the realm of practical politics.

The same Mr. Snowden, who but a few weeks ago declared that the economic life of Great Britain could not be saved without a Capital Levy, is to-day engaged with equal enthusiasm in the task of salvaging British Capitalism without the Capital Levy. The question of Nationalisation is very conveniently forgotten. His duties in the Admiralty do not permit Mr. Hodges to bother about other questions. Mr. Smillie's radicalism is evidently damped by age. Or is he bewildered by the rapid march of events so adroitly manipulated by the "intellectuals" in the Labour Movement? Whatever it may be, Nationalisation is rejected. It is done because the Liberals demanded it. They would not permit the least tampering with the sacred rights of property.

In addition to these very large concessions made in the realm of home politics, Mr. MacDonald had to guarantee that he would not do anything to weaken the Empire in the least. Here he sacrificed two of his most precious personal principles, namely, Disarmament and Self-determination. Of course, he would not admit that this sacrifice has been made. In fact, he still talks of disarmament if not of self-determination. But so also do Lloyd George and Asquith.

The military strength of the British Empire will remain intact under the Labour regime. In his Programme Speech in the Parliament, Mr. MacDonald has declared that the question of disarmament will be discussed without impairing in any way the forces of defence.

As regards the principle of self-determination, Mr. MacDonald has swallowed his own words no less remarkably than the prophet of this cult, the late lamented Woodrow Wilson. Even before he came to office he had made it unmistakably clear through the repeated declarations of his colleague, Mr. J. H. Thomas, that the Empire would be perfectly safe in the custody of a Labour Government. Since then, he has put the same Mr. Thomas (who according to his own words loves the Empire and is proud of it) in the Colonial Office, which is permeated with the spirit of such personalities as Winston Churchill and the Duke of Devonshire.

Mr. MacDonald acted so wisely as regards the three pivots of the Empire—namely, India, the Navy and the Air Forces—that he merited the approbation of *The Times*. The day after the composition of the Labour Cabinet was announced, this organ of Imperialism

congratulated Mr. MacDonald upon the happy choice he had made for the three vital offices concerning the Empire. Indeed the incumbents for the India Office, Admiralty and the Air Ministry surprised even those who entertained little illusion about a "Labour Government" headed by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. An experienced colonial governor, Sir Sidney Olivier, went to the India Office; Lord Chelmsford of Amritsar fame and not a member of the Labour Party became the head of the Admiralty; and a member of the Military Caste, General Thomson, was selected to be the custodian of the Air Forces—the backbone of the army of the future. Naturally such a choice could not but win the approval of the ruling class. The bourgeoisie, as it were, was allowed to station its own sentinels within the citadel of the Labour Government, to guard the three vital spots of the Empire. Mr. J. H. Thomas had proved himself perfectly reliable to be entrusted with the self-governing Colonies. In this post he would be very helpful in carrying out the project of dumping the unemployed in the wilds of the Dominions. He is an ardent advocate of Empire development and stands for sending out not only British capital but British man-power as well, to exploit the "incalculable riches of our splendid possessions."

In making at least one of these sacrifices in the imperial sphere, Mr. MacDonald, however, was not quite within his rights. Being the elected head of the British Labour Party, he is legally competent to distort its programme in any way he likes, provided that his flock acquiesces in this act of distortion. But his liberal professions, particularly of the doctrine of Self-determination, won for him admirers among the Indian Nationalist leaders. These expectantly looked up to Mr. MacDonald's advent to office as the beginning of the era when the principle of Self-determination would be put into practice in India.

Part of the price that Mr. MacDonald had paid for Liberal support was to throw overboard these Indian admirers of his. Here, however, he paid the price in coins that did not belong to him. The Indian Nationalists did not delegate to him the authority to interpret the aspirations of Indian Nationalists as it suited his convenience, nor would they permit him the privilege of dictating haughtily the lines they should follow. Consequently, his Indian

policy has raised a hornet's nest. The advent of the Labour Government to office has filled Nationalist India with indignation and disillusionment, rather than with hope and friendliness, as would have been the case had Mr. MacDonald not sacrificed his Socialism on the altar of imperial interests.

It is true that the faith of Indian nationalists was misplaced in Mr. MacDonald. He wrote much about India ; but he never advocated self-determination for India half as ardently as he did, for instance, in the case of Georgia. But there were other reasons which accounted for the partial optimism that prevailed in India concerning the Labour Government. These were the pronouncements of some leading members of the Labour Party, who are looked upon as specialists on the Indian question.

Col. Wedgwood is the leading figure, Ben Spoor occupying the second place. These two gentlemen visited India in the heyday of the Non-co-operation campaign. They were present in the Nagpur Congress (1921) when the programme of Non-co-operation was finally adopted. They, in the same year, attended the first session of the All-India Trade Union Congress as fraternal delegates from the British Labour Party. Lajpat Rai, an influential Nationalist leader and a personal friend of Col. Wedgwood as well as of Mr. MacDonald, presided over the Trade Union Congress, and dwelt upon the sympathy of the British Labour Party for the cause of Indian self-determination. It is true that, on his return home, Col. Wedgwood expressed himself against the campaign of Non-co-operation, which in those days was a great mass movement fraught with revolutionary possibilities; nevertheless he partially approved of the Nationalist claims, and gave it out that when Labour came to office in Britain, these claims would not be overlooked.

Since 1921 the Indian Nationalist movement has gone through an historic period full of exciting events. The attitude of the Labour Party during this period and before it, even in the case of the Amritsar massacre, does not encourage optimism. Neither the programme of the Labour Party nor that of the I.L.P. calls for the application of the doctrine of Self-determination to India. Nevertheless, occasional pronouncements and stray resolutions put forward by individuals and passed in meetings, caused the

vague notion that a Labour Government would somehow modify the relations of India with the Empire.

During the last year, as the possibility of a Labour Government drew nearer, speculation as to the personality of the Labour Secretary of State for India was rife. Col. Wedgwood was generally looked upon as the candidate. His advent to the India Office was considered to be a foregone conclusion. The surprise of the Indian press was great when Wedgwood was not sent to the India Office by Mr. MacDonald. The choice did not even fall upon the second best man, Mr. Ben Spoor. The appointment of Sir Sydney Olivier was as unpopular in India as it was satisfactory to the British ruling class. On the average Indian, it does not make any impression that the new Indian Secretary is an old Fabian. What forms his judgment is the fact that Sir Sydney is an old member of the Colonial Civil Service, an institution heartily hated and suspected, with ample reason, in India.

Whatever might be his defects, Col. Wedgwood would have been an innovation. For the first time in the history of British domination, the administration of India would have been out of the hands of rank imperialists guided exclusively by the British Civil Service in India, and placed at the disposal of one who had pledged himself, however perfunctorily it might be, to reform the present system. Let it be repeated that there are indeed few among the Indian nationalist leaders who expected that the advent of Col. Wedgwood in the India Office would work a miracle. But in the light of his pronouncements, a certain amount of optimism was natural. Those very pronouncements, which caused a lingering hope in India, deprived the colonel, however, of the coveted job.

Col. Wedgwood represented the pound of flesh which was exacted from the rather too willing Mr. MacDonald by the Shylocks of the Liberal Party. Mr. MacDonald himself must have been also very pleased to be relieved of this compromising burden. Col. Wedgwood had committed himself much more than Mr. MacDonald was willing to go, even had there not been the pressure of the Liberals to contend with. It was a problem for him how to get rid of the much-too-generous colonel. The exigency of placating the Liberals came as a handy excuse; Col. Wedgwood was made a martyr; and the Labour Government, free from all

pledges, left India to the continued safe-keeping of the "steel frame" of Lloyd George (the Civil Service).

Now, what were the crimes of the gallant colonel? Did he by any chance stand for the freedom of India? Or did he even promise that the highly constitutional and modest demands of the Indian bourgeoisie would be immediately granted? Nothing of the kind. Even as far back as 1921, when the responsibility of office was not in sight, he deprecated Gandhi's movement of passive resistance. So it is simply idle to think that he would insist upon the literal application of the doctrine of self-determination to India. The fact that even he could not be accommodated speaks for the imperialist nature of the so-called Labour Government. His appointment would have created a very good impression in India to begin with; but might have led to eventual difficulties by raising unwarranted hopes.

The message that Mr. MacDonald sent to India upon his accession to office is well known. Any other Prime Minister might have attached his name to such a communication. It was wondered, why did he send such an excessively discouragingly message? There was ample reason; it was to counteract the effects of some statements made by the presumptive Secretary of State for India. If Mr. MacDonald would not disassociate himself with the policy that Col. Wedgwood promised to pursue if he came to the India Office, he could not get that benediction of the British bourgeoisie without which he could not be the Prime Minister of the British Empire. The relegation of the indiscreet Colonel would not alone suffice; the Prime Minister must declare that the views of his discredited lieutenant are not his own.

Speaking before the University Labour Federation on January 12, Col. Wedgwood said:—

India will prove the test of a Labour Government. The Labour Party hopes to overcome the difficulties by accelerating the conversion of India into a self-governing dominion. This depends not merely on matters of finance, defence and internal order, but on the winning of the Indian Nationalists to meet them half way. . . . The aim of the Labour Party is a British Commonwealth of peoples of various colours and a free union of free peoples.

This was too much for the British bourgeoisie. They could not permit a party with such subversive ideas to be at the helm of

the country. It would be preposterous. When Mr. MacDonald looked hungrily at the votes of the Liberal minority that controls to-day the most democratic parliament of the world, he was reminded of those indiscreet pronouncements of his colleague. If he would have the good graces of a wing of the bourgeoisie, he must atone for the sins of his less diplomatic followers. He must eat the words of the guileless colonel, and inform his Indian admirers that self-determination is all right when it does not concern the Empire too closely, but when the safety of the British Empire is involved he would not tolerate any "monkey tricks" (to quote his polite words used subsequently in relation to a great power with which he is eager to trade).

It was not only the bourgeoisie at home that Mr. MacDonald had to deal with. There were also the colonial pro-consuls to be reckoned with. Col. Wedgwood's statement enraged the latter, and they clearly said that they did not care a damn what the Labour Government thought or did; they would know how to defend their privileged position. Thus wrote the *Englishman* of Calcutta, the most authoritative semi-official organ:—

It ought to be obvious to Col. Wedgwood that he cannot accelerate self-government by the mere stroke of an India Office pen. Self-government can only be brought about by a modification or substitution of the Act, and this cannot be done without the consent of the Parliament. But in their present position the Labour Party cannot possibly hope to carry such a measure without the support of the Liberals; and Mr. Lloyd George's followers are not likely to favour any premature speeding up of what their leader described as "an experiment"!

Then the organ of the Colonial lords boldly takes up the challenge, if challenge it was:—

Should he (Col. Wedgwood) still be disposed to pursue such mischievous tactics, he would have to reckon with the Viceroy. We believe that Lord Reading will act as a very necessary buffer to a too pushful Secretary of State.

So there you are! What can one do while "in office, but not in power"? One must be a practical politician and sacrifice all programmes and principles if they stand in the way of approach to the glories of office. The bourgeois dictatorship at home cannot be got around by means of Parliament, which is the weapon of bourgeois dictatorship; on the other hand, the ruling class will always

be beyond your power unless you are prepared to pull them down by helping the subject races to rise in revolt. But the British Labour Party, as it is to-day, desires neither the one nor the other. It stands for democracy at home and imperialism abroad.

By rejecting nationalisation and the capital levy, the Labour Government proved its capability to rule at home; while by shaking his mailed fist at India, the ex-pacifist Ramsay MacDonald convinced the British bourgeoisie at home and in the colonies that he can keep the subject races in domination—that he is a Britisher first and Socialist last. Here are some of the choice words which he hurled at the Indian Nationalists who expectantly looked up to him as a man of just principles, and above all as the leader of the British proletariat, who do not have any reason to be attached to the Empire even if their leaders are proud of it.

In the course of his notorious message to India, Mr. MacDonald said :—

I can see no hope in India if it becomes the arena of a struggle between constitutionalism and revolution. No party in Great Britain will be cowed by threats of force or by policies designed to bring Government to a standstill; and if any sections in India are under the delusion that that is not so, events will very sadly disappoint them. I would urge upon all the best friends of India to come nearer to us rather than stand apart from us, to get at our reason and our goodwill.

The gravity of some of these words is immense. In one sentence he dispels any doubt that might have been created somehow or other concerning the imperial policy of the Labour Party. Instead of giving any indication that, true to his profession of self-determination and democracy, he would in any way modify the present unquestionably irresponsible and autocratic government of India, Mr. MacDonald pledges the Labour Party to the task of suppressing any attempt of the Indian people to free themselves in a way not liked by Mr. MacDonald and his task masters, the British bourgeoisie.

And all this sword-rattling at whom? At the Indian Nationalists, who are strict adherents of the constitutionalism so dear to Mr. MacDonald. He supplements this Curzonian gesture with a gracious demeanour. It is like inviting the dog to eat out of one's hand after having whipped it. Mr. MacDonald throws out a hint to the Indian upper classes that, if they behave, they will be given a

modest seat in the corner of the great Empire. He bids them to "get at our reason and our goodwill." But he forgets that everybody may not look upon him just as he looks upon himself. Indians can have as much faith in his reason and goodwill as in those of Curzon. To Curzon at least they can concede the credit of consistency to principle, but the same cannot be said of Mr. MacDonald.

Ever since the Labour Government came to office, ample expression has been given to this feeling in the Indian Press. Only a few days ago a nationalist leader of moderate views told in the Legislative Assembly that India questioned the good faith of the new Labour Government. By stepping in the shoes of Curzon Mr. MacDonald has won the good graces of the British bourgeoisie, who are letting him do their dirty job, but events will sadly disappoint him if he believes that he and his colleagues will succeed in establishing Labour Imperialism.

While the message of Mr. MacDonald was the first official pronouncement of the Labour Government policy towards India, it was not the last. The statement of Lord Olivier, as Secretary of State for India, to the House of Lords on February 26 was eagerly awaited by Indian politicians as a final indication of what to expect at the hands of the new "Socialist" government. The fact that this statement had been preceded a week before by an official pronouncement of the National Council of the Independent Labour Party, which declared itself in favour of an immediate revision of the Government of India Act of 1919, subject to Indian advice and consultation, re-kindled the lamp of hope which had been well-nigh extinguished by the Premier's message. Would the India Office reflect the opinion of the I.L.P., and was this opinion an indication of a change of heart on the part of Mr. MacDonald since his accession to office?

Lord Olivier's pronouncement may be taken as the third and final expression of the policy of the Labour Government towards Indian political aspirations. It can only be described as worthy of the best Conservative traditions, and as such merited the considered approval of *The Times*, which characterised the views of the noble lord as "reassuring," "sound" and "deserving of full and emphatic recognition." It is the fate of the Labour Government

to merit the almost unqualified approval of Conservatives ; this fact may well console them for failure to please in other quarters. The indistinctly-mumbled and confused utterances of his lordship anent the "Swarajis" (a new species of nationalist of whom he had apparently only just learned and that imperfectly) betray, besides a deeply-rooted, dyed-in-the-wool Imperialism, a conscientious and school-boy-like effort to cram an utterly new subject in order to pass an examination. Lord Olivier, besides being a Fabian of scholarly tastes and accomplishments, has been in Civil Service harness in the colonies for many a long year. This fact greatly helped him to cram his subject by a familiar technique, and to pass his examination with flying colours, so far as the safeguarding of the Empire was concerned. After giving a hasty summary of the present causes of unrest in India, the noble lord took his stand with His Majesty's Government on the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1919, to change which for the establishment of full responsible government "would be worse than perilous, would be big with disaster to the people of India." "The programme of Constitutional Democracy . . . was not native to India. . . . It was impossible for the Indian people or Indian politicians to leap at once into the saddle and administer an ideal constitution with all those disastrous religious and other dissensions. The right of British statesmen, public servants, merchants and industrialists to be in India to-day was the fact that they had made the India of to-day, and that no Home Rule or national movement could have been possible in India had it not been for their work."

The Indian people did not require the advent of a Labour Government to hear all these stock arguments of Imperialists, which Conservatives and Liberals have dinned into their ears from time immemorial. Such a speech could have been expected from a Curzon—but it fell instead from the lips of a Fabian Socialist, a "labour lord" raised to the peerage by a party pledged to advance the Indian nation to self-government by the quickest possible route. Coming as it did from such a source, the Die-hard pronouncements of the Secretary of State for India fell with more sickening emphasis upon the withering hopes of the Indian people than would have been the case had another government been in office. The Government of India Act was to run its full course

unaltered, and "there the matter rested," said his lordship. Unfortunately, he reckons without his host. His lordship's definition of policy was transmitted to India just in time to have its effect upon the Indian Budget Debate in the Legislative Assembly at Delhi. The Swarajists, known vaguely to the India Office as "Swarajis," succeeded in rallying the Independents and Moderates to their support under the stimulus of disappointment and disillusionment, and the Customs estimates for the year were rejected by a vote of sixty-three to fifty-six. The betrayal of India by the Labour Government is tending to throw the people more and more upon their own resources in the struggle for emancipation. The advent of the Labour Party to power means the pricking of the last bubble of faith in British pretensions to "help India on the path to self-government."

If Imperialism triumphs Mr. MacDonald will be pushed into abject ignominy like his German confrères, in spite of the thankless services rendered. The Indian people will be free, just as surely as the British proletariat will outgrow the present leaders. Had Mr. MacDonald followed the policy of killing by kindness, India's struggle for freedom would have been sabotaged by winning over the native bourgeoisie. The attitude of the Labour Government has indirectly helped the cause of Indian freedom, while it has damned the Labour aristocracy and the so-called Socialism of the I.L.P.

TOWARDS A NEW POLICY.—IV¹

By ROBERT WILLIAMS

ON re-reading the three signed contributions to the symposium now running in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, I am impressed more than ever that what we want more than any "New Policies" is the patient thorough-going application of the old policies from which we have derived tangible benefits. Most of the various policies advocated as brand new turn out on the most superficial examination to be old and well-worn policies merely re-stated.

I have just received word from an Australian correspondent of an attempt made to register a constitution of the Australian Workers' Union on the lines of the One Big Union. The preamble to the constitution reads almost word for word with the preamble of the I.W.W. :—

There is a class struggle in society caused by the capitalist class owning the means of production to which the working class must have access in order to live. . . . The interests of these two classes are in constant conflict. There can be no peace as long as want and hunger are found among millions of working people. . . . Between the two classes the struggle must continue until capitalism is abolished.

Then we have the "Objects" : the formation of One Big Union with departments for Mining, Agriculture, Transportation, Manufacture, Building, &c., &c.

Socialist development is hampered rather than assisted by various "short cuts" to the revolution which are advocated from time to time. We all remember the way in which our Socialist movement was influenced by the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission. The reform of the Poor Law, we were told by many well-meaning Socialists, would mean the break-up of

¹ Previous articles by Messrs. W. H. Hutchinson (of the A.E.U. and Labour Party Executive), George Hicks (of the Builders and the General Council), and Will Lawther (of the Miners and the Labour Party Executive) appeared earlier this year in the first three numbers of the current volume (January, February, and March, respectively), which can be ordered through any newsagent, or obtained for 7d. each post free from the Publishers of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, S.W. 1.

the capitalist system. The currency cranks never tire of telling us that by the State manipulation of currency and credit we can eradicate most of the evils of the capitalist system. The Single Tax propagandists would have us believe that 20s. in the £ on land values would be even better than the establishment of Socialism. Syndicalism, industrial unionism, or organisation on industrial lines, together with anti-Parliamentarism, were fashionable a few years before the outbreak of the war. Guild Socialism is a more respectable variant of French Syndicalism.

If I were a Bernard Shaw searching for epigrams, I would say that the only short cut to the revolution is the recognition of the fact that there are no short cuts.

The ultra-political school in our movement to-day would have us believe that all would be well if we reposed absolute and implicit confidence in the Labour Government and when that Labour Government has political power as well as political responsibility poverty will be abolished from our midst. I am not so confident that by political action alone we shall be brought nearer to the Co-operative Commonwealth. It must be borne in mind that probably as the result of Snowden's Budget we shall see an appreciable reduction in the taxation of sugar and tea. It must not be forgotten that principally by trade union organisation we have made it possible for the working class of this country and other countries to drink tea at all and to add a little sugar and milk thereto.

Trade union organisation must remain the workers' first line of defence, and, where necessary, of attack upon the stronghold of capitalism. That is not to say that we must not increasingly urge upon every member of the working-class movement the desirability of complete working-class political solidarity. Like those of my colleagues who have made contributions to the present symposium, I felt humiliated as the result of the public debates which took place during the Plymouth Trades Union Congress. Inter-union disputes, demarkation quarrels and personal recrimination touched the lowest level within my memory of Congress proceedings. Since then, many of us have discussed what methods can be adopted in order to make solidarity something more than a phrase.

I am one of those who would willingly give to the General Council infinitely more power than they possess at present, but, if we are to give the General Council power to come to the assistance of organisations in dispute, the Council must have the responsibility of considering and even sanctioning disputes before they take place. I well remember the discussions which followed the proposal of the General Council itself to create a kind of General Staff to co-ordinate and conduct the policy of the industrial side of the movement. This took place at the 1922 Congress, and it will be well to keep in mind some of the facts and circumstances showing the unwillingness of the various affiliated unions to trust implicitly the General Council they themselves have appointed. The resolution was moved by Swales, of the A.E.U., in the name of the General Council itself, and is of course too long to be quoted here. One would have reason to suppose that Mr. Swales would have been in touch with his own organisation before assuming responsibility for moving the resolution, yet we find that the resolution was opposed by a delegate from the A.E.U. itself! Another member of the General Council, Robert Smillie, stood—at least apparently—as sponsor for the resolution, but we find that Mr. Frank Hodges, in the name of the Miners' Federation, moved the rejection. Mr. Thorne was also a sponsor of the resolution as a member of the General Council, but the President of his organisation, Mr. J. R. Clynes, opposed it. Messrs. Tillett and Gosling were sponsors likewise, but the General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, Mr. Bevin, damned the resolution with faint praise, and asked the Council to take it back for reconsideration.

The fact that the unions are unduly jealous of their rights need not dismay us or deter us from our efforts to create a General Staff for industrial purposes. There is grave need inside the trade union movement for more effective industrial grouping and the tendency towards industrial unionism should be encouraged. Industrial unionism, however, must not under-estimate the interests of the various sections employed in any given industry.

I find myself in substantial agreement with Mr. George Hicks when he asks us point-blank what exactly we are out for in the present juncture. Are we out for the gradual supersession of the present capitalist system by securing an ever-increasing share of the

wealth our labour undeniably produces? Or are we to make that system inoperative by strikes, sabotage, diminishing productivity, &c., until it crumbles about our very ears? If our answer to the latter question be Yes, we shall find ourselves instantly repudiated by the overwhelming majority—writing with some knowledge of the movement, I have no shadow of a doubt about that. It is all very well in the peroration of a passionate speech to call for the destruction of the capitalist system, but before every Executive Committee or Delegate Conference of a union which I have attended the representatives call for wage increases and improved conditions inside the present state of society. The attitude of mind which I find preponderant in our movement is summed up in a paraphrase of Shakespeare: "Better to bear the ills we have"—with constant attempts to improve—"than fly to others we know not of."

I have never subscribed to the theory that Socialism would come as a result of the increasing misery of the masses. All the headway we have made in this country comes as a direct result of practice as well as precept. Militancy in propaganda, in organisation, in policy, are to-day more essential than ever. Only recently a wealthy shipowner asked a colleague of mine: "Why is it your friend Williams will make those wild-cat speeches on the platform while he is so able in conducting negotiations at the conference table?" I replied by saying: "Convey my compliments to the gentleman, and say that perhaps a few more wild-cat speeches would bring a little more success at the conference table."

I return to my opening sentence; we can make far-reaching progress by adhering to that policy and those measures upon which our movement has been built. We must undertake all action which will develop the well-informed militancy of the masses. We must work towards an ever-improving standard of life even at the risk of stabilising capitalism. We must make more and more manifest the implications of International Working-class Solidarity. (It remains true that those sections of the British working class least exposed to foreign competition are better paid than the sections most prejudiced by the competition of continental labour paid on the coolie level.) We must bring about more amalgamations on industrial lines; keep closely in touch with the quickening influences of rank-and-file thought as expressed through the

Trades Councils ; give unemployed organisations representation on national and local Labour bodies. Be as obstinate in sticking to Revolutionary Socialism as Lenin and his co-exiles were in adhering to the policy of the Bolshevist section of the Russian Socialist Party. Be as steadfast to the underlying principles of working-class policy in this country as have been, say, George Lansbury and Tom Mann. Give up searching for new methods merely because they are new, and—above all—let us cease our eternal recrimination.

(The Chairman of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, Mr. A. A. Purcell, M.P., will contribute the next article to this series in the May issue of THE LABOUR MONTHLY.)

THE BUDGET OF ILLUSION

By T. H. WINTRINGHAM

WHATEVER may be the provisions of Mr. Snowden's first Budget, it will not represent in any direct way the real position of the finances of British capitalism in 1924. In fact, it will not represent anything real. No British Budget since 1918 has represented accurately the finances of the capitalist State, still less those of capitalism as a whole.

First, every Budget since the war has been advertised as balancing. None have actually balanced without the sale of Government property. The State has been living on its capital, a process that has almost reached its limit.

Over £650 000,000 worth of war stores have been sold during the past five years, and yet the dead weight of the National Debt is higher now than at the end of the war. (March 31, 1919, showed £7,435,000,000 outstanding, and March 31, 1924, will show £7,772,000,000.)

Much of this increase in the National Debt is due to refunding, with lowered rates of interest, but the fact remains that every year since 1919, war stores' sales apart, the State has shown an average deficit of some £170,000,000 !

War stocks are almost ended. That some still exist is one reason why the Budget will be unreal. An estimate will be made for miscellaneous receipts (in 1920-21 amounting to £313,000,000) which will represent the pawning of property—and the losing of the ticket.

A second reason is that it is impossible to estimate the way in which the slump has decreased incomes. Property and income tax receipts (which at the peak of the boom brought in nearly £400,000,000) have been falling steadily. Last year's income tax was estimated on 1920 as well as on the two following years—and 1920 was a year that spawned millionaires. This year the taxes will be paid on the incomes of the slump. It is safe to say that the Treasury (which has under-estimated income tax

receipts hitherto) will be found in a year's time to have over-estimated them for this year. Outside industrial circles there is no general realisation of what the slump has meant, and the estimates are necessarily to some extent guess work.

The most important factors which make it certain that this is to be a Budget of illusion are not, however, connected with the actual finances of the State. It is the revolt of the industrialists against taxation that threatens the Labour Government with an increasing and in the end irresistible pressure. It is, in the last account, the revolt of the organised workers against further wage cuts which makes it impossible for British capitalism to go on as it is at present—stabilised, but stabilised on under-production and needing continually heavier tribute from the working classes if it is to continue to function.

During the boom taxation was borne, not without protest, but without revolt. Since the slump, revolt has been growing.

The Federation of British Industries, treated by many Socialist propagandists as an organisation solely for combating the trade unions, is also an organisation for bringing pressure to bear on Governments and political parties, in order to secure a lessening of taxation—and in order to force on the State the financial policy desired by the industrialists. And this Federation has grown in power and importance since its formation.

The first essay of the F.B.I. in State finance was the economy campaign. The Geddes axe is almost forgotten now. But it filled the headlines once, and it did actually accomplish something. It was blunted in the end against the bed-rock needs of "tranquillity." It could not solve the problem; there were so many heads of expenditure that it could not lop at all.

The F.B.I. next raised a hue and cry against the proposed payment of British debt to America on America's terms. That failed.

Then came a period of indecision and slow decay. Industry was stagnant still. Under-production was chronic in almost every trade. Britain's production as a whole, during 1923, was estimated by the *Westminster Bank Review* as only 88 per cent. of 1913. (And productive capacity had been so increased by the war and post-war expansion that it is safe to estimate

production as less than 70 per cent. of the possible. Productive capacity for steel, to quote one example, is 150 per cent. of 1913.) Over 10 per cent. of the available labour-power was unemployed, and a large proportion under-employed. The local authorities in industrial centres slipped deeper and deeper into bankruptcy. The National Debt, despite all Sinking Funds, increased again. (It had fallen from £7,831,000,000 on March 31, 1920, to £7,585,000,000 at the end of the next financial year. Since then it has increased by £187,000,000.) Services like education were cut down below the limits of capitalist efficiency, and the air force far below the limits of imperialist "security." Wages went down, down, down, until in the spring and summer of last year the builders, farmworkers, and dockers began the inevitable revolt—that is now progressing at the rate of one national strike crisis per month. And still the dreams of a revival of trade were not fulfilled.

That is the picture British capitalism had to face during 1923, here at home. Abroad there were clouds as heavy.

The wiping out of the Ruhr industries as competitors ran almost level with the wiping out of the German nation as a market. Some little relief there was; but before six months had passed the slow ache of decay was numbing industry again.

Autumn came, and behind autumn loomed winter. And statesmen, financiers, and industrialists could not face another winter of tranquillity.

Britain seemed, that autumn, a grey pool parching slowly, until the festering unquiet masses of parasitic life were all that could be seen. With the drying of the pool and the slow dying off of all the healthy living things there came a blind fear of the future and a blind desperate stir towards escape. Sucking bindweed put out tentacles to the new virgin pools linked with their own; marsh grass and fungus edged in towards the last springs of water, threatening to block them and thus dry the pool completely . . .

In other words, Protection and Empire Development on the one hand, and Inflation on the other, were the only remedies men could see. On the one hand there was movement and planning at the Colonial Office, and statesmen came to conference. On

the other the Federation of British Industries demanded first the extension of the Trades Facilities scheme, then the "anticipation" of all Government work—building of cruisers for "replacement" years before the old ones wore out, &c.—hastening of railway reconstruction programmes, and credits for all these things, always credits, the extension of credits. The F.B.I. replied indignantly when accused of favouring inflation that all they desired was the stimulation of industry. "Credits for production would not lead to inflation; they would soon be absorbed by industry and would scarcely increase prices at all."

The F.B.I. having spoken, the great Liberal Party obeyed. They demand wide schemes of national development and a "bold and courageous use of the national credit." The Labour Party demanded, and promised, much wider schemes of national development, and believed it could pay for them all by writing off enough war debt to save £150,000,000 in interest. And inflation began to be more and more discussed in the leading organs of the Labour Press.

The bankers spoke solemnly against inflation; the example of Germany was very vivid in men's minds. The word itself was avoided by all the advocates of the thing. But the advocates of Protection and Empire Development were in no better case; they were dubious of their own arguments and only half-believed that tariffs and emigration could recreate industry.

The election came, and both plans have suffered defeat. But while Protection is dead and damned, Inflation is only shelved. In this deadlock the Budget of Illusion is being prepared.

Mr. MacDonald has foresworn reconstruction by loan—for Britain at any rate. And being "Conservative of the Conservatives" in financial policy, he has announced his intention of standing by the Cunliffe Committee's policy. (Moderate Tories in finance believe that this Committee went too harshly towards deflation and helped to accentuate the slump.) But it does not need hard digging to find proofs of what the Labour "intelligentsia" are thinking.

At the end of last September J. A. Hobson wrote in the *New Leader* :—

Easier and cheaper credit, and all effective methods for steadying and stabilising prices, work in the right direction.

In the same issue of the same paper another writer laid it down that, in order to end unemployment :—

The immediate step is for the Government to persuade or compel the Bank of England . . . to use its vast powers to stimulate a revival of trade by reducing the bank rate and encouraging the expansion of credit.

Next month the Editor of the *New Leader* found a different formula for the problem :—

Assuredly our policy is stabilisation and not inflation . . . (But what level of prices shall we seek to stabilise? At present we incline, on account of the debt, to answer "at a somewhat higher level."—*New Leader* (19.10.23).

"Stabilising at a higher price level" means, of course, that a small amount of inflation should be indulged in first. The old excuse is implied: "Please, it is only a very little one." Mr. Brailsford became so enamoured of this idea that he actually persuaded himself (and proclaimed to a politely incredulous world) that if the Government would only borrow £10,000 on Ways and Means Advances and use it to stimulate industry, unemployment would rapidly be solved!

Later he saw the alternatives as the capital levy or inflation, and wrote :—

We object to the inequitable method of an ungraduated levy by inflation. But . . . if the City, with the Liberal Party behind it, opposes its veto on the levy, then the other method is open to us. It is easy . . . It would stimulate employment. It could be enforced by administrative action alone. Very reasonably, very persuasively, let us offer the City its choice.—*New Leader* (21.12.23).

The offer still stands, and in its good time the City will choose—inflation.

The leaders of the Scottish I.L.P., who represent all that is real in the left wing of the Labour Party and speak through the *Glasgow Forward*, adopted inflation wholeheartedly, if a little late. John Wheatley said, on January 27, 1924 :—

If it is good sound national policy to talk about giving credits to Germans and Russians, in order to find work for our people, then surely a way might present itself, when the position is explored, to apply the principle of the Trade Facilities Act to the working classes of this country, and thus enable them to produce those necessaries of life for which they clamour.

"Applying the principles of the Trade Facilities Act to the worker" means, we suppose, giving them loans. In any case the itch for inflation and a revival of industry is clear.

And Arthur Kitson, secretary of the Bankers' Reform League, Sir Leo Chiozza Money and others, who are scarcely "wild men from the Clyde," have been given a great deal of space in *Forward* for direct or indirect advocacy of inflation.

As against Brailsford and Wheatley, the only opponent of inflation in the Labour Press—except, of course, for formal denunciations with which even its most energetic advocates cover their tracks—has been Mr. Hugh Dalton, of the London School of Economics.

So much for the Labour Movement. Let us glance for a moment at the bankers.

The *Financial Times* distinguishes between two kinds of inflation. It calls the indiscriminate use of the printing press, and Government borrowing, "monetary inflation." Inflation by an increase in the piling of bank credits one upon the other, in order to stimulate industry, is something quite different according to this view.

A cessation of monetary inflation, followed by an expansion of credit for productive purposes, even though the latter entails, as it always must, a passing rise in the price level, is greatly to be desired in the interests of trade generally.—*Financial Times* leading article (8.12.23).

This distinction is taken from an important article in the *Midland Bank Review*, the organ of Mr. Reginald McKenna. "Productive inflation" is, in this article, the name given to the extension of credits by banks to industry, and it is explained that

Inflation of this character was before the war a natural and universally accepted incident of improving trade.

Actually this distinction is unreal: the effects of inflation on the capitalist system as a whole, and on the workers, will be the same in both cases. Stabilisation of the pound sterling is demanded by this joint stock bank's organ, but at "a ratio below the old mint par." Mr. Brailsford's formula, in fact.

This formula is worth examination. It is easy to see that industrialists—and Mr. McKenna is mainly a political and

banking agent of the industrialists—would desire that the stimulating effects of inflation should be reserved to themselves, and not wasted upon the finances of the State. But are they within an arm's length of the facts when they claim that such inflation is normal, its effects passing and unimportant, and the whole process easy?

First of all, it is not easy. The Bank of England lowered the bank rate during 1922. In July, 1923, they returned to the present rate. The *Westminster Gazette* explains the return as follows:—

Probably the underlying reason for making this change was a desire on the part of the directors of the Bank of England to stem the tide of speculation, which had been growing under the conditions of cheap money which had been in force for twelve months.

In this case, then, cheaper credits only led to more speculation.

And the chairman of Lloyd's Bank, in his annual review of finance and industry, complained rather pitifully that they were doing all they could:—

Hardly a board meeting passes, when we are considering an application for an advance which comes near the borderline of what is desirable and what is doubtful, that someone does not say, "We want more advances; let him have the benefit of the doubt."

The primitive method of printing money as required is of course perfectly easy. Its more civilised counterpart, the issuing of loans, is also easy. Inflation by a real widening of credit facilities is difficult because it implies an increase in the grip which the banks have over industry.

Unless industry gives the banks more guarantees, more say in the conduct of affairs, the banks are not safe in starting to extend credits widely. It is the bankers' policy during slumps to bankrupt and gain a hold upon industry as far as they can. Then when they have wide powers of control over smaller firms, and their own directors on the boards of the larger ones, they can begin to let things go a bit.

It is a matter for struggle, and in the end for a bargain between bankers and industrialists. Before that bargain is made the banks cannot inflate; afterwards they will find the "borderline between what is desirable and what is doubtful" pushed far ahead, giving them scope to advance credit piled on credit.

That struggle is going on now; the bargain is still to be struck. But how near we are to the beginnings of inflation is shown by the impression circulating among acute observers that, under pressure from the Treasury and the Bank of England, the process has actually already begun.

The City Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote, on March 4:—

To explain the firmness of the investment market . . . one must look for other causes. . . . The development of an abundance of credit (on the short loan market) . . . has upset all calculations. . . . It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the ease of the money market is, so to speak, artificial and calculated. At a time when the demand for trade credit from the banks is increasing . . . a fall in interest rates is unnatural and could hardly occur save under the present monetary conditions, which enable the Bank of England and the Treasury, if they so desire, to stem or even to reverse for a time the economic tide.

On March 8 the same critic noted an increase in advances from the banks to industry “to a figure higher than any recorded since November, 1921.” From this and other facts he draws the definite conclusion that “*the ‘vicious spiral’ of higher prices, higher wages, still higher prices, still higher wages is being entered upon.*”

And that “spiral” is, of course, the gay path of inflation.

For the workers, inflation means a continual desperate struggle to raise wages to within sight of soaring prices. It means the bankruptcy of their organisations through the depreciation of their funds. It means in the end wages that are worth nothing four days after payment, a day’s work for the price of three loaves, and all the horrors of famine and misery that the workers of Germany have gone through.

That is where Mr. Brailsford’s bright idea—one cannot call it a policy—of “just a little inflation” must inevitably lead. For inflation is a drug of which always larger and larger doses must be taken if an overwhelming reaction is to be avoided.

Inflation must be taken as a definite Liberal-Labour policy, which is perhaps already in operation. But it is not too late for the Labour Movement to take a hand in the game and put a stop to the policy of surrender to the F.B.I.

In Mr. Snowden’s Budget we already know the expenditure

side. It is to be £785,000,000. Mr. Baldwin's Budget of 1923-24 is actually bringing in some £835 millions. But part of this must be written off, for 1924-25, because in Mr. Baldwin's Budget there were several tax reductions which only come into full effect this year. These are estimated at £23,000,000 (*Manchester Guardian*, March 6, 1924). Then, in his Budget speech last year, Mr. Baldwin estimated that decrease in revenue in 1924-25, from exhaustion of war stocks and the slump's effect on incomes, "could hardly be less than £50,000,000."

If Mr. Baldwin is correct, then *all the Baldwin taxes must be maintained* if Mr. Snowden's Budget is to bring in a sum which will be £73,000,000 less than last year—and which will leave a deficit of over £20,000,000.

From the Budget of 1923-24 there is a surplus, more likely to be about £18,000,000 than the *Daily Herald's* cheerful promise of £67,000,000. Mr. Philips Price, in an article in the present number of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, suggests that the Labour Movement should fight for the application of this surplus to the needs of the workers. But what of the coming year's deficit?

The Labour Government is pledged to widows' pensions, a start with housing, the relief of the unemployed, the reduction of certain taxes. If provision is to be made for these on any adequate scale the deficit will be increased hugely. Inflation seems to be the only way out, for Mr. Snowden certainly dare not increase taxation.

But is inflation the only way out? Is it necessary that this should be a Budget of Illusion, to be followed by disillusion as terrible as that which has overtaken the workers of Germany?

There is an alternative. It is one that has been advocated by all branches of the Labour Movement.

Mr. Brailsford, for example, whom we have shown as an inflationist, wrote in the *New Leader* for November 16, 1923:—

Our real demand, our main battle is . . . we must master this obscure money power which lords it over the modern world.

Before this, a writer in *Forward* had said:—

Banking methods are, more than anything else, responsible for unemployment . . . The banks must be nationalised.

After the election, John Wheatley wrote:—

I could understand a Labour Government being formed to promote a bold Socialist policy. . . . *Such a policy would include national control of the banking system as part of the first Budget.* (15.12.23.)

Even the admitted reactionaries of the Labour Movement have put the nationalisation of the banks in the forefront of a Labour Government's immediate tasks. Mr. William Graham wrote in *Forward* for January 5, 1924, under the heading "If Labour Takes Office":—

Many believe that it would be better to make the financial system, now largely a trust, a public and democratic concern. It is the foundation of much activity, and with Labour always it should be first things first.

State control of the banks would act simply, immediately, and directly to the relief of unemployment by transferring credits from non-productive and luxury trades to those producing necessities—in which, on an average, far more labour is needed. In industries where the capital is badly watered, credits could be withheld until the "water" was squeezed out. The industrialists would fight this; but it is not the business of a Labour Government to support industrialists' policy at the expense of the workers.

"Part of the first Budget," wrote Wheatley. An essential part, if it is to be a Budget based on working-class policy.

THE CRISIS IN THE MINING INDUSTRY

By A. J. COOK

(Member of the Executive Committee of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain)

IN 1921, after one of the greatest struggles in the history of Trade Unionism, the miners were defeated. For four months they displayed a spirit of solidarity unequalled in any movement. The Triple Alliance failed to function. As a result of the defeat terms were forced on the men that produced conditions of poverty and slavery. Our "Mighty Organisation," the pride of the Trade Union Movement, was shattered. The coal owners true to tradition imposed such tyrannous conditions that despondency spread like a disease, infecting most of the leaders as well as the men. The suffering of the men became intolerable. Some of the old leaders, having very little knowledge of national or international economics, and believing the masters would yield to a human appeal, pinned their faith in an appeal to the coal owners begging for fair-play and fair conditions.

For over two years numerous meetings with the masters and Cabinet Ministers took place, but the appeal for a living wage fell on deaf ears. Accidents have increased at an alarming rate since resumption of work after the 1921 lock-out. (See the Report of the Government Inspector of Mines.) Safety was neglected—low wages and increased accidents go together.

In South Wales and Lancashire, aggressive action was suggested—the rank and file had reached the limit of endurance. Realising that the principles of the 1921 profit-sharing agreement exploited the miners and failed to give them a living wage, the rank and file demanded the agreement be ended. "We are starving while working, just as well starve without work," say the miners. An industry that cannot provide a living wage for its workers should close down; "private ownership has failed."

For over two years the leaders pleaded, but every suggestion was met with a negative reply. The owners would not listen to reason.

No other course was open but to give notice to terminate the agreement. A ballot was taken and the rank and file in every district declared that *the Agreement must go*. On January 17, three months' notice was handed to the employers. For several weeks even then our case was ignored, but the spirit of revolt spread. The successful struggle of the railwaymen and dockers put new life in our men.

The Executive Committee of the M.F.G.B. prepared for action and demanded that the owners should state their proposals. What a change!—suddenly, owners, Government and public became alarmed. At last attention was drawn to our conditions. On March 6 the same men, who for two years treated us with contempt, were now prepared to consider our case. Organised might had compelled the owners to move. It is a lesson that we shall not forget. Terms were offered that meant a small improvement in our conditions, but did not bring us anywhere near 1914 conditions, taking into consideration the increase of the cost of living. On March 13, the adjourned conference met and considered the proposals; it reassembled on the 14th and unanimously rejected the terms of the owners.

Having forty-nine mining members in the House of Commons, it was decided some time ago to introduce a Minimum Wage Bill to bring the miners' wages up to a living standard. Every attempt possible to obstruct the introduction of the Minimum Wage Bill was made by the owners. They approached their Liberal and Tory friends, and succeeded in making the Government take the private members' time, hoping to stop the Bill going forward, but to their surprise the Government agreed to accept the Bill as their own measure thus making it a Government Bill. In one week both a political and an industrial crisis arose. The miners are determined, come what may, to secure a living wage and some clear understandable agreement to govern wages and conditions in the future.

The great Miners' Federation has been re-organised ready for the fight.

The miners and the consumers are being exploited. More is charged to take coal from the pit top to the consumer than the total costs of production—including rents, royalties, profits and all the whole costs.

There is need for an immediate inquiry. The miners' demands can be conceded without an extra penny per ton being charged to the consumer. The Secretary for Mines (Mr. Shinwell) has again called us together to continue negotiations. Whatever industrial settlement is arrived at, with or without a strike, there is need of a new Minimum Wage Bill, to bring the 1912 Act up-to-date. After this struggle is over, a full inquiry is necessary into the waste and inefficiency in the mining industry. Millions of tons of coal are wasted in the mines, beside increasing the danger.

It is the duty of the Government and the public to demand a full inquiry.

ECONOMIC POWER SHIFTS TO TRANSPORT

By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

DURING the war and, particularly, after the terrific bombardments around Verdun and elsewhere on the Western Front had made the maximum output of shells and artillery of the greatest importance, we became conscious in this country, as in the United States and France, of the enormous influence which the heavy industries had come to exert within the capitalist system of production.

Gradually, it dawned upon us how the engineering, shipbuilding, and iron and steel trades had encroached upon the domination of the industries making consumption commodities, and how the magnates in these trades were displacing the merchants, the bankers and the manufacturers of classic capitalism in the control of economic and political power.

The study of armament rivalry in the whole of Europe during the generation preceding the war, the struggle for railway constructional concessions, which had occasioned the trouble in the Balkans, and the all importance of the Lorraine-Luxemburg ore-fields, which the holocaust of Verdun brought so vividly home to us, showed what a tremendous part the production of iron and steel, and articles fabricated therefrom, had in the development of imperialism, the last phase of capitalism.

Since the railways consonant with the needs of the more technically advanced countries had been built, the great plants, in which had been permanently embodied a very large volume of constant capital mainly to provide the material for these railways, had need of new outlets for their production and commenced a bitter rivalry for an ever less and less profitable market, a rivalry which led to the railway and armament expansion characteristic of modern imperialism.

The exhaustion or absence of ores indispensable to the production of the best steel and the strictly limited supplies of oil fuel

known to exist led to a fierce contest between the great States to monopolise iron-fields and petroleum deposits.

The technical organisation of mining, metallurgical and heavy machine industry favoured the use of vast capital and the growth of the combine. The mining and metallurgical branches of industry were particularly closely allied in many cases with the older governing class that had got into banking and from banking into railways and land. The landed magnate developed his mineral properties, erecting blast furnaces and, like the Duke of Devonshire in Furness and the Marquis de Wendel in Lorraine, came half way to meet the engineering employer who was making his own steel and putting down his own iron-works. A whole series of factors, social, political and economic, favoured the alliance of the State and the mining and metallurgical industries and helped to stimulate their growth in economic power disproportionately to other branches of industry.

In the United States the great development of railways, necessitated by the vast area of the country and made possible by the rapid inflow of West European capital, led to the gigantic production of iron and steel which Morgan syndicated and came to share with Standard Oil.

In Great Britain, the maintenance of naval power and the immense expansion of the merchant marine made the heavy engineering and shipbuilding industries very influential, just as, within them, the South Wales monopoly of best steam coal and the huge export of coal and coke from and import of timber to the coalfields of the North East Coast and South Yorkshire made the coal exporters a very strong force.

The pioneer producers of railway material, especially in Durham, Sheffield, Manchester and Glasgow, linked coal and textile capitalist re-investment with iron and steel, with shipbuilding, marine engineering and naval construction in an historic sequence that, between 1890 and 1910, conquered economic power for the coal, iron and steel interests.

The history of Lloyd George is the history of the conquest of real political power by these elements within British industrialism.

Millerand and, to some extent, Viviani and Poincaré are the political creatures of a somewhat similar development in France.

But, just as the politicians of the phase of capitalism are suffer-

ing eclipse, so are the economic forces which thrust them into the places of their Liberal predecessors being dissipated by other tendencies.

Particularly have the engineering and shipbuilding interests suffered since the stoppage of demand for munitions, since the replacement of tonnage sunk by submarines, and now that the reconstruction and repair of war damage and wear-and-tear have proved inadequate to employ the stupendous increase in productive capacity of the war-bloated machine-shops.

Those who have sunk their capital and their capitalised profits in big installations of machine tools, in dozens and scores of "bays" of new engineering shops, in new berths and cranes and dockyard equipments, find themselves in possession of un-realizable assets which must be written down and down and down. They might, had it not been that by the transfer of stocks and shares they have been able to hand their properties over to guileless shareholders, as well have paid over in Excess Profits Duty the gains of prosperity as expended them in what is now "scrap."

In France, Schneider-Crausôt ; in America, the Bethlehem Company ; in this country, Vickers & Armstrong Whitworth, except for the relief drawn from enormous hidden reserves, would have been in desperate straits. Some of these firms are mere shadows of their former selves.

If so few big shipbuilding and engineering concerns have collapsed it is only because they are braced together, owned or controlled by and supported by shipping combines, banks, investment houses, international financial groups, and that they have forfeited almost every title to independence except the names under which they are registered.

The disadvantage under which the finishing branches of heavy industry labour is that not only is the demand for their specialities now reduced to a minimum, but that they cannot turn their equipment to other uses or realise it except at a fearful sacrifice.

The producers of coal, iron and steel are more favourably placed. They can turn out the raw material of many finishing trades. Their equipment is more adaptable. Much of it can be realised more easily or, if put on stop, does not have to bear such heavy standing charges.

The capitalists in the engineering and shipbuilding industries had, when skilled labour was scarce, to increase out of all proportion the ratio of their constant to their variable capital. Not so the capitalists in the coal, iron and steel industries. They could achieve a greater output without permanently immobilising so large a ratio of capital.

For all these reasons, the owners of mines, coke-ovens, blast furnaces and steel works have not only continued, if on a reduced scale, to make profits, but have strengthened their position relative to other interests within the heavy industries.

Baldwin and Stinnes have fared better than the Pirries and Krupps. In France, the Laurents and the Aciéries de la Marine have not suffered so much as the Schneiders of Le Creusôt.

But with the prolongation of the industrial crisis even these interests have found the strain too severe. They, too, have been driven to rely upon credits from the banks and so to forfeit their independence. Their capacity to produce has gone ahead of the market's capacity to absorb their output. There are said to be 100 blast furnaces too many in Europe.

Not only has the armaments demand fallen off and the requirements of the shipbuilders dropped lower and lower, but the railways have not made the calls upon the iron and steel interests that were confidently expected.

Where the railway companies have placed heavy contracts they have waited long enough, as in the United States and this country, to do so at very low prices. In both countries, the railway interest has regained in large measure the influence which, during a decade, it had been losing to the heavy industry.

It is interesting to observe alike in Britain, France and the United States, where private ownership of the railways has been the rule, that either the railway companies as such or else big railway capitalists have built up in their earlier stages many of the great iron and steel companies. In America, the Pennsylvania Railway; in France, the P.L.M. and the railways of the Nord and Est; and, in this country, the interests in the North Eastern, Midland, Great Western and Great Northern companies played a very considerable part in opening up coal fields and developing the steel industry. In the course of time, the creations came to grips

with their creators. They emancipated themselves from financial tutelage. Native industrial capital in America aspired to financial mastery. In France, the Comité des Forges loomed more impressive than the railways and their central organisation. In this country, the colliery and steel magnates established themselves on the railway boards as in the banks.

This tendency has now been reversed. Tertile and mercantile interests are not resuming their old pre-eminence. Power has passed to the transport interests and, allied with them and supporting and controlling them, the banks and the insurance companies.

In these days of continued depression economic power and, in the sequence, political power are passing to those financiers whose capital is in the most negotiable forms, in assets that are liquid, in materials in general and continuous demand. Such, of course, are transport services. There may be, there has been, a big falling-off in traffic, but as long as capitalist economy or modern highly organised social relations continue the railways and the steamships, the docks and the warehouses, the gas and power plants and the road transport services cannot be dispensed with.

Capitalism, whose basis is the circulation of commodities, is dependent more and more—and, at present, relatively more than ever—on one industry, that of transport.

Transport ought to be over-hauled, its branches co-ordinated technically as well as financially—a process which has gone far; the internal combustion engine should replace the coal; and oil-burning heat-raising furnaces of merchant shipping; electrification of railways should be put in hand forthwith. Technically, the hour has come for these improvements. The organisation of industry has reached that stage when the whole transport systems of one country or of one continent could be co-ordinated. The world waits, however, for two things. It waits for political stability within and between States and it waits for a recovery of commercial intercourse that will recoup the expenditure of tens and hundreds of millions of pounds on extensions and improvements of land and sea traffic facilities.

The great armament and other engineering firms have got ready, in some measure, here and in France to undertake vast projects of electrification. The iron and steel interests have had

hopes of contracts for the material. But nothing comes of their dreams.

The railway and shipping interests and, behind them, the credit houses, not too happy themselves, continue, however, to increase their relative strength.

The next phase in the struggle for the domination of Central Europe will witness transport take the place of coal and steel as the main factor in the problem.

The iron of Lorraine and the coal of the Ruhr will not be permitted to enter into an alliance that will make them supreme on the Continent of Europe. The industry which carries one to the other and brings the product to the market is the industry with which they must now contend.

The Reparations Settlement will not be based on a deal between the Comité des Forges and the Ruhr industrialists with or without the adherence in some way of British and other coal and steel interests. No more than Schneider and the Union Bank of Paris were permitted to foreclose on the succession States and Poland through the European Industrial and Financial Union will the larger French and German combine be permitted to syndicate the industrial resources of the North of France, Belgium and the Lower Rhine. The transport octopus will thrust its tentacles amidst and part their undertakings on the Rhine just as it did on the Danube.

The Commission of Experts have been duly impressed with two aspects of German capital. First, the "impossibility" of locating its foreign hiding-places. Second, the great expenditure of the Germans on railways, canals and telephones. They have discovered a part of the assets, viz., the means of transport.

These assets will now have to be pledged as security for a loan to be made to the German State in order to enable it to pay a reasonable sum in settlement of the Reparations account. The German railways and navigable waterways, telegraphs and telephones will be transferred to private enterprise in the guise of a syndicate dominated by the traffic trusts.

We shall see the group, in the centre of which is the Cie International des Wagons-Lits et des Grandes Expresses Européennes, and in which the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Pullman

Company, Furness, Withy & Co., the Peninsular and Oriental S.S. Co., the London & North Eastern and Southern Railways and the great French railways all have a finger (or a fist) taking over not merely the through *services de luxe*, and dock and warehouse accommodation at certain big ports, but the whole railway, river, canal and communication systems of Europe.

Furness Withy are already on the Rhine and the Danube. Their financial allies, the allies of their subsidiary steel interests, the Kleinworts, are working with Krupps who are working against Stinnes. Furness Withy and Vickers are, generally, together, and Vickers are in Holland and Baden and Switzerland and Poland.

Lloyd's Bank, the Westminster Bank, Lazards and others are all fluttering down quite openly to partake of the pickings of Germany. Barclay's Bank is already there. In Austria and Czechoslovakia, the Bank of England and Glyn, Mills, Currie and Holt are established in two banks wherein Sir Henry Strakosch, of the League of Nations, also participates. The Marconi house is deeply dug into the finance of Hungary. The banks, the steamship houses and the railway companies are all gathering around. Here and there, in the Cie des Wagons Lits and in the shipping world, there are raucous cries and obscure scuffles as the French vultures fall out with the British or the British with the Americans.

But what is to be noted is that it is another group of interests, or a group wherein the incidence of economic power is quite different, that has now to be watched. We have looked quite long enough at the steel kings and the coal magnates. Let us watch now the railway magnates, the shipping lords and the bank directors.

THE BLACK LANDS

BY SCOTT NEARING

STRETCHING away endlessly, their silt-beds darkening the landscape, lie the black lands of Southern Illinois. Rich and fertile are these lands, for they will produce abundant crops of wheat and corn, but richer still because at three or four hundred feet beneath the surface there are veins of bituminous coal that, in places, are more than twenty feet in thickness. Where these veins are at their best, the farmer gives place to the miner, and the ploughed fields to the shacks and rambling streets of a mining village.

We wind into the village on a slow moving train that makes two trips each day to the neighbouring junction point, carrying some passengers but more coal. It is raining, and the brick station is awash with mist. We step from the cars directly into sticky, inky mud, and from that moment until we board the train again our feet are never free from it. There are sidewalks, but the unpaved streets are quagmires.

Our business takes us across the tracks, past rows of one-story houses to a company house, built in one solid block, with rows of doors opening off a common porch. There are twelve of these doors on the first story, and another twelve on the second story, where there is another porch, reached by a steep staircase.

We climb the stairs, approach a door, and knock. A dog, lying across the threshold, barks, and the other dogs on the porch answer. A woman comes to the door—a Bohemian. Her hair is combed tight down. Her calico dress is clean. She speaks no English, but with a wave of her hand, she bids us enter her dwelling.

There is a stove in the main room, a bureau, a sewing machine, a table, and two wooden chairs. There are curtains at the windows, and the place seems well kept. The apartment contains a kitchen and four bedrooms. The whole, unfurnished, rents for \$15 per month.

Four-fifths of the people in this town were born in Europe—in Lithuania, Jugo-Slavia, or Czecho-Slovakia. The old folks speak very little English, but the children all learn it on the street or in school.

The town is completely unionised. There is not a worker in or about the mine who does not carry a union card. Still work is slack. At full time these mines produce 12,000 tons of coal a day, but for almost a year the mines have been working two or three days a week, consequently the men with families are drawing \$25 or \$30 every two weeks. This is enough to cover the rent and to buy the food. But there is no margin for anything else.

Still the men trudge through the rain to a meeting in defence of the Communists who were recently arrested for holding a convention at Bridgeman, Michigan. The hall is little better than a barn. The seats consist of planks thrown across empty cases. (The rent for the evening is \$2.) But they listen and question, intelligently, and when the collection for the defence is taken they throw more than \$25 into the hat, although there are but sixty-five of them in the hall.

One of them, a strong, vigorous man in early middle life, who lived in the company house, was very active in arranging the meeting. We thank him for his pains.

"It is nothing, comrade," he answers. "I gladly do anything that will advance the interests of the working class."

That seems to be the general sentiment among these "foreigners," who have tested the class struggle in Europe and who know it when they meet it in the United States.

Throughout the war the bituminous operators made profits that ran into the hundreds of per cents in single years, but the miners still live in their one-story cottages or crowd into the company houses, with half-time work and the threat of worse to come. Still, they have saved their union, they are joining eagerly in the demand for independent working-class political action, and they have a simple faith that in the long run they will win the day.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND POWER

II.¹—Possible Achievements and Certain Difficulties at Home

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

IF one makes a political canvass among the houses of the working classes and of the various grades of the middle classes in a typical industrial centre of England to-day, one will find roughly, I think, four types. There is first the type which has not altered its adherence to the two historic parties, Liberal and Conservative. The reasons for this are among certain of the workers largely personal and are due to the moment of inertia created by decades of custom and tradition. Among the big bourgeoisie, of course, a conscious or an unconscious class instinct is aroused, which determines their allegiance to these two parties. Then there is the definite Labour adherent, who has consciously or unconsciously had his class instinct aroused, and has for some time past looked to the Labour Party as the political weapon of the workers. The Party has become in fact part of his political life and his mentality is fixed. This is not the type which turns elections, but it forms the bulk of the Labour Party voters in most constituencies. Thirdly there is a militant class-conscious element which is in the Labour Party for the same reason that the second type is there, but is sceptical of the power of the Labour Party under its present leaders to achieve any big social change. This element is active particularly when industrial disputes arise. It does not permit any hero-worship for leaders to interfere with its right of criticism. It is, however, numerically very small, and its influence is indirect and due mainly to its energy. The fourth type is the most important at the present political juncture in England. It consists of elements

¹ The first article of this series appeared in our last issue but one (Vol. VI, No. 2, February, 1924), which can be ordered through any newsagent or bookseller, or obtained for 7d. post free, from the Publishers of the *LABOUR MONTHLY*, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1.

which have hitherto not been politically active, have taken no parts in industrial disputes, have either not voted at all or have till quite recently voted Liberal or Conservative, but are now in a state of unstable political equilibrium. They are drawn, it seems, from all classes except from the upper layer of bourgeoisie. Hand and head workers are among them, shop-keepers, professional men, state and municipal officials, small employers, craftsmen, &c.

It seems that these latter are divided into sub-types or sections. It is one of these which has brought the Labour Party to its position in Parliament to-day. And it is another which, when its mind is a little more made up, will increase the Labour Party's strength still more. But an analysis of the psychology of this element will reveal a great diversity in regard to the causes of its desertion, actual or contemplated, of the two historic parties. An important number of them represent the type of mind which says : " We have tried the two old parties and they have got the country into this mess of unemployment, high taxes, high prices, and low wages ; it's time the third lot had a try." There is a cynical touch about these which may in the event of failure of the Labour Party lead to apathy and abstentions from politics altogether. This on the Continent has led very largely to the rise of Fascism through the dropping out of politics of certain sections of the lower middle class. As Marx showed in his brilliant analysis of the 1848 revolution in Germany (*Revolution and Counter-Revolution*), sections of the small middle classes, or democrats as they were politically in those days, are always liable to alternating fits of wild elation and deep despair, and are treacherous political allies. This type in England to-day is found not only amongst the small middle classes but amongst the working classes as well. They can only be retained as supporters of the Labour cause if they can see some tangible result come from the existence of a Labour administration in Westminster. It is they who, by dropping out of politics or by being stampeded into some patriotic armament scare by the stunt Press, can make the life of a Labour government precarious.

Another section of this fourth type is sincere in its inclination towards Labour, but it is far from Socialistic in its outlook. There is an intellectual type, drawn largely from the " free professions " and from the clerk and head worker, which is genuinely disgusted

with the old parties and disillusioned in the war and in the peace after the war. It is seeking all sorts of ways out of the country's difficulties by humanitarian quack remedies. The League of Nations and the international loan to Germany will "pacify" Central Europe, a "new spirit" in the administration of the country's affairs will provide a talisman at home. As usual in English politics, religion and the churches make their influence felt among these types. The fact that one important phase of the struggle of the British bourgeoisie for power, namely, the Puritan revolution, was carried through under the banner of religion has left its mark on the English countryside to this day, and influences even the rising forces of Labour. And so it is still possible to find provincial towns in England where a body of working men and intellectuals, who form the local Labour Party, solemnly sit down and decide to celebrate the first of May, the feast of international Labour, by—going to church! And that trade union branches, holding an evening social to commemorate the winning of a strike, should discuss among themselves whether the proceedings should or should not open with a toast to the king and to the bishop of the diocese!

Now what has been the effect of the six weeks of Labour government on the psychologies of this fourth type of the population, which is in various stages of transition to Labour? I think there can be no doubt that certain acts of the Labour government have made a deep impression on considerable sections of this type. It is true there is a sigh of relief from the Thoroughly Comfortable and their intellectual hangers-on that the advent of a Labour government did not result in the immediate seizure of their bank balances, and some can be found who will say that they are considering whether they will vote Labour next time, if this is all that Labour is. But apart from these insincere and selfish elements, there is a large body of people who are impressed by such things as the abolition of the "gap," the recognition of Russia, the scrapping of the Singapore naval base, and are roused to enthusiasm at Wheatley's attack on Joynson Hicks over the Poplar affair and the prospects of reforming the old Poor Law from top to bottom. The material effects of the acts of the Labour government on the lives of the masses of workers in this country may be very small as yet, but nevertheless such was the stagnation of the country under the Baldwin government that

the least stirring of the waters creates a big reaction. The wavering elements of the population which are in the state of transition to Labour have undoubtedly been affected by these actions of the Labour government in the past month, and this has strengthened the latter's position morally in the country.

But the real difficulties are not yet begun. A mountain seen in the distance may seem easy to ascend, but only on closer approach the forests, cliffs, and morasses are discernible. We may not be up against them for six months or even for a year. But they will rise before us when we come to finance the schemes for housing, widows' pensions, reduction of food taxes, adequate scales of unemployment relief. If the *Daily Herald* estimate is correct, there will probably be a surplus on the estimates for the coming year of sixty-seven millions. This might, if it materialises, be a nest-egg which Snowden can put aside to begin operations on the home front. But it has always been a custom and tradition of the Treasury to automatically devote all surpluses, as they arise, for the redemption of the national debt. And through the Treasury speak the "Big Five." What sort of situation, therefore, will arise if the banking oligarchy insist on putting their hands on all surpluses, as soon as they accumulate, in order to bring about not an increase of purchasing power of the broad masses, as the Labour movement wants, but to continue the policy of artificial deflation of money values? A first-class crisis will then arise, which may result in an open trial of strength between the class interests of the big monopolists of the City on the one hand, and the working classes and the small middle classes, organised politically in the Labour Party, on the other.

In his speech to the Midland Bank Reginald McKenna hinted at the need for the Bank of England to get back under its control the issuing of currency notes, which was started by the Treasury during the war, thereby making the Chancellor not entirely dependent on the Bank of England for monetary issues. One can see already the sort of line along which the struggle will probably come. The "Big Five" through the Bank of England may refuse to grant Ways and Means to the Treasury during the thin time of the year, when the taxes come in slowly, except at high rates and will use this power to blackmail the Chancellor of the Exchequer into relinquishing his hold on the surplus, which should

be earmarked for laying the foundations of a real Socialistic policy and the extension of State at the expense of private enterprise at home. When this issue is joined, the fate of all these excellent little administrative acts, which the Labour government has performed since it has been in office, will be called into question. These little acts must, if they are to be effective, be followed by larger acts, which will bring the Labour government into conflict with private industrial and commercial monopolies, and will let loose the struggle between private and public interest. And behind the private interests will stand the banks, blocking all paths forward for the Labour government and the rank and file which to-day is marshalled in imposing array behind. But few of that rank and file know the forces they will be up against. Upon the resolution of the active and class-conscious section of the Labour movement to keep the leaders facing straight at the enemy will depend whether the fourth type, which I have analysed above, will overcome its hesitation and actively enter the contest.

(Subsequent articles by Mr. Philips Price will deal with the difficulties which the Labour Government will meet in carrying through its policy abroad, and with the attitude which the militant Left Wing of the Movement should adopt at the present time towards the Labour Government.)

Correspondence between the Editor and Printer of *The Labour Monthly*

(The following letters (published by mutual consent) serve to illustrate the conditions of publication in this country. There is no doubt that it would be impossible to print legally in this country a complete collection of Lenin's works, although many of the leading intellectual representatives profess the greatest admiration for his ability and would presumably wish to be acquainted with what he wrote. Mr. Moss himself, whose relations with THE LABOUR MONTHLY leave nothing to be desired, is in no sense personally responsible for the part he has to play. The law of England, which would shrink from setting up an open censorship of the Press, leaves it to the unhappy printer, under the threat of economic ruin, to play the part of unpaid censors.—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.)

I. FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE LONDON CALEDONIAN PRESS TO THE EDITOR OF THE LABOUR MONTHLY

March 5, 1924.

DEAR MR. DUTT,

It is obvious that I wish to retain your goodwill, and I do not want to say anything in this letter that would hurt your feelings or upset you in any way, but I must protest against the article which appeared and the last paragraph but one on page 154 of No. 3, March, 1924.

Had my attention been drawn to this paragraph we most certainly could not have printed it, and you have put us in a position of running very great risks if the people referred to cared to take action.

The reference to the leaders of the Berne International as thieves and foul murderers is very wrong indeed, and moreover, in my opinion, is not a matter of fact. Even if it were a matter of fact—and such a thought horrifies me—it is not the correct thing to call a man a murderer until he is proved by his peers to be one.

In any case, I must respectfully request you to exercise more care in respect of the contents of THE LABOUR MONTHLY while we print it.

Faithfully yours,

W. F. MOSS,
Managing Director.

P.S.—I do not consider that Lenin wrote such an outrageous paragraph. I think it must be a wrong translation.

II. FROM THE EDITOR OF THE LABOUR MONTHLY TO THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE LONDON CALEDONIAN PRESS

March 11, 1924.

DEAR MR. MOSS,

I am sure that you will wish to reconsider your letter of March 6 before you wish to abide by it, as it is evidently written in haste. Otherwise we should be very regretfully compelled to consider alternative printing arrangements.

Let me remind you that you make the following suggestions :—

- (1) That a certain paragraph by Lenin is to be treated as not authentic because you disagree with it.
- (2) That in passing the paragraph I did not exercise proper care.
- (3) That it is improper to refer to a group of men as "murderers" on political grounds.
- (4) That the reference raises "very great risks" of legal action.
- (5) That you "certainly could not have printed" the paragraph had your attention been called to it.

With regard to these allow me to point out :—

(1) That the translation is literal, authentic, verifiable, and that it is not the custom of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* to be inaccurate in its presentation of important documents, and that I strongly resent any such suggestion.

(2) That I equally resent the suggestion that in passing the paragraph I failed to exercise proper care, and that it is not the province of an editor to distort and bowdlerise the works of a writer and statesman of the distinction and reputation of Lenin. Even the Victorian bourgeois printers did not venture to violate the writings of Marx, strongly worded and venomous as they were in their attacks upon those whom he justly condemned. Shall a Labour Press do worse ?

(3) That your wholesale condemnation of any reference to a group of men as murderers on political grounds (for the justification of which in the present case you need only turn to Philips Price's *Germany in Transition* or Gumbel's *Two Years of Murder*) would rule out not only some of the greatest writings and literature of all time, but also some of the most distinguished members of the Parliamentary Labour Party, since no expression of regret or retraction has yet been made by the Labour Party for the just use by Mr. Maxton of the epithet "murderers" against the baby-slayers of the Conservative benches, nor have you yourself to my knowledge, who are, I believe, a member of the Labour Party, taken any public step to dissociate yourself from it.

(4) That the suggestion of the possibility of legal action arising out of a general unspecified attack against a now defunct Association without legal existence is so remote as not to admit of serious treatment, and the best evidence on this point would be to take the considered opinions of those most concerned.

(5) That the suggestion of an arbitrary printers' censorship, exercised according to the principles indicated above, on documents of supreme historic and political importance, if upheld by you, would mean that *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* could not, consistently with its reputation for accuracy and responsibility, continue to print with you. No doubt if you were issuing an edition of Shelley you would expurgate the lines :—

" I met Murder on the way,
He had a mask like Castlereagh."

And if you were the Government Printing Office you would feel compelled conscientiously to refuse to print the famous passage of Mr. Maxton as "too horrifying" and "probably not authentic." But you must not be surprised if responsible editors could not regard such conduct as justifiable even in the most reactionary printers.

I hope that you will consider these points, in order that we may not have to face an interruption of the admirable and exemplary service which *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* has always enjoyed with the utmost appreciation at your hands, and which I sincerely trust will long continue.

Yours fraternally,
R. PALME DUTT,
Editor.

Correspondence between Printer and Editor 245

III. FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE LONDON CALEDONIAN PRESS TO THE EDITOR
OF THE LABOUR MONTHLY

March 12, 1924.

DEAR MR. PALME DUTT,

I thank you for your very kind, considerate, and courteous letter of the 11th, which you sent in reply to mine of March 6 in respect of a content of LABOUR MONTHLY, March, 1924.

I am sure you would prefer that I replied to the paragraphs of your letter *seriatim* :—

(1) I am sorry that you interpret any part of my letter to read that I do not consider a certain paragraph of Lenin's to be authentic because I disagree with it. That would indeed be conceit.

(2) I did not consider that proper care had been exercised, but your letter puts a different complexion on the matter and alters my point of view, to which I will refer afterwards.

(3) I do not think it proper to refer to men as murderers on political grounds ; I am revolted by the use of the term.

(4) I did think that the contents of the paragraph rendered it possible for you and us to be prosecuted.

(5) Before I received the letter I am now answering, *i.e.*, before I knew your views, I should certainly have found it difficult to print the paragraph.

Further in respect of :—

(1) You say that the translation is authentic and verifiable, and if you have read into my letter that there is any suggestion that you are inaccurate in your presentation of important documents, I am sorry. I had no such thought in my mind, and I should appreciate to the full your resentment of any such suggestion. The only point that I stress here is that you yourself say that the translation is literal. I have always understood a literal translation to be the conversion of one word in a language to another word in another language without reference to metaphor, idiom, or any national peculiarity. Therefore, it would be possible for a man to write a word in a language and a literal translation into English would read as "murderer" whilst actually meaning something else.

(2) I had no thought in my mind that you would wilfully, let alone accidentally, distort the writing of any one, least of all Lenin.

(3) I have certainly taken no public steps to dissociate myself as a member of the Labour Party with the epithet used by Mr. Maxton against the Conservatives ; the only reason being that by no stretch of imagination am I a public man. Nevertheless his use of the words did not receive my inward sanction.

(4) I have no answer to make except that individuals of the defunct Association conceivably could take action.

(5) An arbitrary printers' censorship, in my opinion, would be the most obnoxious thing possible, and I have never attempted in any way throughout my life the censorship of opinion ; but the use of words, if it means the closing down of works that are placed under my control, must be, and if you were in my position you would think the same, the subject of decision. I would print the words of Shelley, but I would not print in his day that Castlereagh was a thief and a foul murderer for many reasons that we need not discuss here.

I want to say in conclusion, and I say it with all sincerity, that there is no journal or piece of printing that we produce that I am more proud of in the sense that we have some connection with it as printers, as THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

It is from a typographical point of view a good job, and the contents I enjoy every month, and I am proud to be associated with it even in such a small degree, and I want you to read in my letter what I have in my mind, that though I may have been precipitant and have exaggerated a point of view, I had the protection of the Press, the book, and your good self in my mind.

Believe me, very sincerely yours,

W. F. MOSS,

Managing Director.

The World of Labour

GERMANY : The Communist International on the Situation ... PAGE 247

GERMANY

The Communist International on the Situation

THE accompanying document was drawn up at a recent conference in Moscow of the Executive Committee of the Communist International with representatives of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party. The document is dated January 21.

It is of the first importance, both as an analysis of the development of the situation in Germany and as the considered opinion of the whole International on this all-important question.

Within the German Communist Party at the present time three definite groups are discernible, which have crystallised out as a result of the severe political crisis of last autumn. There is a Right group (represented by Brandler and Thalheimer) which is in a very small minority on the Central Committee (two votes out of twenty-seven); a compact Centre representing the mass of the Party (17 votes on the Central Committee); and the old Left tendencies, centring in the Berlin and Hamburg Party organisations.

The present resolutions united both the Centre and the Left, that is to say, the overwhelming mass of the Party membership. The Right also subscribed to them in principle.

We reproduce herewith the main points of the resolutions, which are very detailed:—

(1) THE TACTIC OF THE UNITED FRONT

At the Third World Congress¹ of the Communist International, the tasks of the German Communist Party arising from the March defeat were discussed in the greatest detail and summed up in the slogan: *To the masses!* In December of the same year the method by which the masses were to be won over was embodied concretely in the resolution of the Executive on the tactic of the United Front.

In Germany the Communist Party immediately proceeded to carry out the tactic of the United Front with the greatest earnestness. The whole objective situation in Germany favoured this tactic. As a result of its labours the Party achieved great success; it won the increasing sympathy of the masses, and caused disruption in the ranks of the Social-Democrats. . . .

The Fourth World Congress pointed out the dangers concealed both in the whole tactic of the United Front and in the special slogan of the Workers' Government. The Congress declared: "In order to avoid these dangers, and in order to be able to take up immediately the fight against the illusion that a stage of "democratic coalition" is inevitable, the Communist parties must not forget that every bourgeois

¹1921

Government is at the same time a capitalist Government, but that not every Workers' Government is in reality a proletarian socialist Government!" . . .

It is essential that Communists in all countries should now ponder carefully what the tactic of the United Front is and is not. It is a tactic of revolution, not of evolution. Just as the Workers' (and Peasants') Government cannot be for us a democratic transitional stage, so the tactic of the United Front is not a democratic coalition nor an alliance with the Social Democrats. *It is purely a method of revolutionary agitation and mobilisation.* We reject all other interpretations as opportunist. . . .

(2) THE REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS IN GERMANY

The beginning of the revolutionary wave in Germany was signalled by the great strikes in the Ruhr and the struggles in May and June, the strike in Upper Silesia, the metal workers' strike in Berlin, the fights in the Erzgebirge and the Vogtland, and the political general strike of August, 1923, which brought about the fall of the Cuno Government.

The rapid increase in the acuteness of the situation was expressed in the rise in prices, the depreciation of the currency, inflation, burdensome taxation, the decline of Parliament, the increased capitalist offensive following on a feeble offensive of the proletariat, food scarcity, decreases in wages, the abolition of the social conquests of the working class, as well as in the growth of separatist and particularist movements, the increasing impoverishment of the old and the new middle classes, and in the decline of the influence of the democratic Centre parties. The whole burden of the war in the Ruhr was laid upon the proletariat and the middle classes, who were being steadily proletarianised. The aggravation of the class antagonisms proceeded step by step with the rapid decline of German capitalist economy, which was severed from its centres of power. . . .

In the months leading up to the winter of 1923, the relation of class power in Germany moved steadily in favour of the proletarian revolution. Before the movement in the Ruhr began, the eighteen to twenty millions of the German proletariat were far removed from any nationalist frame of mind. A profound ferment was taking place among the six to seven million petty bourgeois of the towns and the four to five million small peasants and tenant farmers.

The democratic coalition policy was patently bankrupt. The Social Democrats, who had shared the power of government with the democratic bourgeois parties, had to decide whether they should enter into a stable *bloc* with the representatives of heavy industry and of reactionary militarism; and this they finally did.

The task of the German Communist Party was, and is, to take advantage of the period of international complications arising out of the crisis of the Ruhr, the internal and extremely difficult crisis of German capitalism, and the proceeding liquidation of the Ruhr crisis in order to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to set up the dictatorship of the proletariat.

To this end the Party should have mobilised the industrial proletariat for the fight, both against German heavy industry and French imperialism, but at the same time it should at least have neutralised the middle classes of the town and country and, if possible, brought them under its leadership.

The first task could be fulfilled only if the Party succeeded in freeing the majority of the proletariat from the influence of the Social Democrats of whatever shade and in organising them so that they should be prepared for the attack upon the capitalist positions. . . .

This task has not been adequately carried out, the reasons for which will be examined below.

The second task, in essence, involved destroying the Fascist influence and transforming the nationalist frame of mind into the will to fight in alliance with the proletariat against the German big capitalists, and against French imperialism. This task was tackled by the German Communist Party with success, as is best evidenced by the Anti-Fascist Day of July 29, 1923. Large sections of the petty bourgeois population were already in sympathy with the German Communist Party, which had succeeded in a rather high degree in pointing out to these sections the hypocrisy of the "social propaganda" of the Fascisti and their objective rôle as aiders and abettors of the big bourgeoisie, who were betraying the nation, as well as the community of interests of the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie. . . .

(3) THE OCTOBER RETREAT AND ITS CAUSES

In October, the German Communist Party, despite its weaknesses, was prepared for the revolutionary fight for power. If, in spite of the revolutionary situation, and in spite of the exertions of the Communist International and the German Communist Party, neither a revolutionary decisive struggle nor political mass struggles resulted, this was due to a number of errors and defects and, in part, to opportunist deviations.

Defects in Estimating the Revolutionary March of Events

The Party realised too late that the revolutionary situation in Germany had matured. The Executive of the Communist International also failed to draw attention energetically enough to the oncoming crisis, with the result that the necessary fighting measures were not taken in hand in time. Already, with the end of the preceding period (Cuno Government, occupation of the Ruhr, &c.), the question of power should have been raised and the technical preparations should have been undertaken. . . .

Tactical Errors

The task of intensifying and broadening the numerous isolated actions which took place between July and September and developing them right up to actions with political slogans, was not fulfilled.

After the Cuno strike, the mistake was made of wanting to put off fundamental movements until the decisive struggle took place.

One of the most serious errors was that the instinctive rebellion of the masses was not transformed into a conscious revolutionary will to fight by giving it political aims.

The neglect of the factory councils' movement also made it impossible to place upon them temporarily the functions of workers' councils, so that when the decisive moment came, an authoritative centre was lacking around which could rally the vacillating workers who were drawn away from the influence of the Social Democratic Party.

Since other United Front bodies also (councils of action, control commissions, &c.) were not systematically used in order to prepare the struggle politically, the struggle was almost entirely interpreted as a Party affair and not as a united fight of the whole proletariat.

Political-Organisational Weaknesses and Defects

. . . The amount of technical preparation, of readjustment of organisation for the fight for power, of the arming and internal consolidation of the parties, was at a minimum. The much too brief and feverish technical preparations practically produced no results; it is true, they technically prepared the Party members for action, but they did not embrace the wide masses of the workers.

Errors in Estimating the Relation of Forces.

The feverishness of the technical preparations during the decisive week, the view that the struggle was only a Party struggle, and the concentration on the "final blow," without preliminary and cumulative partial struggles and mass movements, made it impossible to examine the true relation of forces and to fix proper dates. . . .

The under-estimation of the forces of the counter revolution consisted in the fact that the Party underestimated the power of the Social Democrats as a hampering force within the proletariat.

The Party also misunderstood the nature and the rôle of the Left Social Democratic leaders, and allowed the illusion to be cherished in its own ranks that by exerting the necessary mass pressure it could compel these leaders to join with it in calling for the fight.

The Mistaken Political-Strategic Orientation on Saxony

The rigid one-sided policy of passing to the decisive struggle only from the defence of the Central German positions was a mistaken one. It resulted in the neglect of other industrial and fighting provinces, and in severe disorientation after the Saxon position was surrendered without a fight. It was a fatal error of the Party to stake all its cards on Saxony, and thereby fail to provide itself with a line of retreat and defence in case of failure, and a reserve line of attack. . . .

In any case, it was a great mistake of the Party not to have immediately changed its front and proceeded at once to partial struggles. . . .

(4) THE SAXON EXPERIMENT AND THE HAMBURG STRUGGLES

The aggravation of the class antagonisms in Germany, the sharpening of the economic crisis, the concentration of the Party upon the decisive struggle induced the Executive Committee of the Communist International and of the German Communist Party to undertake the experiment of allowing the Communists to enter the Saxon Government.

The idea of the participation in the Saxon Government was, in the opinion of the Executive, a special military and political task, which was defined in an instruction as follows:—

Since, as we estimate the situation, the decisive moment will take place not later than four, five or six weeks hence, we consider it necessary that every position that can be directly useful should be immediately occupied. In view of the prevailing situation, the question of entering the Saxon Government must be treated as a practical one. On the condition that Zeigner and his people will be prepared sincerely to defend Saxony against Bavaria and the Fascisti, we must enter the Government, immediately arm from 50,000 to 60,000 men in an effective manner, and ignore General Müller. The same in Thuringia.

Under these originally assumed premises, the participation in the Government conformed to the resolutions of the Fourth Congress. The promotion of revolutionary struggles, the welding together of the working masses should have been the pre-condition for the entry into the Saxon Government: this entry should have been based upon mass movements. Although the direct military task had to be put off in view of the slowing-down of the revolutionary process, nevertheless the Communists could and ought to have carried on a real revolutionary activity. In this, however, they showed themselves gravely below expectations.

It was their duty first of all to advance ruthlessly the question of arming the workers; from the first moment of their participation in the Workers' Government, the Communists should have known no other basic principle but the arming of the proletariat.

It was further their duty to unfold before the masses their proletarian programme for saving the country, and to carry on an energetic propaganda for political workers' councils, and thereby to counteract the sabotage of the "Left" Social-Democratic ministers. It was their duty to work in Parliament and in the factory councils for the immediate adoption of revolutionary measures, such as the confiscation of the enterprises

of manufacturers who were sabotaging production, and the requisition of the houses of rich families for homeless workers and their children.

It was also the duty of the Communists from the first moment of their participation in the Government to brand in the eyes of the masses the double-dealing policy of Zeigner, his secret negotiations with the military dictators, as well as the whole counter-revolutionary rôle of the "Left" Social-Democratic leaders.

Owing to this negligence, and to the fact that the Party was not capable of mobilising the masses, the Saxon experiment failed to mark a forward move in the fight. Instead of revolutionary strategy, we had a non-revolutionary parliamentary co-operation with the "Left" Social Democrats. The special assertion of the Communist ministers that they were responsible only to the Landtag and to the constitution was scarcely suited to destroy democratic illusions.

The Chemnitz Conference could have been a success for the Party only if adequate revolutionary work had been undertaken by all the Party bodies. The Party allowed itself to be caught unprepared by the thrust of the enemy, the Reichswehr Expeditionary Force, which everyone foresaw. The greater therefore was the error that, although the general strike was to be proposed, no attempt was made to concentrate the conference from the moment of its opening exclusively on the question of defence against the Reichswehr Expeditionary Force. These were errors, which undoubtedly facilitated the treacherous game of the "Left" Social-Democratic leaders.

A direct contrast to Saxony was the uprising in Hamburg. Here it was proved that a bold surprise attack of determined fighters could smash the enemy militarily. But it also showed that such an armed struggle, even though, as was the case in Hamburg, it is regarded by the population not without sympathy and is supported by a mass movement, is nevertheless doomed to failure if it remains isolated and is not supported on the spot by a workers' council movement, the absence of which was severely felt in Hamburg.

The fight itself in the Reich was hampered by contradictory orders issued by the centre, and the strike movements which were actually taking place suffered from lack of news of the fight in the Reich generally, and by the news which was received of the outcome of the Chemnitz Conference. . . .

(5) THE RÔLE OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE CHANGE IN THE TACTIC OF THE UNITED FRONT IN GERMANY

The leading sections of the German Social Democrats are at the present moment nothing else than a faction of German Fascism under a Socialist mask. They have handed the power of the State over to the representatives of the capitalist dictatorship in order to save capitalism from the proletarian revolution. . . .

For five years the German Social Democrats of all shades had been gradually passing over to the camp of the counter-revolution. The process is now nearing its completion. The legitimate heir of the "revolutionary" Government of Scheidemann and Haase is the Fascist General Seeckt.

It is true there are differences even in the camp of the capitalist dictatorship, and these may be of great enough importance to be exploited for our class fight. There are shades of difference between Ebert, Seeckt and Ludendorff. But, apart from those differences in the camp of the enemy, the German Communists must not forget that the main thing is to bring the working class to understand what is the essence of the whole affair, namely, that in the fight between capital and labour the leaders of the Social Democratic Party of Germany are irrevocably united with the White generals.

It is not only just now that the German Social Democrats have passed over to the side of capitalism. At bottom, they have always been the class enemies of the

proletariat. But it is only now, after they have passed from capitalist democracy to capitalist dictatorship that this has become grossly evident to the masses.

It is this fact which induces us to introduce some modification into the tactics of the united front as applied to Germany.

No negotiations with the mercenaries of the White dictatorship! This is what every Communist in Germany must plainly realise, and proclaim loudly and emphatically to the whole German proletariat.

But even more dangerous than the Right wing of the Social Democratic leaders are the Left wing leaders, this last illusion of the deceived workers, these last fig leaves covering the counter-revolutionary policy of Severing, Noske, and Ebert.

The Communist Party of Germany rejects all negotiations not only with the Central Committee of the German Social Democratic Party, but also with the "Left" leaders as long as these heroes do not summon up enough manhood to break openly with the counter-revolutionary gang sitting in the Central Committee of the German Social Democratic Party.

The tactic of the United Front to be employed in Germany is now: "Unity from below."

In the first theses of the Executive of the Communist International, of December, 1921, we find:—

As a counter-poise to the diplomatic game of the Menshevik leaders, the Russian Bolsheviks put forward the slogan: *Unity from Below!* i.e., the unity of the working masses themselves in the practical fight for the revolutionary demands of the workers against capitalism. Practice has proved that this was the only correct reply. As a result of this tactic, which was modified according to the circumstances of time and place, a huge section of the best Menshevik workers was gradually won over for Communism.

The Communist Party of Germany must learn how to realise the slogan of the United Front from below.

A ferment such as had never before existed is going on among the workers who still belong to the German Social Democratic Party. They see the bankruptcy of their leaders and are seeking new paths. There is therefore no reason why we should reject local negotiations and agreements with the German Social Democratic workers wherever we are faced with honest proletarians who are prepared to prove their devotion to the revolution. . . .

The concluding section of the resolutions on the "Immediate Tasks of the Party" points out the importance of organising the struggle in defence of the eight-hour day, of uniting the forces of the unemployed and employed workers, of gaining the support of the small peasantry, clerks and officials, small middle classes, &c. Stress is also laid on the importance of organisation and technical preparations for the ultimate armed struggle for power: the "proletarian centuries" must be made a reality.

In order that these tasks shall be successfully carried out the International demands a full and open discussion throughout the German Communist Party of the experiences through which it has recently passed.

BOOK REVIEWS

SOME OF THE ENEMY'S WEAPONS

- The Real Enemy and other Socialist Essays.* By Dan Griffiths. Foreword by J. Ramsay MacDonald. (Grant Richards. 2s. 6d.; International Bookshops. 1s. 3d.)
- The Threefold Commonwealth.* By Rudolf Steiner. (Anthroposophical Publishing Company. 2s.)
- Industrial Democracy: A Plan for its Achievement.* By Glenn E. Plumb and William G. Roylance. (U.S.A.: B. W. Huebsch, New York; Great Britain: Allen & Unwin. 10s. 6d.)
- State Socialism after the War: A Retrospect of Reconstruction After the War.* By Thomas J. Hughes. (John Bale, Sons and Danielsson. Second revised edition. 4s.)
- The Birthright of Man.* By Henry Lowenfield. (Leonard Parsons. 3s. 6d.)
- War or Peace.* By Gilbert Slater, M.A., D.Sc. (6d.)
- The Fellowship of Humanity by Reason, Love and Freedom.* By Gilbert T. Sadler, M.A., LL.B. (1s.)
- The Restoration of Hope.* By R. L. Outhwaite. (The Commonwealth Land Party. 2d.)
- Money Based on the World's Goods.* By C. H. Chomley. (*The British Australasian.* 6d.)

THE REAL ENEMY is an attempt to rouse the working class to "our first and chief task: to destroy the pernicious influence of the capitalist over our minds." Yet its effect on any class-conscious or rebellious worker can only be sedative; for its whole purpose is to dope the workers into believing that universal education in Socialist idealism is "their only way out."

Its philosophy is that of Shaw's *Back to Methusaleh* (i.e., that of 1890): "Until the workers see and understand and feel and desire, nothing can save them." And, of course, when they "desire," they will be able to achieve without organisation, bitterness, struggle, or war. (J. R. MacDonald says in the foreword: "When our people know and love Socialism, they will have Socialism, and not till then.")

From many of these books, which form part of the armoury of our enemies (though professing democracy, humanitarianism or Socialism), only a short quotation is needed in order to show their character. Readers who might be tempted by title or advertisement can then avoid, and those who have the leisure to indulge in conscientious wading or contemplative irony can buy.

The following is a good example of the style of English (translated from the German) adopted by the Anthroposophical Society. It also shows Herr Steiner functioning as an opponent of nationalisation—in the interests of efficiency!

However dazzling the thought of the individual producing not for himself but for society collectively, yet its justice within certain bounds should not hinder one from also recognising the other truth, that society collectively is

incapable of originating economic schemes that permit of being realised through individuals in the manner desirable.—*The Threefold Commonwealth.*

Mr. G. D. H. Cole writes of *Industrial Democracy* that it "is the best piece of anti-capitalist propaganda I have read for years." The book consists of an explanation and application of "the Plumb Plan"—an elaborate Whitley Council scheme. Says Mr. Plumb:—

In this country (America) we can proceed with the most necessary work without violence to our traditions, without revolution; *without taking away any vested right; and without departure from our usual methods of adjusting economic and industrial relations.*

The italics are ours, the "anti-capitalist propaganda" our author's.

State Socialism after the War is a misleading title. The book is a detailed Utopia on incredibly complicated lines. An idea of the economic knowledge behind it can be gained from this passage:—

There is a larger proportion of capital free for business and industrial purposes than in other countries. The reason is that since all land is owned by the State, there is no buying and selling of the fee as between individuals, leaving a larger amount of capital free for other purposes.

According to its sub-title, the book embraces a greater democracy and is founded on the teachings of Christ.

Mr. Leonard Parsons, the publisher, tells us that *The Birthright of Man* contains a plan, which implies no drastic revolution and no interference with existing institutions or the rights of property. The author's own words show how greatly needed is this disclaimer of any revolutionary tendency, when he says:—

Our savings, and the investments and enterprises which represent them, are the chief instruments of human progress.

War or Peace is a puff of Woolwich Arsenal, and an attack on private armament firms. The author is so convincing as to the efficiency of the Arsenal that we are almost driven to defend Vickers & Co. as the lesser evil, since they are the less effective weapons for imperialism.

Mr. Sadler says:—

For the workers to arm is absurd; they would make the State prepare more and more arms to resist them. Let them rely on the spiritual powers of the unlimited Life.

Mr. R. L. Outhwaite says, apropos of the Single Tax apparently:—

The civilisation that Force has reared on the sands of slavery cracks and shakes in the throbs of dissolution. . . . Strike with the wand of justice on the barren rocks of human desolation, and the waters of Hope will flow.

Money Based on the World's Goods is a wild attempt to fasten some variant of "credit reform" to the British Empire. It would encourage Empire trade, minimise war risks by leading to the storage of vast quantities of goods, and prevent depreciation of the pound sterling.

The waters of dope *will* flow . . .

And that is really all that can be said of these books.

T. H. W.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- An Introduction to World History.* Syllabus Series No. 12.. For Classes and Study Circles. By Margaret I. Cole. (Labour Research Department, 6d.)
- Economic Geography.* Syllabus Series No. 13. A Study Course for Students. By J. F. Horrabin. (Labour Research Department, 6d.)
- The Goslings.* A Study of the American Schools. By Upton Sinclair. (The Author, Pasadena, California. Cloth and paper.)
- Social Struggles in the Middle Ages.* By Max Beer.
- Unity in Industry.* By James Kidd. (John Murray. 3s. 6d.)
- The Bolsheviki Persecution of Christianity.* By Captain Francis McCullagh. (John Murray. 18s.)
- General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century.* By P. J. Proudhon. Translated from the French by John Beverley Robinson. (Freedom Press. 2s. 6d.)
- Limitation—The Way of Progress (An Essay).* By G. H. Stonehouse, M.A. (Bolton and Bolton, Hull. 6d.)
- A Christian View of Socialism.* By G. H. Stobell. (Charles H. Kerr & Company, Chicago, U.S.A. 5 cents.)
- A Constitution for the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.* Anonymous. (Johnston, Fear & Kingham, Melbourne. 3d.)
- Sinn und Schicksal der Revolution.* By Hans Kohn. (E. P. Tal & Co. Verlag, Leipzig, Vienna and Zurich.)
- Deutsche Bauhütte. Ein Wort an uns Deutsche über mögliche Gerechtigkeit gegen Belgien und Frankreich und zur Philosophie der Politik.* By Florens Christian Rang. With postfaces by Alfons Paquet, Ernst Michel, Martin Buber, Karl Hildebrandt, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Spira, and Otto Erdmann. (Gemeinschafts-Verlag Eberhard Arnold, Sannerz and Leipzig. Paper, 4 rentenmarks; boards, 5 rentenmarks.)
- The Kumiai Undo.* Organ of the Revolutionary Students of Japan. (E. K. Nobushima, c/o Rodo Undo-sha, Komagone Katamachi, 15 Hongo-hu, Tokyo.)
- Korrespondenjo: Nippon Insatsu-Ko Rengo Kai.* (The Industrial Federation of Printing Workers, No. 1 Ighome Demma-Cho, Akasaka, Tokyo.)
- Socialism and Religion.* Socialist Educational Society Library No. 1. With a Preface. (American edition: S. E. S., New York. 7 cents. London: Socialist Party of Great Britain. 5d.)
- Die Geburt des Roten Armee.* By L. Trotzky. (Verlag für Literatur und Politik, Vienna).
- Lenin: 23/iv, 1870—21/i, 1924.* By G. Zinoviev. (Verlag für Literatur und Politik, Vienna).
- The White Lead Question.* (W. R. Douglas Shaw, M.I.Ae., F.R.S.A., Rugby. 2nd Edition.)
- Anglo-Russian Trade and its Possibilities.* Address delivered by A. G. Marshall, Managing-Director of Becos Traders, Ltd. (Sampson, Clark & Company. 4d.)
- Environment and Health.* Fabian Tract No. 208. (Presidential Address to the 91st Annual Meeting of the British Medical Association, Portsmouth, July, 1923.) By Charles P. Childe, B.A., F.R.C.S., M.R.C.P.E. (Fabian Bookshop, 2d.)

- Compulsory Voting: What it is and How it works.* Fabian Tract No. 209. By William A. Robson. (Fabian Bookshop, Id.)
- The New World of Labor.* By Sherwood Eddy. (George H. Doran Company, New York, \$1.50).
- An Outline of the British Labor Movement.* By Paul Blanshard. With an introduction by the Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson, M.P. (George H. Doran Company, New York, \$1.50).

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ERRATUM

Insert on page 261 between lines 1 and 2 of the paragraph in the *Notes of the Month* beginning "MacDonald began, it is recorded, as a Liberal, in" the words :—

"Liberal journalistic circles just as his colleague, Mr. Henderson, began not only as a Liberal but in"

NOTES of the MONTH

*A Ruling Policy—No Clear Opposition—MacDonald's Claim—
What are Labour Principles?—MacDonaldism and Liberalism
—Liberalism and the Bourgeoisie—Liberalism as Counter-
Revolution—MacDonald's Record—Why the Bour-
geoisie Backs MacDonald—What MacDonaldism
Means—Unconsciousness of the Movement
—Marxism Needed*

THE speech of the Prime Minister at York afforded a very clear expression of the policy which rules the Labour Party and the Labour Government to-day. There is no doubt that MacDonaldism and all that it stands for is not only temporarily in the ascendant, but has achieved for a space a measure of insecure control over the whole movement, sufficient to be able to deflect it into channels which few of its most prominent leaders would have imagined possible twelve months ago. If anyone had foretold twelve months ago that within a year MacDonald would as Prime Minister lead the working-class movement into the establishment of a Coalition Government with a Liberal Imperialist and a Conservative ex-Viceroy; voluntary suppression of strikes with the threat of the Emergency Powers Act in the background; use of the Secret Service against Labour; carrying of armaments extension programmes by means of the Labour vote, and coercion in India, he would not have been believed. Yet all this and more has happened with very little effective protest from the working-class movement.

THIS temporary apparent power of MacDonald is only a reflection of the present balance of classes, to be swept away very rapidly by a development of the class struggle in one direction or another. But while it lasts it tests the capacity of the working-class movement to resist such inroads, and consequently the power of the working class to act as an independent force in the immediate future. So far there have been many isolated sectional and factional protests and oppositions on particular issues or of particular groups of interests, but there has been no coherent unity or expression. MacDonald has always

been able to maintain his position, partly by the support of his own immediate ring of non-labour backers in the key positions, partly by his control of the giving and withholding of place and position among a greedy and not very high-principled crowd, partly by the open protection of the bourgeoisie and their organs of the Press, but mostly by the confusion and incoherence of all opposed to him. There have not lacked revolts and crises on one measure and another: "I will not stand for this"; "I will not stand for that": but there has been no attempt to concentrate the issue on to the policy itself which is responsible for these measures, the policy of which MacDonald is the embodiment.

WHAT is MacDonaldism? Let it be noted at the outset that in his York speech MacDonald repudiated the suggestion that he was in office, not in power. "We are in office, with power." This repudiation was a direct blow in the face to his shiftier and less honest supporters all over the country, who have repeated the parrot cry of "Office, not Power" *ad nauseam* in the hope of evading responsibility for what has taken place. In last month's issue we had occasion to expose the hypocrisy of this cry, and it is satisfactory that so clear a statement has been made by the Prime Minister. For MacDonald the union with a Haldane, the use of E.P.A., and coercion in India are not the regrettable necessities of a minority, accepted for the sake of a larger aim, to reach the beautiful ideal of "Socialism" (this is the innocent picture presented to guileless followers over the country): they are the genuine and voluntary expression of his own policy.

LET it be noted that he twice declared that his Ministry was governing "in accordance with the principles of the Labour Party." In the same speech he declared that the largest party in the country was prevented from governing by reason of the fact that "it is so committed to immediate changes in matters like fiscal affairs that it could not hold office without having a combination of the other two parties made against it." Now the Conservative Party is generally credited with having dropped Protection for a season since its last conference. Never-

theless it is stated by Mr. MacDonald to be committed to such "immediate changes" that it cannot govern. But the Labour Party in MacDonald's view is not so committed to immediate changes as the Conservative Party: that is to say, it has dropped the Capital Levy, Nationalisation, &c., more completely than the Conservative Party has dropped Protection: and a "Labour" Government, with all the features of the Labour Party programme left out, can be continued for two or three years as government "in accordance with the principles of the Labour Party." Certainly this MacDonaldisism is worth examining which can so completely suppress and silence the whole objects of the Labour Party in a way that the cleverest Liberal or Conservative statesmanship could not do. What are the forces of which MacDonald is the expression?

MACDONALD began, it is recorded, as a Liberal, in fact as a Liberal agent. Now it is no offence to begin as a Liberal or even as a Liberal agent. Men may begin as anything without it being very much their fault: it is what they end as that they are responsible for. And the real charge against MacDonald is not that he began as a Liberal, but that he still regards himself as essentially a Liberal, that he regards his Socialism and Labourism as simply the outcome and growth of Liberalism made perfect. "The Labour Party," he declared a year ago in his speech at the Holborn Empire, "stands to-day as the inheritor of the Liberal tradition: we start where they leave off." This, be it noted, is the view of present-day Liberals. "The Labour Party," declared the *Manchester Guardian* at the same time, "is the child of Liberalism . . . If and when there is question of political co-operation the best elements in Liberalism will find it easier to join hands with Labour." And the *Nation* at the same time speculated on the possible disappearance of the Liberal Party, and after considering as "just possible" that the result might be a fierce class struggle, concluded: "It is far more probable that the spirit of Liberalism would return embodied in the Labour Party. But hard work is necessary if Liberalism and Labour are to combine in a constructive policy based on good international relationships, working together as a Government

with a majority which will make England, &c." And in the same strain of identification of Labour and Liberalism MacDonald declared at the dinner of Metropolitan Labour Mayors: "The Labour Party will be the only alternative to the reactionary party, whatever name it may be known by." Thus the essence of MacDonaldism, it is clear, is to see two forces—Reaction and Progress: and whether Progress is called Labour or Liberal is a very minor matter.

WHAT is Liberalism? Liberalism is of course the philosophy of the bourgeoisie. But this is its historical basis rather than its present significance. Under the banner of Liberalism, of liberty and freedom and equal citizenship, the bourgeoisie overthrew the entrenchments of feudal order and privilege and established their own power. Once they were in power they declared further struggle and class division at an end and unnecessary: society was free and equal as between the millionaire employer and his cringing serfs in the slums and the workhouse; and the rising struggles of the working class in the first half of the nineteenth century were crushed with savage violence. The early revolutionary organisations of the British workers, revealed in Revolutionary Trade Unionism and the Chartist movement, were wiped out of existence and in their place were established new obedient working-class organisations, from which the existing movement has developed, soaked in Liberal philosophy, in law and order and constitutionalism and abject submission to the bourgeoisie. Against Liberalism Marxism stood forth as its mortal enemy: Marxism exposed Liberal capitalist society as a class society no less than feudalism and slavery, veiled in hypocritical forms to conceal the eternal fact of surplus labour, and called the working class to their mission to destroy it and bring in a true society without classes. But for half a century the anodyne of Liberalism held the British workers in its thrall: and the paste eloquence of a Gladstone or a Lloyd George on the atrocities in Bulgaria or the iniquities of dukes chained the workers to their servitude a hundred times more effectively than bayonets or guns.

TO-DAY Liberalism is no longer the dominant philosophy of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie, brought up more sharply against the problem of power by its own development, the growth of antagonism and rivalry between world bourgeois groups and the rise of the working class, has developed to new stages, the stages characterised by Imperialism, by trusts and monopolies, by State concentration and bureaucracy and militarism, and culminating in Fascism and White Guardism. Liberalism has become essentially the philosophy of the petty bourgeoisie, of the middle class of small owners and professional men, crushed between the growingly fierce struggle of the classes, and looking more and more to a big benevolent impartial State to save them and give them jobs. Here is the happy hunting-ground of pacificism, reformism and collectivism—the modern forms of Liberalism. But Liberalism is still maintained by the bourgeoisie as the means to stifle and suffocate the consciousness of the working class. And here to-day is the rôle of MacDonaldism in the working-class movement, as it was the rôle of Lloyd Georgism fifteen years ago.

THE phases of MacDonald's own career and development illustrate this use by the bourgeoisie of the most typical petty bourgeois expression to stifle the revolutionary force of the working class. In the early days when the Independent Labour Party was struggling to divorce the workers from Liberalism, and was thus performing a revolutionary task, the Independent Labour Party was the universal object of reproach and attack, and its leaders were denounced in the official conferences of the Labour movement. In the next stage, when with 1906 success crowned the early patient labours, the failure to make a real break with Liberalism was revealed; and while the workers outside were struggling towards more and more direct attacks upon the whole structure of society, the Parliamentary Labour Party under MacDonald was becoming more and more tied up with Liberalism. During this period MacDonald blossomed forth in the bourgeois Press as a great "statesman" with a future, because he represented their best hope of stifling the growing Labour "unrest." Then came the war, the open bourgeois conflict and throwing aside of

the veil: there is no more use for the "reconcilers," and if they are not ready to perform a complete somersault like Lloyd George they are relegated to the background. MacDonald's career seemed finished to the short-sighted. But war itself leads once again to the revolutionary struggle of the workers; and it was on the back of this that MacDonald rose once again to his old position and even higher favour, as the opponent of Bolshevism and apostle of class conciliation. The Press forgets all it has said: he is once again the "statesman" in the limelight. With unusual frankness the servile biographer "Iconoclast" remarks that it was the fight with Bolshevism which "ultimately proved the means by which he at once saved and conquered the Labour Party." And it was MacDonald himself who wrote in a leading capitalist journal his claim to praise that he had been "in the forefront of the Socialist antagonism to Communism and the Third International."

IS not the process clear beyond confusion? And all the clearer because in this case the individual in question is a sincere expression of the petty bourgeois outlook, and not the adventurer type of the Lloyd George-Briand species. The more sincere MacDonald is, the more use he is to the bourgeoisie, so long as he is skilful and "practical" enough to keep pace with all the shifts required by their politics and not to let his "idealism" interfere with this. MacDonald represents all that opiate of social pacifism, religion, constitutionalism, and cloudy ethical idealism by which the bourgeoisie hopes to drug and stifle the awakening consciousness of the working class. But if once the struggle goes past MacDonald, and the workers go forward to the attack in spite of him, then MacDonald will either have to apply the iron hand of the capitalist dictatorship or he will be as ruthlessly flung aside as during the war, and Fascism will succeed as the next weapon of the bourgeoisie.

THUS MacDonaldism is the greatest enemy of the working class at the present stage against which all sincere elements must openly combine. MacDonaldism begins as everything that is liberal, humane, idealist, noble: but the other end of the journey is not so beautiful. For behind all

the fine phrases is one meaning and one meaning only: the denial of the class struggle and therefore in practice the support of the subjection of the working class. All the talk about the "organic" development of society means only this; all the talk about "constructive" purposes and "civilisation" and a "spiritual" mission and "working together" and a "divine ideal" have only one brutal meaning in fact: a meaning that is suddenly and sharply laid bare when the noble speaker has to go straight from addressing fair words to a religious gathering to order new guns and cruisers and weapons of destruction for the Imperialists, to direct the shooting of strikers in India, to maintain the secret counter-revolutionary spies against the left-wing workers, to repudiate the right of soldiers to have any conscientious objection to shooting their fellow-workers on strike, and to proclaim the dictatorial Emergency Powers Act when a section of the Labour movement which is supposed to have placed him in power dares to go on strike. And not so far away in a neighbouring country is the picture of the final outcome of constitutional social democracy, when the guns that have been voted are used—against the workers.

WHAT readiness is there for a clear stand against all this? How many of the Labour Party understand what is happening or whither it is tending? In all the spasms of revolt that have taken place, how much intelligent alternative policy to MacDonaldism has been revealed? Half the revolts have been stupid sectional quarrels, concerned as much with questions of jobs as with questions of policy. Where there have been revolts on principle, they have been on isolated principles with no clear total policy or aim. The General Council rushes into public to "deplere" the use of E.P.A. by a Labour Government. But the General Council does not stop to consider that the only alternative for a Labour Government is to take its stand openly with the class struggle, a course which the General Council itself has not yet adopted. The Clyde group make a good stand on many issues. But when it comes to the central discussion of policy at the I.L.P. Conference they have nothing to say. They do not take their stand on the class struggle; they are strong

in their sentiment and spirit of sympathy with the working class (and angry when the other side calls it "sob-stuff"), but when it comes to policy and expression they are as much the slaves of the "nation" and the "Empire" and the rest of the cant as any. Their Ruhr report, received with delighted approval by the *Morning Post*, reveals how perilously near their national Socialism and complete obliviousness to class issues in the wider sense can bring them to unconscious jingoism in practice. This same obliviousness to class issues has been even more strikingly disclosed in their discussions of the question of armaments and the duty of a Labour member's vote. This question they have discussed at length in their press as involving only two possible alternatives—Tolstoyan non-resistance or the support of national armaments in the hope of essential international disarmament. The unconscious assumption behind this is so deeply entrenched, that when the writer of these Notes attempted to point out the familiar Socialist issue, the indignant reply of the Editor of *Forward* revealed that the issue was not even understood.

BUT an alternative leadership has got to be achieved. The triumph of MacDonaldism does not mean merely the defeat and frustration of the working-class movement; it means its disruption. The revolts that have taken place may have been confused and imperfect, but they have been symptoms of a situation running deeper than any particular issue, and all the more serious because it is expressing itself in these unconscious sectional movements. For the workers will go forward in any case, and no MacDonald can hold them back. But if MacDonald remains at the head of the movement, then it means a breach in the movement. The new militancy of "trade union M.P.'s" is not the result of a sudden awakening on their part (their past records would absolve them from this charge), but is the compulsory reflection of the awakening of the rank and file. While the workers are awakening to new attacks, the MacDonaldites are all pouring out the propaganda of Industrial Peace. And this is the issue for which the bourgeoisie is playing, and, as their indecent eagerness during the tram strike revealed, the rock on which they hope to wreck the movement. The MacDonald policy, being a bourgeois consti-

tutional policy and therefore an anti-working-class policy, must necessarily involve conflict with now one and now another section of the workers. So long as these sectional oppositions remain unconscious of any larger aim, their occurrence is only part of the general disruption. Only a genuine working-class policy can unite all sections. Such a working-class policy cannot be based on sentiment or querulous opposition or stage leftism: it can only be based on a broad and conscious alternative to MacDonaldism for the policy of the working-class movement. There is only one alternative to MacDonaldism for the policy of the working-class movement. That alternative is Marxism, the modern realisation of which is Communism. The expression of this alternative has got to be achieved by all the virile elements in the Labour Party.

R. P. D.

TOWARDS A NEW POLICY.—V

By A. A. PURCELL, M.P.

(Chairman of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress)

THIRTY-FOUR years continuous membership of the Union in a trade gathers within its four corners the experiences of quite a mass of "new" and "forward" policies.

This does not necessarily mean that even those which petered out at some stage or another were not worth the time and energy spent on them. Not at all—more frequently than otherwise it is a case of any good-looking peg being momentarily strong enough to hang your young or old advocacy upon.

The chief thing should be to go in and get something; if it comes off well, good—if not, well, come again—and again—and again.

Policies, programmes, platforms and what not have the knack of nosing forward, and shifting either sideways or to the rear a little or much, just according to the bleat of those behind or the blast of those in the front line of advocacy.

Similarly after demonstrations where the teeth of the movement were to have been delved into the main arteries of this commercial system they get too loose by the morning to assist the digestion of the softest of food.

But how many times (according to our position in the Industrial Line) have some of us, if not all, taken sections of our class up the side of the mountain, shown them the promised land, and then—now back—down again.

Of course, we all have, and correctly so, we have always been bigger than we thought we were.

Our trouble really is that we are so easily disappointed, and quite airily we say something else is needed, and so we prove our courage, or want of it, as you please.

Now all these programmes, platforms, policies and manifestos have their place. I have been in at the drafting and distribution

of millions of them, but never once did I believe they would do the thing the chief enthusiasts desired. My view has always been that I regarded this literature attack as an effort to get the working class to know itself.

Even to-day you could raise the storm upon a really urgent matter, and things would look quite hopeful and suddenly damp down.

“There you are,” say the kindly critics, “I told you so, the working class will not move—damn them. I’m going to stand for Parliament.”

He does so, succeeds, concludes that he is the working class, and should the latter kick or their attitude appear strong and bent upon instant advance, well, good advice is necessary and he gives it—*Caution*.

Many of us then lapse into personal attacks, and so on, emulating the bar-parlour croaker proving to a nicety how virtuous he really is.

This is as I have seen it over a very happy and useful number of years.

I would leave those who are desperately anxious to adumbrate new policies to their task, let them keep to it. They are quite a necessary part of our working-class mosaic. Keep them in and at it.

My preference is for preaching, urging, quietly, noisily, in season and out, undiluted working-class solidarity.

How? By constant association with every working-class effort, local or national. Encouragement at every conceivable point of the industrial compass. Persistently agitating for the reduction of the 1,000 unions to ten, and then the ten to join as one and under the same roof.

Always a forward policy, and ready with an urge that from the cashier’s desk down or up through the machine shop to the warehouse and store, and on to the actual delivery of the goods—one union.

Gradually, even if ever so slowly, these long years of advocacy are bearing fruit. We are constantly reminded of this by the “public inconvenience” croak.

But even if we do not get the great reductions in the numbers of organisations which are so vitally necessary, it is quite easy to perceive the gradual development of a growing measure of solidarity, strange as it may appear, among the sectional unions. It is therefore coming home to them, maybe unknowingly.

The inclusion of administrative, technical, manual and mental workers inside the industrial organisation ; the organisation of the Trades Councils, city, town and county, into integral parts of the National Industrial Union, the direct connection everywhere of the finger tips to the head.

Tomes of detail will yet ensue, but they will sooner or later sink beneath the sheer weight of the onward rush of the worker towards solidarity.

Those who have got the tone and atmosphere of parliamentary activity need fear very little, provided they are bent upon the capture of Parliament and all that it involves, but they will ask, What becomes of Parliament in the event of such an organisation of industrial completeness as roughly outlined ?

The answer is Parliament will become a new place, if it exists at all, a place for co-ordinating the industrial structure in all its varying parts. More will have been achieved, the Industrial Order will be on the threshold of Control and, indeed, its final emancipation.

My contribution is an evasion of the details of a new forward policy and a restatement of the old.

I would not quarrel with any attempt made to get us to the gates quickly, in fact, I give general support during the periods intervening between a persistent, constant and everlasting urge to draw the workers in all spheres into the nearest approach as a surging mass.

Inform them well and unite them swiftly and well.

Previous contributions to this symposium by Messrs. W. H. Hutchinson, (of the A.E.U., and the Labour Party Executive), George Hicks (of the Building Trade Workers, and the General Council), Will Lawther (of the Miners, and the Labour Party Executive), and Robert Williams (of the Transport Workers, and the Labour Party Executive), appeared in the first four numbers of the present volume of THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

LENIN AND THE WORKERS

By G. ZINOVIEV

IN her article dedicated to the memory of Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg wrote : “ . . . If we wish to formulate in a few words what Marx accomplished for the contemporary working-class movement, we would say that Marx discovered the working class as a historical category, that is, a class with definite conditions of historical existence and definite laws of historical development.”

To Lenin a greater destiny has been allotted : he has led the working class, which was theoretically “ discovered ” by Marx, into the fight. Under his leadership, the working class in one country at least, from being the “ lowest ” class became the ruling class. His genius has created an international organisation of the working class which has set itself the same goal on an international scale.

Although it was not given to Lenin to “ discover ” the working class, it was given to the working class to “ discover ” Lenin himself. During the very earliest manifestations of the approaching proletarian world revolution, the international working class perceived in Lenin its chosen leader.

Lenin always felt himself merely as the first of the workers whom history had pushed to the position of leadership. Throughout his whole activity it always seemed as if he said : “ I am only one of the leading working men. It fell to my lot to possess a good education and capacity, my business is to gather all the remaining workers together and lead them to battle.”

This fundamental attitude of Lenin has communicated itself through a thousand invisible threads—through “ wireless telegraphy ”—from heart to heart within the widest circles of the non-party workers. The intimate, affectionate attitude of the widest circles of the non-party working masses towards Vladimir Ilyitch was shown with striking clearness in the year 1918, when wounded by the bullet of the Socialist Revolutionary, Comrade Lenin struggled against death. Who does not remember the great

flood of resolutions and declarations which poured in at the time from the masses, written by the workers themselves, which bore a quite unique impress of the fullest love, tenderness and adoration in the deepest sense of the words.

The masses of the working class are by no means effusive in the way they accord praise and appreciation. The ordinary worker is generally moderate and reserved in the expression of his feelings, even towards a highly esteemed leader. But in the year 1918, this ordinary worker found words concerning V. I. Lenin which have rendered many resolutions of non-party workers real models of artistic prose.

And we are experiencing the same in greater measure now that Vladimir Ilyitch has closed his eyes for ever. One needs only read the following letter from a working woman over the death of Comrade Lenin.

The unemployed Nikitorova writes :—

“ . . . Our dear father ! You have left your children for ever.

We know that the hour will soon come when from the lands of all the earth wreaths will pour in to cover your warm grave. And it will not be moistened by the morning dew of summer, but by the tears of your children who have loved you so deeply and who will eternally be devoted to your memory . . . ”

Who can doubt that these words express the feeling of the best in the ranks of the working class ?

A single tear from such a working woman is the best praise for a leader of the proletariat.

He who has seen the tens and hundreds of thousands of workers waiting in devout silence to enter the state chamber, to pay their last respects to the departed, will never forget this drama, whose magnitude was unsurpassed in the history of the world.

He who knows the attitude of the Russian worker towards Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin has never doubted that from the mass of non-party workers one united reply would come to the death of the Master. We did not know what character it would take. Now it is quite clear. The non-party workers are streaming in masses to the ranks of the party created by V. I. Lenin.

In Leningrad and Voronesh, in Kiev and Charkow, in Moscow and Ivanovo-Vosnessensk, in the Donetz valley—everywhere the same is happening ; baring their heads before the newly made

grave of V. I. Lenin, the non-party workers are expressing, without superfluous words, that firm desire to enter the ranks of our Party.

Whole organisations are deciding unitedly to join the Party or "to elect their best and to send them as members into the Party."

That is a manifestation completely without parallel and whose significance can scarcely be overestimated. The Party must study it carefully, learn to understand it thoroughly and to draw all possible practical conclusions from it.

"We will place our power at the disposal of the glorious organisation of the Russian Communist Party whose stability has been shaken by the loss of its Master and Leader." So write the non-party workers of the ammunition works in Moscow.

At the joint special meeting of the workers of the "Moskust" cast-iron works and the "Moto Maschina" concern on the morning of January 23 there were about 400 workers present, 99 of them expressed the desire forthwith to join the Party. Dozens of similar declarations from non-party workers are reaching the Party nuclei of "The Red Leather Worker" Works. "He who is stronger shall join the ranks of the Russian Communist Party. We will do our utmost to send the best into the ranks of the Russian Communist Party."

Such utterances are coming from the circles of non-party workers in the great industrial concerns of Leningrad and other towns.

"The 50 non-party workers here assembled have chosen their five best and are sending them to join the ranks of the Russian Communist Party."

Such resolutions have been received by the dozens.

This movement is just beginning. We must understand how to give heed to it and to support it. Our recent Union Party Congress decided to introduce no fewer than 100,000 new party members into our ranks in the course of the next year, consisting exclusively of workers from the workshops. This decision was made before the death of Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin. If this decision were correct and profoundly justified before January 21—the day upon which Vladimir Ilyitch closed his eyes for ever—it is now by far more correct and justified.

We do not speak here of the hundreds and thousands of resolutions from non-party workers, which only speak generally of the necessity for strengthening our Russian Communist Party. We are not speaking about those workers who, perhaps under the influence of their feelings, give expression to their trust in our Party : we do not doubt that if one had urged the hundreds of thousands of workers who streamed to the lying-in-state in the hall of the Trades Union Building to join the Party a good half of them would have enthusiastically accepted.

We speak here essentially of those amongst the non-party workers who firmly, and in the strength of their conviction resulting from mature thoughtful consideration, adopted their present attitude towards our Party.

In the events which we are now experiencing, each one of us can see with particular clearness how strong our Party is and how, despite all our weaknesses, it is intimately connected to and grown to the mass of the non-party workers. With anxiety we put the question at our congresses and conferences : How many members have we who are engaged in industry ? Is this group not too small ? Are we not in danger of separating ourselves from the masses ? This anxiety is justified. We would be no disciples of Comrade Lenin if we did not ask ourselves such questions, and if we did not do our utmost at the right time to adopt the necessary measures. The echo, however, which the departure of Vladimir Ilyitch has found amongst hundreds of thousands and millions of the non-party workers in our Union of Republics shows that, in the end, the question of how great the groups of those members of our Party are who are immediately engaged in industrial work is a subordinate one. We always were and will remain the party of the working class, flesh of its flesh. The masses of the workers recognise and will recognise no other party than that which was created and brought to maturity by Vladimir Ilyitch.

Our party can do well to pay the closest heed to the conspicuous movement which has set in during the last few days amongst the wide circles of the non-party workers. We must meet this movement with all our power. If we, in the near future, succeed in bringing an entirely new stratum of workers from the industrial concerns into our Party, it will be the best wreath we can lay upon

the newly-made grave of Vladimir Ilyitch. The new stratum of workers which, in view of the remarkable enthusiasm amongst the non-party proletariat during the last few days, will, after the necessary test, enter our Party will not be, of that we are convinced, the worst one.

These new strata of what were yesterday non-party workers will gain through the help of our Party the necessary tempering and Marxist education, and will become a worthy part of the advance-guard in the cause of Lenin. Yesterday we heard accidentally a conversation of two workers :—

The First : “What will we now do without him (Vladimir Ilyitch) ?”

The Second : “Oh, that won't be so very difficult now. But what would we have done had he died three or four years ago ?”

In this way simple workers translate into their own language the words of the poet : “Say not with sorrow, they are no longer there, but with thankfulness, they were there.”

The misfortune which has befallen our Party will be felt by the whole working masses of our country as their own misfortune. The best friend of the people is dead. But also through his death he has united anew the ranks of the class of which he was the Standard Bearer.

Nearer and still nearer to the working masses—that is our answer to the enthusiasm which has set in amongst the non-party workers. And only such a policy of our Party is worthy of the name of Vladimir Ilyitch.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND POWER

III.—The Outlook Abroad

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

SINCE the Labour government has been in power there have been only two controversial matters of first-class importance concerning foreign policy before Parliament. Both these had a naval aspect. They were the construction of the five cruisers and the dropping of the Singapore dock. On the one there was disagreement within the ranks of the Labour Party, and on the other full agreement but a bitter contest with the Conservatives. The disagreement within the party on the matter of the five cruisers turned out to be a storm in a tea-cup, because those who objected to them did so on purely pacifist grounds, which no Socialist recognising the economic problems facing Labour in its struggle with capitalism could possibly accept. The real objection to the construction of the five cruisers was not mentioned in the House by any Labour speaker. But if the construction of the cruisers are not looked upon just as electioneering stunts for providing work in dockyard constituencies, if they are taken in connection with the concentration of the British fleet in the Mediterranean and with the fact that the naval manœuvres this summer take place off the Balearic Islands, right on the lines of sea communication between France and her African cannon-fodder and cheap labour plantations, if it is remembered that the French debt to British financial houses through the Treasury amounts to 550 million sterling, and that a further advance was recently made to assist the stabilisation of the franc, then the increase of British naval strength in fast cruisers with heavy armament and guns is not without meaning. It is a reminder to the debtor that the creditor is there with the bailiff at hand, and that probably there will be one day also an American bailiff calling to ask about those 2½ milliard dollars. As things are at present, the Labour government is merely doing what the City and incidentally the armament firms want in building these cruisers. On the other hand, a refusal to construct them

would have met with the support of the Liberals and other manufacturing and trading interests, who are not concerned with France's debt to the City.

But the scrapping of Singapore was supposed to be great moral gesture ! It certainly has cleared the air in the Pacific. But Sir Percy Scott let the cat out of the bag when he wrote in a letter to *The Times* that it was criminal to waste money on Singapore when what was needed was a concentration of naval and aerial force at home. The inference is obvious. Moreover Japan has had an earthquake and I doubt if the Tory orators who attacked MacDonald really cared, except that by their action they kept the Jingo feeling going at home, which is always an important psychological asset for any group of monopolist interests.

Other matters of foreign policy have not yet come to the fore, but important developments have nevertheless taken place since the Labour government came into power. In Egypt the Zaglul government has taken office, and, while British troops and British officials still remain in Cairo, there is no doubt that the native Egyptian bourgeoisie with its Greek, Levantine, Syrian and Jewish hangers-on are increasing their political and in certain spheres their economic independence. Certainly in matters concerning the granting of concessions to excavate in the Valley of the Kings the Egyptian bourgeoisie is going to have its own way, as the executors of the late Lord Carnarvon have been made to feel. But British Imperialism, which in this case means the great steamship companies serving the East and the banks and trading concerns affiliated with them, keep their hold on the Suez Canal. In the Sudan the hold of South African Jew financiers on the natural resources of the land is tightening. The Labour government has not dared to break the usurious pact which its predecessor made, although one would have thought that they would at least have imposed some new conditions limiting profits. Not that it matters very much to the "fellaheen" or to the town workers in the Valley of the Nile if they are exploited by native or by international usurers, and under existing conditions in England one cannot expect the Labour government to remove them both at once. But one can at least expect from it a clear indication of what it would do if its hands were untied.

Further to the East in India, that special preserve of British finance and construction capital, the rise of a native capitalist class is in full swing. Though it is very difficult to get statistics there is every reason to believe that the accumulation of native investments is going on at a greater rate than the export of fresh capital from England. Side by side with this is the rapid breakdown of the caste system in the country, which has been testified to by Indian labour writers in the *Daily Herald*, so that the stock argument of the Anglo-Indian that the natives cannot get on without his assistance because of these social divisions is falling to the ground. New social divisions are forming and he is being pushed into the background. But like all obsolete ruling classes the Anglo-Indian, nurtured in the atmosphere of autocracy, is not going to let power slip from him without a fight. The Labour government has done absolutely nothing to curb his power yet, and MacDonald has gone out of his way to encourage him by that message to the Indian Nationalists. The outlook in India is not without some similarity to that of Russia before the revolution; with obscure agrarian movements, a privileged native nobility, a bureaucracy of foreign origin, and a rising bourgeoisie in the towns. British labour has no interest in setting the native capitalists in power in India and its ultimate aim should always be to hasten the passage from the present autocratic regime to that of a federation of states where native labour rules. The transition period is bound to be long and painful, because there is not, as there was in Russia, the unifying influence of geography, climate and language over the great plain. But the Labour government is looking on, while the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy unites the Indian coolie and the Indian capitalist against his vested interest. An explosion seems inevitable.

Let us look at another part of the world. American Imperialism is now in a position of arbiter over the fate of the capitalist world. With more than half the bullion of the world in the coffers of the Federal Reserve Board, obtained as guarantees for loans to bankrupt countries in Europe, with nearly 400 million dollars of foreign capital invested in America this year in its flight from Europe, Wall Street can face a trade boom at home without fear of inflation by simply expanding credits based on the huge gold reserves. Its economic conquest of Canada is continuing. It has come to terms

with the revolutionary government of Mexico with a view to opening up new markets, while the City has prevented the Labour government from taking a similar course, on account of the objections of British holders of Mexican bonds. Once more the conflict of interest between the bankers and the industrialists come to the surface. But Wall Street keeps its hold on the City and on the Labour government by the Anglo-American Debt Agreement. This is the British reparation, which has to be paid for having induced America to join the war. It is perhaps as well to regard this debt—as Lenin regarded the Brest-Litovsk Treaty—as an obligation to be respected on account of the existence of *force majeure*. In this case the *force majeure* is not bayonets and cruisers, although these might also under certain conditions appear, but the blockade of the British Treasury by Wall Street and its friends in the City. There would be prospects of engineered panics through selling of sterling securities in large blocks, causing immense financial embarrassments to the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer. One cannot, therefore, blame the Labour government for leaving well alone as far as the American debt is concerned for the present. To open hostilities on yet another front, when there are so many already, would be the height of tactical folly.

The powers that are now ruling England at the present time have secured their rear by pacifying America because they have problems to solve in another quarter. Hence the Labour government, if it is going to challenge this power ruling England, must direct its attention there also. Walton Newbold has shown in his brilliant analysis of the European situation in last month's *LABOUR MONTHLY* that transport and banking capital is challenging with apparent success the Franco-German coal and steel combine which has come into existence since the Micum Agreement last autumn. It now appears that Stresemann has let the cat out of the bag in a speech at Kiel in which he has said that the British banks threaten to refuse credits to the German trusts if the Micum Agreement is renewed. The experts, who are to present their report to the Reparations Commission, are really the nominees of the Wall Street and the City banks. The latter's plan is to get the Franch out of the Ruhr, in order to mortgage the whole of the transport and heavy industry of a united Germany to an

international loan, floated by themselves. The coming elections in Germany will decide not an issue between capitalism and Socialism (German labour is too crushed and demoralised to make even a pretence of a fight), but whether the agents of banking and transport capital in Germany shall secure a settlement with France on the basis of a Ruhr evacuation, or whether the French and German coal and steel trusts shall rule over West Germany and the rest of the country, east of the Elbe, be thrown to the wolves, that is to London and New York. But the victory of banking and transport capital will mean a 12-hour day in Germany and an unemployed army of at least 10 millions with wages probably below the present starvation level. Then we shall hear even more than we hear at present about colonial governments putting their railway orders in Germany because the quotations are cheaper. Then an additional argument will be provided for beating down the wages of the "sheltered" industries to the level of the "unsheltered." Our Labour government will be digging its own grave if it permits the British and American banks to float a loan to Germany on the conditions which they intend to exact.

But what can the government do to break the iron ring which surrounds it in nearly every part of the world? To be quite frank, it cannot break it now and no one can expect it to. But it can at least speak the truth, show us the enemy, and mobilise public opinion for new elections. It must cease to pretend that the international loan to Germany is anything else than a Shylock's pound of flesh. It must put forward its own reparation policy—not that of the coal and steel trusts (Micum Agreements) and not that of the banks and transport interests—but a working-class reparation policy. In addition to the recommendations of the *New Leader*, that the British government waives its share of reparation and cancels the French debt, should be added a condition that French and German labour representatives be present at an international conference, and that a minimum standard of living be guaranteed to the German worker in the interest of all Europe.

And should any gesture in this direction on the part of the Labour government fail, as it probably would, it has still a powerful weapon in its hands. The Russian delegates are now arriving to the conference on debts and economic relations between Russia

and England. Already the howl of execration going up from *The Times* is indicative of the fact that a certain gang of wirepullers in the City is getting nervous. Judicious manoeuvring, which MacDonald is quite capable of, if he intends, could isolate this little clique of so-called "creditors of Russia" and the holders of the old Tsarist bonds. The trading and manufacturing interests and indeed most of the F.B.I., including the heavy concerns, are bound to be tempted by the prospects of opening up the Russian markets and keeping their plants running at home. The interests of the bondholders must not be allowed to hinder for one moment the opening up of credits to finance exports to Russia. If the former creditors of Russia are wise, they will take any offer they can get in liquidation of their claims, such as rouble participation in "mixed" companies for the development of Russia, and they may think themselves lucky if they get this, probably their last chance. A settlement with Russia of this kind will tend gradually to free the workers of this country from the control of food and raw materials by price manipulators in America and elsewhere. Already the advent of Russian timber has brought down the price of that article. And as for the prospects of exports of manufactured goods from this country, there is ample room in Russia to make up for the loss of the continental markets, which would come if either the Micum Agreement or the international loan to Germany without conditions protecting German labour were brought into effect. Here is a chance for our Labour government fearlessly to strike out a new line, not Socialistic in its immediate implications, but one which would make a beginning of breaking down the iron ring of the banking oligarchy which surrounds it in every other part of the world. I believe the government will be judged in history by the way in which it handles the coming Russian conference.

A LABOUR PREMIER MEETS HIS MASTERS

By V. G. CHILDE

THE refusal of a loan to the Labour Government of Queensland by the City moneylenders created a sensation in 1920. But then the financiers won only a Pyrrhic victory. The Labour Premier declined to modify at their behest legislation passed by the elected Parliament of Queensland. He went back to the people of the State and, with "No dictation by foreign capitalists" as a battle-cry, managed once more to secure a victory for Labour at the polls. He even managed to secure a modest but costly loan in the U.S.A. At a time of universal depression, when the capitalist class has been making a mass attack on the standards of the workers, real wages in Queensland have remained higher than in any other State in Australia. The masters themselves have paid a striking tribute to the Labour Ministry by offering a bribe of £5,000 to a Labour member to desert his colleagues at a critical division.

Nevertheless these intervening years have been a period of disillusionment both to the proletariat of Queensland and to Mr. Theodore. The lack of loan moneys at once ruled out any "extension of the industrial and economic functions of the State" on lines which should on Australian theory pave the way to "Socialism." The financial embarrassments of the Government involved a partial cessation of public works which had been utilised to absorb the unemployed. The ranks of the latter were swelled by the inevitable retrenchment in the public service. In the absence of loans to cover the deficits, railwaymen and other State employees were sacked wholesale. No wonder the reiterated demands of the Party Conference, repeated with emphasis just the other day by the Brisbane Industrial Council, for double pay for night work on the railways evoked a blank *non possumus*. And in the face of the general capitalist assault on hours and wages backed with the threat

of a universal lockout, another plank of the Labour platform—the statutory 44 hour week—has had to be jettisoned.

The biting criticism of industrialists has only served to underline the Premier's lesson. And so he stands in Lombard Street in the garb of penitence. As the price of a short-term loan the Labour stalwart has reversed the position he adopted four years ago and acknowledged the superiority of economic to political power. In an apologetic letter to the interested companies he has promised that the weapon forged by Parliament in pursuance of a long established plank of the Labour platform shall rust in its scabbard.

This signal capitulation crowning four years of starved impotence is doubly instructive. The "silken cords" which bind the self-governing Dominions to the motherland are now revealed in their true nature. The imposition of conditions in return for a loan is only the obverse of that much trumpeted demonstration of complete Dominion autonomy in politics—the unhesitating Royal Assent to the obnoxious Bill for the abolition of the Queensland Legislative Council. The effective control over Dominion policy resides not in Westminster but in the City. And it is left to a Labour Colonial Secretary to give his blessing publicly to its exercise.

Secondly, the paralysis of legislation and the abrogation of parliamentary sovereignty exposes the fatuity of theories which promise the transformation of capitalism by evolutionary means; for it was precisely in Queensland that evidence for the feasibility of such politics might have been sought. The Labour Ministries which have ruled there since 1915 have some claim to be regarded as genuine workers' Governments. They made on their accession honest, if modest, attempts to give effect to the Labour policy for Socialism by the establishment of a number of State enterprises. Some of these, notably the State Butchers' Shops and the State Insurance Office, attained considerable dimensions, very substantially reduced prices and rates to the consumers, and earned an appreciable revenue for the State. The Insurance Acts giving the State Office a monopoly of workmen's compensation business and establishing a strict supervision over private insurers in other risks is particularly obnoxious to high finance and especially valuable to the workers. Similarly much admirable industrial

legislation was passed in the interests of the toilers. The Industrial Arbitration Act went as far as it is possible to go within the limits of the compulsory system to give the Unions at once legal status and freedom of action. In administration again the Labour Ministers' policy contrasted favourably with that habitually pursued by "Labour" Governments in Australia—and elsewhere. Where the naked issue of the class war was raised, the Cabinet was distinctly, if perhaps reluctantly, on the side of the proletariat. While the Tory Government of New South Wales was crushing unionism on the railways there in 1917, the Queensland Minister concerned informed his colleague in the south that goods carried on non-union trains could not be accepted at the frontier for transmission over the Queensland lines. In the same year Premier Ryan ended the shipping lockout by a threat to commandeer all ships in Queensland and man them on union terms. During the sanitary carters' strike at Townsville the Premier "cleansed" the town under the Public Health Act by paying the men the wages demanded and charging the cost to the Tory local authority.

The first reaction of capitalism against this regime was the adoption of fascist violence in 1919. To this end returned soldiers organised by Tory officers and encouraged by the Federal Government under the renegade W. M. Hughes were employed. The workers were unprepared and the State police insufficient to repel their attacks. Diplomacy was necessary, and Labour Ministers had to pose as upholders of law and order even at the cost of arresting militants for exhibiting the Red Flag contrary to Federal Law. So when the police at Townsville used firearms to repel an assault by armed strikers upon a non-union meat works, the Home Secretary condoned their conduct and despatched reinforcements to the town. The Minister for Railways suspended some unionists who refused to work the train conveying their extra constables, and only fully reinstated the victims under the cloak of the "Peace" celebrations when the crisis was passed. But the conspiracy to wreck the Labour Government by brute force was circumvented. The veterans' organisations were corrupted and their energy diverted to other channels.

It was after this partial defeat that the capitalists turned to their proper weapons. The post-war depression and the unemployment

it entailed were utilised to undermine the position of the more militant unions. At the same time the financial boycott has robbed the Labour Government of its power to provide effective shelter to the victims of the attack. Mr. Theodore's capitulation is only the formal acknowledgment of defeat. The capitalist class have proved the efficacy against mere constitutionalism of that direct action which Mr. Theodore himself had once long ago preached to the workers when organising the unskilled navvies and lumberers of the north. The "responsibilities of Office" turned him against that doctrine, but its application has reduced his Cabinet and himself to the position of a subservient managing committee for the bourgeoisie.

THE IMPERIAL STRUGGLE FOR CANADA

By SCOTT NEARING

MORE than three and a-half million square miles of wheat lands, timber lands, coal, iron, copper, oil and water power make up the Dominion of Canada. Though its borders cross the Arctic Circle few areas are potentially richer in those natural advantages which provide the basis for a modern industrial civilisation.

Canada means wealth and power to its future possessor. Where will the title to Canada rest a decade hence—in London or in Washington ?

To Great Britain Canada means a market for manufactured goods, a source of raw material, but above all an investment field. When the war broke out the Canadian investment market was the favourite child of British financial imperialism. During 1913 about 45 million pounds sterling were sent by British investors into Canada. At that time the British investing public had more wealth in the Canadian field than in any other area outside Britain with the single exception of the United States.

Potentially, Canada means more to the United States than to Great Britain. Within a very few years the United States will cease to provide a sufficient supply of wheat and of meat to feed its own population. The Canadian grain fields will then become indispensable to the American people. Already the timber supply of the United States is seriously depleted and the great forest resources of Canada are being drawn upon for paper stock and lumber. The coal of Nova Scotia, the iron of Newfoundland, and the copper of the lake regions will sooner or later be requisitioned for American manufacturing industry. In the meantime, the great volumes of American surplus are finding Canada the most promising neighbouring field.

Canada was neglected by outside investors until the end of the nineteenth century. The rapid building of railroad lines with the

opening up of new agricultural and industrial territory offered choice opportunities to the American and British investor. At that time, however, American investors, busy with their own internal developments, had no surplus funds to place outside of the United States. Consequently the field was left open to the British.

The opening of Canada as an investment field corresponds with the development of an important investable surplus in the United States. The free lands of the United States were exhausted in the '90's. Thereafter American farmers looking for homesteads found that it paid them to cross the border-line into Canada. The United States Steel Corporation was organised in 1901. From that time forward American industrialism was producing on a reasonably efficient scale, by quantity methods, vast amounts of economic goods, a part of which found a market in the United States. The surplus went of necessity into some foreign field.

By 1910 the volume of investable surplus in the United States had increased to such a point that Cuba, Mexico, Central America and Canada were all called upon to absorb their share of surplus American funds. At that time, however (1910), the amount of United States investments in Canada did not exceed 225 million dollars.

Meanwhile the British investors had been making the best of an excellent opportunity. The amount of new British capital publicly sent into Canada during the years immediately preceding the war was :—

1908	...	...	...	...	...	£27 million
1909	...	...	...	...	...	£26 "
1910	...	...	...	...	...	£36 "
1911	...	...	...	...	...	£41 "
1912	...	...	...	...	...	£47 "
1913	...	...	...	...	...	£44 "
1914 (first six months)	...	...	...	...	...	£37 "

—*Monetary Times Annual*, 1914.

By 1914 the total of British investments in Canada had exceeded 500 million pounds. In the same year the total of United States investments was not more than 130 million pounds.

These two figures represent the relative investment positions of the two empires at the outbreak of the World War. The United

States investors had not yet waked up to the value of Canadian opportunities, while British investors had taken advantage of them to the full.

With regard to trade in 1913, Canada imported from Great Britain, for consumption, 20 per cent. and from the United States 58 per cent. of her total imports. The exports to Great Britain and the United States for that year were actually the same, namely, 39 per cent. to each country.¹ Thus in both exports and imports exactly 78 per cent. of Canadian business was carried on with these two countries. But while Canada sold an equal quantity of goods to each, her imports from the United States were three times her imports from Great Britain. Canada, in other words, was borrowing money in Great Britain and spending it in the United States.

Already, therefore, at the outbreak of the war, Canada, while depending upon British investors for her prosperity, was looking to the United States for her goods. Britain still held the purse-strings, but Canada's buying market lay across her southern border.

The war of 1914 completely altered the position of the two empires in relation to the economic life of Canada. The British manufacturing industry was compelled to devote its attention to the supplying of war materials. Consequently by 1917 Canada was importing only 12 per cent. of her total from Great Britain as against 70 per cent. from the United States. On the other hand, the great demand for war materials created a situation in which Canada was exporting 68 per cent. of her total to Great Britain as against 25 per cent. to the United States. Furthermore, the total of Canadian exports jumped from 455 million dollars in 1913 to 1,179 million dollars in 1917.

This war episode not only destroyed a part of the British market in Canada by stimulating the development of local Canadian industry, but it hurt British industry at home by stimulating the export of Canadian manufactured goods to the Mother-country.

¹ These figures apparently do not take account of wheat and other transit trade, and therefore should not be taken at face value.—ED., LABOUR MONTHLY.

At the same time, new British investments in Canada virtually ceased, since the entire surplus of British production was utilised for war purposes.

The war situation gave United States investors their opportunity. Between 1914 and 1917, when the United States entered the war, American manufacturers and traders were making unheard-of profits. This investable surplus found a quite logical outlet into Canada. At the same time, the rapid growth of Canadian manufacturing business demanded a great increase in the total volume of capital. Since this could not be secured from Britain, it must come from the United States. Consequently, while the war virtually stopped the increase of British economic interests in Canada, it provided an immense stimulus for those of the United States.

The net inflow of United States capital into Canada in 1919 was about 220 million dollars; in 1920 about 325 millions (*Wealth and Income of the American People*, by W. R. Ingalls, page 61). In the latter year the total of British investments probably did not exceed two billions, while the total of American investments had jumped to 1 billion 800 millions, as compared with about 600 millions in 1914. Even more significant than this total, however, was the complete modification that occurred in the ownership of some of the Canadian key industries. Thus in 1920, out of a total investment of 650 millions in the iron and steel industry, Canadian investors held 47 per cent., British 4 per cent. and United States investors 38 per cent. Similarly, in the mining industry of Canada, Canadian investors held 54 per cent., British 13 per cent. and United States investors 31 per cent.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics recently published a report on the nationality of capital in Canadian industries for 1919. According to this report, of the 126 million dollars invested in the lumber industry, 61 per cent. was Canadian, 11 per cent. British and 27 per cent. United States. Of 135 millions in the pulp and paper industry, 68 per cent. was Canadian, 4 per cent. British and 24 per cent. United States. In the foundries, out of 48 millions, 70 per cent. was Canadian, 8 per cent. British and 21 per cent. United States. In agricultural implement

manufacturing, out of an investment of 39 millions, 58 per cent. was Canadian, 10 per cent. British and 31 per cent. United States. In the manufacturing of electrical appliances the distribution of capital was 36 per cent. Canadian, 12 per cent. British and 49 per cent. United States; and in building operations, 57 per cent. was Canadian, 0.2 per cent. British and 41 per cent. United States. Although the proportion varies considerably from one industry to another, by 1919 all of the major manufacturing and mining industries of Canada were being financed by Canadian or by United States capital. The United States investments had practically equalled British investments, and the volume of United States money pouring into Canada every year far exceeded the volume of British money.

It should be noted that these figures on the nationality of Canadian capital relate only to the local titles. In many instances United States capital is invested under Canadian names and under Canadian directorates; nevertheless the real control remains in New York or Chicago.

Five war years were sufficient to check and even curtail the increase of British financial influence in Canada, to provide United States investors with an immense surplus and to enable them to make rapid inroads into this vastly important British dominion.

Trade depression followed the war, giving United States investors new opportunities to dominate the Canadian economic field. The approaching dissolution of Europe rendered Continental investments unattractive. The evident stability of industrialism in Canada provided a double incentive for United States economic expansion in that direction.

Then, too, many of the Canadian industries had been organised during the pressure of war prosperity. As soon as the war demand fell off, their sponsors found themselves in financial difficulties, and rapidly made terms with American banking interests, under which title passed across the international boundary line. The *American Economist* estimates that between 1920 and 1923 the percentage of Canadian manufacturing industry controlled in the United States increased from 50 per cent. to 60 per cent. This was due in part to the failure of Canadian investors to hold their

economic position in the face of hard times, and in part to the rapid movement of United States manufacturers to establish plants in Canadian territory.

Just how far this latter movement has gone it is rather difficult to say. It is estimated that there are between 600 and 700 branches of American industry in Canada at the present time. Some of them, such as the International Harvester, Canadian General Electric and General Motors, are very important enterprises, while others are of minor consequence. In the aggregate, however, they constituted a rapidly growing volume of American capital movement into the Dominion.

Unofficial estimates for 1923 place the total volume of British capital in Canada at 2 billion dollars, and the total volume of United States capital in Canada at $2\frac{1}{2}$ billions.

Canadian trade in 1922 had swung back toward its pre-war position. Exports to Great Britain slightly exceeded exports to the United States (374 millions as compared with 310 millions). In the case of imports, however, 67 per cent. were coming from the United States while only 18 per cent. were drawn from Great Britain.

Imperial policy is having not a little influence upon the rapid absorption of Canadian economic opportunity by the United States business interests. The higher the tariff wall which the Empire erects about itself, the greater the pressure compelling United States manufacturers to set up branch houses in Canada to produce there and to ship the commodities inside the Empire under preferential tariffs.

Companies like General Motors have already taken advantage of the British preference in favour of Canadian-made automobiles. They are turning out their product in Canada, selling locally without the necessity of meeting the Canadian tariff, and exporting to Britain at an advantage over their United States competitors.

The closer the Dominion is tied to the Mother-country, the larger the opportunities for United States investors to work from inside the Dominion to the economic markets of the Empire, and the greater the probability that increasing amounts of Canadian purchases will be made on the American side of the border. At

the present time such purchases exceed two-thirds of all the imports into Canada.

The economic title to Canada's foreign investment field has passed from British to United States bankers. The political title still remains in British hands. History shows that economic possession ultimately carries with it political control.

For the time being, Canada remains in a condition of unstable equilibrium. The roots of her economic power are driven deep into the business life of the United States. Her political fealty remains with Great Britain. Whenever the test of strength comes, however, the economic will undoubtedly outweigh the political.

There is a remote chance that Britain may win back her economic supremacy. This is so faint, however, as to be scarcely dignified by the term "possibility." With the lines of economic advantage which bind Canada and the United States together; with the very large sums of investable surplus which lie ready on hand in the United States, and with the pressure of British imperial policy forcing American industries to locate in Canada in order to obtain the advantages derived from imperial preferences, there seems to be an overwhelming probability that the relative position of the two empires will remain what it is, that the British financial position in Canada will grow proportionately less and that the position of the United States will become rapidly more dominating.

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE BOMBAY STRIKE

By EVELYN ROY

ONE hundred and fifty thousand mill operatives, including thirty thousand women and children, have been on strike and locked-out of the textile mills of Bombay for nearly three months. All the mills of the district, eighty-three in number, are closed down. The question at issue is the payment of the annual bonus to the operatives, in addition to their usual wage. In July of last year, the owners put up a notice that the usual bonus, received by the operatives during the last five years and regarded by them as a form of supplementary wages, would not be paid. The men did not heed the notice, most of them being illiterate, and it was not until the end of the year when the bonus became payable that they realised the issue at stake. A strike was declared in the middle of January, followed immediately by a lockout on the part of the owners, in an attempt to force the men back to work unconditionally.

The monthly wage of a Bombay mill operative is 35 rupees for men; 17 rupees for women—for a ten-hour day. This sum is insufficient to maintain their bodily health and strength, or to provide them with the most elementary necessities. For this reason, during the height of the post-war boom period when mill profits soared to several hundred per cent., the annual bonus was granted as a form of supplementary wages. The cost of living has risen (according to official figures) 58 per cent. since 1914; profits have risen from 674 lakhs of rupees in 1917 to 1,559 lakhs in 1921, with a slight falling-off in 1922-23. The cotton mill workers are proverbially underpaid and overworked, with the result that they are always heavily in debt to the money-lender. Their right to organise into trade unions is not legally recognised; they have no regular labour organisations and no union fund. Their leaders, up to the time of the present strike, were drawn from the ranks of the bourgeoisie—lawyers, politicians, philanthropists and professional labour leaders, who were closer in interests and sympathies

to the employing class than to the workers. They sabotaged every attempt to strike on the part of the latter; they took the part of the employers in every decisive issue; they used their influence to keep the men at work and satisfied with the old conditions instead of attempting to better themselves. The Government, which affects to maintain its neutrality in labour disputes, has never hesitated to call out armed police and military to aid the employers in guarding their property and crushing a strike.

Thus every institution and condition was against the success of the present strike, as it has been of previous ones. Yet the textile workers of Bombay have maintained their struggle for three months in face of all odds; they have remained peaceful and non-violent in the teeth of the most open provocation; they have repudiated their old leaders and elected new ones from their own ranks to present their demands before the Government and the employers; they have endured with marvellous fortitude the sufferings of hunger and privation throughout the whole of the strike period. They have never wavered in their demand for the payment of bonus as a pre-requisite for returning to work; they have maintained their solidarity of front against the efforts of the employers to seduce a part of them back to work, and against the sabotage of the Government and the public, which has refrained from giving them any concrete help during the long and bitter dispute.

The textile workers of Bombay are dying in the streets from starvation. Their January wages, already earned before the declaration of the strike and lockout, have been illegally withheld by the owners. The grain dealers and provision shops have long ago refused them credit. They are unable to pay their rent for the miserable rooms in which they huddle by tens and dozens in the infamous Bombay Chawls (tenements). The workers have never possessed any material resources to carry them from one day to the next, nor any central fund to maintain them in time of strike. They are sticking to their demands in the face of slow starvation. Appeals to the public for material help and to the Government have met with no response. *The charitable associations of Bombay are all controlled by the Mill Owners' Association, and have refused to give aid to the strikers.* The Legislative Councils, both national and provincial, have made no move to come to the assistance of the

sufferers. The Indian National Congress, which in each of its annual sessions since 1916 has pledged its support to the cause of Indian labour, refused to sanction the granting of a sum for supplying grain or credits to the starving strikers. The All-India Trade Union Congress, which presumes to lead the struggle of the Indian workers against the employing class, has never so much as mentioned the Bombay strike, nor sent one of its office-holders to the scene of the struggle to investigate and guide it, nor issued a single appeal on behalf of the starving strikers. The Fourth Annual Session of the All-India Trade Union Congress, which was scheduled to be held on March 7, the very day on which the workers of Bombay were being shot down by the guns of the police and military, *deferred its session indefinitely because of internal quarrels and factional disputes among its office-bearers*. When it finally met on March 14, it broke up in a rain of abuse and a free-for-all fist fight, without so much as giving one thought to the cause of the 150,000 striking mill hands of Bombay, or of identifying the All-India Trade Union Congress with the greatest industrial struggle that has ever been waged in India.

The British Labour Government and Labour Party, which rule the destinies of the Indian people to-day, has limited its interest in the fate of the starving Bombay workers on strike for a living wage to a statement in the House of Commons that the matter "has been left to the Government of India." While in Britain the Dockers' strike, the tram and bus strike, and other threatened strikes have been subjected to the immediate and closest scrutiny of the Government, which spares no efforts to bring them to a speedy and satisfactory solution, in India an industrial dispute affecting the welfare and very lives of 150,000 workers, to which must be added the count of their families and dependents, and reaching out in its consequences to the very shores of England in its effect on the Lancashire textile industry, has been allowed to proceed for *three months* without a motion to interfere on the part of the Labour Government or a gesture of sympathy or solidarity on the part of the Labour Party.

The British Labour Government and the British Labour Party have permitted the striking and locked-out mill hands of Bombay to die in the streets from starvation, to be shot down by the rifles of armed

police and military, without using their supreme power as head of the British Empire to bring this strike to an end and to secure victory to the just demands of the Bombay workers.

What are the facts of this strike? In what way is it proceeding, and what will be the result of a defeat of the workers, both in India and in Great Britain?

The present struggle is more than a mere demand for payment of bonus on the part of the workers. It is an offensive on the part of Indian capitalism (which includes both Europeans and natives) against the Indian working class to reduce still further its already pitifully low standard of living. It was intended to follow up the refusal of the bonus with a cut in wages. The comparative lull in the textile industry was seized upon by the owners as a favourable moment to cut into the wage-bill, which had been slightly raised during the boom period in response to the rise in the cost of living and the consequent strike wave that visited Bombay in 1919. Such an offensive had already taken place in Ahmedabad, where the workers were forced to accede. The Bombay mill owners were prepared to close down for a short time to force the men to submit to the new conditions. The strike of the operatives in January was promptly replied to by the declaration of a two-weeks' lockout. It was held that this period would suffice to bring the men to their knees. In spite of the opposition of their so-called leaders, who tried by every means to persuade them to resume work unconditionally, having failed in all their efforts to prevent the strike, the workers instinctively realised that more than the bonus was at stake—if they yielded, the next attack would be directed against their wages. Therefore they held firm, and the lockout had to be extended for two further successive periods of two weeks. At the close of each one, unsuccessful attempts were made by the owners to reopen the mills with blackleg labour. Signs were posted, saying that if the men would resume work the owners guaranteed not to reduce wages, but nothing was said about the bonus. The men held out, and at the end of six weeks the owners began to feel the effects of the complete stoppage, and division arose in their own ranks. At a meeting of the Bombay Mill Owners' Association, a strong Indian minority were for granting the demand for bonus, but a slight majority against it carried the day. *In the battle between*

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Lancashire and Bombay, in which Lancashire textile products are protected at the expense of native industry, it is the Indian workers who must pay the difference in a lower wage bill to permit the Indian textile industry to thrive.

At the end of six weeks, in response to the urgent demands of the workers and the pressure of public opinion, the Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson, who had refrained from taking any action calculated to bring the dispute to a close, appointed an Inquiry Committee with power to investigate "the customary, legal or equitable claim of the men to payment of bonus." This Committee had neither power to recommend nor to arbitrate; despite the request of the workers, no representative of labour was included among its members, appointed from the prominent capitalists and Government henchmen of Bombay. It was a move to gain time, by appearing to do something, and to drag out the negotiations until the workers would be forced to surrender. This Committee held three sittings, extended over a period of two weeks. Appointed on February 29, it published its findings on March 12, five days after the events of March 7, when protest meetings of the strikers were fired upon by the police, resulting in five killed, four wounded and thirteen arrests. The decision of the Committee caused no surprise, given its nature and composition; it declared that: "The mill workers have not established any enforceable claim, customary, legal or equitable, to the payment annually of a bonus," . . . and that "the results of the working of the mill industry as a whole for the year 1923 are such as to justify the contention of the mill owners that the profits do not admit of the payment of a bonus." Would that the mill workers of Bombay could say to their Christian rulers: "I asked for bread, and ye gave me a stone."

On March 7, just before these findings became public, a notice was posted on all the mill premises to the effect that: "To all workers willing to resume work unconditionally, the mills will be opened for resumption of work on March 8, and two days later the January wages will be paid." The notice was signed by S. D. Saklatvala, Chairman of the Bombay Mill Owners' Association. The result was the tragic and, till present writing, unexplained events of March 7, when in reply to some stone-throwing on the part of assembled groups of strikers gathered together to discuss the notice,

police fire was opened without warning on the unarmed crowd, killing five and wounding four. Thirteen workers who attempted to loot a grain shop were arrested.

This brutal massacre, which would have been unthinkable in Britain, and which roused a storm of indignation in the Indian public mind, was brushed aside by the Bombay Government with the single statement in the Bombay Legislative Council on March 8 that "the Government desire to offer their sympathy to the victims, particularly in view of the very creditable behaviour of the men hitherto. . . . Military patrols have been called out, but it is hoped that it will not be necessary to use them unless absolutely essential to preserve law and order." Asked by a member if there was any loss to property as a result of the acts of the strikers, the Home Member replied: "I understand there has been some window breaking and some looting in the mills. But so far *I have no information of any serious injury to any of the mills.*"

Human life may be held cheap in a country inhabited by 320,000,000 souls, but in the interests of what assumes itself to be "civilised government" it might have been expected that an official inquiry would be undertaken into the reasons for an order to shoot, on the sole authority of a deputy police inspector (European), in the absence of a magistrate, and before the crowd had been warned to disperse or blank shots had been previously fired into the air. Can mere stone-throwing on the part of justly-aggrieved men in the face of the most intense provocation be held to justify the calling out of armed police and soldiery and the shooting into an unarmed and defenceless mob? Are industrial Amritsars to be repeated all over India with impunity under the aegis of a Labour Government?

The events of March 7 precipitated long-delayed action on the part of the Bombay Government, and the Mill Owners' Association was informed by His Excellency that: "January wages should be paid at once without affecting the question of bonus and irrespective of resumption of work by the men, and that the mill owners should meet the representatives of the men to discuss the questions at issue." It should be remembered that this tardy step to effect negotiations was made two months after the beginning of the dispute which had plunged 150,000 workers, together with their wives

and families, into the direst distress and the whole industrial life of Bombay into an abnormal state. Would a similar strike of such dimensions have been allowed to drag out its course in Lancashire without some action being taken by the Labour Government?

Yet still another month has been allowed to pass without any decisive action being taken to bring the dispute to a close. The latest reports bring news that the striking operatives, exhausted and starving, have appealed to the Government for help to assist 50,000 of them, with their wives and children, to be repatriated to their villages, where they hope to find some kind of work. Fifty thousand have already found their own way back to the country districts—the remaining ones, three times fifty thousand at the least if we count those dependent upon them, remain in Bombay to fight it out to the end, performing casual labour, subsisting on precarious charity, or dying outright in the streets of Bombay. The Government has been asked to provide them with some form of work to enable them to survive the struggle. A few of the smaller mills are reported to have opened, to which a few thousand men had straggled back to work. But the overwhelming majority remain firm to their voluntary pledge to abstain from rejoining the mills until their original demands have been met. Nor theirs is the cry of the British proletariat, "Work or maintenance." To claim such a boon as their right is beyond their humble dreams. They know only how to do that which is within reach of their own human endurance—to resist the capitalist offensive dumbly, peaceably, uncomplainingly, but with what worlds of determined fortitude, until either their cause is won or they themselves are no more. There is something truly Indian in this infinite capacity for suffering; in this strength of the meek to resist injustice even unto death. What scorn of human life it expresses—or of human existence reduced to a status lower than the beasts!

The British Labour Party, in power to-day as the British Labour Government, has it within its means to save the Bombay workers from death by starvation and from the lingering existence which exploitation renders worse than death. It can send material help to support the starving strikers, and it can demand arbitration of the dispute in a manner fair and just to the cause of the Indian working class.

Upon the outcome of this strike hangs the fate, for the next few years, of the Indian textile workers in their heroic struggle for a living wage. *And upon the payment of a living wage to the Indian textile workers depends the future well-being of the textile workers of Great Britain, whom the Indian workers are being forced, against their will, to undercut.* The Bombay strike is but another instance of the fact that the international proletariat must hang together or they will hang separately.

THE MELBOURNE POLICE STRIKE

By CURTIS ATKINSON

THE Melbourne Police Strike of October to November, 1923, destroyed the myth that Victoria was the best governed State in Australia. This myth owes its rise to the fact that Victoria, so far, has never had a Labour government, such governments being anathema to the people who use the "best governed" phrase.

Like the gas and tramway strikes preceding it was a strike against conditions not against actual wages, though these, for the police, were less than in New South Wales. The police service had for many years been undermanned and underpaid,¹ a foolish treatment of the operating limb of the Law. This being so it needed but a spark to set aflame the smouldering discontent. A system of espionage by supervisors (pimps or "spooks" as the police called them) in plain clothes furnished this, and the police, following a demand for their withdrawal, startled the Chief Commissioner, the Cabinet and the public by a lightning strike.²

The Commissioner and the Premier, the latter a would-be Mussolini with knees of clay, prated about duty, a challenge to the community and the usual forcible-feeble foolishness of a fight to a finish with the "mutineers." Before the fight got very far, the mob took a hand and incidentally wrecked any chances the police might have had of gaining public sympathy and winning.

There is a healthy prejudice in Australia against men who blackleg in industrial disputes and the crowd did not discriminate in this case. The "loyal" police on duty in the City were heckled,

¹ After his twentieth year in the force a policeman was entitled to a weekly salary of £5 19s. In Victoria the cost of food and groceries was 70.3 per cent. above the 1914 average. This is the highest in the Commonwealth. The others are, N.S.W. 63.5% ; Tasmania 60.9% ; Queensland 69.8% ; South Australia 48% ; Western Australia 31.8%

² In a speech in Parliament, the Premier (Mr. Lawson) naively complained that "the Government takes exception to the fact that not the slightest notice was given of the threatened action. . . . It seems that the men chose the most awkward time, on the eve of Cup Week, to throw the service into a state of disorder."

their numbers were insufficient to control the crowds, someone was pushed through a shop window, the irresponsibility peculiar to mobs came uppermost and soon a whole block of shops had their windows smashed and looted.³ For several hours on two successive nights rioting took place. The Commonwealth was appealed to and troops of Light Horse were sent to patrol the streets.

A Citizens' Committee delegated a retired general⁴ to take charge, volunteers were called for a Special Constabulary and soon squads of these Blue and Tans were to be seen marching and driving all over the City. The crowd would hoot them and in return they would charge, using the baton so freely that the hospital casualty wards were kept busy. Many of the striking police aided in dispersing the crowds on the two days of crisis. For six days a curfew was virtually in operation. The public were notified that trains and trams would cease at 7 p.m., and a hint given that persons in the streets after that time without legitimate business would be suspect.

It was an unexampled opportunity for the Press and it must be said that it made the most of it.⁵ The papers behaved as the guardians of property in a panic might be expected to behave, that is, property rights first, justice anywhere after. All the dailies had leading articles on the strike *ad nauseum*. Journals which never displayed any news, no matter how important or vital to the peace of the world it might be, over larger than single column type, featured it like a big war or an earthquake. Of course, to them it was both, a manifestation of the class war and a quaking of the foundations of their world. To the initiated, capitalist psychology can be gauged by its "featuring" of "news."

³ Some of the signs on the shop windows were taken literally. One sign read: "Genuine clearing," another "Why Go Shabby?"—and they didn't. Some even tried on new hats and boots in the windows they looted; these included women, who tried on furs and walked off with them.

⁴ General Sir John Monash, whose reputation in Australia is in the same relation as Kitchener's was in England, was voted by general consent as leader of the forces of law and order. Later he resigned in favour of General Sir J. W. McCay, a noted disciplinarian.

⁵ Speaking some days afterwards in Sydney, Sir John said, "It was like a big holiday crowd, which, when it found itself unrestrained by the hand of the Law, began to enjoy itself. Of course there was a section of the vicious element there, but things were not half so bad as some newspapers tried to paint them. It was not a well-planned and organised outbreak, but a great spontaneous outburst." He estimated the damage at £10,000; the newspapers had previously assessed it at £50,000.

On the whole, though, the Press behaved better than the politicians, who grew more self-righteous as every day went by and more determined to wade through oceans of blood to save their dignity. The Labour Party in Parliament were out-voted and the Public Safety Bill enacted, a piece of panic legislation if ever there was one. As for the Press, once the crisis was over it obviously enjoyed its holiday as children enjoy playing with fire. There is no doubt the rioting lost the police strikers the battle though others will reap where they have sown.⁶ Nearly 1,000 ex-police will have to be absorbed into other avenues of employment ; already many of them are working on the trams.

Some of the strike's after-effects were amusing. The psychological contribution of the middle class was made on the day following the riots when droves of them rushed in their motor-cars to see the damage they had shuddered over at the week-end. It was as though a conscientious objector had accepted a joy-ride to the battle-front. There were those who asserted that the affair was not a quarrel between Capital and Labour, and who echoed the papers in calling it a mutiny and a stab at society. These people endeavoured to square their professed democratic principles with the fear and panic they secretly shared with the mob of middle-class voters.

Others revealed themselves in their naked hatred of all democratic or pseudo-democratic forms, and openly advocated the blowing up of the Trades Hall⁷ as being the place where the trouble originated. At ordinary times such people hide their real opinions. A public subscription was opened in the *Argus* newspaper for the police who remained loyal throughout the State, and this finally reached a total of £7,400. This divided into £6 5s. a man. The "specials" or amateur police were paid 15s. a day, the "loyal" professionals only receiving 12s. a day.

At the time it was alleged that many of the men signing on as special constables had previous convictions against them—Satan casting out Satan. A feature of the police court scenes was the

⁶ Both the Premier and the Police Commissioner definitely stated, once the crisis was passed, that the force would be "made more attractive."

⁷ The Disputes Committee of the Trades Hall offered its services as mediators. Their intervention has been, and is likely to remain, ineffective.

large number of respectable youths who helped to make Melbourne a pandemonium. The average sentence was three months' imprisonment. The occurrence was probably no worse than would obtain anywhere under similar conditions though the use of the beer-bottle as weapon of offence—a judge described it as the national weapon—seems peculiar to the Australian street-fighter. One ironic happening nearly convulsed observers with mirth and the authorities with terror. The specials objected to the attempted militarisation of the new force and threatened to strike themselves unless objectionable features were withdrawn. This was hastily accomplished.

The hands of officialdom will be full for some time over the creation of a new force, which carries in it the seeds of future trouble as many of the "loyalists" sympathised with their late comrades and would have joined them were it not for the risk of losing a pension to which long service had entitled them. Besides this, they detest the ways and temper of the Blue and Tans. And in spite of the notoriously short memories of the electors, the Lawson Ministry is likely to have the loss by damage and the dislocation of trade during Cup Week, as well as Victoria's loss of prestige, all laid to its charge. Already it has jettisoned the Treasurer (Sir Wm. McPherson) whose annual surpluses and niggardly policy are now blamed for the trouble.⁸

For the workers, one of the lessons of the strike is Labour's need for a publicity bureau. The Strike Committee did its best, but its efforts were swamped by the vast resources of the enemy.

⁸ "Is the function of Government to achieve petty triumphs of autocracy and false economy, or is it to make a happy, contented, and prosperous people? On one side of the record of the Lawson Ministry we have Sir William McPherson's surpluses, on the other side we have a police force goaded to disruption, a railway service suspicious and 'nervy,' warders and asylum attendants deeply discontented, and right through the lower grades of the public service a feeling of wrong and injustice."—*Melbourne Herald*, November 14, 1923.

IRELAND TO-DAY

By R. M. FOX

IN Europe, movements of thought and action sweep across the continent, and we can see Fascism and Communism grappling with one another in their great conflict. But in Ireland there are no such clear lines. Ireland broods over its troubles in a preoccupied way, and much of what is said and done here is meaningless to the outside world. Insularity is the keynote of the Irish problem, and the average Irishman speaks of the great European war vaguely as the "far war." The Irish movement is quite indigenous, being firmly rooted in national tradition.

Seven hundred years of foreign domination have fostered national feeling, and, as in the case of the Balkan States, Poland and other small nationalities that have suffered from arrested development, intense nationalism crowds out social and economic ideas. Other countries passed through this phase of nationalism—as a child has measles—during the period when feudal Europe consolidated into nation States, and when France contributed the idea of a national will expressed through a national assembly. Any analysis of the Irish situation will be false unless it recognises the fierceness of this national feeling, which has been dammed up so long.

Underlying the national sentiment is the question of the land. Up till recently Ireland was a land of evictions. The absentee landlords gave no security of tenure, they rack-rented and evicted until Land Leagues, agitations and boycotts forced them to mend their ways. The tale of how the Irish were hunted from the land is written in blood, starvation, and emigration, and this forms the seed bed for opinion in Ireland to-day. The crop of evictions after the famine and the substitution of cattle for men on the land has kept alive the land agitation among the people. Liberal and Conservative parties in the years preceding the war attempted to sap this agitation by passing acts granting facilities for small holdings. But cattle have taken the place of tenants all over the country, and huge walled estates like fortresses are the rule. The alien ascendancy gang cut down beautiful forests and regard the people as vermin.

Land is almost as necessary as bread in an agricultural country like Ireland, and the desire for land and security of tenure explains much of the bitterness and tenacity of the Irish movement. The Unpurchased Tenants' League is carrying on a vigorous agitation for those whose landlords grab the benefit of any improvements they make. The land movement is a dynamic force in Ireland.

As Ireland is a country of peasants and farmers, it is decidedly out of harmony with the industrial civilisation of England. The small scattered farms have developed an outlook more local even than national; they look with suspicion upon strangers—runners, they call them—and strange ways. They have no use for a connection with an Overseas Empire, with all its problems of industry, commerce and trade. They want the land and to be left alone.

The tradition of the ancient Gaelic civilisation counts for something, but not so much as some people believe. It is true that Ireland escaped feudalism, and that clan law had far more of a communal spirit than feudal law; and it is also true that, broadly speaking, capitalism was an English importation. Connolly laid great stress on this, and tried to make the national agitation one for Gaelic Communism as well. The growth of co-operative creameries and the more recent taking over of land and buildings by groups of workers may have been reinforced by this idea, but these things were mainly directed by practical considerations.

We have now to consider the activities of special groups under these influences.

First we will take the business men who have a separate party in the Dail. They are, in the main, pro-English, though they do not want interference with Irish trade (such as the prohibition of the importation of Irish cattle to England on the score of foot-and-mouth disease, which occurred not long ago). In the days before the Free State, the middlemen, small business men and capitalists were nationalists, and supported the parliamentary party led by Redmond at Westminster. W. M. Murphy, who headed the Dublin employers in the 1913 lockout, was typical of these. To-day they support the Government and urge economy, freedom from taxation, facilities for trade and all the usual business cries. Their

attitude was stated very well by a Mr. Shanks, speaking recently as President of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. He found fault with the green flags, green pillar boxes and green telegraph forms which had been introduced, saying that he had been informed that blue was the true heraldic colour of Ireland. Anyhow, he saw no profit in the change. But, and here he came to the crux, he had been assured that these things were necessary to make the people loyal to the Free State. The business people were terrified during the civil war, when private property was treated without reverence and the business of the country interfered with. They are afraid of the people getting out of hand again, so they slavishly support the Government in its most ferocious exhibitions of "strength" such as the long imprisonment of 15,000 untried prisoners. Most of these prisoners have now been released, as they had become more of a disturbing factor in prison than outside.

The Government is composed of opportunists, "men of transition," who are patriotic Empirists in England and who become Nationalists according to the shade of their audiences in Ireland. They floated into power when the country was sick of war, and now they depend upon England and upon finance for support. Their policy is to keep things as they were before the Treaty, while parading all the forms of change. At the last election their position did not improve; they secured the return of sixty-three candidates as against forty-four definitely anti-Treaty deputies. Because of the strong opposition in Ireland they are forced into greater dependence upon England and their Republicanism has evaporated. They rely partly upon the anti-national elements in the south of Ireland, and they dare not insist on an Ulster Boundary Commission for fear of losing this support.

Opinion among the farmers is very mixed, and among their fourteen representatives are sympathisers with both sides. Ireland has not a large population, and personal factors operate strongly. Many farmers' sons are Free State officers, while others, who belonged to the old I.R.A., are Republicans. A vendetta has been raging between the two groups. But apart from personal cross-currents, the farmers do not want any association with industrial England.

Labour must be divided into two sections, official and unofficial.

The official section of fifteen deputies, led by Johnson, is very constitutional and regards Republicanism as one of the follies of its youth. This section has supplied some statesmanlike senators. It is nominally independent, but actually Free State.

The unofficial section, represented by Larkin, responds vaguely to the Connelly Gaelic tradition and tends to support any anti-Government movement. It has no voice in the Dail and little power as an organised force. It has carried out sporadic strikes for the prisoners, the biggest being a one-day strike in Dublin. Between this section and the vested interests grouped round the Government one sees the lines of the future struggle. Labour is strong industrially, and fights well for wages and conditions, but is very weak politically, having no social ideas or programme, all thought along these lines being held up by the national conflict.

The Irish Transport and General Workers' Union is the premier industrial body in Ireland. It overshadows the smaller unions, and is the basis on which the Irish Labour Party has been built. The membership figures are given as round about 100,000, and Dublin is particularly well organised, the carters and dockers standing out as militant sections. Liberty Hall is a hive of activity at night when the different sections hold their branch meetings. Larkin is well supported in Dublin, but the Union machine is controlled by the anti-Larkin official element. The whole situation within the Union remains unchanged pending the legal proceedings which each side is taking against the other. The issue, on the face of it, is whether Larkin or the old Executive have legal standing in the Union; the underlying issue is whether the revolutionary or the opportunist policy will prevail.

The smaller unions, many of whom have their centres in England, play little part. The national rates agreed to in England are often blackleg rates in Ireland, and so their members are driven to act independently or with the Transport Union to maintain their Irish standards, on which, by the way, the attack is now general.

On the Republican side there is a strong conservative element. Many are Republicans because "they have always been Republicans." They have not tried to re-adjust their minds to the new situation since the Treaty was signed. So to add to the chaos we get a union of revolutionaries and conservatives under the same banner.

Because they are only united on the national issue, the Republicans cannot frame any social programme.¹

To-day, in Ireland, one-third of the people have voted Republican and have no representation in the Dáil. The other sections, Government, farmers and business men, have coalesced to put through anti-Labour legislation, notably to reduce the old age pensions by a shilling a week. The Labour Party stood alone against this. Troops have been used in the Waterford strike, a curfew imposed and a union organiser arrested and interned. Labourers' cottages have been burnt down there, and a fierce spirit of reaction is abroad. The electoral policy of the Government was "six years of iron rule," "the Flogging Bill" and so on. A sort of Irish Fascisti is growing up which is strong for law, order and property, and is quite lawless and disorderly in their defence. The mass of the people are exhausted by the struggle since 1916 and care for little except peace. Property elements are well in the saddle and have tacitly dropped all political differences.

¹ After some months of cautious discussion Sinn Fein (the Republicans) has adopted an "Economic Policy" manifestly designed to satisfy all sections. The result is that none have any enthusiasm for it and the Republican papers have scarcely referred to it since its adoption. The divergences in the movement make it still-born. The basic Republican attitude is best expressed by Iean McEntee, a recent Republican candidate in Dublin, who said, after criticising the Free State Government for reducing old-age pensions, &c., that he would not ask the people to vote for him on any social programme but only on national grounds.

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THE BALKANS

Socialist Conference

ON March 11-12 the Labour and Socialist International called a conference of all the Socialist Parties in the Balkans, at Bucharest. Actually, it was only attended by delegates from the Bulgarian, Roumanian and Jugo-Slavian Parties. The delegates of the International were Adler (secretary) and Tseretelli, the well-known Georgian Menshevik. The Bulgarian delegates were stigmatised, in *Zemledelsko Zname*, the organ of the Bulgarian Peasant Union (Stambulisky), as among those most responsible for the crimes of the Tsankoff Government. It will be recalled that the Bulgarian Social-Democrats joined the Tsankoff Fascist Government after the overthrow of Stambulisky in June of last year, and had since participated in that Government's brutal repression of all workers' and peasants' organisations. On February 16, 1924, they left the Government.

The Peasant Union had previously asked the Labour and Socialist International to undertake an inquiry into the part played by the Bulgarian Social-Democrats. Commenting on the decision of the International (at its Executive meeting at Luxemburg in February) *Zemledelsko Zname* wrote:—

We hail this decision of the leaders of the tens of millions of the workers of Europe, and we are perfectly sure that the inquiry will not only relieve the International of all responsibility for the crimes of the Bulgarian Social-Democrats, but will contribute to the *rapprochement* of the Bulgarian peasant masses and the working masses of Europe.

They were, however, doomed to disappointment. The Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party certainly presented a full statement to the Conference—of which, unfortunately, only a bald summary has been published. It declared that it participated in the Tsankoff Government

in order to check the danger of civil war, and to counteract the danger of occupation by foreign Powers.

It does not, however, defend all the actions of the Government. Its activity was successfully directed towards lessening the loss of life and the suffering caused in the Communist rising.

There is no indication in the published reports of the Conference that this astounding statement did other than satisfy the Conference and the delegates of the International.

Indeed, the *Preporatz*, a Bulgarian bourgeois paper, wrote that:—

We are satisfied with the discussions which took place at the Bucharest Conference, and with the resolution which was passed.

Abundant light was thrown on the agrarian regime, as well as on the events which succeeded the Ninth of June. All the suspicions and accusations levelled against the Bulgarian Socialists . . . have been cleared away . . . The Bulgarian delegates were supported by the Roumanian delegates and the delegates of the International.

The Jugo-Slavian delegates had expressed their intention, before the Conference, of raising the question whether the Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party could remain within the International after its active participation in a Government which had ruthlessly massacred workers and peasants. It is clear that the International did not share their views.

For the rest, the Conference discussed the danger of war in the Balkans, with special reference to the recent troubles in Macedonia and the tense relations existing between Bulgaria and Jugo-Slavia. The principal resolution concerned this question. The resolution declared that the Social-Democrats of the victorious countries, Jugo-Slavia and Roumania, should strive to expose chauvinism in their respective countries, and that the Bulgarian Social-Democrats should aid them, "as far as their means allowed." The Jugo-Slavian Social-Democrats undertook to intercede with their Government for an amnesty for Macedonian refugees to enable them to return to their homes. Some perfunctory references to the danger of imperialist intervention in the Balkans were inserted in the resolution.

In point of fact it would appear that, in the clash between the nationalism of the Jugo-Slavian Social-Democrats and the nationalism of the Bulgarian Social-Democrats, the latter had the general support of the Conference and of the International.

The *Epoha*, a Bulgarian Social-Democratic journal, wrote:—

The Bucharest Conference, by what we can tell from its published declarations, has finished favourably enough for our Socialists as for the whole of Bulgaria. . . . The question of the racial minorities, who have a right to be defended, was submitted to a well-deserved criticism, and the conduct of the Yugo-Slavs with regard to the Macedonian problem was severely disapproved. . . .

The Socialist International has been of great value to us in calling the Balkan Conference just at this moment. It will be of not less value to us in the future by creating favourable conditions for our so sorely-trying and misrepresented Fatherland.

GERMANY

The Opposition in the Trade Unions

THE development of the Left-wing Opposition in German Trade Unionism, beginning with the Weimar Conference last year, has already been treated in these notes.

Since then the situation has developed rapidly, and the opposition has continued to make remarkable progress. A few examples may be taken from recent Trade Union elections. At Dresden the railwaymen elected only

¹ THE LABOUR MONTHLY, March, 1924, Vol. VI, No. 3, pp. 182-184.

Communists as delegates to the general meeting of their Union. The furnishing trade workers of Düsseldorf elected a local executive composed entirely of Communists. No reformist list was even presented to the Essen metalworkers, and the Communist list was unanimously elected. The Neustadt (Thuringia) textile workers likewise elected the entire opposition list. The factory workers of Freital (Saxony) elected 7 opposition candidates as against 3 reformists (previously 2 opposition and 8 reformists); and at Stassfurt (Saxony) they elected an executive composed entirely of the opposition. At Hartha (Saxony) the boot and shoe workers elected 9 opposition candidates and 2 sympathisers, and 1 reformist. The local executive of the Carpenters Union in Berlin now consists exclusively of Communists. In the election for delegates to the general meeting of the Woodworkers' Union the Berlin district gave 6,309 votes for the Opposition against 5,899 votes for the reformists.

The bureaucracy of the General Trade Union Federation (A.D.G.B.) and of the various Trade Unions is conducting a relentless struggle against the Opposition: it is making free use of the weapon of exclusion, and, while vehemently accusing the Opposition of splitting the Trade Union movement—a baseless charge—it is itself pursuing that policy with the utmost vigour.

For instance, the Halle-Merseburg district committee of the A.D.G.B. was expelled by the national executive simply because it had a Communist majority. Two Union officials have been sent to the district to convene a conference to elect a new district committee. Exactly the same thing has happened in the mining district of Remscheid.

At a conference of the Transport Workers' Union on February 24-25 a resolution was passed forbidding members of the Union, under pain of expulsion, to have anything to do with the Communist Party or the Red International of Labour Unions. Union officials contravening this resolution are to be discharged immediately. Similar decisions, and many cases of expulsion, are reported from the Boot and Shoe Workers, the Bookbinders, the Woodworkers, the Textile Workers, and the Factory Workers' Unions.

As a result of these expulsions the situation in German Trade Unionism is highly critical. A dozen opposition district committees have held a conference and decided to summon an opposition congress of Trade Unions and Factory Councils—as the Weimar Conference originally decided. This congress is to be summoned this month, if possible.

Metal Workers' Congress

The sixteenth general meeting of the German Metal Workers' Union (postponed from September, 1923) took place at Cassel on February 17-23. The meeting was awaited with the greatest interest, for the Metal Workers' Union is the largest in Germany, and its decisions are naturally of great significance and exercise a strong influence on the policy of the A.D.G.B. The membership was 1,600,000 in the summer of last year, but has since declined to an estimated figure of 1,000,000.

The delegates to the meeting were elected in August, 1923, and therefore did not necessarily represent the actual tendencies of opinion among the membership at the present time. However, out of 400 delegates 140 belonged

to the opposition, under Communist leadership, and some seventy to ninety were Left-wing Social Democrats, under the leadership of Dissmann, member of the Union Executive. It will be seen that these last were in a position, by joining forces with the Communists, to put the reformist Right wing in a minority. It had been generally expected, from the repeated declarations of the Left-wing Social Democrats, that this was what would happen. The Congress proved otherwise.

The Congress agenda comprised only three main heads :—

- (1) Annual report of the Executive.
- (2) International Metal Workers' Congress.
- (3) Social Policy.

Dissmann delivered the report of the Executive in a speech lasting three hours and a-half. Two hours of this time he spent in a violent attack on the Communists. He gave no answer to the many questions which are foremost in the minds of German workers to-day—such as the defence of the eight-hour day, the struggle against wage reductions, dismissals, and colossal unemployment, against the general capitalist offensive and White Terror, and the means of stopping the present slump in Union membership.

The strongly critical resolutions and amendments put forward by the opposition were steadily voted down by the coalition of the reformist Right-wing and the majority of the Left-wing Social Democrats. Even a general resolution of protest against the White Terror of the Seeckt dictatorship was opposed by the Right wing.

A resolution approving the action of the Executive in expelling several dozen leading members of the Union on purely political grounds was passed. An attempt was even made to annul the credentials of the thirty-eight delegates from the Berlin district, because they were all members of the Opposition: however, this raised such a storm that it was eventually dropped.

On the question of the Metal Workers' International, both Reichel, chairman of the Union, and Ilg, the secretary of the International, spoke. They admitted that the International was powerless, and then declared that revolutionary Unions such as the Russian Metal Workers' Union and the French Unitary Metal Workers' Federation would not be admitted into the International unless they accepted the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions. They naturally attacked the Red International of Labour Unions with vehemence.

The concluding point on the agenda—Social Policy—produced nothing from the Right wing save an appeal to vote for the Social Democratic candidates at the Reichstag elections.

The old Executive was re-elected *en bloc*, including Dissmann, by 254 votes to 136.

Factory Councils Elections

The German Communist Party has put forward the slogan, "The elections to the Factory Councils are more important than the elections to the Reichstag." But the task of the Communist opposition in these elections has been by no means an easy one, as may be seen from the declaration of the A.D.G.B. that:—

Only candidates are eligible for inclusion in the Trade Union lists who support the Amsterdam International and who carry out the decisions of the

BOOK REVIEWS

WHY ECONOMIC SCIENCE ?

A Short Course of Economic Science. By A. Bogdanoff. (Communist Party of Great Britain. 3s.)

THE Allied imperialist powers at the end of the war found themselves faced with the problem of how to make Germany pay without at the same time reviving German imperialism. To provide the money, German exports must increase; but these exports would come into competition with the products of the other imperialist powers—an effective competition owing to many factors. This would mean the re-birth of German imperialism which the war was meant to destroy. This was the problem. Experts were called in. The last batch have just reported. But these experts in so far as they were not economists themselves called in economists to their aid.

The problem, however, is insoluble under capitalism; it contains a complete contradiction—the only solution being the rule by the workers: the economists, therefore, being capitalist economists, have not provided material for its solution, but material for each imperialism to use to further its own policy.

That is now the function of capitalist economists—to serve capitalism and by that service to destroy the meaning of economics. For by their service these economists have shown that they are more concerned to bolster up the capitalist system than to justify their title to being economic experts. They must, therefore, be called Capitalist or Bourgeois Economists whether they are orthodox like Marshall or heterodox like Keynes.

In so far as modern bourgeois economists become more and more patently unscientific and more and more inclined just to rail at the working class (had it not been for whom, they assert, all would have been well in the garden of capitalism—thus revealing their crawling sycophantic brains), in so far as this happens it just reflects the bankruptcy of capitalism itself.

But capitalists in the period of their final struggle for power over the feudal lords, in order that their struggle might be successful, were compelled to investigate the facts of the development of society, to generalise on those facts and to apply those generalisations to the state of society they were using all their force to bring forth from the womb of feudalism. The classical economists were their experts. It was with their help that they were able to build up the capitalist system. In so far as the economists were unable to see that this system contained within it contradictions which would finally prove its destruction, their investigations failed to be scientific.

But it was Marx who first applied the scientific methods to “the social labour relations between men.” By revealing the contradictions within the capitalist system and by showing that in the womb of that system Communism was already being conceived, he was the first Economic Scientist, the first “Expert” to come to the aid of the workers in their struggle for the conception of this new state of society.

But while the capitalist system, owing to its inherently autocratic character, has developed with but few experts in its laws, the system of Communism requires that every worker must at least have some knowledge of these laws.

The Russian Communist Party, therefore, produced this *Short Course* in order to familiarise as many workers as possible with Economic Science—the science first investigated by Marx. The *Short Course* was the textbook of the workers of Russia before the revolution; it is the textbook now of thousands of schools and study circles. It is used in order that every worker may take his part in the administration of his society.

Economic Science or the social labour relations between men involves not only an investigation of the basic structure of society at every period of its development, but also of the surface characteristics of that period—such surface characteristics as the ideology of the ruling class of the period. The Course is not a treatise on the theory of marginal value or a book on “pure economics,” and therefore instinctively shunned by the worker, but a book just as Marx is, that will enable the worker to contribute towards the task of forcing a Communist Society from the womb of Capitalism.

H. P. R.

PUNISHMENT AND PERSECUTION

Political Crime. By Wilfred George Carlton Hall, B.C.L., M.A. (Allen & Unwin. 4s. 6d.)

The Bolshevik Persecution of Christianity. By Captain Francis McCullagh. (John Murray. 18s.)

MR. HALL'S essay is of such stuff as letters to the twopenny Press are made of: ill-collated trivialities of legal information presented so as to justify an argument, whose real motive is to be found by analysing the needs of a class and not the quaint phraseology of obsolete legislation.

The author is a barrister, disgruntled by his experiences while on service in Ireland as a Territorial officer during 1919, and further alarmed by the opinion of an ex-Home Secretary, Mr. Shortt, who said in the course of an after-dinner speech:—

I do not believe that ever since the end of the eighteenth century in France there has ever been so much working for revolution as there is to-day.

Mr. Hall, according to the publisher's announcement on the dust-cover, here attempts to explain the failure of the British Government in recent times to deal effectively with the growing tendency to use violence in the pursuit of political or revolutionary aims.

The attempt is not strikingly successful because Mr. Hall with ingenuous generosity gives such full particulars of the numerous cases in which sentences of death, transportation, penal servitude or imprisonment have been inflicted, in the British Isles during the last hundred years, for treason, under martial law (applied to civilians) or for offences against the Official Secrets Acts, the Defence of the Realm Acts and the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act; and he adds that his list is by no means complete.

Indeed there is no reference made to the Emergency Powers Act, 1921, under which, the Executive having declared a State of Emergency to exist, the police are given immediate and arbitrary powers of search and arrest without warrant. Thus in the case of *R. v. Inkpin* it is notorious that the police

had no charge ready at the time of Mr. Inkpin's arrest, but had first to take advantage of their powers to search the Communist Party's premises in order to find documents on which to frame a charge (and that failing to find what they wanted, they trumped up their main charges on the basis of certain extracts from *The Theses of the Communist International*, which, it subsequently appeared, had also been published by H.M. Stationery Office).

The E.P.A. has the further advantage that sentences of imprisonment "with or without hard labour" can be passed on summary conviction, which avoids the delay and publicity of trial on indictment as required for cases of sedition and allied offences.

A prisoner convicted of sedition must also be allowed in gaol the privileges of a "first-class misdemeanant." Mr. Hall complains that this "looks like an open and deliberate attempt to establish the principle that the punishment of political offenders shall be nominal rather than real," but in fact, even when a State of Emergency has not been proclaimed, charges for sedition are rare, simply because political "crime" can be dealt with, with less fuss and severer punishment, by means of nominally minor charges that are followed by imprisonment "with or without hard labour," or at best in the second division, but never in the first division. (Several such sentences are at the present moment being served in spite of the Labour government.)

The author of *Political Crime* is content to substantiate his case by a review of the existing law in those forms which have unhappily become obsolete since the good old times. Once upon a time, a man who assaulted the State, as, for instance, by violating the King's wife, suffered the following punishment:—

to be drawn upon a hurdle to the place of execution and there hanged by the neck; to be cut down while he is alive and his entrails taken out and burnt before his face; and his head cut off and body quartered and the head and quarters to be at the king's disposal.

It is interesting to note that this particular form of treason appears to have been committed only twice and in both cases it is recorded that the lady herself was held to have been an accessory (and, therefore, by the law of treason guilty as a principal).

Even now it is felony punishable by death to aid or abet in arson at any of His Majesty's victualling stores, while the mere act of imagining restraint of the person of the King is treason for which the punishment may still be, by Royal Warrant, beheading while alive (in public).

The armoury of the Common Law is full of useful weapons (*e.g.*, seven years' penal servitude for taking an unlawful oath), but their use is rather hampered by the existence of other means of protection or coercion which are either impracticable of execution or irrelevant to the present needs of the Capitalist State.

In these circumstances Mr. Hall, taking up the logical and unhypocritical point of view of pure Fascism that "the same crime calls for more severe punishment (in the sense of more *effective* punishment) if committed in the course of an attack on the established government than if committed for some merely private aim," proceeds to his conclusion:—

. . . persecutions for treason felony, seditious conspiracy, seditious libel and the like, do very little good, and a good deal of actual harm. But it cannot be denied that popular opinion would be strongly against frequent trials and

executions for high treason, however completely warranted in law and fact; and it might become almost as difficult to get juries to convict in England as it has been lately in Ireland, though for a different reason. As a compromise it may be suggested: (1) That all statutes dealing directly with political offences be drastically revised, and the bulk of them repealed; (2) that the punishment for treason felony be altered to flogging; (3) that the Sovereign be empowered by statute to make flogging a condition of pardon for treason. Concurrently with these legislative changes, it might be laid down as a settled administrative policy: (1) That an alleged political motive for a crime not directly political should not be regarded as a reason for the exercise of the Royal clemency, but rather the reverse; (2) that persons believed guilty of directly political crimes should be prosecuted with as little hesitation as non-political criminals . . .

It is strange that this handy text-book of practical democracy should have emerged from such a publisher, and if some of Mr. Unwin's other publications are investigated we fear that he may be one of the first to find himself at Mr. Hall's whipping post when that gentleman's constructive proposals are carried into effect.

Except that it also is of such stuff as communications to the twopenny Press are made of, Captain Francis McCullagh's latest production is written in a very different tone to the so soberly reactionary legalities of Mr. Hall's plea for white terror. The two books will, however, be approved by exactly the same class of people. Indignation at a working-class State "persecuting" its enemies is corollary to indignation at a Capitalist State failing to persecute its enemies, or rather failing to punish them, for persecution should not be confused with punishment: persecution is coercion of the rich or the formerly rich by the poor; punishment is coercion of the poor by the rich, and if the bourgeoisie prefer to use two separate words to indicate the moral difference between one and the other, let us concede them that point, for it will serve well enough to stress their respective political meanings, which are understood as well by the governing class as by us.

McCullagh's candid confession in his preface that he is not "a trained historical writer," but "merely a working journalist compelled by the circumstances of his life . . . to write copiously for the daily press," confirms a long-standing suspicion and fortunately exempts us from reviewing *The Bolshevik Persecution of Christianity* in the detail demanded for *Political Crime* by its author's academic and legal qualifications.

The journalist does not even pretend that Cieplak, Budkiewicz and the other criminals, whose trial he describes, were innocent of breaking the Soviet laws, and since these were the laws not of a firmly established state but of a newly established state struggling against untold foes, we can only read with wonder of the clemency of the Russian workers towards many of their prisoners—a clemency that compares so kindly with the treatment of political offences in England, of whose leniency Mr. Hall complains, as to make that leniency of occasional mitigations or part-remissions of sentence appear in its true light as a brutal severity merely modified. *Political Crime* would certainly make a highly contentious appendix to *The Bolshevik Persecution of Christianity*. What penalty would Mr. Hall suggest for a foreign reporter who attacks a Government, as Captain McCullagh does, because counter-revolutionaries

could not even use the diplomatic bags safely to smuggle their communications abroad since the Bolsheviks stopped some on discovering that they were being used for espionage and other non-diplomatic purposes?

However, one feels that Captain McCullagh does his best to indicate the wickedness of a working-class state:—

On the night after the Archbishop and his companions were paraded in a motor-lorry through the streets of Moscow, the terrible leader of the Reds gazed in horror on one, more terrible than himself, who, having passed swiftly through the triple guards and the bolted doors, had halted at his bedside and laid an icy hand on that proud and formidable brain. From that day Lenin was a living corpse.†

† See footnote, p. 90.

Who said Captain Francis McCullagh was not a trained histrionic writer?
A. E. E. R.

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- Socialism and Finance.* I.L.P. Study Courses, No. 7. By F. W. Pethick Lawrence, M.P. (I.L.P. Information Committee. 6d.)
- Socialism for Women.* I.L.P. Study Courses, No. 8. By Minnie Pallister. (I.L.P. Information Committee. 6d.)
- A Suggested Basis for the Discussion of One Union for Railway Workers.* By P. R. Higginson. With a Foreword by G. D. H. Cole. (I.L.P.)
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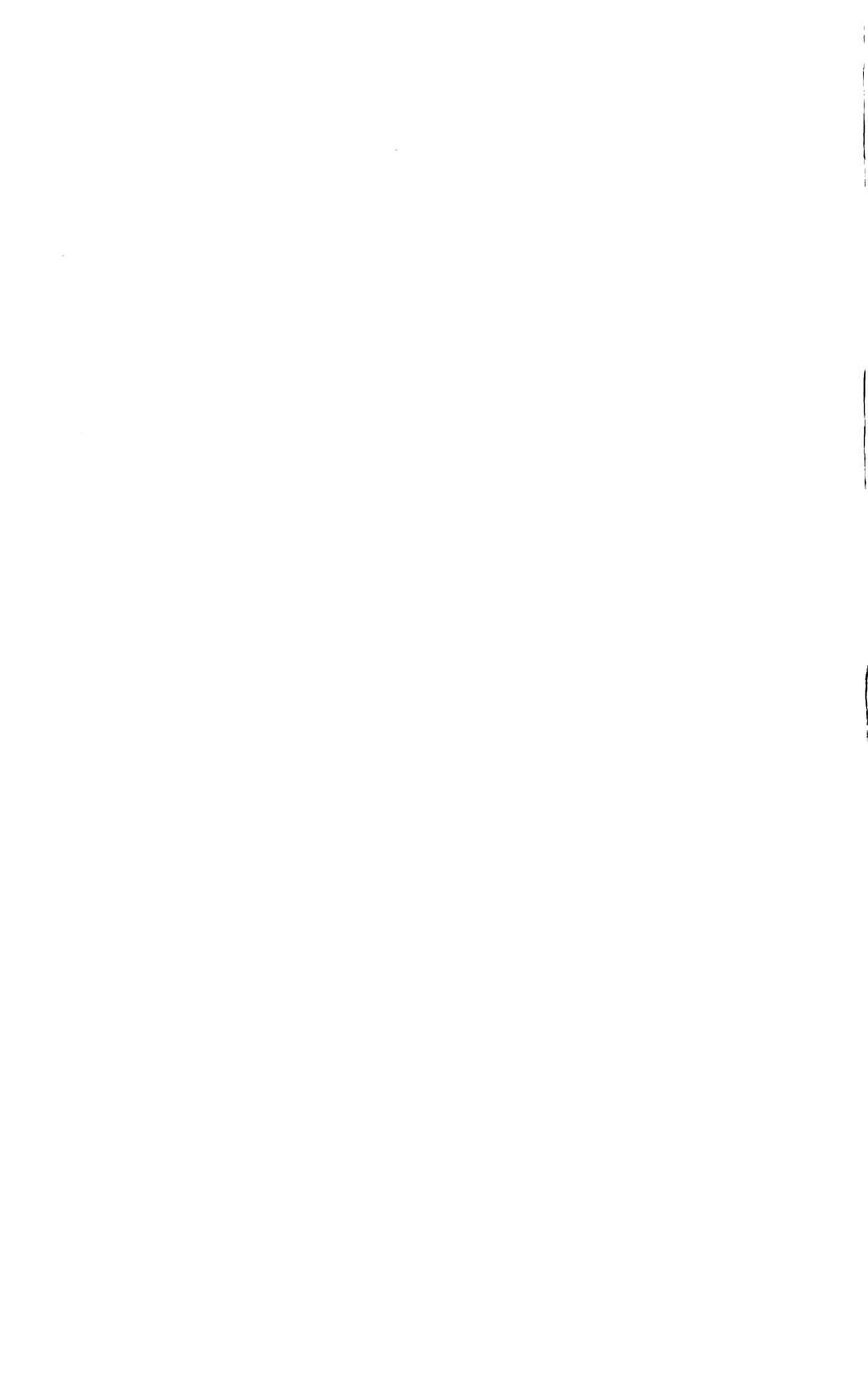
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NOTES of the MONTH

*Reason, Sanity and Moral Courage—To “ Stabilise ” Capitalism—
Beginning the New Era—The Syndicate of Europe—Germany
in Pawn—Pacifists’ Cruisers—Blindfolded—Workers’
Policy or War*

WITH the French and German elections, and the elaboration and acceptance of the Experts’ Report, Europe enters upon a new period and hopes are high. Presbyterians and Pacifists, hushing their voices to the tone of a *Nunc Dimittis*, speak of a “ change of heart amongst the peoples.” *New Statesman* echoes fraternally to *New Leader* : “ It is like the end of a nightmare.” The victory of the parties of Reason, Sanity and Moral Courage is acclaimed equally by all the leaders of the Second International and by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce. The “ Left ” is in power at last. The “ Way to Peace ” is found. The settlement of all the problems that have tortured Europe since Versailles is in sight. The feeling of relief and of new hope is universal, for all the separate national situations in France, Germany and Britain are caught up into a single European situation that bears unmistakably the stamp of a new era. And then, with the lock-out of a million men in the Ruhr, reality comes back into the picture. For with the French and German elections, the issue and the acceptance of the Experts’ Report, the forces in Europe are clearly ranged, and there can be no excuse for misunderstanding. The forces of Capitalism and of the Revolution, which five years ago were face to face in open battle, are to-day once again clearly face to face, in a new and more subtle conflict : a conflict in which International Finance is making a supreme effort to subjugate Europe and to crush out the Révolution.

TO achieve this end, to secure that the great trusts, the reigning banks and financial houses maintain their grip on the resources—and above all on the labour-power—of Europe, temporary concessions have been made by each of the national groups to ensure something like unanimity on the main issue. The forces of capitalism are at present united and agreed ; but not one of the causes of their former disunity have been removed or

even alleviated. The Governments that have been formed to effect agreement are called governments of peace ; but aeroplanes and cruisers are being built hastily by all of them. A new era has indeed opened, but it is an era of desperate struggle. It is a fight for the stabilisation of capitalism, perhaps the last great concerted effort of which European capital is capable. British bayonets at Cologne and Senegalese machine-gunners in the Ruhr play their part in that battle ; but the biggest part is played by what M. Painlevé, of the *Bloc des Gauches*, calls " the gesture of humanity." This gesture, which the new France is to make, consists in a discussion of " a settlement on the basis of the Experts' Report." M. Herriot, the new Premier, says : " I am a man with whom the subject can be easily discussed. . . . But I will not permit the intervention, open or concealed, of either Socialists or Nationalists." Gestures of humanity of this sort are clothed in fine and worthless phrases to cover the brutality of their meaning, but the phrases are not without importance. They are the means with which finance has netted those of the working-class movement who still follow the leaders of the Second International. It is by means of the Second International that the financiers are fighting Revolution. London—of Downing Street and Lombard Street—faces Moscow.

THE new era did not really begin with an uprising of the peoples, with changed hearts, to smash Baldwin and Poincaré at the ballot-boxes. It began a long time ago, when the negotiators of the Standard Oil and Shell combines came to an agreement to share the Persian oil fields. Next came agreement, in principle, at Lausanne, as to the oil of Asia Minor. With the defeat of Huerta the question of the oil of Mexico was settled. Then came agreement as to the ultimate disposal of the Caucasian wells. The American debt is also settled as far as Britain is concerned. The experiment of direct control by the financiers of Europe has proved a success in Austria and is being extended to include Hungary. Italy received her soporific slice of African desert in the agreement as to Jubaland. These preliminary difficulties have been cleared out of the way, and all the spade work done for the " settlement " of the biggest question of all—that of the control and exploitation of the railways, coal and ores of

Continental Europe. For the "settlement of that question" American capital is needed, since the diplomatic settlement is not actually as important as the work of getting the Syndicate going on modern commercial lines. And for American capital to come in there is need for an international court of arbitration, on which American finance can be represented, to settle the disputes as to interpretation of phrases and to enforce the contracts agreed upon between the constituent national interests. That is why the Senate of the United States is at this moment discussing four distinct plans of action with regard to American participation in the World Court of the Hague.

IT was in this way, by the secret agreements of World Trusts and the deals of financier-politicians, that the "way to peace" was cleared. One great obstacle remained at the beginning of the year—the France of Poincaré. The section of French Imperialism in power believed that they could get more out of Germany by independent pressure in the Ruhr, and by making separate agreements with the German trusts, than they could get in co-operation with British and American capital. But money is powerful. The franc fell; the cost of living rose; discontent grew. The Editor of the *New Statesman* describes the process clearly: "Poincaré feared the fall of the franc, and so it became the pious duty of every good European to pray for that fall and to sabotage the franc if he could. In other words, we were forced to seek the salvation of Europe in the temporary ruin of France . . . M. Poincaré allowed us no alternative." The pious Europeans of the Labour Party use strange methods in their pursuit of open diplomacy and working-class policy. But after such a confession (repeated by Mr. Brailsford in the *New Leader* for May 16) how can they really expect the observer to believe that a peace of the peoples is being built, based on the contracts of Trusts, the manœuvres of bankers and the reports of Reginald McKenna and General Dawes? It is the prospectus of the Syndicate of Europe (Armaments and Usury) that these Socialists flourish, with its proud record of success in speculation and monopoly.

THE Experts' Report is, in fact, a scheme for the reduction of Germany to the position of a conquered colony, to be exploited by foreign capitalists. The whole of the German railway system, the most important transport network in Europe, is to be handed over to a joint stock company, effective control of which will be vested in a Foreign Commissioner. The bank that is to control the currency is to have a foreign board of directors, and the German State is to hand over debentures of German industrial concerns to the value of £250,000,000. Never was there so complete a mortgaging abroad of a nation's resources. All customs receipts and excise duties on many articles are to be paid direct into the account of the agent for Reparations payments. The key positions in Germany's finance and industry—the Central Bank, the railways, the tariffs—are to be in the hands of foreign financiers. And just as a farmer weighs prize stock, to help him judge its value, so Germany is to be measured by a "prosperity index," and if any prosperity is to be found those reparations are to be taken. A slave colony would be preferable to Germany under the Experts' scientific surgery; but Germany is to be more than food for leeches. It is to provide the cannon fodder for a new war—a final effort to end the Soviet Republics.

WAR will not be difficult: all the tools are to hand. To those who believe that MacDonald, Herriot and the unknown but inevitably Liberal American who is to be the President of 1924 are on the road to peace—and to those whose Socialism inclines them to "sabotage the franc" and scatter hardship through the peasants and the "little people" of France—it is always America that appears as the peacemaker. Proposals are now before Congress to build eight new cruisers—to answer MacDonald's five. (Italy is also building two cruisers, four destroyers and four submarines.) But the Americans are not satisfied with this. On May 23 Mr. Wilbur, the new Secretary for the Navy, stated that "the present ratio of fighting strength of the British, American and Japanese navies is five, four, three." This, according to *The Times*, is an effort to secure new cruisers and the "complete modernisation of battleships"—in other words their

virtual rebuilding with a heavier armament of more powerful guns. While on this side of the Atlantic a Territorial Air Force is being formed. Mr. Leach, the Under Secretary for Air, has certain spiritual angularities that rasp the nerves of Conservative editors, but his fame as a pacifist enables him to increase the Air Force with unanimous approval from the "Community." That indeed is the root political principle of the new era. The pacifists are useful to prepare for war.

IN all this pageant of phrases and armaments there is a tragedy too great to be easily dealt with. Men have given all they had, ease and happiness included, to build up the Labour movement in this country. To serve and strengthen it they have gone through prison, eviction and the contempt of their friends. Now a Labour Government is in power—and they are blindfolded by their own memories of what Labour used to mean !

IF the Labour Government had been worthy of the pioneers who made it possible or of the masses that it leads and betrays, the alternative was open. A bold view of the whole European situation from a working-class stand-point would have shown the Labour Government that it was not their policy to ally themselves with high finance and the reactionary nationalism of France, but to range themselves with the workers of the Soviet Republic. The workers' governments of Britain and of the Soviet Union, in alliance and supported by the working-class movement of all other countries, could have seen a very different sort of peace enforced. The Treaty of Versailles could have been annulled. The whole strangling web of debts and reparations could have been cut through. Instead of this we find the Labour Government spinning a new web in which to snare the Russian delegates to the Anglo-Soviet Conference—the debts, the demands of the bankers, the whole attitude of the bourgeoisie towards the Russian revolution have been taken up by the MacDonald Government and made their own. And this Conference Hall is not the only place where the MacDonald Government, the Government of Peace and Sanity, is operating to

the full the policy of the bourgeoisie. In India trade unionism and Communism are both illegal ; the strikers of Bombay are shot and the Indian Communists sentenced to four years' imprisonment for their attempt to form a Communist Party. In the dockyards and aeroplane factories new weapons are being shaped for terror and warfare. The Government of Peace by speeches is in its acts a Government of War.

T. H. W.

WILL THE EXPERTS' REPORT SETTLE EUROPE?

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

THERE are only three ways by which so-called reparations can be paid. There are payment in cash, payment in goods and payment by investment of the creditor country's capital in the debtor country's industries and public services. In the final analysis all three methods mean the transference of material wealth from the one country to the other in the form of the export of goods or services. Reparations, therefore, under a system of production for profit means the taking of values created by labour in one country and transferring it to the owners of the means of production in another. Nevertheless, in spite of similarity in ultimate effect, the immediate effects of these three methods of paying reparations are different. The economic clauses of the Versailles Treaty are examples of an attempt to secure reparations payment by the transference of cash and goods from Germany to France. But the originators of the Treaty had not reckoned with the mechanism of capitalist economy, and as fast as they demanded the transference of cash and goods to themselves from Germany they created obstacles in the way of so doing. For if they had not created these obstacles the greater part of their industry would have been laid still by the prodigious exports forced on Germany to pay the reparations. All this now is commonplace among normally-thinking people throughout Europe.

The breakdown of the cash and goods export method brought about the crisis at the end of 1922. This breakdown widened the gap between the French and British governments, that is to say, between another pair of creditor and debtor nations, and made France seek "productive pledges" in a part of Germany in order to liquidate and in part escape her obligations to England. The French capitalists seized important instruments of production in Germany in order to secure industrial investments in Germany in

payment of reparations. The result was the economic partition of Germany—a state of affairs which has been characteristic of Germany during 1923 and up to the present. This attempt at reparation settlement broke up the unity of existing economic systems, the German Reich became divided into spheres of foreign influences, the currencies collapsed and inflation became the handmaid of heavy industry trusts in both France and Germany. As the Franco-German coal and steel combine assumed practical shape after the signing of the Micum Agreement in October, 1923, the danger to the big banks and international transport interests in England and America increased. British trading and industrial interests might be able to tolerate the Ruhr occupation by securing export privileges in the other zones of Germany to the east of the Weser. But to the banks and the larger investment houses in the City and Wall Street there could be no recompense for the destruction of the unity of the financial system of the Reich and for the breaking up of that wonderful network of German State railways, which is the finest conceivable pledge for reparations payment. And so the struggle during 1923 and 1924 has been between the industrial inflationists and partitionists in control of the German and of the French Governments on the one hand and the financial stabilisers and owners of passive capital in London and New York, who want a united Germany, on the other. The former were content to solve the reparations problem by seizing a pledge or allowing it to be seized, and tearing it out of the body of the Reich, regardless of economic consequences to Europe as a whole. In this both French coal and steel interests were at one. The stabilisers, on the other hand, are more long-sighted, and seek to solve the reparations problem by securing a capital investment in the debtor country, which will place the whole labour power of Germany, and ultimately of the whole of Europe, at its mercy. The Magna Charta of this group of international banking interests is the Experts' Report of the Reparations Commission.

The essence of the Experts' Report is that the annual payments which are laid down for Germany are to be met from Budget surpluses of the whole Reich, by specially assigned revenues and monopolies, by the issue of debentures on the whole industrial

and agricultural property of Germany, by denationalising the State railways, and by handing them over to a private trust on which the Reich will be represented, but on behalf of which the Reich must issue eleven milliard goldmark debentures, two milliard preference shares, and thirteen milliard ordinary shares. Now the net effect of this will be to transfer material values from the Reich to Allied and American banks by forcing a Budget surplus. This presupposes a surplus on the German railways and a profit from the operations of agriculture and industry. It presupposes also the stabilisation of the mark, the depreciation of which has up to now made all attempts at balancing the German Budget impossible. But in order to create this surplus on the railways and in the industries one of three things must happen. Either German industry must export in much larger quantities than hitherto; or else the expenses of running the public services and the transport and industrial system must be reduced and taxation increased. In other words, the producing classes in Germany must produce relatively more for less remuneration and for longer hours of work, and the consumers must consume less. In the first case we are back again at the old attempt to pay reparations by flooding the world markets with German goods. In the second case we are faced with a progressive deterioration of the already catastrophic standard of living of the producers and consumers in Germany, which must lead in the end to a steady dying out of a large section of the population and the defeating of the whole payment plan. There is, however, a third alternative: that the Budget surpluses and increased revenues might be found from the marginal profits which the German capitalist class exacts from all industrial and agricultural operations in Germany, and which amounted during the period of open inflation to large sums, when converted into foreign currency and exported abroad, as it was. The question, therefore, is: will Germany create a Budget surplus by pushing exports, or by still further lowering the standard of living of the producers and consumers (a combination of both is also possible), or, thirdly, by annexing a portion of the surplus values or profits of the German capitalist class? Which of these three methods does the Experts' Report facilitate?

In regard to the first question, there is no reason why Germany should not expand her exports except for the inability of the world market to absorb her manufactured articles. The creation of the Budget surplus by large profits from the State railways, handling a booming export trade or by first charges on flourishing German industries working for the foreign markets, is theoretically quite possible. There is no doubt that during the last four years under the London payment plan Germany has exported large quantities and has had a much more favourable foreign trade balance than is generally believed or than the official German statistics admit. Some German authorities are of opinion that, reckoned in gold values, a substantial surplus of exports over imports has been obtained, but the figures given may be exaggerated. But the point is that the carrying out of the Experts' Report by this method of creating a Budget surplus would only bring the world back to the old vicious circle which was created under the London payment plan. The Allies, particularly England, would pay reparations in doles to their unemployed.

Will the Experts' Report, then, provide a Budget surplus by decreasing the earnings and purchasing power of the German working classes? The position at present is that prices in Germany since last November have been stabilised at 150 per cent. above pre-war, while the highest paid categories of workers receive wages of 66 per cent. above the pre-war gold value. In other words, the purchasing power of the workers is 45 per cent. below pre-war. Now come the experts, and in their report tell us that "the scale of indirect taxation seems unnecessarily low." It is proposed to take customs, alcohol, sugar and beer taxes and to make them one of the special charges for the payment of annual sums, mounting from fifty million sterling in 1924-25 to 125 million sterling in 1928-29. The amounts may be raised or lowered, according as the revenue from these indirect taxes comes in. The prospect for the German consumer, therefore, is that certain articles of prime necessity for him will become an important means of financing reparations payment. Higher taxation of these articles will lead to less consumption, unless wages are raised. The net result will be that money values will be created by raising artificially the prices of certain articles of necessity in Germany.

There will be a smaller consumption, but an inflated monetary value will be squeezed out and transferred to the foreign bondholders. The effect will be anti-social in the extreme, and the German consumer may try to protect himself by cutting down consumption to a minimum, thus defeating the object of the indirect taxes and monopolies, but reducing himself to still greater poverty.

Then the German State railways are to be denationalised and handed over to an international financial syndicate. The German Reich may sell its shares in the syndicate to find the cash necessary to fulfil its obligations under this heading, thus losing even a shadowy control over this most important of all the nationalised transport services of the Continent. A sum amounting to roughly two milliard goldmarks will have to be found by the German railways per annum to pay the interest and sinking fund on the various debentures and preference and ordinary shares of the syndicate. A special transport tax is foreshadowed, which will raise freight charges correspondingly, and in regard to passenger rates the experts are of opinion that "the charges for the third and fourth class are too low." Hence the travelling public will be paying reparations, and particularly those who travel third and fourth class. Further economies are foreshadowed by wholesale dismissal of railway servants and officials. This is not done in order to make the position better for those that remain, for the report goes on: "Wage increases are not to be expected in Germany to-day." The advantage, therefore, of the dismissals will go solely to the railway surplus, which will be transferred to reparations account. The burden will fall on the travelling public and the railway workers.

The Experts' Report gives the German Government good advice about how to balance the Budget by economies in expenditure. At a time when the Labour Government in England is reducing food taxes and increasing the money paid out for social services, the experts wish to load up the German workers with higher food taxes, transport charges and a reduction in expenditure on social services. "Under the heading of unemployment benefit an economy might be made," they say, and proceed to advise the cutting out of the sum of 500 million goldmarks from

the Budget of 1924-5 under this heading. I am sure that the present reactionary Government at Berlin are only too thankful to the experts for this hint, and will not waste any time in piling another burden on the backs of the German workers. Thus we see that the creation of a Budget surplus by lowering the standard of living of the producing and consuming masses in Germany and transferring the values in money so realised to the reparations account is quite possible, and indeed is the only practical result that can come from the Experts' Report. But how long transference of values by lowering social conditions could continue before a counteracting influence began to operate is a question which I will not enter into here.

But perhaps we do the experts an injustice. Perhaps there is tucked away somewhere in the report a recommendation that part of the Budget surpluses should be found by direct taxation and levies on the capital and incomes of the German propertied classes. In fact we do actually find passages which refer to the scandalous evasions of taxation by the German capitalist class. It is pointed out that in the Budget for 1924-25 out of the 1,344 million goldmarks coming under the head of income tax 764 millions, or over half, come from wage deductions from the working class. As a matter of fact, the position, even after the so-called stabilisation last November in regard to the finances of the Reich, is that of the 142 million goldmarks which were collected by the Treasury in the month of December of last year only twenty-five million goldmarks came from tax on incomes other than wages and salaries, excess profit duty, company tax and stamps. What have the experts to say to this? Apart from a laconic remark that the inheritance duties might be raised, they add: "It is a matter for Germany to decide how taxation can best be adjusted to meet her own special conditions." It would appear, therefore, that when it comes to financing Budget surpluses for reparations payments by imposing crushing burdens on the working and consuming classes in Germany the experts have no qualms of conscience about interfering in internal German affairs. They can lay down the indirect taxes and propose the setting up of a control apparatus to see that they are collected. But as soon as it comes to making the German bourgeoisie disgorge

some of the ill-gotten gains which it has plundered from its own people and make it pay its share of reparations, then suddenly—it is a matter for Germany herself to decide !

Can anything prove better than this that the Experts' Report is actuated by strong anti-social motives, however much it may clothe its language with honeyed words about preserving the unity of the Reich and stabilising the currency? And here is just the danger. For these aims are in every way desirable. The partitioning of Germany into economic spheres of interest and the tearing of one part of the great German State railway system out of the body of the Reich and its artificial grafting on to the French economic system can only prolong the chaos in Europe. But when one sees a scheme to restore the economic unity of the Reich, to balance the Budget and to stabilise the currency by imposing still further burdens on the German masses and by ignoring the German Socialists' efforts to secure a more equitable distribution of wealth within Germany itself, then one can only assume that the powers behind the experts—the Morgan Bank, Lloyds, Lazard and others—are really not concerned with these aims at all, but with using the reparations liabilities of the German Reich as a means to get hold of the German railway system and to control the labour power of Germany in their own interests. *Does our Labour Government realise this? Does it realise what an appalling power is being put into the hands of an international financial syndicate to control the economic life of Europe?* By manipulations of the German railway tariffs it can make cheap German exports pour across to England to compete with British manufactures and thereby force the British workman to accept wages and conditions equal to the German workers. For capital is quite international and knows no country when such questions as labour conditions are at stake. And this will inevitably happen if the German State railways are denationalised, handed over to a private international trust and the German workers' standard of living still further lowered.

Are we, then, to reject the Experts' Report altogether? I have said above that in so far as it provides for the restoration of the unity of the Reich and the stabilising of the currency it is at least an advance on the present state of partitioned Germany

and ruined European finances. It is the method by which it is proposed to bring this about that Socialist and Labour Parties throughout the world must attack with all emphasis. The salvation of the workers of Europe is not to be found by transferring power from groups of industrial trusts to a single banking and transport trust. We must never lose sight of the need to establish a uniform standard of living for all workers in the highly industrialised countries of Western Europe. Therefore we must demand that the German Budget be made to balance by taxes and levies on German capital, and our tactical problem should be to assist the German Socialists in their struggle to attain this end, for they are interested in this as much as we. It may be said that the German Social-Democrats accept the Experts' Report in its entirety. In this respect it is necessary to be careful of German Press utterances at the present time. A dying man grasps at any straw, even if it be a phantom one, and the policy of the German Social-Democratic rank and file in Germany to-day, let alone of the Communists, is one of waiting for a move at this end which will make the settlement of the reparations problem a working-class settlement and not one in the interests of an international financial oligarchy and their agents, the German capitalists.

As an immediately practical proposal it should be insisted on that no international loan should be floated to Germany except under conditions of balancing the Budget by taxes and levies on German capital, of re-establishing the eight-hour day and setting up a minimum wage, laid down by the German Trade Union Central Commission. To that task our Labour Government ought to address itself. So also ought the Labour Bureau of the League of Nations, if it is going to justify its existence as an international body for the protection of Labour.

TOWARDS A NEW POLICY.—VI

Trade Unionism at the Cross Roads

By A. J. COOK

(Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.)

THE last Trades Union Congress at Plymouth proved conclusively that the trade union movement needs overhauling. It proved there were many unions, but very little unity. The present form of organisation in Great Britain has almost become obsolete. Plymouth was an exhibition of tribal chiefs fighting to retain the confidence of their tribe. There was no suggestion of unity, but a fight to retain small unions and leadership.

The workers of Britain believe in organisation, but, as yet, they have a difficulty to know what organisation they are to belong to. Since 1921, instead of a reduction in the multiplicity of unions there has rather been an increase. Instead of organisations being based on industrial unionism, one union for every industry with proper representations for every class and grade, we have small unions poaching on the larger unions. Take the mining industry for example. Having been beaten by the employers through the neglect of the trade union movement in 1921, the miners became demoralised and disorganised, with the result that many men left their unions; instead of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress helping the miners to rebuild their organisation, the various sections affiliated to the Trades Union Congress started poaching. The General Workers' Union and other unions that had never previously catered for the miners began to take miners both underground and on the surface into their membership; with the result that to-day there are more unions trying to cater for the mining industry than ever before. This must be stopped, and the miners are determined that there shall be one union for the mining industry.

Since 1921 trade union members have realised the necessity for a united front. One union after the other was attacked by the

employers. Customs and hours were taken away. Conditions generally were worse. The General Council, instead of rallying the forces together, to stay the retreat and urge for an advance, so that the workers might at least be assured a living wage, began to act more as strike breakers. In every dispute that took place the Trades Union General Council, instead of supporting the members thereof, were called in to act as arbitrators, generally with a view to settling the dispute on a compromised basis. There is new life in the rank and file of the trade union movement; they now realise the necessity for organisation, but they do not believe in the multiplicity of unions, one acting against the other, and in a struggle with the employing classes acting separately and sectionally. Just as the miners have united together, and all their agreements terminate at the same time, so we must see that every union agreement terminates at the same time. Every union can formulate its own programme, but the programmes must be fought for by all the unions together. This may take some time to bring about, due to the fact that separate agreements have been entered into by the railwaymen, by the dockers, by the miners, the engineers and the other unions. But at the moment every union is attempting to raise its head once again, and to fight for the right to live for its members. At the present moment millions of men are involved in wage disputes, affecting the big industries of this country.

The year 1924 has seen a revival in organisation, and woe betide any leaders that stand in the way of real progressive trade unionism. The immediate problem is to form a united front. Give power to the General Council to unite together to fight on general questions. What are those general questions? First, the question of wages. The Trades Union Congress ought to decide on a minimum wage for all the workers in industry. Second, the question of hours could be decided upon, and, third, the question of safety which affects all workers in various ways.

Upon these questions we can unite together and work, and thus prove to the workers that we are thinking not according to our trade and our occupation, but thinking as members of the great working class.

The General Council should at once draft out a scheme ready for the next Trades Union Congress; otherwise that meeting will

be a farce, where we will pass resolutions that we never intend to carry out—that, in fact, we have not the machinery to carry out.

We have plenty of resolutions on hours, wages, safety and every other subject beneficial and necessary to the workers in industry, but we have not the machinery to carry out the resolutions that we have passed so unanimously. The problems we have to face are changing. New problems demand new methods and new machinery to face them. Therefore, while fighting for wages and hours, our ultimate aim must be control of the industries we work in, in the interest of the whole of the community.

Then the next step must be a real live international organisation, instead of a mere meeting of people congratulating one another and passing pious resolutions. There is a limit to passing resolutions. The rank and file are becoming keen and alert, and they are not content to listen to the continual excuses of the trade union leaders explaining why resolutions have not been carried out. The members of our union are losing faith in conferences and organisations that simply pass resolutions and make no attempt to carry them out. It is not sufficient to state at May Day demonstrations and at big mass meetings that the time is not opportune, and that we have not yet the machinery, and to attack the other unions for being backward and other things. At the present moment there is no linking of interests between the Miners' union, the Dockers' union, the Railwayman's union, and the engineers. There is no consultation between the leaders of the various unions prior to entering a struggle. Foresight is better than hindsight, and it is necessary that the unions should be consulted before any union takes action. It is no use taking action and then asking other unions to join hands, before they have been consulted, only to find that they are not prepared to take action with you, although the majority of the members may be involved in the stoppage. It is well known that the miners cannot fight without affecting the railwaymen and the dockers. The same can be said of the railway men or the dockers. They cannot strike without immediately affecting the miners, who would stop work without getting any tangible results. At the last Trades Union Congress the miners, railwaymen, dockers and engineers, through their spokesmen, opposed forming a united front; opposed giving power to the General Council to get

the unions together to act together in a crisis. It is no use blaming the other workers as we, the miners, did in 1921 for handling coal.

Railwaymen, dockers and seamen, we must attempt to set up some machinery before the struggle takes place to avoid such a thing happening again. Striking is still our only effective weapon. It cannot be always used, but should be ready to be used at the most opportune moment. The divisions between us must cease. You cannot touch coal without touching steel, iron and other things. The employers are well organised together, and act together, and use the fact of wages being low in one industry to reduce wages in another. The problems of the present are more difficult than the past: they are of a different character. New methods must be devised to meet the new problems. Under the present conditions of the industry wages cannot be guaranteed equal to a decent living.

If capital is to get the returns that it desires upon its idle stock, a huge accumulation, then they will only do so at the expense of lengthening the working day and reducing the wages of other men. That slogan "an injury to one, an injury to all" must be made real and live, and I hope the miners at their next conference will decide that a united front is necessary. I will agree that the time is past when, even a big union like ours, can act successfully alone. We have no right to act alone, because by acting we are bound to affect possibly the rest of the workers in this country. We must think not as miners, railwaymen and dockers, but as members of the great working-class movement. We can start upwards, start putting our own house in order. Every man a member of the union, and it is the duty of the General Council immediately to draw lines of demarcation, so that men may know what union they are to join. It is time we decided definitely that organisations should be by industry. I know this would mean doing away with many unions, doing away with many union jobs, and will create conflict between union officials. We cannot allow individuals to hinder the progress. The rank and file must and will take a greater interest in organisation. Unions are not made up with the object of providing funds for the trade union leaders, or to provide for funds for benefits only. Friendly societies are meeting that. The unions must organise for the control of industry. That means that international organisation is necessary. The employers at the recent Inquiry told us that the

longer hours in Germany, on the Ruhr, in France and Belgium, prohibited them from paying wages in this country, and competing against their labour. More and more must organisation take on an international character. We must have an organisation that will act. The only true test of an organisation is, will it act or function in time of need ?

WHOSE BUDGET?

By H. P. RATHBONE

IT was said that the Budget would prove the supreme test of the Labour Government. If the Labour Government could produce an acceptable Budget, it would justify its claim to be fit to govern.

But this argument assumes many things. It assumes that there is only one kind of Budget. It assumes that a Budget which a *Labour* Government ought to produce could be accepted. Finally, it assumes that the Labour Government is in power in order to govern just as all other Governments have governed before it.

These assumptions must be investigated before we can estimate the value of the Budget as a supreme test, before we can decide on the nature of that test and, therefore, can pass judgment on the Labour Government itself.

What Is the Budget?

What, then, is the Budget? It is the balance sheet of the State. Here is reckoned annually all the expenditure which must be incurred in order to keep in being the State machine: here is reckoned all the income which the State obtains in order to meet that expenditure. But the State itself is only a machine—a machine for certain purposes.

The Fundamentals of the Capitalist State

The present system of society is based on the domination of the capitalists over the workers. The worker has to work for the capitalist in order to obtain his means of existence. The capitalist obtains his profit from the labour power of the worker. There are, therefore, two classes in society, the capitalist, the exploiter—the worker, the exploited. But capitalism itself has had to struggle to obtain this position of a dominant class. It had to destroy the old feudal system, and to destroy that system, it had to destroy the machine which feudalism had created to protect its interests. The old feudal State was this machine. Capitalism destroyed this State machine and set up its own State machine.

But this State machine was found to be necessary not only to destroy the last remnants of the power of the feudal lords, but to protect its creators against the new antagonistic class, the working class, which the victorious system had created.

As Lenin said in *The State and Revolution*¹ :—

According to Marx, the State is the organ of class *domination*, the organ of oppression of one class by another. Its aim is the creation of order which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between the classes.

The method by which the State carries out this, its primary and elemental function, is by the creation of oppressive machinery—the army, the navy and the police force; the method by which these organs of oppression of the exploited classes are maintained is by the levy of taxes, the borrowing of loans, by the State. The Budget is the account of this expenditure and this revenue.

The Growth of the Capitalist State

The modern imperialist State, however, is a much more complex structure than was the State of early capitalism. Capitalism was then in its competitive stage of development. The home market had yet to be conquered; the working class was still in the stage of only sporadic revolt. Free competition, just as free exploitation of the workers, was vitally necessary to capitalist development.

To-day, however, not only has the home market been conquered for capitalism, but also the world market. Competitive capitalism has developed into monopolist capitalism. Monopolist banking capital has linked with monopolist industrial capital and formed an alliance of finance capital. In this development capitalists have had to export not only their goods but also their accumulated capital in order that it may gain them profit. This means large armies and navies in order that that profit may be secure not only from the grasp of imperialist, or less developed capitalist units of other countries, but also from the revolts against it by the exploited class which it has caused to arise in those countries. The struggle to keep control of this profit has become immeasurably more intense because all the hitherto unexploited

¹ *The State and Revolution* (Communist Party's edition, page 11).

areas of the world are now under the domination of one or other of these units of finance capital.

At home, meanwhile, in the struggle to maintain its existence against the working class, finance capital has to use the State to an ever-increasing extent. It must increase the police and other repressive forces, because, owing to the development of the system, the working class—the exploited class—has become more organised and united, and therefore more of a menace to its existence; because, owing to the growing contradictions in its workings, crises become more and more frequent and, therefore, the unemployed army ever greater—an army which is at once a necessity and a continual menace to its existence. Free competition and free exploitation of the workers is no longer possible. The State becomes ever more necessary to resolve the complications in the more and more delicate machinery of capitalism; the State is also necessary to moderate the collisions between the classes, “to deprive,” as Lenin says, “the oppressed of certain definite means and methods in its struggle for throwing off the yoke of the oppressors.”¹

The Budget, therefore, the balance sheet of the machine whereby the exploiting class keeps its control, assumes at once an ever more important place in the existence of that class and at the same time increases in amount out of all proportion to the increase in the number of the working class.

The following table of the Exchequer receipts of the United Kingdom, the revenue side of the Budget, in relation to the growth of the population, clearly proves this² :—

Year	Exchequer receipts (millions of £)	Percentage increase over 1821	U.K. population (in millions)	Percentage increase over 1821
1821	54	—	21	—
1861	70	48	29	43
1901	130	141	41	95
1914	198	267	45	114
1924	837	1450	47	124

It will be seen that the increase in Exchequer receipts and the increase in population in the first forty years covered by the

¹ *The State and Revolution*, p. 11.

² Compiled from tables given in *A Short Fiscal and Financial History of England, 1815—1918*. By J. A. Rees. (Methuen.)

above table was very much the same, though already the increase in Exchequer receipts had out-distanced the increase in population. This was the period of free competition and the free exploitation of the workers. There were indeed colonies at the end of this period—2,500,000 square miles of them—but the export of goods was still more important than the export of capital.

The next period of forty years to 1901 shows how it was found that the State machine had to be considerably strengthened in order to protect the rapidly developing capitalism. Capitalism had already entered upon the period of monopoly; export of capital had become increasingly important and colonial possessions had consequently enormously increased. By 1901 British capitalism was exploiting colonies to the extent of 9,500,000 square miles.

The next period of thirteen years showed capitalism to an enormously increasing extent relying on the State for its security. Competitive capital had now completely given place to finance capital: all efforts were concentrated on maintaining the defence of the colonial areas already conquered and on building up large armed forces to conquer from other rival imperialist capitalist, or less developed capitalist, countries more areas for exploitation now that the remaining free areas had all been annexed by the rival units: meanwhile at home class collisions were growing more frequent and therefore required more State machinery to "moderate" whether by force or fraud. A further three million acres of exploitable areas were added in this period.

The final period to the present day saw British finance capital involved in the first world struggle to increase its exploitable areas at the expense of other finance-capital units. As a consequence of this struggle it increased its exploitable areas by 500,000 square miles, but at the expense of an immeasurably more complicated State machine. A huge debt has been built up and Exchequer receipts have had to be increased more than four-fold to meet the current expenditure.

Enter the Labour Government

Such is the present position of the State machine—exercised in the interests of the dominant class, the capitalist class, to keep exploited the working class. In order that capitalism might

maintain and extend its field of profit making, it has compelled the State to seize by force over thirteen million square miles of territory; in part of that territory the State keeps in direct subjection and exploitation 380,000,000 workers and peasants. Such is the State that the working class has to attack and destroy before it can free itself from the bonds of its exploiters.

A Labour Government has taken office in this State. What are the issues that face that Labour Government? It can attack the machine, as it were, from the shoulders of the workers, or it can knuckle down to the machine, govern in the interests of the class that controls the machine, hang supported by its chains and thus dispense with the shoulders of the workers who raised it up.

If it chooses the latter alternative what must be its attitude to the Empire?—the Empire which, as we have shown, is of vital necessity to the very existence of imperialist capitalism, the controller of the machine? It must declare for the continuance of that Empire with all its class oppression and class subjection. The Labour Government has done this.

For Ramsay MacDonald's first act was to send a message to the Indian nationalists warning them that no obstruction of the subsidiary Indian State machine would be permitted, that there was no hope for the release of the 300,000,000 workers and peasants of this land from their subjection to the British State. He has denied these same workers and peasants all right to set up independent political working-class organisations. He has allowed them to be shot down when striking for the elementary demand for a bare existence.

Numerous representatives of this Labour Government have repeated time and time again that they stand for the unity of this system of exploitation called the British Empire; they take every opportunity of recalling that they are proud of being in the position to govern this League of Free Peoples—"free," indeed, yet conquered both by the force of arms and the fraud of bribery and drink.

This alternative of dispensing with the shoulders of the workers and working the State machine in the interests of its controllers, the capitalists, further involves the maintenance of

the forces of oppression by which those capitalists maintain themselves in power—the army and the air force, the navy and the police force. The Labour Government having chosen this alternative, therefore declares that it will uphold the army and the navy, and has shown indecent haste to improve the latter instrument of oppression by “accelerating” (official phrase) the building programme of the new “light” cruisers of 10,000 tons each. As a previous and openly capitalist First Lord of the Admiralty¹ has remarked with reference to the employment of these light cruisers in foreign waters:—

Their services are frequently requisitioned for the direct protection of British interests and the maintenance of order.

Likewise in the case of the air force, it has declared for the one-power standard and has displayed a transparent facility in adopting that “continuity of policy” with the late capitalist Government in the matter of increased construction of aeroplanes which will be exclusively officered, just as are the existing ones, by the capitalist ruling class.

In its dealing with the movements of the workers at home, the Labour Government, by siding with the capitalist class, is compelled to hinder and to try to break up those movements and to adopt repressive measures towards them if they become, despite all these efforts, too threatening to the smooth running of the capitalist machine. The Labour Government has done this. For during the dockers’ strike it threatened to use the anti-Labour law passed by Lloyd George, the Emergency Powers Act, “to secure the transport of necessary food supplies,” *i.e.*, to blackleg on its electors, the working class. During the tram and ‘bus strike Ramsay MacDonald actually obtained the necessary signature to the proclamation under this Act, to suspend all the ordinary constitutional forms, and thus openly to reveal in all its stark nakedness the State as the instrument of capitalist dictatorship. So as to leave no doubt as to the class that Ramsay MacDonald meant this, his action, to protect, he kindly explained that:—

The major public services must also be maintained, and the

¹Lord Lee of Fareham in his statement on Navy Estimates (1922-23), Cmd. 1603.

Government, any Government, all Governments, must give protection to those engaged in legal occupations.

But the complete change of front necessitated by this choice of the two alternatives which faced the Labour Government on assuming office in this State machine is nowhere more startlingly illustrated than in its attitude towards an amendment to the Army Annual Bill to allow a soldier to refuse to take duty in industrial disputes. This amendment had previously been regularly brought forward every year on previous Army Annual Bills by members of the Parliamentary Labour Party. But this year it was left to George Lansbury to move the amendment and for some fifty-three members of this same Parliamentary Labour Party, thirty of whom were holding office in the Government, to vote against it and thus to defeat it.

In its relations to the police force the Labour Government is likewise governed by its choice of the two alternatives. For the police force is the instrument of individual repression of the working class. Arthur Henderson has set his seal on such a policy in a speech delivered at a dinner of C.I.D. representatives; for there he asserted that :—

The relationship between the Government and the police will be one of trust, confidence and real friendship.

Finally, Mr. MacDonald has definitely declared for industrial peace between capital and labour, for class collaboration between these class enemies. In a speech to an I.L.P. demonstration at York at Easter-tide he said :—

We will try to change industry from a battleground of strikes to a co-operation and confidence between the worker and the owner of capital.

The Labour Government, therefore, is in favour of the means by which the capitalist class retains its domination over the working class. It is in favour of large armies in order to shoot down workers in India and elsewhere; it is in favour of large navies because its members are proud of the Empire and would do nothing to "harm its prestige." It is in favour of a larger air force in order more effectively, we suppose, to bomb the peasant or worker of India, Mesopotamia, or—Britain. It favours a large

police force and will "trust" it to keep order and see that the workers do not revolt against their exploitation.

The Consequences of Its Policy

What, then, does this Budget, the first Budget of a Labour Government, accomplish? Mr. Snowden has confirmed the estimates for the forces of class domination of his predecessors, the Conservative Party—one of the parties of the exploiters.

They are as follows, with a comparison of the actual expenditure for 1913-14:—

	Actual Expenditure 1913-14	Estimates 1924-25
	In thousands of £'s	
Army	28,346	45,000
Navy	48,833	55,800
Air Force	—	14,763
Law and Justice (including police and prisons)	4,491	11,646
Foreign and Colonial services	1,523	9,138
Debt charges	24,500	350,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Totals	£107,693	£486,347

The expenditure on law and justice is included as well as that on the police and prisons, as the administration of justice is also a direct instrument for class domination in the hands of the capitalist class. "Foreign and Colonial Services" are in the same category. Debt charges are also included because they are entirely due to debts arising out of various wars in which capitalism has engaged to extend its domination.

It may be said in defence of Mr. Snowden that he had not adequate time to revise these estimates and that he foreshadowed at the end of his Budget speech important economies that he intended to effect in the course of the year. But this prophecy was most significantly qualified. These are his actual words (Hansard, 29.4.24, 1606):—

I shall watch the expenditure with the utmost vigilance, and wherever economy can be effected *without impairing the efficiency of the national services*, that economy shall be made. (Our italics.)

This does not appear to imply any large reduction in these armed forces; in fact the total payments on the army, navy and

air force in the year 1923-4 are actually *less* by close on £10,000,000 than the expenditure estimated by Mr. Snowden for these forces in the year 1924-5.

The argument that Mr. Snowden has had too short a time to revise the estimates falls to the ground, and Mr. Snowden takes his place in the ranks of the class collaborators and class oppressors like Lord Chelmsford, Lord Olivier, Lord Haldane, J. H. Thomas, Arthur Henderson and James Ramsay MacDonald. Did he not assert in his concluding remarks on the Budget: "The Budget is vindictive against no class and against no interest." (Hansard, 29.4.24, 1608.) He, along with these other traitors to the cause of a working-class Government, now is seen to join in their approval of class—capitalist class—domination over 380,000,000 peasants and workers in the British Empire. He approves of the armed forces and police being used by capitalists to retain their exploitation of these workers.

The Sweets of the Budget—Bitter Sweets

How comes it, then, that he has been welcomed by certain sections of the Labour Press? His Budget speech is now being broadcast by the Labour Party in pamphlet form with the title of a "Housewife's Budget." The *Daily Herald* came out on the "morning after" with the immense and optimistic streamer:—

Labour's Budget takes a load off your breakfast table.

The *New Leader* says Mr. Snowden has composed:—

A balance sheet which promises to be the most popular budget of recent years. . . . Even the F.B.I. has reason to congratulate itself on the disappearance of the Corporation Tax (*sic*).

What is the reason for this chorus of praise? It is because Mr. Snowden has taken a big step forward to fulfil *one* of his election promises to make "A Free Breakfast Table for the Workers." Mr. Snowden estimated a surplus of £38,000,000. Of this sum £27,300,000 has gone in reducing duties on sugar, tea, coffee, entertainments, &c., the remainder in abolishing the McKenna duties, the Corporation Profits Tax and the Inhabited House Duty, and in giving certain small Post Office concessions.

But Mr. Snowden is praised for "freeing the breakfast table" not only by sections of the Labour Press but also by sections of the Capitalist Press and individuals of the capitalist parties.

Sir Robert Horne said in the Commons Debate that:—

The Budget statement to-day with some slight modifications, might very well have been the Budget of either of the old parties (Hansard, 29.4.24, 1609).

The *Statist* agrees with him:—

Where the Socialist Chancellor touched on matters of general fiscal policy, hardly a sentence of his but would have graced the lips of the staunchest Liberal or Conservative, except, of course, as regards the Protectionist issue (3.5.24, p. 705).

The *Economist* says:—

The soundness of his proposals is shown by the fact that, with the exception of the two fiscal issues (the McKenna duties and the refusal to agree to the Imperial preference proposals), his Budget has been favourably received (3.5.24, p. 901).

Finally we have Mr. Asquith, of Featherstone and Irish rebellion fame, heaping praise upon praise:—

The Budget proceeds on thoroughly sound financial lines. . . . There is nothing in the Budget, so far as I know, in which principle is concerned, to which a single one of us sitting on these benches will not heartily subscribe. . . . This is a Free Trade Budget (Hansard, 29.4.24, 1613—15).

Let us pause to examine these statements, most of which are taken from capitalists or capitalist papers that still believe in Free Trade. Why is Free Trade of benefit to the capitalist? Because, as Karl Marx showed in his speech on Free Trade before the Democratic Association of Brussels in 1848,¹ by the repeal of the corn laws, to which he was referring, cheaper bread means lower wages for the workers. But there is one complication arising in this case. It is that it is almost certain that any immediate benefit the workers may derive from the lower prices of these "breakfast table" articles, will, as a head of a multiple grocery shop pointed out in an interview in the *Manchester Guardian* (1.5.24), be soon filched from them by the monopoly position of the planters and importers. Therefore, whichever way it works, as long as capital exploits Labour, Labour will be cheated of its free breakfast table, either by the Free Trade method of reducing

¹ *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Appendix iii. By Karl Marx. (Kerr, U.S.A.)

the price of the necessaries of life for the worker and then reducing his wages, or by the monopolist method of creating a shortage in supplies and so driving up the price of the articles to the level at which they stood before the tax was reduced.

This is the reason why the Budget has been welcomed by the capitalists. It has been welcomed by Labour supporters for the reason that it affects to go some way towards fulfilling one of Labour's promises in the election—and so few of them have been fulfilled. But this fulfilment is seen to be a base illusion. Mr. Snowden's claim that, whatever else his Budget does or does not do, at any rate it will raise the real wages of the workers, is thus proved to vanish in thin air; he stands out merely as a tool—conscious or unconscious—in the hands of the capitalists to delude and divide the workers, to break the rising tide of their demands for higher wages. He is the true "moderating" influence so that the State machine of capitalism may continue to keep the workers in a state of subjection and their labour power exploitable by the capitalists.

The Real Issue of the Budget

But the omissions in this Budget provide the other half of our picture depicting Mr. Snowden refusing to attack capitalism's armed forces of oppression, filling in the last letter in the proof that Mr. Snowden is indeed a "class collaborator."

On what did the Labour Party fight its election? For the unemployed, the provision of *immediate* national schemes of productive work with adequate maintenance for those who cannot obtain employment. Children leaving school must be kept off the labour market as long as possible; young people must be given full educational training with maintenance. What did these national schemes of productive work include? A national electrical power supply; the development of transport by road, rail and canal; the improvement of national resources by land drainage, reclamation, afforestation, town planning and housing schemes.

It also put forward a minimum wage for the agricultural workers with credit and State insurance facilities for farmers. We will pass over its foreign policy as this does not involve immediate changes in the Budget. But it gave extensive promises

in factory, sick and accident legislation, workmen's compensation, and old age, widows' and ex-service pensions.

In the forefront of its taxation proposals was the Capital Levy pruned and renamed as "a graduated War Debt Redemption Levy"; the reduction of armaments (we have already seen that they have been actually *increased*), and taxation of land values leading to reduction in income tax together with all the promises we have already mentioned as having been partially fulfilled by the present Budget.

Even on the meagre and doubtful schemes which are here set forth to relieve unemployment, Mr. Snowden is as silent as the grave. Even the War Debt Redemption Levy has passed into oblivion. What benefits do the unemployed get from this Budget? —a few weeks' cheaper tea and sugar, inevitably to be filched from them. Mr. Snowden leaves himself with a surplus of £4,000,000 to carry out the Government's housing schemes, the old age and widows' pension schemes, and the factory legislation already set in train by the Government. What economies can he make? He is committed to the maintenance of repressive armed forces: so no economies there. Can education be trimmed? No, his Party programme demands its extension. Can he reduce the other Civil Service expenditure? Old age pensions—the programme bars the way again; ex-service pensions, again his party programme demands "fair play." Right through the list no large economies are possible.

What, then, can he do for the unemployed? There are two alternatives left: a productive loan or their complete abandonment to the tender mercies of the mirage of a trade revival. Either spells disaster to the working-class movement. A "productive loan" means nothing but inflation if no attempt is made to assault the twin citadels of capitalism—the banking and industrial monopolies—the one by complete socialisation, the other by socialisation when they refuse to produce and heavy taxation at all times. Inflation means an artificial boom followed by chaos and then slavery to the imperialism which thoughtfully offers assistance. Complete abandonment to the trade revival means disillusionment and gradual break-up of the Labour Movement, possibly leading to Fascism and certainly to a complete setback for many years.

Mr. Snowden has had his supreme test of his fitness to govern. But that supreme test means surrender to capitalism, means fitness to govern on capitalism's behalf. The Budget will prove in a very short run its essentially capitalist nature. Reductions in food taxes will be forgotten when the immediate benefits they may bring to the workers are filched from them again. The Housewife's Budget will become the Budget of Inflation or the Budget of Tranquillity, each equally disastrous to the workers.

Only a bold attack can succeed: immediate socialisation of banking, credit and insurance (this, by the way, is in the I.L.P. programme and has been rejected and is now relegated to the limbo of idealism); immediate and steeply graduated taxes on the capitalists; immediate abolition of all taxes on the workers; immediate levy on capital for social purposes and not for debt redemption; cancellation of all interest upon debt holdings above a certain figure; immediate expropriation of industries which refuse to give even the barest existence to their workers or refuse to produce goods at all; workers' control commissions to be established in every factory; full maintenance for all the unemployed: a six-hour day and £4 a week; repudiation of the class oppression of colonial peoples and immediate action to free them from British rule; repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles and all its works. The proclamation of such proposals is the only way for the Labour Government to save itself in the eyes of the workers. For such a proclamation would unite the workers behind it, would ensure their support immediately the Labour Government required it to carry these proposals through in the face of the united capitalist opposition.

But Mr. Snowden has undergone the supreme test already, and under that test he has proved his class affiliation. For to draw up a Budget and assert that it "is vindictive against no class and against no interest"—a Budget that is to carry on the State machine of the capitalist class "without impairing the efficiency of the national services"—is a complete contradiction. For under such conditions it can but prove "vindictive" to the working class. For what is the State but capitalism's machine to keep the workers in bondage?

BRITISH FREEDOM

By W. T. COLYER

(Joint Hon. Secretary, Labour Defence Council)

WHITE terror undisguised is the reward now being enjoyed by most of the world's workers who, in the years 1914-1918, fought for what they imagined to be their national interests. In Italy, Germany, Hungary, Finland, Bulgaria, Labour lies crushed and bleeding under the heel of avowed reaction. In the United States a host of "criminal syndicalism" and "criminal anarchy" laws have made left-wing propaganda of any kind an exceedingly dangerous business. The Moroccan war and the example of Italy have provided the reactionaries of Spain with an excuse for intensified military despotism. Even Switzerland, formerly the home of political exiles and advanced movements, now permits "whites" to assassinate "reds" with impunity.

Amid this general orgy of repression it is natural to ask whether what is popularly known as "British freedom" has passed unscathed through the crisis. The question is not only natural, it is of burning interest to everyone interested in the future of the British Labour Movement. Before attempting a detailed answer to it, however, we must be clear that most of this supposed liberty rests not upon law but upon the usage of our governing class. Bernard Shaw put the case pretty accurately when he made the Devil in *Man and Superman* explain: "Englishmen never will be slaves: they are free to do whatever the Government and public opinion allow them to do."

As a matter of cold fact the law of seditious libel in this country has all along been sufficiently wide to punish almost any form of criticism which the Government of the day has thought worth while to suppress. Under it Sir Francis Burdett was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of £1,000 for criticising the conduct of the military in the Peterloo massacre of 1819. "The test whether the statement is a seditious libel is not either the truth of the language or the innocence of the motive with which the statement is published, but is this: Is the language used

calculated to promote public disorder or physical force or violence in a matter of State ? ”¹ To slander the sovereign or his administration or the constitution of the realm or either House of Parliament or any judge or magistrate is not only sedition, it is also “ a high misprision or contempt,” and, therefore, according to Dr. Blake Odgers, K.C., one of the foremost living authorities on the subject, “ the defendant may be fined to any amount, or sentenced to a term of imprisonment of any length, or both, at the discretion of the judge, as in *praemunire*.” “ It is also sedition to speak or publish words defamatory of the Government collectively or of their general administration with intent to subvert the law, to produce public disorder or to foment or promote rebellion.” Intent to excite rebellion or disorder will be presumed if the natural consequence of the defamatory words will be “ to excite a contempt of H.M. Government, to bring the administration of its laws into disrepute and thus impair their operation, to create disaffection or to disturb the public peace and tranquillity of the realm.”

Dr. Odgers admits that on a rigid interpretation of some of the Court decisions, notably one given by Lord Chief Justice Holt in 1704, almost every opposition newspaper would be constantly liable to prosecution, but he suggests that the Lord Chief Justice had not in mind “ a quiet change of ministry which in no way shakes the throne, or loosens the reins of order and government.” A social crisis of real magnitude would almost certainly bring into existence conditions very different from the tranquillity contemplated by the learned writer of lawyers’ textbooks, and the reader can only infer that in such an event the Government would have no difficulty in finding valid legal and constitutional precedents to justify the prosecution for sedition of any person guilty of expressing opinions likely to lower it in public esteem. Words construed as expressing an “ intent to excite ill will between different classes of His Majesty’s subjects ” may certainly be punished as seditious within the meaning of the law.

The blasphemy laws are no less sweeping. In some cases the courts have recognised the right to attack established religion, provided that “ the decencies of controversy ” are observed ; but Stone’s *Justices’ Manual* lays it down that “ wilful intention to

¹ Blake Odger’s *Digest of the Law of Libel and Slander*, page 513.

pervert, insult and mislead . . . by wilful misrepresentation *or artful sophistry* calculated to mislead the ignorant and unwary is the criterion and test of guilt" (italics ours).

Yet with such weapons already in their hands British Governments in recent times have seen fit to add to their powers of repression. By virtue of the Treason Felony Act of 1848, it is now treason felony, punishable by penal servitude, to "express, utter or declare" any "compassings, imaginations, inventions, devices or intentions" to deprive or depose the sovereign from the imperial crown or to put any force or constraint upon or to attempt to intimidate or overawe both Houses or either House of Parliament. It is easy to imagine circumstances in which this Act, designed to suppress Chartist agitation, might, in the not distant future, be invoked for the crushing of a mass movement in support of the twelve-point charter proposed by the General Council for adoption at this year's Trades Union Congress.

If this were all, it would be more than enough to dispel any excessive confidence in "British freedom." Unfortunately it is by no means all. The last five years have witnessed further legislative inroads upon such personal rights as were left to the workers by earlier enactments. Under the Emergency Powers Act of 1920, authority is conferred upon the King in Council that covers, in the words of Mr. Shortt, an ex-Home Secretary, "all kinds of things that one may conceive." That a "state of emergency" may be proclaimed and that, during the emergency, regulations may be made for "securing the essentials of life to the community" are facts generally understood. Section 2 (1) of the Act, however, contains language that suggests the possibility of action entirely inconsistent with what most people still regard as constitutional procedure. Orders in Council have hitherto ranked among the legal instruments by which governmental or departmental decisions are put into effect. For one reason or another it has been the practice to publish some decisions through departmental orders under seal and signature of the responsible heads of the departments and others through Orders in Council issued through the Privy Council upon representations from the departments concerned. The Orders in Council embodying regulations made under the Emergency Powers Act may, however, "impose duties" as well as

confer powers upon the ministers of the Crown—a provision which seems almost to hint at the coercion of recalcitrant ministers in certain contingencies.

This point is worthy of consideration because of the feeling that is growing up in some well-informed Labour quarters that our generation may see a revival of the Privy Council as an anti-Parliamentary force. When he first heard the point argued, the present writer was inclined to scout the idea, but a subsequent reading of the Emergency Powers Act caused him to modify his view very considerably. Apparently all the members of the Privy Council are entitled to be summoned to its meetings, and in the event of a serious threat to the interests which are predominantly represented on the Council there would be obvious advantage in a large and influential assembly to frame regulations to curb an insurgent Labour movement.

Be that as it may, it does not exhaust the matter for conjecture offered by the Act. For example, the powers and duties that may be conferred by the emergency regulations are not limited to government departments and persons in His Majesty's service. Any other persons "acting on His Majesty's behalf" may be invested with special powers for any purposes that may be deemed "essential to the public safety and the life of the community." Just who can act "on His Majesty's behalf" without the trouble of enrolling even temporarily in the royal service is a nice question. Were we reading any other document than an Act of Parliament we should unhesitatingly conclude that the British Fascisti were indicated.

The possible scope of the regulations is all-embracing. Two things only may they not contain, *viz.*, (1) an order for military or industrial conscription and (2) a direct prohibition of a strike or of peaceable persuasion to strike. But what practical worth will these two reservations possess at a time when every branch of human activity and all the material wealth of the country may have been placed under rigid military or police control? Let us be candid with ourselves. With skilful management a single declaration of emergency might under favourable conditions be converted by a reactionary administration into a permanent absolutism renewing itself in a perfectly constitutional manner by a continuing proclamation once a month.

It is true that the Act provides that Parliament, if not sitting at the time, must be called together within five days after the issue of a proclamation, and that after being laid before Parliament the regulations shall only remain in force for seven days unless continued by a resolution of both Houses. The trouble is that there is nothing to prevent all members likely to resist the emergency policy from having in the meantime been prohibited by regulation from leaving their homes or straying more than two miles away from the local police station. We must also remember that if such a person infringed the regulation for the purpose of getting to the House he would be liable to arrest and three months' hard labour, with the loss of his chance of voting against the initial declaration and the first two continuances.

Any reader who feels disposed to laugh away the preceding paragraph as over-fanciful should look into the record of the Six-County Government's treatment of Dr. Cahir Healy, M.P., within the past few months. According to the Ulster Defence Alliance several hundred nationalists are still interned, without charge or trial, after nearly two years of "profound peace." Release is granted to individual prisoners on condition of deportation from the Six Counties for periods varying from two to five years—or, alternatively to such of the victims as agree to find bail, to report twice a week to the nearest police barracks and to remain within a radius of two or three miles. Thus, conditions prevailing in Ulster to-day are seen to be not unlike those suggested as possible at some future date on this side of the Irish Sea ; and in this connection we need to remind ourselves that Ulster has time and again supplied fighting brains to reaction in Britain. At the present moment the most sinister personality in home politics, from the working-class point of view, is Lord Birkenhead, who received the best of his training as "Gallop Smith" in Ulster.

One or two pieces of legislation call for notice before we can proceed to a general summing-up. The Official Secrets Act of 1920 is credited by no less an authority than the annotator of *Chitty's Statutes* with introducing "quite a new feature" into British criminal law. The particular provision so characterised is that which permits the exclusion of *any portion* of the public from trials not otherwise held in secret. Certain other sections present

features even more startling to the ordinary mind. It will probably be news to many readers that to "approach, inspect, pass over or be in the neighbourhood of" any "prohibited place" within the meaning of the Act "for any purpose prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State" is a felony punishable with penal servitude up to fourteen years. "Prohibited places" ordinarily include naval and military establishments, but a Secretary of State may by order declare any place "prohibited."

No act need be proved against the accused if, "from the circumstances of the case, or his conduct, or his known character as proved," it appears that his purpose is prejudicial. For the purpose of the law the accused is deemed to have been in communication with a "foreign agent" if within or without the United Kingdom he has visited the address of, or consorted with, a foreign agent. What is, for legal purposes, a "foreign agent"? The Act supplies an answer: "Any person who is *or has been or is reasonably suspected of being or having been employed by a foreign power either directly or indirectly* for the purpose of committing an act either within or without the United Kingdom prejudicial to the safety or interests of the State." What is the address of a foreign agent? "Any address whether within or without the United Kingdom *reasonably suspected of being an address used for the receipt of communications intended for a foreign agent or any address at which a foreign agent resides or to which he resorts for the purpose of giving or receiving communications or at which he carries on any business.*" Verily, our Labour leaders must needs be careful with whom they consort and at what houses or shops they call! The subject has its funny side, but in all seriousness the fact remains that in time of crisis a militant trade union official's character might be blasted under this Act by adducing proof that he bought his tobacco at a shop "reasonably suspected" of being the address of a foreign agent.

Finally the trend of legislation governing the stranger within our gates is a bad sign. Ever since the passage of the Aliens Act of 1905 things have been made steadily harder for the foreign-born worker in Great Britain. Naturalisation can be obtained only through administrative action on the part of the Home Secretary; it may be refused without any reason given and it costs more money than the average worker can afford. The alien trade unionist who

fails to become naturalised is liable to six months' imprisonment if he "promotes or attempts to promote industrial unrest in any industry in which he has not been *bona fide* engaged for at least two years immediately preceding in the United Kingdom." If he "attempts or does any act calculated or likely to cause sedition or disaffection," ten years' penal servitude may become his portion. Though he transgress in neither of these respects, he is under constant police supervision and may at any time be deported "if the Secretary of State deem it to be conducive to the public good" to make a deportation order against him. Any money or property he may possess may be applied in payment of the costs of his deportation.

Not even the immigration laws of the United States are so restrictive as this, and everyone who has studied the encroachments on working-class liberty in that country is aware that the first inroads were made upon the rights of the foreign-born. The tendency inevitably is to make it criminal for the native to do acts or hold opinions for which aliens may legally be excluded or deported. From this point of view alone the present status of aliens in Britain is worthy of very close attention from native trade unionists.

What, then, is the general position? From the citations given above it will be abundantly evident that the legal framework is already in existence for as thorough-going a system of coercion as the mind of man can conceive. If the administration of the laws has not hitherto been as oppressive as their content, we must look to political expediency for the explanation. Denshawai, Amritsar, the massacres of strikers in Bombay, the Cawnpore trials and a host of other examples have given us the moral and humanitarian measure of our bureaucrats. We have been treated differently because our rulers prefer to deal with their wage-slaves in sections and at different times.

Only those who are very determined to live in a fool's paradise will base their activities on the expectation of an unbroken series of Labour Governments increasing in power and in working-class sympathies. As intelligent human beings we must allow for changes of a very different character. Officialdom, at any rate, is not thinking along the lines of permanent Labour administration. It is not for the delectation of our Labour Government that detectives

are instructed to secrete themselves in cramped positions under the platforms at Communist conferences.

| There is no more useful task to be performed in the Labour movement to-day than that of arousing the rank and file in the trade unions and the co-operative organisations to their peril. Once the danger is fully understood, it will be a comparatively easy matter to organise for its removal. The immediate need is for an educational campaign, but this must not be limited to an exposition of the legal position in Britain. It must also aim at the creation of a living realisation of the horrors of white terror. In other words, the agitation against repressive laws and reactionary administration at home must be closely and continuously linked with schemes of practical assistance for persecuted workers abroad.

“British freedom” can only be made a reality when it is part of the freedom of the international working class. There must be a deepening of the sense of comradeship and solidarity, based on practical help, between the workers of Britain and their fellows under the iron heel both within the Empire and beyond its confines. To promote this solidarity is the task to which the Labour Defence Council has set its hand.

THE GATES OF THE RUHR

By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

THE next stages of the deliberations on the question of Germany's liability to make payment of Reparations to France and Belgium are going to bring into prominence factors that have, hitherto, remained in the background, seeming only of secondary importance. We are going to be made acutely aware of the fact that the profitable exploitation of such an industry as has grown up in Lorraine and on the Ruhr depends not only on the harmonious co-ordination of iron and coal mines, coke ovens, blastfurnaces and steel works, but also upon the goodwill of those who handle the raw, semi-manufactured and finished material passing between the various establishments and issuing from them on to the world market.

Both the Lorraine ore-field and the Ruhr coal-field have this double handicap that the outlets which serve them most economically are situated within the territory of a foreign state. This difficulty has presented itself as a problem of grave concern to the industrialists and to the statesmen of France and Germany for many a long year and now that it is complicated by the post-war antagonisms of the two countries and the vested interests of Antwerp and of Rotterdam it is going to require a skill and discrimination in adjustment that there is no indication of in Europe to-day.

However a settlement may be arrived at or the conflict of economic and political forces may continue, one thing is certain and that is, that it will affect the wage rates, hours of labour and volume of employment of hundreds of thousands of miners, iron and steel workers and railway and port employees along the east coast of Great Britain from Methil Docks to Dover. For that reason, if for none other, it is imperative that we should try to understand the issues that are at stake. The Rhine is the natural artery up and down which the heavy traffic of the Ruhr and Westphalia has always passed and must in the nature of things continue to pass. The great emporium of Rhineland trade has been and is the

Dutch port of Rotterdam whose prosperity is bound up, as recent shipping returns make evident, with that of the Rhineland to which it sends foodstuffs, ore and other raw materials and from which it takes outward bound coal and manufactures. The development of the Ruhr has made Rotterdam the wealthy city that, during the nineteenth century, it has become. It has given it an independence so far as coal and many other commodities were concerned that has enabled the Dutch to snap their fingers at the powerful shipping and mercantile community of London and the east coast ports of England.

Rotterdam has stood mid-way between two great industrial areas and has grown rich and influential in her commerce with them both.

Formerly, there was a considerable flow of Dutch capital to the iron industry of Durham, and in the coal trade between the north-east coast on the one side and Holland on the other strong links of mutual interest were forged that endure to this day.

Just before the war the Furnesses of Hartlepool acquired a monopoly of the grain-elevators of Rotterdam and with twenty-eight of these, discharging up to 30,000 tons per day, were doing, in conjunction with four German partners, a roaring trade in American and Canadian grain with the Rhineland.

In the summer of 1914, the same group established a shipyard with Dutch capital at Schiedam and, in 1917, re-organised and re-capitalised their big coal shipping agency with its fleet of tugs and lighters. In 1920, Furnesses entered into further alliances with Dutch merchant capital and are now interested in coal-mining in the Limberg area of South Holland.

Through Amsterdam, the banking group of Mendelssohn & Co., who act with Krupps, inter-lock with Kleinwort & Co., who operate with Furnesses. Kleinworts and the Westminster Bank, whose interests are very closely associated in the Furness group of shipbuilding and steel companies in Scotland, are now co-operating in banking enterprise in Holland.

At the same time, Van Müller & Co., the great mercantile agents of Rotterdam, are working with Vickers, Ltd., on one hand and with Otto Wolff and the A.E.G. on the other. Müllers are shipowners and Wolff has 20 per cent. of the capital of the Société

de Navigation du Rhin. Krupp, Wolff and Müller co-operate in Germany, Vickers and Furnesses in the British Empire.

None of these parties, severally or collectively, will be disposed to permit France, whose representative is president of the Rhine Navigation Commission, to dominate the waterway as far as the sea.

Whilst Rotterdam has the very greatest importance for the water-borne traffic coming to and from the Ruhr, the nearest port is that of Antwerp which, prior to 1914, took several million tons of Ruhr and Rhineland exports through her docks every year. At that time, the Belgian capitalists and their Government wished to have a canal built connecting the Ruhr and the Meuse—connected, in its turn, by canal with Antwerp—but the German Government, under the insistent pressure of Bremen and Hamburg, refused. By the Article 361 of the Treaty of Versailles, however, the Belgian Government secured that “should Belgium within a period of twenty-five years from the coming into force of the present Treaty decide to create a deep-draught Rhine-Meuse navigable waterway in the region of Ruhrort, Germany shall be bound to construct . . . the portion of this navigable waterway situated within her territory.”

Just as Hamburg and Bremen by the Ems-Rhine Canal were seeking to exploit the Ruhr so was Antwerp determined by similar means to get her grip upon its resources. This influence within Belgium is, like that desiring the closest customs union with France and Luxemburg, the cosmopolitan banking interest at the centre of which is the Société Générale de Belgique. It has in hostility to it not only the British and Dutch but, also, the lesser colliery and iron and steel concerns of Belgium and Northern France.

The occupation of the Ruhr had the effect of greatly increasing the number of ships coming into Antwerp—bringing coal from England. Antwerp's trade with Middlesbrough as, also, with Newcastle, Cardiff and Hull has, for decades, been very considerable, the staple article being, of course, coal.

Any such proposition as a canal linking up the Scheldt with the “fat” coal region with the Ruhr would meet with the strongest resistance from the Durham, Humber and South Wales exporters.

The iron-works of Northern France have always been such good customers of the Durham coke-oven owners that the latter have no desire to lose them, either, to the masters of the Ruhr.

But more important than its present connection with the Ruhr is Antwerp's present and past connection with the North of France, with Luxemburg and with Lorraine. Despite all the efforts of French Ministers of Commerce and of the French railway companies from 1883 onwards to develop Havre, Calais and Dunkirk as the ports of the Nancy region, heavy traffic persisted in going 590 kilometres to Antwerp rather than 652 to Dunkirk and 783 to Havre.

Antwerp has been the port for decades of the great iron and steel concerns of Northern and Eastern France participating in the Comité des Forges and for the industrial production of the region around Metz. That explains, very largely, why there has been so much Belgian bank and trade capital in the two great "banques d'affaires" of France, the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas and the Banque de l'Union Parisienne, and why Belgian money has been poured into what were, seemingly, French concerns.

But the railways running from Antwerp south-eastwards through Luxemburg to Switzerland were very largely built with British capital and, like the shipping of Antwerp and the ready money of Antwerp and the coal of Antwerp, were under British influence.

The political *Entente* was no accident of politics. It was an incident of economics and Antwerp was the link.

The capitalists of Antwerp, of Northern France, of Luxemburg and Lorraine can only get out of traditional economic tutelage to British capital by the aid of American capital and the acquisition of German coal. If they acquire the latter they will draw the former as a magnet draws iron. Foreign capitals will jostle each other on the road to Ruhrort.

Of this fact, Poincaré and the Bank of France are conscious and, therefore, daring in their diplomacy and their finance. They have the support of a group of forces, rallied in France, in Belgium, in Holland and in Central Europe with that circle wherein stands Schnieder et Cie, and in which, also, are the Wendels and Stinnes together with the Chatillon Commercary Steel Company and the Banque de l'Union Parisienne.

In this group, which represents older and more mellowed elements in capitalism, are Lloyds Bank, Ltd., the Shell Oil companies, Lazard Brothers, the Baldwins, the Peases and, apparently, Dorman, Long and certainly the Pearsons. Looming in the background are J. P. Morgan & Co., Schroeders, Rothschilds and others of the older financial houses of Europe and America.

These interests, dominant in the privately-owned railways of Britain and France, become fabulously wealthy in the building of the railways of the world, grown rich upon the credit and underwriting business of the vast overseas commerce of Britain and Belgium, participants in the finest spoils of empire development, are now driving forward to the complete liquidation of all economic independence within Central Europe and its approaches.

The French State, debtor of British and American high finance, now once more come to its rescue, has seized upon the gates of the Ruhr and the Rhineland, has depreciated temporarily the value of assets which, surrendered by their German owners, either indirectly or directly, to the conqueror, the latter must pass over as guarantees for loans made to stabilise the franc and to balance the Budget.

The banking and money power of Britain and of America see in the possession of the industrial resources of Europe a means to their retention of control, economic and political, within their own capitalist societies. The industrialists of America and of Britain would either keep out of Europe or perpetuate the independence of Central European industry or, somehow, seize it for themselves by rescuing Germany with a loan guaranteed on her railways.

Interest fights interest, vertically and horizontally, in the hideous death-grapple of the European bourgeoisie. Should victory come to either or should they call it a draw and agree to recuperate their dissipated strength upon the spoils, the results will be calamitous not only to the blast furnace men and steel workers of Aberavon and of Middlesbrough, to the coke oven men and the miners of Durham and Yorkshire and South Wales, but, also, to the port employees of the Tyne and the Tees, the Humber, the Thames and the Bristol Channel, and the railway workers on all the British systems.

Antwerp and Rotterdam will become the inlets and outlets for the one great industrial region that capitalism will develop in Europe.

Nowhere is international preparedness so urgent a necessity as it is on the part of the workers in the ports and on the railways, in the mines and at the furnaces in Britain, Germany, Belgium, Holland and France. The facts are so obvious, the menace so palpable that to state them should be enough.

Yet on the industrial field as in the sphere of high politics where a Socialist Premier exchanges platitudes with a Capitalist Premier, the one "creating an atmosphere," the other guarding his position, what is being attempted to bring together transport workers, railway men, blast furnace men, steel workers and miners in a common and united front against a common and ever more united enemy?

IDEALISM *versus* HISTORY

By ARTHUR E. E. READE

TWO plays¹—one by a Fabian, one by a Communist—have recently been produced in London; each is the epic of the struggle of a woman and idealist with the world, and in both her fate is to be dutifully executed by quite polite State officials. But the worlds of Shaw and of Toller are different worlds: the characters in *Saint Joan* are people drawn from the world of mediæval history; in *Masse-Mensch* “the protagonists (except for Sonia),” Toller states, “are not individual characters”—they are symbols representing the forces that govern the world to-day, the world of the class-struggle in its most brutal reality. Hence Toller has a message for the working class, and that is perhaps why the workers have less opportunity of seeing *Masse-Mensch* than *Saint Joan*. Not that serious consideration can be given to the rash classification of *Saint Joan* as fascist, on the grounds that Shaw accepts a philosophy of social despair when he seems to depict the shabbiness of the powers that be merely by contrast with the glorious courage and perfect faith of one human being, martyred without malice in her own age, and canonised by humbugs in the next.

Now whether *Saint Joan* be or be not Shaw's greatest work, it certainly is one of the finest historical plays ever written—in the conventional sense that an historical play is a dramatisation of a “true story” from the history books; and *Saint Joan* is nothing more. But in it Shaw's stagecraft has so surpassed itself, and, in

¹ *Saint Joan*. By Bernard Shaw. (Constable.) At the NEW THEATRE.

Masses and Man (Masse-Mensch). *A Fragment of the Social Revolution of the Twentieth Century*. By Ernst Toller. Translated from the German by Vera Mendel. With a note from the Author to the Producer, and a note on the production by Jürgen Fehling. Illustrated with photographs by Lissi Jessen of the Volksbühne production and Hans Strobach's designs. (The Nonesuch Press. 4s. 6d.) Performed by the INCORPORATED STAGE SOCIETY on May 18 and 19 in Louis Untermeyer's prose translation as *Man and the Masses*.

the present production at the New Theatre, he is so nobly served by the players, that the effect overwhelms powers of criticism. The too subtle critic, failing to discern that the secret of *Saint Joan* is not in any obscurantist evasions but in its homeric simplicity, seeks some explanation of Shaw's emphasis on the lives and fates of half-legendary personalities, diverting attention from his play's unquestionable historical background of social conflict—on the one side, the feudal aristocracy and the internationalist Roman Catholic Church in alliance with a foreign invader (a custom still maintained by reactionary governing classes whose position is being threatened by the people), and, on the other side, a nationalist middle class finding its ideological expression in incipient Protestantism and personified by Joan; and so into the playwright's incidental irony is read a consistency of despair which is not likely to be supported by Shaw's preface in the edition about to be published by Messrs. Constable—if indeed there is any preface, other than the brief historical note that appears on the programme at the New Theatre; for *Saint Joan* might well stand without one—its epilogue, when the ghosts of Joan, her persecutors from hell and a modern priest assemble to the Dauphin in a dream, supersedes the need for any prefatory argument, so much so that the stalls may be seen hurrying away before that last scene since the rumour has been spread by certain hack critics of the "Society" press that it is worse than any Shavian preface for spoiling a pretty spectacle by the nature of its philosophic meaning.

If critics of the Left are to justify the mediocrity of their own understanding (a thing which the critics of the Right never bother to do), and to find the intellectual food of Fascism in *Saint Joan*, how is the almost helpless pessimism of *Masse-Mensch* to be treated? *Masse-Mensch* is more directly a drama of class-war; the bourgeois critics have not attacked it, for they have not understood it. There is no criterion by which a unique expression of genuine revolutionary art—that is art created out of conscious experience of the working-class revolution—can be judged by critics timorous of analysing the meaning of a conflict which the bourgeoisie would prefer were ignored. Happily for the "Heartbreak House" audiences who attend the Stage Society's performances the political significance—the "propaganda"—of *Masse-Mensch* is

obscured by its pessimism, a pessimism natural in the circumstances in which it was written, during October, 1919, when the author was in solitary confinement in a cell at the fortress of Niederschoefeld, Bavaria, beginning a term of five years' imprisonment for the part he played as President of the Munich Soviet in March of that year. *Masse-Mensch*, says Toller in his preface (written two years later than the play itself in the form of a note to the producer of the *Volksbühne* production at Berlin), "literally broke out of me and was put on paper in two days and a half."

Masse-Mensch consists of seven "pictures," three of which are called "dream pictures," but the whole has the effect of a nightmare by reason of its "expressionist" form. It is accepted as the masterpiece of expressionism, and, since it cannot be supposed that during those two-and-a-half days Toller occupied himself with experiments in technique, it is evident that that was the form he found most adequate to his inspiration.

The picture opens in a workman's tavern where the general strike for the morrow is being planned. The comrade of the working masses, the woman, Sonia, wife of a State official, is all strength:—

I am ready.
 With every breath power grows in me.
 How I have longed and waited for this hour.
 When heart's blood turns to words
 And words to action!

* * * *

If I to-morrow sound the trumpet of Judgment
 And if my conscience surges through the hall—
 It is not I who shall proclaim the strike ;
 Mankind is calling, "Strike!" and Nature "Strike !"

* * * *

My knowledge is so strong. The masses
 In resurrection, freed
 From wordy snares woven by well-fed gentlemen,
 Shall grow to be
 The armies of humanity;
 And with a mighty gesture
 Raise up the invisible citadel of peace . . .
 Who bears the flag, the Red Flag,
 Flag of beginnings?

WORKMAN: You. They follow you.

Such is the individual at the summit of her strength and yet, even so, only just strong enough to overcome the ties of her own social class personified by her husband when he comes to dissuade her from damaging his reputation, "the more that you will harm the State as well as my career":—

The urge you feel to help society
Can find an outlet in our circle.
For instance,
You could found homes for illegitimate children.
That is a reasonable field of action,
A Witness to the gentle nature which you scorn.
Even your so-called comrade-workmen
Despise unmarried mothers.

In the next picture, the Stock Exchange, bankers are bidding for shares in a profitable investment, National Convalescent Home, Ltd.:—

We call it
Convalescent Home
For strengthening the will to victory!
In fact it is
State-managed brothel.

The curtain falls on a grotesque fox-trot danced by the bankers to raise money for charity.

In the third picture, the Masses, "from eternity imprisoned in the abyss of towering towns," are crying, "Down with the factories! Down with the machines!" The woman calls the strike, and then the Nameless One comes out of the Masses and calls for arms:—

THE WOMAN: Hear me!
I will not have fresh murder.

THE NAMELESS: Be silent, comrade.
What do *you* know?
I grant you feel our need,
But have you stood ten hours together in a mine,
Your homeless children herded in a hovel?
Ten hours in mines, evenings in hovels,
This, day by day, the fate of masses.
You are not Masses!
I am Masses!
Masses are fate.

THE MASSES IN THE HALL:
Are fate . . .

- THE WOMAN: Only consider,
Masses are helpless,
Masses are weak.
- THE NAMELESS: How blind you are!
Masses are master!
Masses are might!
- THE MASSES IN THE HALL:
Are might!
- THE WOMAN: My feelings urge me darkly—
But yet my conscience cries out : No!
- THE NAMELESS: Be silent, comrade,
For the Cause!
The individual, his feelings and conscience,
What do they count ?
The Masses count!
Consider this
One single bloody battle; then
For ever peace.
- * * * *
- THE WOMAN: You . . . are . . . the Masses
You . . . are . . . right !

But when the battle is joined, Sonia tries to stop it, and the Masses are crying, " Treason," " Intelligenzia," " Let her be shot." She is only saved from the workmen by the soldiery capturing the hall and all within being taken prisoner.

The husband comes to the condemned cell to congratulate her that she is at any rate guiltless of murder. " Guiltlessly guilty," she replies.

- THE HUSBAND: I warned you of the Masses.
Who stirs the Masses, stirs up hell.
- THE WOMAN: Hell ? Who created hell—
Conceived the tortures of your golden mills
Which grind, grind out your profit, day by day ?
Who built the prisons ? Who cried " holy war " ?
Who sacrificed a million lives of men—
Pawns in a lying game of numbers ?
Who thrust the masses into mouldering kennels,
That they must bear to-day
The filthy burden of your yesterday ?
Who robbed his brothers of their human face,
Made them mechanic,
Forced and abused them to be cogs in your machines ?
The State ! You !

Her indictment weaken into words of love—but he stumbles out.
The Nameless One enters, also to congratulate her; she has

no doubt recovered now from her pacifist delusions. They are to escape; two warders have been bribed, and the third, at the gate, shall be struck down. But she refuses to gain her life by this man's death.

THE NAMELESS: The Masses have a right to you.

THE WOMAN: What of the warder's right?

The warder is a man.

THE NAMELESS: As yet there are no men.

On this side men of the Masses;

On that side men of the State.

THE WOMAN: To be a man is plain, is primal.

THE NAMELESS: Only the Masses are holy.

THE WOMAN: The Masses are not holy.

Force made the Masses.

Injustice of possession made the Masses . . .

* * * *

You are not release.

You are not redemption.

I know you, who you are.

* * * *

You are the bastard child of war. . . .

* * * *

Unholy every cause that needs to kill.

The nameless spokesman of the masses leaves the cell with the words: "You live too soon," thus echoing the last scene in *Saint Joan*, but with this difference: Joan fought with uncompromising and logical enthusiasm for the collective cause in spite of her associates' mean and selfish intrigues; Sonia refused to fight at all because of her private conscience.

The woman is led out and executed, and two women convicts, gossiping over the trinkets in her cell, over the coffin—"a yellow box"—that is ready for Sonia in the washroom, over the officer's golden uniform, are startled by the sound of the shots into crying, "Why do we do these things?" And Toller leaves it at that, so that an unscrupulous or stupid London producer can reverse the interpretations of Berlin and Moscow and render *Masse-Mensch* as the sad story of a misguided idealist who suffers for rejecting a kind husband in favour of the masses whose leader proves a villain. The Nameless is presented as a devil incarnate¹; there could be no more unfair perversion of Toller's intention.

¹This presentation has been slightly modified in later performances.

Toller explains that in his artistic capacity he questions the validity of the various social forces and relations between human beings whose objective reality he assumes in his political capacity. Yet I do not think the dramatist presenting a problem and the Communist refraining from a solution are conflicting personalities. The failure of idealism, even though directed against the State, to satisfy the historic need of the Masses is a fact to be faced and not a problem to be solved. In recognising this, Toller has conceived a great tragedy. An artificial solution might dissipate the tragedy of the theme, but it would seal its despair, as can be seen in *The Adding Machine* by Elmer Rice, which the Stage Society produced early this year. This, too, was an "expressionist" play, superficially a great deal more cheerful; but while it begun with social satire it ended by finding a solution in individual cynicism, and *that* is the way of Fascism.

Correspondence

To the editor of THE LABOUR MONTHLY

SIR,

Mr. T. H. Wintringham writes in your April issue :—

And Arthur Kitson, Secretary of the Bankers' Reform League, Sir Leo Chiozza Money and others, who are scarcely "wild men from the Clyde," have given a great deal of space in *Forward* for direct or indirect advocacy of inflation.

Your contributor is mistaken. Neither in *Forward* nor in any other place have I ever advocated inflation, to which I am opposed.

Your obedient servant,

LEO CHIOZZA MONEY.

April 26, 1924.

Our contributor writes in reply:—

Sir Leo Chiozza Money wrote in the *Forward* for Saturday, February 9, 1924:—

For my own part, I do not know what stands in the way of the raising of a big Reconstruction Loan (or, if you like, Unemployment Loan) to the tune of £250,000,000, to be applied to the purposes of Power, Transport, and Housing. Such an issue, for application to such reproductive purposes, could not fail to be a success. *It would not add one penny to our real National Debt, for it would be reproductive and represented by capital assets.* (Sir Leo's italics.)

I suppose that Sir Leo's position is that because the £250,000,000 increase in purchasing power is to be employed in building power stations, rebuilding railways, &c., therefore it is not inflation. The *Financial Times* and the *Midland Bank Review* call ordinary inflation "monetary inflation," and they call the expansion of credit for productive purposes "productive inflation."

I dismissed this distinction in my article as unreal, not having the space to analyse it. I may say here:—

- (1) Any increase in immediate purchasing power as compared to immediate production is definitely inflation (however much advocates of such an increase may dislike the word).
- (2) The construction of power stations, new railways, &c., would not yield a revenue, or increase productivity as a whole, for several years.
- (3) Therefore, during the first years (at least) of reconstruction by loan there would be normally a fluctuating rise in the general price level.
- (4) Such a rise means a "trade revival" (with wages lagging behind prices), to be followed, as always, by slump. Probably Sir Leo's new power stations would open to find that the factories they were to supply were on short time.

In effect, inflation is inflation, however estimable the purposes for which the money is used. Its final product is a nation of millionaires who work twelve hours a day and are hungry.

The World of Labour

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GERMANY Reichstag Elections

THE most significant facts of the German general election, which took place on May 4, were undoubtedly the enormous Communist increase and the catastrophic Social-Democratic slump.

It is interesting to compare the election manifestos and statements of the two Parties.

The Social Democrats maintained a discreet silence in their chief manifesto as to their own record. After some passing references to the Fascists, they declared roundly that wherever the Communists had been in power they had simply been paving the way for reaction and counter-revolution, "as in Bavaria, in Thuringia, in Mecklenburg, in Italy, in Hungary." They went on to say that the Social Democratic Party was still fighting for the "old objectives" of Democracy and Socialism. Further, the Social-Democratic Party was eager to assist in "the reconstruction of Germany" and was prepared to fight for the eight-hour day. The manifesto concluded with the following slogans:—

For the Republic; against the Monarchy!

For social progress; against social reaction!

For economic democracy; against the dictatorship of capitalist monopoly!

For international understanding; against international militarism!

Against that manifesto it is instructive to set the speech of Herr Stresemann, ex-Chancellor and now Foreign Minister, who, speaking on March 30 at the Conference of the People's Party (big industrialists), gave a remarkable exposure, from the bourgeois point of view, of the true role of the Social Democrats. The Social-Democratic Press, and particularly their central organ, the *Vorwärts*, completely suppressed this portion of his speech, which was as follows:—

The chief successes of the Social-Democratic participation in my Cabinet were that, with the approval of the Social Democrats, I managed to secure the return of the Crown Prince to Germany; that it was possible for me, again with the approval of the Social Democrats, to inflict a military defeat on the Communists in Saxony and Thuringia, and this defeat, in its turn, has cleared the way for the abolition, without any resistance, of the eight-hour day and the so-called "conquests of the revolution." . . . My collaboration with the Social Democrats has therefore been fruitful. That we were able to overthrow the Saxon and Thuringian Governments was simply due to the fact that the Social Democrats gave their approval to this military action, and

consequently we had to face not a united front of the workers' forces, but the Communists alone.

Typical of the attitude of the Communist Party was the declaration which all Communist candidates had to sign:—

The German Communist Party (K.P.D.) sees in Parliament merely an instrument of bourgeois dictatorship. Parliament can and will do absolutely nothing for the working class as for the whole of the exploited masses. Parliament is not the expression of the "will of the people." It is nothing but a fig-leaf to disguise the shameless dictatorship of Capital.

The Communist Party takes part in elections simply from the agitational point of view. The Communist deputies only make use of Parliament in order to show that they are fundamentally opposed to bourgeois society and therefore are forced to expose "democracy" as the most subtle and refined form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

The Communist deputies are certain that Parliamentary action does not make history, and that it is the working-class struggle which will decide the fate of bourgeois society. Consequently, the Communist deputies are forced to centre their activities chiefly among the wide masses of the working people and to serve their interests only . . .

This fundamental Communist position does not allow Communist deputies to keep silence over any so-called "State secrets" which may come to their notice as deputies, members of Government commissions, &c. The duty of the Communist deputy is to expose pitilessly the humbug of these "State secrets" and the whole fetish of bourgeois parliamentarism . . .

In accord with these principles, the undersigned declares that, both as candidate and deputy, he is simply a delegate of the German Communist Party and not a so-called "freely elected representative of the people, responsible only to his own conscience." He declares that he will carry out all the decisions of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party, and that in all his actions he will be subject to its decisions. . . .

The Communist election manifesto concluded with these words:—

A Communist vote is a vote for the proletarian revolution and against bourgeois parliamentarism. A Communist vote is a vote for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Soviet Republic.

The provisionally complete voting results for the principal Parties are (the bracketed figures indicating the number of deputies):—

	1924	1920
Communists	3,728,089 (62)	441,195 (4)
Social Democrats	5,991,547 (100)	11,151,311 ¹ (186)
Democrats	1,661,425 (28)	2,333,741 (39)
Centre	3,901,087 (65)	3,845,000 (64)
People's Party	2,646,747 (44)	3,919,446 (65)
Bavarian People's Party	941,982 (16)	1,173,344 (21)
Nationalists	5,764,628 (96)	4,249,100 (71)
Völkisch (Fascists)	1,922,626 (32)	—

A comparison of these results with the results of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in Russia in 1917, after the seizure of power by the Soviets, is of interest. Then the Bolsheviks obtained 9,000,000 votes out of a total poll of over 36,000,000, as against the German Communists, nearly

¹ This figure includes the votes of the former majority of Social Democrats and the Independents, who fused in the United Social Democratic Party in 1922.

4,000,000 out of a total poll of 29,000,000. But against them the Bolsheviks had a mass vote of 21,000,000 for the S.R.'s and half a million Mensheviks. The German Communists are opposed by the 6,000,000 votes of the Social Democrats, only 20 per cent. of the total poll, compared with their 40 per cent. in 1920.

That the Fascist vote is not larger is due to the extremely effective anti-Fascist propoganda of the Communist Party.¹ In the whole of the Rhineland they only polled 93,496 votes, and in the Ruhr only 25,758. In Thuringia, where they polled 109,228 votes, it is reported by the Berlin correspondent of the *New Statesman* that the Fascists are chiefly former members of the Majority Social Democratic Party.

The most striking successes of the Communists were in the big industrial centres, notably the Ruhr and the Rhineland, as the accompanying table (adapted, with amplifications, from the *New Statesman*) shows:—

	Communists		Social Democrats	
	1924	1920	1924	1920
Berlin	225,194	13,949	238,861	644,238
Hamburg :... ..	112,272	2,931	173,887	299,811
East Prussia	118,168	68,450	115,780	281,980
Upper Silesia	129,731	37,118	26,009	75,416
Prussian Saxony	184,075	10,681	111,295	371,790
Rhineland	545,461	49,089	323,099	952,820
Ruhr	267,018	17,294	204,513	469,961
Totals	1,581,919	199,512	1,193,444	3,096,016

In the last five districts it will be remarked that the Communist vote now exceeds the Social-Democratic vote.

Finally, the election results in Saxony proper, where the Social Democrats relatively maintained their position, give point to the contention that the exclusive orientation of the Communist Party on Saxony last year was a mistaken one.² The figures for Saxony are as follows:—

	1924	1920
Communists	430,996	104,954
Social Democrats	801,833	1,191,162

¹ See THE LABOUR MONTHLY, April, 1924, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 249.

² *Ibid.* pp. 250-251.

BOOK REVIEWS

JAMES CONNOLLY

James Connolly: His Life, Work and Writings. By Desmond Ryan. With an Introduction by H. W. Nevinson. (The Labour Publishing Company. Paper, 2s. 6d.; Cloth, 5s.)

SOME day a Marxist must write the life of James Connolly. We shall never get a true appreciation of Connolly's place in Irish history and the revolutionary Socialist movement of Britain and America until someone armed with the guiding philosophy of his life has turned it upon his work and appraised his thoughts and actions accordingly.

Desmond Ryan has brought together "a record of facts, opinions and recollections of James Connolly" which will be exceedingly helpful to whoever undertakes the work, but in so far as he attempts to place Connolly he enters into the same partisan claims which he condemns in others. "One inclines upon the whole," he says, "to define his probable attitude as that of the official Irish Labour Party," begins an argument to justify his claim, and suddenly drops it as "perhaps a profitless conjecture." I doubt this. The controversy and speculation have a significance which, if properly appreciated, would do much to indicate the right line of approach to an understanding of Connolly.

Why the rival claims for the soul of Connolly? Why the quotation and counter-quotation to justify the support or non-support of action? Why still more Connolly's own dying exclamation: "The Socialists will never understand why I am here"? Does not the answer lie in the fact that Connolly is among the few great figures of the international working-class movement which belong to the transition from the epoch of imperialist expansion to the epoch of social revolution, that he felt himself surrounded by reformism, narrow nationalism, doctrinaire socialism, none of which had been brought face to face with the task of revolution? I think McManus struck the key to the situation when he observed that Connolly was "the one Socialist that he had ever met who judged every public situation or political crisis with an eye upon revolutionary possibilities." Where were the others to be found at that time? Certainly we do not find them in the British Isles or America. We are compelled to turn our eyes eastwards and bring him into alignment with the small Bolshevik group led by Lenin. Desmond Ryan says: "Broadly speaking James Connolly must be classified as a workers' Republican and Communist. The doctrines and methods that the Russian Revolution has since familiarised were his. He would certainly have been at one with Lenin in destruction and construction alike."

Ryan is right in this, but the trouble is that Ryan himself does not understand Leninism and consequently cannot apply it to the understanding of Connolly. He does not understand the great changes that were coming in the ranks of Marxists, the cleavage that was imminent when those who had been transforming Marxism into an apology for reformism were to be separated from those who grasped Marxism as the philosophy of revolution. Nor does he understand the difference between those who marched with Lenin under the banner of Communism and those who marched under the leadership of De

Leon, most of whom at least kept much of their revolutionary powder dry and saved themselves in the hour of international crisis from becoming the abject creatures of imperialism such as Kautsky, Vandervelde and the reformists of the Second International. He writes with a mind which seems to be a long way back amidst the old controversies between nationalism and internationalism, industrial unionism and the ballot box, talking about peaceful periods and war periods. And yet these are only incidentals to an appreciation of Connolly's position. Connolly's place in history is among the heralds of a new epoch, and he must be placed and understood accordingly.

Ryan vividly sketches his struggles. Born in Ulster in the same year as Comrade Lenin, "Connolly was 'dragged up' like most proletarian boys. . . . Of his parents we know little beyond the fact that the father was a labourer. . . . In 1880 Connolly's family became exiles and arrived in Edinburgh, where his father obtained work as a corporation dustman. James became a printer's devil in the office of the local *Evening News*. He was then under legal age, but his employer for a year defeated the law. . . ." Then the sack. "But he was lucky enough to find work soon afterwards in a bakery . . . later . . . two years in a mosaic tiling factory. . ." The company of his uncle, an old Fenian, kept vivid in his memory the glamour and agony of the national struggle. Mitchel, too, he read, and much Irish history. Brooding, intense, silent, outwardly cold and inwardly aflame, a spirit of adventure called him to new scenes. Leaving Edinburgh at eighteen, Connolly was in turn tramp, navy and pedlar, spending a roving and eventful life in different parts of Britain. He was married in Perth at the age of twenty-one. "An accident to his father recalled him to Edinburgh. His parent was permanently disabled, and James Connolly took up his work as dustman in the cleansing department of the corporation. . . . But many tomes of ancient and modern history had he handled, the revolutionary phases of Irish history in particular. . . . Marx, Engels. . . . Association with British Socialists, Morris, Hyndman, Leslie. . . . Then to Dublin in 1896 as Socialist agitator, and to start the Irish Socialist Republican Party and edit its organ *The Workers' Republic*. Revolt against the Boer war. . . . Anti-Jubilee Empire Demonstration. . . . writing *Labour in Irish History*. . . . representative of the Irish S.P. at the International Socialist Congress in 1900. . . . In at the split of the S.D.F. in 1903, and the formation of the Socialist Labour Party in line with De Leon. Later in that year he departed for America. Back again in 1910. . . . The organisation of the I.T.W.U. . . . The great industrial revolt of 1913. . . . The final martyrdom after Easter week, 1916."

Here was no complacent trade union leader, but a working-class warrior with heart aflame. What could be the use of talking about the philosophy of gradualism to this man steeped in revolutionary lore and compelled to do battle at every step? Once the goal of social revolution becomes his consuming aim, and he has grasped the Marxist method of reading history, his evolution towards Leninism becomes a certainty as the years sweep us onward towards the great crisis of 1914. His divergence from the Kautskys lies in the revolutionary purpose. They had no revolutionary purpose, but turned Marxism into a fatalism which saw Socialism emerging through the gradual transformation of capitalism. What to them was a paralysing blow was to Connolly the great opportunity. Ryan's account of the effect of the imperialist war on Connolly

reads like Zinovieff's account of its effect upon Lenin. "His whole being cried out against it, and where Lenin called for the transformation of the imperial war into the civil war of the classes, Connolly called the subject nation of Ireland to war upon the Empire."

We shall continue in season and out of season to teach that "the far-flung battle line" of England is weakest at the point nearest its heart, that Ireland is in that position of tactical advantage that a defeat of England in India, Egypt, the Balkans or Flanders would not be so dangerous to the British Empire's conflict of armed forces in Ireland, that the time for Ireland's battle is now, the place for Ireland's battle is here.

Both watchwords were fundamentally sound in relation to the war on imperialism. Both men with tireless energy pursued their tasks, but there is a difference in the means of operation. Both agreed in that they must call into operation the sum total of the forces they could muster against the imperialist, but one had a highly developed party as an instrument to gather the forces and maintain the proletarian hegemony, the other had no such revolutionary party understanding the rôle of the proletariat in a predominantly agricultural country. Lenin was farther ahead than Connolly, and with the Bolshevik Party not only led the workers as the vanguard of the mighty revolutionary movement of workers and peasants, but crystallised and expressed the experience that the world should see and hear and read and understand. Connolly had not such a party. He appealed to the I.T.W.U. and to the citizen army. He led his recruits to the very forefront of the national struggle, and by that act stamped upon the pages of Irish history the rôle of the proletariat of Ireland in its war of liberation: but, although he created the impression that he would not hesitate to turn against some of his colleagues in the national war if they would not proceed to carry out the Socialist measures for which he fought, I do not find any clear defining of the rôle of the proletariat or his aims as that of the dictatorship of the proletariat or what part a revolutionary party must take in relation thereto. His deeds proclaim the answer, and one feels convinced that had Connolly not been murdered by the Asquith-Henderson combination, and had he lived to see the Russian Revolution and the emergence of the Communist International, he would have completed his writings in full accord with the declarations of the Communist International.

It is this incompleteness which gives rise to the claims of partisans. Ryan speaks of his departure from "his original Marxism" when in reality he was manifesting a firmer grip of its essentials in contrast to the formal expression passing in the name of Marxism whether *via* Kautsky or De Leon. This was the case on more than the struggle of subject nations. He grasped the essentials of working with the peasantry and of using the co-operatives whilst the followers of De Leon were concentrating on industrial unionism and the ballot box. He learned his industrial unionism in the industrialised countries of England and America, but he had to apply his philosophy in an essentially agricultural country dominated by a powerful nationalist spirit because of its subjection to England. Fearlessly he faced these problems which did not press upon the De Leonists of Britain and America, and as he grappled with them he felt the big differences that lay between him and his old associates. That is why he exclaimed, "The socialists will not understand why I am here." Could

he have seen the succeeding years, welcomed the Russian Revolution and felt the quaking foundations of capitalism, he would also have heard an answering cry—the revolutionary socialists do understand, and greet James Connolly as one of the valiant few who by their deeds rescued Marxism from sterility and led the way into the epoch of social revolution.

J. T. M.

BOWING TO THE INEVITABLE

Labour and the New World. By the Rt. Hon. Philip Snowden, M.P. (Cassell & Company. 5s.)

Unity in Industry. By James Kidd. (John Murray. 3s. 6d.)

Wage-Slavery. By J. K. Heydon. (John Lane, The Bodley Head. 5s.)

The New World of Labour. By Sherwood Eddy. (George H. Doran Company, New York. \$ 1.50.)

The Strike for Union. By Heber Blankenhorn. (The H. W. Wilson Company, New York. \$2.25 ; Grafton & Company, London.)

“THE privileged classes in Great Britain,” remarks Mr. Snowden in a casual way, “have always shown a remarkable willingness to bow to the inevitable.” On this indeed remarkable phenomenon he bases the main argument of his book, which seems to have been written with the revolutionary movement in view all the time.

One chapter of this book is Socialist propaganda of a general character, one describes the fundamental basis of the author’s beliefs—“Evolution or Revolution”—and the remainder of the book is a dissertation on the practical methods of achieving Socialism without a revolution.

From the second chapter the following statement deserves attention :—

It is a curious travesty of the teaching of Marx that he should be regarded to-day as the authority and support for the policy of violent revolutionary methods, for during the later years of his life he was engaged in a persistent struggle with the rebels and anti-parliamentarians, whom he scornfully stigmatised as “bourgeois democrats.”

The quotation (from Engels) brought forward to support this interpretation of Marxism is actually only a warning against “putschism” and an advocacy of “going to the masses.” And there is no attempt whatever to prove the remarkable willingness of the British capitalists to be expropriated, nor any mention of the years of bitter fighting that took place before the privileged class of the seventeenth century bowed to the inevitable.

The book of Mr. James Kidd is an example of one of the ways in which our privileged classes are, at the present moment, not bowing to the inevitable. They are steadily trying to work out some scheme by which the working-class movement can be safely and strongly harnessed to capitalism in industry so that not even the worst conditions will rouse the workers to a straight fight. Mr. Kidd’s contribution to this discussion is a new company law securing that trade unions shall have the right to invest in the companies for which their members work, and that if they so invest they shall be entitled to a representative on the board of directors. Most of the book is of course an orthodox attack on Socialism.

Wage-Slavery is a similar attempt, by an Australian employer of labour to show the need for some scheme of profit-sharing and "Labour Co-Partnership." It is mainly addressed to those of the middle classes who desire no compromise with the workers' claims, and therefore contains a certain amount of material that could be used as Socialist propaganda.

The New World of Labour is a description, in the main, of what is being done by the titular leaders of the working-class movement to make that movement as a whole the organised form for tying the workers to the wheel of capitalism. In considerable detail and a certain modicum of accuracy the official Labour movements of the world from China to the U.S.A. are described and defended. The underlying usefulness of these movements to capitalism—while their present leadership remains—is well shown when the writer says :—

The aims of the Labour Party are explicitly stated in *Labour and the New Social Order* in its four pillars :—

- (1) The Universal Enforcement of the National Minimum.
- (2) The Democratic Control of Industry.
- (3) Revolution in National Finance.
- (4) Surplus Wealth for the Common Good.

Who would dare to claim that these are "the principles of the Labour Party" according to which Mr. MacDonald claims that he is at present governing ?

The author of the *New World of Labour* bows to the inevitable in the following fashion :—

Labour has issued the call, "Workers of the world, unite!" Yes, they will, they must unite. . . . But for what ? For a class war, a dictatorship, a terror, a revolution ? Most certainly, if we drive them to it.

But there is one way left. Why not try Jesus' way of life !

And finally Mr. Blankenhorn's excellent book shows the way in which the capitalists of America bow to the inevitable development of trade unionism amongst the coal-miners. Sacking of trade unionists, prevention of organisers from even entering a county where non-unionism was the rule, locking out 35,000 unionists, evicting them, using the law courts against them—the story is familiar and well-proved. That it is not part of our daily experience in Britain is due to one fact : that the British bourgeoisie bow to the inevitable—by taking the leaders of Labour into partnership with them in the maintenance of capitalism.

T. H. W.

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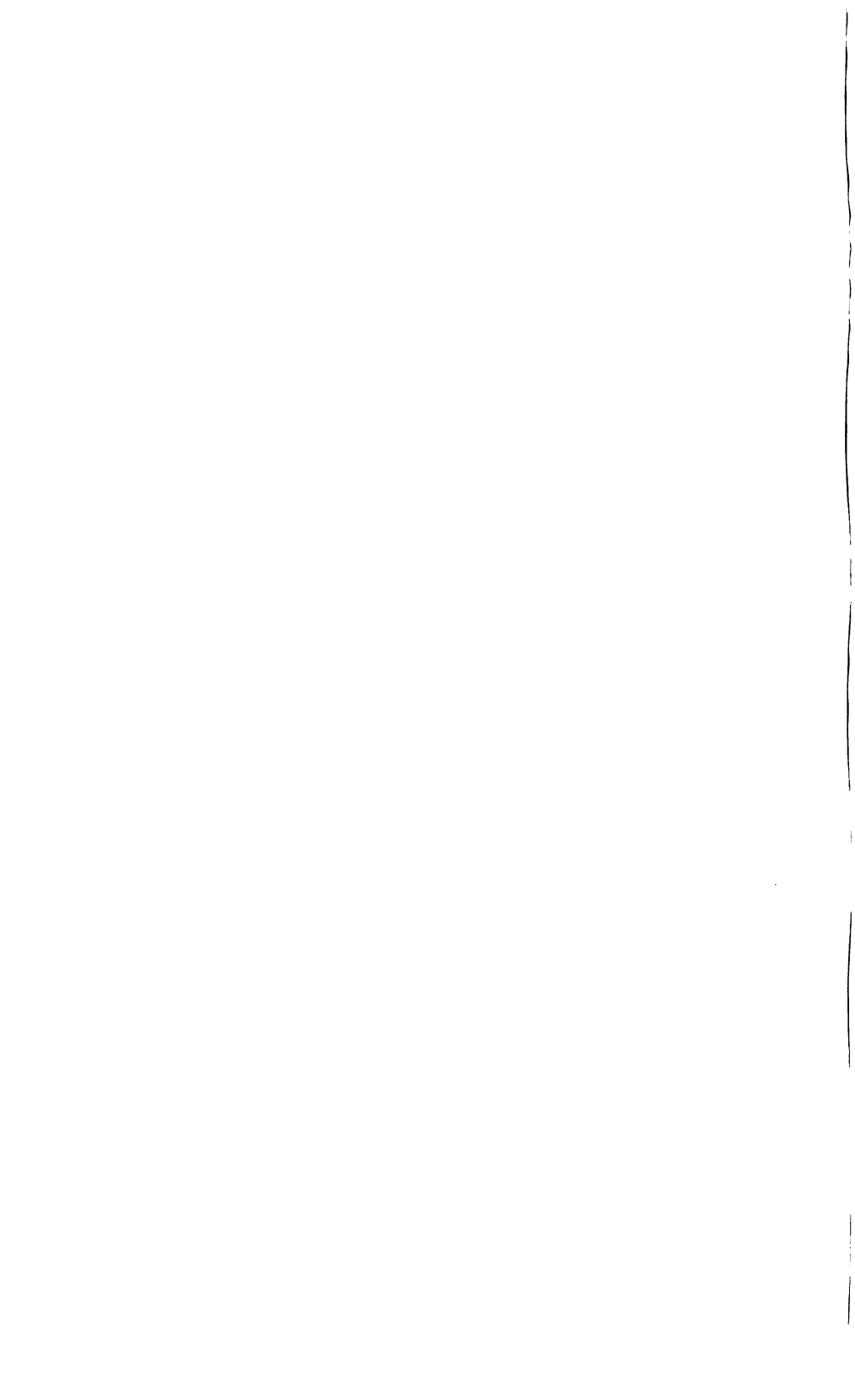
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NOTES of the MONTH

The Labour Government—The Opposition—Why the Labour Government?—British Bourgeois Tactics—Forestalling Labour Victory—Absorption—The Bourgeois Victory—The “Wider View”—The Court Dress Discussion—The Army and Strikers—India and the International—Profits—Disrupting the Movement—A Bourgeois Campaign—The Final Surrender—The Working-Class Reply

THE Labour Government brings to a head the deepest issue facing the working class. The battle within the working-class movement, which is still only half conscious, and finding its expression, is not a battle between two tendencies of one movement. It is a battle between the bourgeoisie and the working class. It is a struggle between capitalism and the Revolution for the soul of the British workers. That struggle was the issue behind the whole question of the war. That struggle was the issue behind Black Friday. That struggle was the issue behind the attempted exclusion of Communists and the attempted Industrial Truce. That struggle is the issue which to-day is brought to a head by the Labour Government. For the aim of a Labour Government, the aim of the power of the working class in order to transform society, is the supreme aim before the workers. But the existing Labour Government is using that aim, is using that conception, to attach the British workers to capitalism. If it succeeds in its policy, if its policy is allowed to go through unchallenged and unchanged by the Labour movement, then that means the defeat and coming to nothing of the existing movement, and the struggle of the British workers will have to find new forms. “It has taken us thirty years,” said an old worker in a Union branch who had taken part in the struggles of the Labour Party from its inception, “it has taken us thirty years to build up the Labour Party, and now it will take us thirty years to destroy it.”

IN October comes the Conference of the Labour Party. At that Conference the representatives of the working-class organisations will have to take into review the actions of the Labour Government which is responsible to them for all its actions. According as they approve or disapprove those actions they will be settling, not only the future of the Labour Government, but their own fate and future as claiming to speak for the working class. For it is no longer an issue of differing policies and views and outlooks; it is an issue of action. It is the question whether Labour men shall administer all the bloody suppression and exploitation of Imperialism or shall fight it. On this question there can be no half answers or misleading resolutions. Therefore it is of vital importance that the fundamental issue shall be straightly put to the Conference. That fundamental issue is a class issue. It is fatally easy to imagine the kind of discussion that will be raised at the Conference. There will be a discussion on court dress. There will be a discussion on ministers' salaries. Strong feelings will be expressed. The ministers will explain that they have had much too big questions to handle on behalf of Labour to be able to give much thought to these details which after all are only a matter of convention. The hard-headed common sense of the delegates, while disliking court dress and big salaries, will on the whole agree with them. The Opposition will crumble. "A bit wild, but thoroughly good at heart. Of course they have no case." The Conference will break up in good temper with "the air cleared." If this is the outcome of the Conference, then capitalism will have won the victory in the Labour Party.

WHAT is the real position? If we wish to understand the real position of the Labour Government, we should begin by understanding the policy of the bourgeoisie. For it was by the action of the bourgeoisie that the Labour Government was placed in office, and it is only by the consent of the bourgeois majority in Parliament that the Labour Government is maintained in office to-day. This must be the starting point for any consideration of the Labour Government. Our first question must be: What is the aim of the bourgeoisie in maintaining the Labour Government in office? Is that aim the same as our own? If it is

not the same, which aim is securing its objective—theirs or ours? These must be the first questions in any objective consideration of the Labour Government. Too often at present the whole approach is sentimental and not realist. The desire, the aspiration for a Labour Government, the hope and the dream of what it may accomplish, occupies the forefront of the picture: then comes recognition of the “difficult” position in which it is placed—“in office, but not in power,” “a Socialist Government, but not a Socialist Parliament”—and consequently the necessity not to expect too much, not to be “impatient”; finally, perhaps, comes a little sentimental opposition to one or two things that jar, such as Royal Visits or Imperial Junketings, but recognition that these things must be tolerated in the interests of unity and that criticism should be kept within bounds in order not to embarrass the Government. From this outlook follows a position in which no conceivable action or inaction of the Labour Government, no conceivable treachery or surrender, is felt to be at variance with Labour principles; in which the Labour Government is not expected to be able to accomplish anything, and therefore whatever it does accomplish, even though precisely the same measure from a Liberal or Tory Government would have been received with contempt, is hailed as a blessing from heaven; and finally a point is reached at which all the measures of imperialist coercion, military armament increases, action against strikers and the like are accepted as part of the natural order of things, while if the Labour Government so much as orders an extra feed of corn for the horses in government employ in Mandalay it becomes a token of a new humanity, a revitalising of official administration with a new and generous spirit, the introduction of a broader cultural outlook and the herald of the dawning of the coming era. Whether the creation of this type of atmosphere, which is obviously convenient to the Labour Government and naturally inculcated by the Government Press, is in the interests of the bourgeoisie or the working class is another question which it will be necessary to consider.

THE British bourgeoisie is the most skilful in the world. It uses at will, according to the situation, the most reckless bloodthirsty measures, as at Amritsar, and in the

plan to blockade the miners' villages in 1921, or the most smooth-faced kid-glove procedure as in the historic Sankey Commission or the democratic functions of Buckingham Palace. Whatever method it uses, its objective remains unfaltering and the same: to maintain the enslavement of the workers and the extraction of profits. If, therefore, the bourgeoisie takes steps to establish and maintain in office a Labour Government, it is necessary to know the reasons. Fortunately there is no difficulty in learning these. Both Mr. Baldwin and Mr. Asquith, the representative bourgeois politicians concerned, have stated quite clearly the line of tactics they have pursued. We may first take the statement of Mr. Baldwin, who was responsible for dissolving the secure Tory majority and throwing the reins of power within Labour's grasp. Mr. Baldwin justified his action in his statement to the Unionist Party meeting. He said:—

It was on unemployment that the Labour Party relied on coming to power within two or three years. Their calculations were that the discontent in the country coupled with want of action on our part would have swept them into power and us out by 1926. And I believe myself that that would have happened, and believe that in spite of the losses in this election we shall emerge all the stronger and able to bring to pass a great victory about the time when in my view nothing but disaster could have overtaken us.

Whether the future hope expressed in this is likely to turn out exactly as he thinks need not here concern us. What is important is that the primary concern of the Tory Prime Minister, according to his own statement, in causing the dissolution of 1922, was to forestall an absolute Labour majority, even at the risk of creating a Parliament with the Tory majority lost and an increased Labour representation.

MR. ASQUITH'S statement of his part in the process is equally clear. He explained in the National Liberal Federation that he had "no regret" for his part in establishing the Labour Government.

We still sleep more or less comfortably in our beds. Capital steadily pursues its old routine of continuous and on the whole prosperous investment.

What was his reason then for putting Labour in power? His

reason was precisely the same as Mr. Baldwin's—to forestall the danger of a real Labour Government based on a Labour majority and committed to endeavouring to carry out the Labour programme. The best preventive against this real danger of a working-class advance was the establishment of a tame Labour Government “with its claws cut” based on and subject to a bourgeois majority in Parliament, and so to be taught in leading strings the business of bourgeois administration. “The experiment could hardly be made under safer conditions.” Such a bold proposal of inoculation as the best safeguard naturally aroused keen discussion in bourgeois ranks: but it rapidly won over the weightiest sections, and has increasingly received expressions of their approval. Liberal and Conservative leaders, Chambers of Commerce and business men have alike expressed their satisfaction with the experiment. “I regard,” declared Lord Grey, “the advent of a Labour Government under these circumstances with no apprehension at all.” “The Unionist Party,” wrote the *Observer*, “definitely prefers a Labour Government on the present terms to any Liberal Government.” Even such a representative of the old Coalition as Austen Chamberlain, who was at first bitterly opposed to the proposal, later confessed that the experiment was “perhaps not bad in the long run.” We find representatives of the Conservative and Liberal Parties actually carrying on a controversy in the correspondence columns of *The Times* as to which Party was more responsible for maintaining the Labour Government in office. It is clear from daily expressions that the bourgeoisie is so far well satisfied with the results of its policy of maintaining a Labour Government.

WHAT is the calculation behind this satisfaction? It is based on two points. The first is that a Labour Government, placed in such a position and unable to carry out any of its promises, would be so discredited as to lose influence and lead to the Labour Party becoming internally disrupted and unable to reach its majority. This calculation has been set out with cold precision by the *Observer* :—

There is, we believe, no modern case in any country where Socialism by taking office has not been weakened in its constituencies.

And again:—

Mr. MacDonald's Government cannot attempt to continue in office too long under present restrictions as a Ministry on sufferance without disrupting the Labour Party itself both in Parliament and in the country.

That is the first calculation. The second and more important is that the process of participation in Government under such conditions must necessarily mean the subjugation of Labour to the purposes of bourgeois administration, and therefore making all safe for any future Labour ministry. The raw material of pacifists, trade unionists, lay preachers and socialist propagandists would be deftly subdued to the tasks of administering the biggest capitalist empire in the world. This calculation has been set out with no less clearness by *The Times* in a leader in which it was amusing itself with the "highly illuminating" process by which a Government "in theory strongly pacifist" was being compelled to push through the House vast increases in Air Armaments through the instrumentality of a minister who had been "a notorious conscientious objector":—

The great and manifold tasks of the Empire must in the end subdue these new forces to their purpose.

These two calculations are closely related and react upon one another. They are based on the assumption of so corrupting the Labour Party to the service of capitalism as to destroy its whole character and discredit it in the eyes of the working class. They represent in fact one aim, the supreme aim of the bourgeoisie in relation to the working class: to defeat the working-class advance, not otherwise easily to be countered, by securing within the ranks of the organised movement beforehand the victory of Capitalism.

THIS, then, is the supreme test by which the present position of the Labour Government must be judged. Is capitalism making progress in the working-class ranks? Is the Labour Government permitting itself to be made the spokesman and apologist of capitalist policy? Or is it using its position to fight and expose capitalist policy and to rally the workers against it? For according as it is doing one or the other the bourgeoisie or we are winning. It is unfortunately only too easy to answer this question. It is not necessary to look for an answer in the obvious

jubilations of the bourgeoisie, of the Chambers of Commerce, and the Stock Exchange in their references to the Labour Government. The answer exists in the record of the Labour Government. In every sphere and department of policy during the past six months the Labour Government has appeared as the agent of the bureaucrats, the militarists, the imperialists and the big financial interests. The record, whether of armaments or of imperial coercion, of subsidies to foreign exploitation companies and refusal of money for work for the unemployed at home, of anti-strike action, secret police and all the rest of it, is sufficiently familiar and does not need repetition. To set against this record the charitable crumbs of revised relief scales, diminished tea and sugar taxes, &c., which the bourgeoisie willingly concedes to secure its major purposes of financial, imperial and European policy is to show a complete failure to understand what bourgeois policy is. Bourgeois policy is as dominant and all-powerful in this country as it has ever been in the past: but what makes this position serious is that, with this complete domination of bourgeois policy, with this unchallenged and unshaken imperial barbarity, reckless exploitation and financial speculation in the necessities of life, poverty and hardship of the masses of the people, Labour Ministers now go about saying that the country in this condition is more "settled" than it has ever been before. This is the real defeat of the movement. The record of action and inaction, criminal as it is, is not the biggest thing. The Labour Government could in any case do little enough save in so far as it could rouse the working class behind it. But it is the mental and moral surrender to capitalism which has accompanied this record that is the supreme treachery. As Mr. Clynes said in a memorable luncheon at Wembley :—

"Even Labour," continued Mr. Clynes amid laughter, "is being converted or perhaps diverted by the signs of the times from its former grooves to the wider view."

WHAT is "the wider view"? Let us examine a few stray examples of it to see what it is that is being spread through the movement and whether it heralds the victory of the bourgeoisie or the working class. It is not necessary here to take the more signal utterances of the great

leaders in the limelight, which serve to set the tone for the rest. These are familiar: their celebration of the Empire, their "hatred of revolution," their "distrust of Socialism," their pride in "that extraordinarily quiet massive service which is the British Navy," their belief in "the mission of the British race," their affection for "this Old Country" and its Constitution and King, their dislike of strikes, their zealous devotion to "national interests," their superiority and freedom from common Party ties and obligations, all these are a household picture broadcast a millionfold daily. But it is more important for our purpose here to note smaller signs of the process that is taking place, which will help to throw a sidelight on its political meaning and consequences, and will serve to indicate what is meant by the noble phrase of Mr. Thomas, when he declared:—

Men faced with these responsibilities can never again be the indifferent propagandists that they were in the past. They must remain for all time responsible politicians, keeping only in mind the greater interests of a great country.

TAKE first the discussion on Court Dress. With zealous impartiality the *Daily Herald* has published a long discussion on Court Dress as on all similar stage-play subjects of "opposition" to the Labour Government. This correspondence is very illuminating as illustrating the kind of discussion that is encouraged on this subject. The division is presented as if it were a kind of division within a religious movement between Mr. Worldly Wiseman and Mr. Straitlaced Purist on the vanities of the World and the proper place of Convention. On the one hand it is argued that Labour has no time for such gew-gaws and fal-lals. On the other hand it is argued that a little brightness is very welcome. Finally the editor comes down with a paternal leader to point out that fuss and feathers are very foolish, but they should not be allowed to weigh against the pure gold of achievement of the Labour Government. And so the whole discussion is allowed to pass with no suggestion of the real issue, with no indication why the popular consciousness has justly seized on Court Dress as the symbol of the new régime, not because it represented the expenditure of a few pounds on finery or nonsense, but because it is the symbol

of slavery, it is the open appearance of the Labour Ministers and their wives and daughters as the agents of the Old Order they were supposed to attack. And therefore the most significant expression on the subject is not the direct "practical" defence that may be offered or the direct attack that may be made, but the letting fall of some such chance expression as that of the wife of the Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer to a capitalist paper that after all "it serves the purpose of supplying a certain amount of work." For fifty years the Labour movement, through its humblest propagandists and street corner speakers, has fought and struggled against all the vileness that that phrase implies: and now it is carelessly let drop by a Labour woman leader (as it was carelessly let drop by a Labour Minister in defence of building cruisers) in defence of Court Dress. It is in such chance mental revelations that the inroads of capitalism throughout the Labour bureaucracy are most clearly seen. When that foul sophism was allowed to pass without a protest or a challenge (save in a Communist journal) in a gushing interview of a leading Labour representative "After Her First Court" to a dirty capitalist sensation-mongering paper, then in that moment a point of degradation of the whole Labour movement was registered.

TURN to another direction—the Army. For how long has the whole Labour movement fought against the most open, the most direct and conspicuous use of the army as the instrument of capitalist power—the use of soldiers in industrial disputes? On other matters the movement might be divided by national illusions, and the opposition as a whole to the Army Bill and the Army Budget (once the bounden duty by signed pledge of every party in the old Second International) be left to a small group of pacifists. But on this there could be no division, and the Party as a whole was committed year by year to a stand. But on the assumption of power the Party was committed to responsibility for the whole machine, and had at once to eat its words. In other words the assumption of power meant, not the victory of the Labour Party over capitalism, but the victory of capitalism over the Labour Party. And this was most clearly seen when the Party had to defend its

position against the opposition of a section led by Lansbury who put in an amendment against the use of troops in industrial disputes. All the ministers and their followers were compelled to vote in the capitalist lobby. A cry of protest arose from the workers over the country, so strong that it forced an entry into the *Daily Herald*, and a defence had to be made. A wretched minor Labour M.P. was put on to the job and did the best he could: he declared that he was in full sympathy with the object of the amendment, but he considered it was so unfortunately worded as to defeat its object, and was against official Labour policy, and so he was compelled to vote against it. To which Lansbury produced the simple and conclusive reply that the amendment in question had been the official Labour amendment the previous year for which the M.P. in question had himself voted. The correspondence did not continue. This in itself is only a picture of the position. But the damage begins to be visible when well meaning Labour men are tied up in the position. Take such a case as Mr. Ammon, now a Minister in the Admiralty, and formerly an active anti-militarist and left winger. A working-class constituent writes to him to ask him why he voted against Mr. Lansbury's amendment. Mr. Ammon could have replied quite simply that he had to do so because he is a minister, and that if it seemed good to have a Labour Ministry under present conditions, it meant swallowing a peck of dirt in the process. That would have been a straightforward, even if mistaken, answer. But Mr. Ammon unfortunately read the inspired defence in the *Herald* that morning, and so in simple triumph he wrote off a personal letter to his constituent telling him that if he would read that morning's *Daily Herald* he would find in it information that would put quite a different complexion on the whole matter. Alas for his short-lived triumph. His imperturbable correspondent wrote back, thanking him for the suggestion and adding that he had also read Mr. Lansbury's reply, and he would now be glad to hear what Mr. Ammon had to say. The final letter is pathetic. Mr. Ammon's secretary begs to state that Mr. Ammon sees no purpose in continuing this correspondence. It is an old story, a familiar story, a story as old as politics. But when it happens to Labour men who once were fighters—it is a pity.

TAKE another direction of Labour policy—the Empire. The service of Empire, the propaganda of which has been the principal propaganda of Labour ministers since their accession to office, makes very definite demands of those who give themselves up to it. The Empire, like the military and naval departments, and unlike other show departments, is a part of the actual process of bourgeois coercion. Its acceptance is therefore a very important test of the subjection and surrender of the Labour movement. The bourgeoisie rightly complain that all the traditional utterances of the Labour movement, as well as all the present utterances of the real movement as it exists in street-corner propaganda and in the local union branches and Labour Parties, are deeply and bitterly hostile to the whole conception of the Empire. The capitulation to Empire was the most important step of Labour's accession to power: and it was vividly expressed at the very moment when that accession was still in doubt by MacDonald's famous coercion message to India of January 6, the significance of which was suitably enough emphasised on the European stage by Mussolini. To-day we have a new step in that process: the prosecution of Communism by a Labour Government in the Cawnpore trials with sentences of four years for endeavouring to organise a workers' and peasants' party with the programme of an independent republic. But the most significant thing is once again not simply the trial itself, but the manner of its defence by a Labour Government. For the noble ex-Governor of a Crown Colony and the Welsh professor who together constitute "Labour" for the Indian workers solemnly announce that they have no intention of prosecuting Communist propaganda as such: all that they are prosecuting is a conspiracy "to deprive the King-Emperor of His sovereignty of India." There is a certain type of answer known as the Ministerial answer with which intelligent men do not attempt to argue. This splendid specimen of that class, so profoundly Socialist in its whole spirit and outlook no less than in the form of its expression, deserves to stand as the monument of the Labour Government—the supreme utterance of the "triumphant" British working class to the Indian workers and peasants under the heel of Britain.

THE Court. The Army. The Empire. There remains the central pillar of the citadel of Capitalism—Profits. If official Labour propaganda can be brought to bow the knee to the God of Profits—all's well with the world. The approach is delicate and can only be made slowly. The sanctity of interest on War Debt is defended by a tenacious Executive before an insurgent Labour Party Conference. The doctrine of a "revival of trade" as the supreme hope of Labour is preached in every Labour statesman's speech. The gospel of improved relations between Capital and Labour and due recognition of a just return for each is fervently proclaimed. And then suddenly comes a little incident, an offensive incident, which is the more noteworthy in that it aroused no comment. The profits of the Indian tea plantations are among the most notorious and the most crime-soaked in the history of Capitalism. On a basis of murderous exploitation, with wages of a few pence a day and conditions of semi-slavery, profits of 40 per cent. to 50 per cent., and even 100 per cent., free of income tax are declared. For the past year the profits have been particularly high. Taking simply declarations of the past week at the time of writing, the Empire of India and Ceylon Tea have declared 40 per cent., Dooars Tea 50 per cent., Jokai (Assam) Tea 52 per cent., while Makum (Assam) Tea declared 20 per cent. final dividend on the whole issued capital, having previously issued 100 per cent. bonus during the year and an interim dividend of 10 per cent., making a total for the year of 150 per cent. It was natural to expect some comment on this colossal exploitation in the principal Labour organ. Some comment did appear. But the comment that appeared was this :—

TEA "TIP" THAT CAME OFF

Tea plantation companies are rejoicing their shareholders with very handsome dividends, and readers who have acted upon the various recommendations of these shares which have appeared from time to time in these notes have done very well.

Daily Herald, June 10, 1924.

THE corruption of Labour is only one-half of the aim of the bourgeoisie. The disruption of the unity of the working-class forces on the basis of that corruption of the official elements is the other half of that aim. And this is the part that is

now coming into play. Having established the full rights of Capitalism within the Labour movement, the bourgeoisie is now very solicitously engaged in pointing out the incompatibility and inconsistency of maintaining Communism within the same movement, and the necessity of excluding those elements which still endeavour to carry on the war against Capitalism. A whole campaign for this purpose is being carried on in the organs of the bourgeois Press. On the one hand the Kelvingrove by-election, where the Labour candidate dared to disagree with those actions of the Labour Government in which the Labour Government had entered into alliance with Capitalism, was made the subject of paternal homilies to the Labour Party to show the necessity of preventing such unfortunate episodes and keeping out such undesirable elements if the Labour Party was to continue to receive the confidence of the bourgeois Press. On the other hand the unofficial Rail Strike, where men who had been played battledore and shuttlecock with between competing unions for years without consideration of their claims had dared to come out on strike for a minimum of three pounds a week, furnished the occasion of grave warnings to the Trade Unions to remember their function of disciplining Labour and dealing with the turbulent forces responsible for such outbreaks.

“**T**HE Labour Party will do itself no good,” declared the *Manchester Guardian*, “if it allows its official candidatures to be made the tools of a disruptive movement.” And with striking unanimity *The Times* also comes out with similar sentiments after quoting with approval some remarks of the I.L.P. organ *Forward* :—

It is a wholesome lesson. Perhaps it will result in the imposition by the Labour Party of a stricter test of the good faith of such as seek admission into its ranks in order that those whose object it is to capture the party for Communism may be excluded.

The Times, June 4, 1924.

With no less unanimity of friendly advice the whole bourgeois Press came out on the position within the trade unions. “It is the business of the official,” declares the *Manchester Guardian*, firmly, “to stop the unofficial strike,” and to achieve this successfully it is desirable to develop “a first rate democratic technique.”

The Times is even more explicit. The spread of militant unofficial movements, it declares :—

excites not unreasonable anxiety as to the future of the great organisations which the genius of the industrial labour movement has built up. *Only if these minority movements are countered and stamped out can trade unionism function as the expression of the orderly mind and purpose of the organised workers.*

And it goes on to what deserves to stand as a classic definition of Trade Unions in the modern State :—

Trade Unions have won for themselves a responsible place in the industrial life of the nation. They have a privileged as well as a powerful position, which they retain not merely for the benefit of their members, but *in order that the organisation of industry on the side of the workers may be disciplined, orderly and trustworthy.*

The Times, June 9, 1924.

The lesson is writ clear. The function of Trade Union and Labour Party organisation in the eyes of the bourgeoisie is to act as an organ of capitalism to discipline the workers and to “exclude” and “stamp out” every element of working-class revolt.

THIS is the culminating phase of the bourgeois campaign. The character of this campaign should be clear to the most careless and indifferent socialist and trade unionist. The quotations given above could be paralleled a hundred times over from every organ of the bourgeois Press in the last few weeks. That this campaign should be obediently joined in by those elements in the movement that have surrendered to Capitalism is only the logical counterpart of their surrender. That surrender on their part is no use to Capitalism unless it can be translated by them into positive combating of the working-class elements and disruption of the movement. Hence the continual goading them on to the fight by the bourgeois Press. And the obedient elements have responded. Mr. Cramp (who once was an apostle of revolution himself—but that was before the days of co-operation with the Secret Service) comes out with a flaming denunciation of the “disruptive elements” that is universally published and applauded in the bourgeois Press. In the *New Leader* the rail strike is denounced as leading to the danger of Fascism “in some form congenial to our national temper,” in almost precisely the same language as the *Observer* at the same time.

Forward comes out with a grand campaign against Communism at exactly the same time as the *Daily Mail*, and draws morals from the Kelvingrove by-election which are quoted with approval by *The Times*. The question of exclusion is raised again. It should never be forgotten that the deliberate policy of exclusion of working-class delegates was attempted by the official leadership already two years ago with the Edinburgh amendment. It was defeated by the universal opposition of the working class. It was withdrawn, not by conviction of its wrongness, but under pressure of events because it could not be enforced. It will be attempted again so soon as opportunity offers. If ever disruption comes to the movement, it will come from the Right.

THE working class will do well to note the danger from the quarter from which it comes. Not along the path which the bourgeois Press advocates, but along the exactly opposite path is the path of advance for the working class. The minority movements, the development of a disciplined and organised opposition, the organisation of the workers along the basis of the factory or other place of work in the unity of mass combination to overcome the old sectional divisions, the spread of the workers' own revolutionary party working within the whole organised movement—these, the measures which the bourgeois Press denounces, are the line of advance for the whole working class as a united force, and the sole means of saving the workers from the chains which the bourgeoisie is endeavouring to impose upon them through the official machine. In proportion as these beginnings develop and grow in strength, as they are already doing, the old leadership, supported by the bourgeoisie, will use every means to combat them and will be ready to disrupt the whole movement in order to maintain their power. They will endeavour to do this by disciplinary action and doctrinal tests, based, not on loyalty to the working class, but on loyalty to constitutionalism, parliamentarism, democracy or whatever other shibboleths they use to cover their servitude to the bourgeoisie. But they cannot do it. Neither the Labour Party nor the Trade Unions are based on democracy or parliamentarism. They are not organisations of individuals holding certain views, and therefore involving the

right to exclude individuals not holding those views. They are mass organisations of the working class, based on one basis only (a very irrational basis to our democrats)—the working class. Their only test can be loyalty to the working class. That basis is by its very nature at war with the whole conception of constitutionalism, democracy, &c., which it is endeavouring to impose upon the movement from outside and which is only a cover for imperialist sycophancy. And therefore, as the working class grows to consciousness, the imperialist sycophants will inevitably find themselves more and more completely divorced from the working class. The chains which they have endeavoured to forge will be shattered. The working class will go forward to a real workers' government which will be able to help them and to break their chains because it will be based, not on the tactics and calculations of the bourgeoisie, but on the workers' own united strength.

R. P. D.

THE REVOLUTION IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Struggle for Power in Holy Bokhara.—I

By EVELYN ROY

THERE are two aspects of the Bokharan Revolution of 1920 which resulted in the declaration of a People's Soviet Republic—one is national, the other international. It is the latter which makes this event significant for the man in the street, who in all probability has never heard of Bokhara the Holy, except as a name for expensive rugs adorning the houses of the rich; nor of its Amir, once rejoicing in the title of "Commander of the Faithful," and venerated by the Moslems of lands other than his own as second in sanctity only to the one-time Caliph of Constantinople. Had it not been for the immense international significance of this national revolution in Bokhara, the latter might have occurred in 1917 instead of 1920, almost simultaneously with that of the November Revolution in Russia, and might have accomplished its purpose with very little fighting or bloodshed, and almost no loss of life—for the whole population of Bokhara, except for the thin upper strata of corrupt nobles and clergy surrounding the court of the Amir, were unanimous in their desire for freedom.

Unfortunately, however, for the Young Bokharans who formed the vanguard of the revolutionary people, and for the oppressed and exploited masses who aspired to emancipation from their earthly miseries more ardently than for the promised delights of Mohammed's Paradise, the enslavement of Turkestan had proved essential to the interests of two of the world's Great Powers whose rival imperialism had come face to face in Central Asia. One after another, all the five Khanates of Turkestan—Tashkent, Khokand, Bokhara, Merv and Khiva—had surrendered their sovereignty to the advancing armies of the Russian Tsar in their projected march on India; while from the south and east, the outposts of British Imperialism responded to this advance by the rape of Baluchistan

and the subvention of Afghanistan and Persia. The disintegration of Russian Imperialism by internal revolution brought about a momentary cessation of this struggle for power in Central Asia—a struggle destined to recommence again almost immediately when the contagion of revolutionary ideas spread eastward as well as westward, and the desire for national freedom on the part of native populations long suppressed saw at last an opportunity to express itself.

The Russian Revolution of November, 1917, with its proclamation to the various peoples and races that went to make up the former Russian Empire that henceforth they would enjoy equality and sovereignty, with the right of free self-determination, met with an immediate response on the part of all the Russian Asiatic dependencies which had groaned under Tsarist tutelage, and had tried vainly through their several revolutionary parties to win a modicum of freedom from the tyrannous exactions of the Khans and Mullahs (kings and priests) who were backed up by the Imperial armies of the former Russian state. From March to November of 1917, the months that separated the bourgeois republic of Kerensky from the rise of the Bolsheviks to power, these nationalist revolutionary movements in the Central Asiatic provinces gained more and more headway, though still controlled by the old machinery of repression. The victory of the Second Revolution in European Russia was followed almost immediately by the declaration of a Soviet Republic from Tashkent, the capital of Turkestan. What had been the very heart of patriarchal autocracy became threatened by an inundation of the reddest of revolutionary ideas. The disintegration of Tsardom spelt the ultimate collapse of the Khanates and Emirates of Central Asia, with all their centuries of incalculable corruption, oppression and vice. The advance of the victorious revolution threatened to undermine the feudal monarchies of Persia and Afghanistan. With a whole ancient world tottering to its fall, the revolution with its message of emancipation would be carried to the very gates of India! British Imperialism, the triumphant survivor of its once deadly rival, felt itself newly menaced, and henceforth became the most inveterate foe of the Revolution in Central Asia—became the backbone and foundation of the counter-revolution.

Those who read the daily papers without pausing to consider the

hidden meaning of nine-tenths of what is published as mere "news," may remember having seen published in the world Press in June of 1923 an "Appeal from the Amir of Bokhara" against Bolshevik oppression, addressed to the governments of Great Britain, Japan, China, the United States, Turkey, Persia and to the League of Nations. This "Appeal" was given unusual prominence in most of the great London organs of capitalist opinion, and leading articles were written to add weight to the document itself, which aimed to expose Bolshevik barbarities in Central Asia. The cause of the victimised Amir was warmly espoused by these worthies—just as recently that of the deposed Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid and of his successor, the ex-Caliph of Islam, Abdul Mejid, has been similarly defended against the energetic action of the Angora Government. When the European Press begins with such unanimity to defend a lost cause so ardently, it is well to look below the surface and try to discover the reason thereof. The "Appeal" set forth in extremely vivid and picturesque language the "low and abominable character" of Bolshevik policy in Central Asia, which had abolished the independent governments of the Bashkirs and the Usbecks, "flooding the entire country with the blood of hundreds of thousands of Mussulmans"—"the Red Army bought and sold each others' wives and daughters, scoffing at the tears of their victims." The culmination of this devastation and oppression of Turkestan by the Bolshevik forces was reached in the bombardment of Bokhara, whereby "one-third of the population was lost, mosques destroyed, the inhabitants (including the Amir) forced to flee and a government organised, calling itself the Independent Republic of Bokhara."

Such in brief is the context of this pathetic appeal to the civilised world to come to the rescue of the deposed Commander of the Faithful, so iniquitously robbed of his throne and driven forth from his kingdom. The world, particularly the Mussulman world, may have felt some acute twinges of indignation at this fresh instance of Bolshevik enormities, but, oddly enough, the League of Nations did not equip and send forth a band of holy crusaders to do battle in the cause of righteousness, and the Amir remains in exile in the court of his brother-potentate, the Amir of Afghanistan, who kindly gave him shelter. The Bokharan People's Soviet Republic remains in

power and continues to maintain the closest relations with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, to which it is federated. Nearly a year has rolled by since the launching of that forgotten Appeal, and though recent items in the world Press would have us believe that a new attempt is being made on the part of Russian White Guards and native bandits to upset the *status quo* in Central Asia, we may take it that this is but another indication of the fact that the struggle for power in that remote but important region of the earth is not yet ended, and that in spite of reports to the contrary, the Bolsheviks are holding their own.

So much having been said on the international aspect of the Bokharan Revolution, a few facts may be cited which throw new light on the national side of the struggle, which resulted in the establishment of a republic in 1920. What were the conditions that led up to this revolt, and how came it to be successful in the end?

The Bokharan Revolutionary movement had existed since the end of the nineteenth century, as a natural result of the intolerable conditions which prevailed under the combined oppression of the Russian and Bokharan autocracies. Open rebellion had been prevented by the armies of the Tsar, which were placed at the disposal of the Amir. The government of the latter, nominally independent, was in reality a protectorate of Russia, which kept a Resident Agent there to exercise control. Railways and telegraphs, built by the Tsar's government, were entirely controlled by the latter, and Russian garrisons maintained respect for the real power behind the Amir's throne. This theocratic potentate, regarded by the Moslems of Central Asia and neighbouring countries as the embodiment of powers not only earthly, but divine, was held in superstitious veneration by the Moslem world, and the fame of Bokhara el Sharif as a centre of Islamic culture attracted pilgrims and students from all the Mussulman countries. Such international prestige in no way lightened the burden which official robbery, corruption and vice imposed upon the Amir's immediate subjects. This despot regarded Bokhara as his own personal estate, and the government income, wrung from the labour of the people, as his pocket-money. Over one-half the national income was given over forthwith to himself and the Mullahs and Begs (clergy and nobles).

The wealth extracted from the miserable populace was squandered in the licentious pleasures of the court and harem, and in maintaining the dignity of the Amir in neighbouring capitals. One of his pleasure-palaces in the Russian Caucasus has now been turned into a rest-house for convalescent workers, who to-day enjoy the luxury which was wrung from the sweat and blood of the Bokharan peasant and handicraftsman. It is one of the minor conquests of the Russian Revolution.

Political suppression naturally accompanied these economic exactions, which were a constant provocation to revolt on the part of the masses. The Amir's power was absolute; the rights of the people nil. Those who were brave or rash enough to urge for reform were either imprisoned, tortured and executed or massacred outright. These patriarcho-feudal rights of the Bokharan ruler were protected by the rifles of the Tsar, and the fact that he was a mere puppet of the Russian autocracy increased the hatred of his own people against him. This feeling was shared even by some of the younger priests, drawn from the ranks of the people. Large numbers of Mullahs joined the Bokharan secret revolutionary organisations, one Mullah Ikram being a prominent leader. The Shiahite massacre of 1909, directed against the Bokharan Government for giving the biggest posts to the Shiah sect of Moslems, and repressed by the Tsarist troops, was organised by another priest, Mullah Bachi. But the real centre of discontent lay in the exploited peasant masses, whom exorbitant taxation has reduced to the direst poverty. Not a year passed by without its peasant riot or rebellion, put down with the utmost cruelty.

There was little opportunity for a strictly nationalist movement to develop in a country where no chance was given for a native bourgeoisie to evolve. Russian capital ruled uncontrolled, enjoying every guarantee, while native capital had none. After the construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway, an immense trade developed between Central Asia and Batoum on the Black Sea, to which a branch railway ran, connecting it with the Trans-Caspian. For one hundred and fifty miles, this Central Asian railway line traverses the territory of Bokhara, resulting in a great stimulation of trade. A certain number of Bokharan intelligentsia, educated in Russia and imbibing the ideas of the revolutionary movement there,

constituted the nucleus of the Young Bokharan Party, which together with the discontented elements among the priests and trading class agitated for the granting of constitutional rights and the limitation of the power of the Amir. After the Russian Revolution of 1905, which had its echoes in Bokhara as well, all the revolutionary parties and factions united into one central organisation known henceforth as *Mlada Bukharsi*.

(*To be concluded*)

APPENDIX

COPY OF TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE DEPOSED AMIR OF BOKHARA¹

(*Translation from the original*)

IN the name of God Powerful and Almighty, I, the humble Mahmed-Taghi-Beg, son of the Premier of the Government of Bokhara, have prepared myself for the solving of the Peace of Bokhara, Amir-Ali-Khan, Shadow of God, who was compelled because of the aggression of the Russian and Bokharan Bolshevist Parties, to leave the country and flee to Afghanistan, and who is at present under the protection and surveillance of the Afghan Government. Also in the name of all Moslems; of the Court of the Islamic nobility of those localities, and of the merchants and landowners and individuals of Bokharan nationality, for the regaining of our Holy Lands, we conclude a semi-official Treaty with the Military Attaché Consul-General of the great State of England, plenipotentiary to Meshed, which is one of the regions of Persia.

In every way, before beginning the struggle for the conquest of Bokhara and the liberation of these territories from the hands of the Russian and Bokharan revolutionaries, to acquire and strengthen the friendship, to begin a review in the Council of the Holy National Assembly (may Allah be pleased), and also in International Conferences, after raising the question of the defence of the defeated rights of the weak Bokharan nation, and of liberating its dear lands from the hands of the conquerors and enrolling it as one of the defenceless States of the world. And also a request on the part of the defenceless Bokhara to the Council of the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers of the great ruler of England, that through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to demand

¹ When the existence of this agreement was announced in the *Isvezia*, in June of last year, the British Foreign Office issued the following official statement: "There is not the least foundation for a statement published in Moscow that Great Britain has concluded an agreement with the anti-Soviet Emirs of Turkestan by which she would accept a protectorate in that region." There is, however, no question as to the authenticity of the document published above, which was signed in December, 1922, by Mr. Prideaux, as representative of the British Consul. The India Office may, however, have refused to ratify the Treaty.—EDITOR, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

one representative from Bokhara, in order to receive a voice at International Conferences.

In order that, at the sessions of the Court of the English State and for the discussion of any questions pertaining to the Bokharan nation, and for reports at the Conferences of other Powers—we present one semi-official Treaty, in order to rise for the conquest of the State of Bokhara; and the Bokharan nation preparing itself to move into Bokhara, and after attaining its aims, the nation of Bokhara is ready to support all plans and wishes of the English Government with regard to Turkestan, and to render moral, material and armed assistance and, like other nations, to submit completely to (national?) orders of the great State. And the other condition is, that all expenditures during the time of war must be made by England, upon the condition that one of the true representatives of Bokhara should enter this Commission.

(1) The Government of Bokhara will accept all expenses necessary for the liberation of Bokhara from the hands of the Bolsheviks from the Official Commission empowered by the English Government.

(2) For all expenses, the Government of Bokhara is ready to give away to the English any choice place, without discussion, for use for an indefinite time.

(3) The Government of Bokhara is ready, during the time of the reconquest of Bokhara and her liberation from the hands of the Russians, to accept all orders and counsels, without any refusals, up to the time of final peace in Bokhara.

(4) I, Mahmed-Taghi-Beg, son of the Prime Minister of Bokhara, have the plenary power to conclude such a semi-official Treaty with the British representative in Meshed, and ask among other things, that the English Government enter into negotiations with Afghanistan and first receive permission for his departure, and in case of failure to receive this permission, then the support of the English Government for the nation of Bokhara must pass either through the son of the Amir of Bokhara, or with the aid of some members of the Court of these localities.

(5) The Government of Great Britain knows that during the stay of the Russians in Turkestan, they had been the cause of the war, and having semi-officially taken away Samarcand from the Amir of Bokhara at the time of the conclusion of the Treaty between Russia and Bokhara, Samarcand was included by the Russians in their territory, and Katta-Kurgan declared as the boundary of the State. Consequently, after the reconquest, Samarcand should be as before included in the territory of the State of Bokhara.

(6) The Government of Bokhara is ready to accept all expenses incurred by the English, with expenses for all kinds of wars and military armaments up to the conquest of the territories of Bokhara and Samarcand, upon presentation of a bill by aforesaid Commission.

(7) The Government of Bokhara takes upon itself the obligation, after the reconquest of Bokhara, during thirty years to leave the military rule of the British, and after thirty years, the military chiefs and commanders shall be British, while all armies shall be composed of the nationals of Bokhara.

(8) The Government of Bokhara pledges itself, after concluding the Treaty with England, to make no treaties with any one else, except in case when the English give their permission.

(9) The Government of Bokhara is ready to cease all friendship with the Afghans and Persians and Turks and Khivans and to be exclusively under the control of the Government of Great Britain.

(10) The Government of Bokhara pledges itself not to bring its wares on the European market and not to trade in them, without the permission of the English.

(11) The Government of Bokhara is ready to transfer the telegraph, posts customs, and internal and external transit into the hands of British supervisors. Telegraph, post and customs will be in English hands.

(12) The Government of Bokhara will leave up to a certain time, to the plenipotentiaries of England, all ministerial institutions for the carrying out of order inside and outside the country.

(13) The Government of Bokhara undertakes the obligation to receive no representative of Russia or any other European power or of other governments in general, without the permission of England.

(14) The Government of Bokhara will send the best sons of the nation nowhere else but to England for study, and all the students of Bokhara in Great Britain will be cared for in moral and material way, by the British.

(15) The Government of Bokhara presents to Great Britain all internal revenues arising from mines, subsoil, and running rivers from which profits can arise.

(16) The Government of Bokhara may circulate no money out of the British coins, excepting that part of the gold which will be placed in the Bank of Bokhara under the control of the internal Government.

(17) The Government of Bokhara buys in England the machinery for the erection and running of factories; in some cases where it will be to a greater advantage, it has the right to purchase them from other governments.

(18) The Government of Bokhara will receive and bring over military equipment for a time from England, but later, upon the decision of the Government, may erect in its country factories for war-supplies, without prohibition by Great Britain.

These eighteen points, in the semi-official form of a Treaty, are concluded between the Governments with the aid of the Major Attaché of the Consulate of the Government of Great Britain in Meshed. The nation and the Government of Bokhara hope that England will pay some attention, if only for the sake of friendship, and in a brief time before the International Conference will make clear that it supports the Government of Bokhara and will remove this pernicious Russian force and liberate our defenceless and unhappy nation.

And if England should find some deficiencies contained in the eighteen points of this Treaty, the Government of Bokhara promises to accept all propositions of the National Assembly. Also, if in this Treaty contained in these eighteen points, which is presented to the Consul-General and to the Major-Attaché, the Government of Bokhara or the Bokharan nation should desire to introduce some changes, Great Britain shall, without taking offence change the Treaty and replace the disputed paragraphs.

I, on my side, Mahmed-Taghi-Beg, son of Bashi-Beg, the Prime Minister of Bokhara, conclude with the permission of Amir-Ali-Khan, as well as in the name of the entire nation of Bokhara, this Treaty in Meshed with the Consul General and the Major-Attaché of the British Government for the friendship of the two States, in the hope that what shall be necessary will be done to achieve the liberation of Bokhara.

If this Treaty should have deficiencies, let know, in order to change it.

Place of Seal.

(Signed) MAHMED-TAGHI, SON OF MULLAH
KHALI MIRZA NYUN GASHI BEG.

Khed. . . .

(Signatures of copyists, translators, &c.)

Year 1341 (Arabian style)

Month Djamaadnal Akhir.

H. G. WELLS AND LENIN

The Philistine Discourseth on the Revolutionary¹

By L. TROTZKY

We are able to publish in advance the following translation of a chapter from a forthcoming book by Trotzky.

IN one of the many books containing pronouncements of prominent men regarding Lenin, I came across an article² by the English novelist, H. G. Wells, entitled "The Dreamer in the Kremlin." The editor of the book makes the observation, that "even such advanced people as Wells failed to understand the import of the proletarian revolution proceeding in Russia." It would appear as if this is not regarded as a sufficient reason for refraining from publishing Mr. Wells' article in a book which is devoted to the leader of this revolution. But it is not worth while worrying oneself about this: I at least read some of the pages of Wells not without interest, but this was not the fault of the author as will be seen from what follows.

One can still vividly call to mind those days when Wells paid a visit to Moscow. This was during the cold and hunger of the autumn of 1920. There were already premonitions of the complications which were to follow in the spring. Starving Moscow was wrapped in snow. Our economic policy stood before a sudden and thorough-going change. I very well remember the impression which Vladimir Ilyitch derived from Wells: "Ugh! What a narrow petty bourgeois! Ugh! What a Philistine!" he repeated, raising his hands over the table with that laugh and that gasp which was characteristic of him when he ever felt a sort of inner shame on account of another man. "Ugh! What a Philistine!" he repeated when he again called to mind that conversation. This conversation between Lenin and myself took place before the opening of a sitting of the Political

¹ Copyright in Canada and the United States of America.

² This article was printed in London as Chapter VI. of Mr. Well's *Russia in the Shadows*. (Hodder and Stoughton, 6s.)

Bureau, and was practically confined to a repetition of the above-mentioned terse characterisation of Wells. But this was quite sufficient. For myself, I had read little of Wells and had never met him personally. But I was able to envisage in a fairly clear manner this picture of the English drawing-room socialist, of the Fabian, of the writer of phantasies and Utopias, who had come to view the Communist experiments. And the exclamation of Lenin, and in particular the tone in which he made this exclamation, enabled me to fill in the remaining features with little difficulty. And now this article by Wells, which in some inexplicable manner has found its way into the pages of the collection of articles on Lenin, not only revives in my mind that exclamation of Lenin's, but has also filled it with a vivid content. For, if in the article by Wells there is practically no trace of Lenin, one can see Wells in it as plain as plain can be.

Let us begin with the introductory complaint of Wells: he was compelled, just think, to take extraordinary pains in order to be able to speak with Lenin, which he (Wells) found "tedious and irritating." Why, pray? Had Lenin summoned Wells? Had he pledged himself to give him a reception, or had he so much free time on his hands? On the contrary. In those extremely difficult days he was occupied every minute of his time; he could not so easily find a free hour in order to receive Wells. This should not have been difficult for a foreigner to understand. But the whole trouble was that Mr. Wells, as a distinguished foreigner—and with all his "Socialism" a most conservative Englishman of the imperialist type—was filled with the conviction that he was conferring a great honour upon this barbarian country and its leader by condescending to visit it. The whole article of Wells, from the first to the last line, stinks of unwarranted smug self-conceit.

The characterisation of Lenin begins, as was to be expected, with a discovery. Lenin, only think, is "not a writer." Who, indeed, is better able to decide this question than the professional writer Wells? "The shrill little pamphlets issued from Moscow in his (Lenin's) name (!) full of misconceptions of the labour psychology of the west . . . display hardly anything of the real Lenin mentality." The noteworthy gentleman is of course unaware of the fact that Lenin has written a great

number of works of the highest importance on the agrarian question, on theoretical economy, on sociology and on philosophy Wells is only familiar with "shrill little pamphlets" with regard to which he remarks that they merely appear "over Lenin's name," that is, he insinuates that they are written by other people. The true "Lenin mentality" is to be found, not in the dozens of volumes written by him, but in that conversation, lasting but one hour, which the most illustrious visitor from Great Britain most graciously deigned to hold.

One could at least expect from Wells an interesting sketch of Lenin's outward appearance, and for the sake of one well-portrayed feature we would have been ready to pardon him for all his Fabian trivialities. But the article does not contain even this. "Lenin has a pleasant, quick-changing, brownish (!) face with a lively smile . . ." "He is not very little like the photographs . . ." "He gesticulated a little with his hands over the heaped papers as he talked . . ." Mr. Wells did not get beyond the banalities of the average reporter to a capitalist newspaper. For the rest, he made the further discovery that the shape of Lenin's head reminds one of that of Lord Balfour's, it being domed and slightly one-sided, and that, as regards his figure, he is a "little man—his feet scarcely touch the ground as he sits on the edge of his chair." As regards the shape of Lord Balfour's head we are unable to say anything concerning this dignified piece of anatomy and are quite prepared to believe that it is domed. But for the rest—what an impolite piece of carelessness! Lenin was a somewhat reddish-blond type of man. He can in no wise be described as being brownish. He was of medium stature, perhaps a trifle under the average height; but that he gave the impression of being a small man and that when seated he could hardly touch the floor with his feet, this could only be apparent to Mr. Wells who, with the self-confidence of a civilised Gulliver, had penetrated into the country of the northern Communist Lilliputians. Mr. Wells further remarks that Lenin in the pauses of the conversation had the habit of screwing up one eye. "Due perhaps to some defect in focussing," suggests the very discerning writer. We are quite familiar with this gesture. It was to be observed when Lenin had before him

a man with whom he was entirely unacquainted, at whom he took a rapid glance. Lenin's defective focussing consisted in his seeing through and through the man with whom he conversed; through his puffed up self-conceit, his narrow-mindedness, his civilised haughtiness and civilised ignorance, and after he had taken this picture into his consciousness, he long afterwards shook his head and exclaimed "What a Philistine! What a thoroughbred petty bourgeois!"

The conversation took place in the presence of Comrade Rothstein, and Wells, in passing, makes the discovery that his presence "is rather characteristic for the present condition of Russian affairs:" Rothstein, as one could see, was controlling Lenin on behalf of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, in view of the excessive candour of Lenin and of his dreamy lack of caution. What can one say regarding this precious observation? When Wells entered the Kremlin he brought with him in his consciousness all the rubbish heap of international bourgeois presumptions, and with his lynx-eyed sharpness—oh, of course, there was no defective focussing there!—he discovered in Lenin's study all that he had previously sucked in from *The Times* or some other reservoir of the hair-oil and spats brigade.

In what now consisted the real import of the conversation? As regards this we receive from Mr. Wells some pretty hopeless commonplaces, which show how wretched and barren Lenin's thoughts appear after passing through the prism of another mind, regarding the symmetry of which there is not the least occasion to doubt.

Wells came "expecting to struggle with a doctrinaire Marxist," but as a matter of fact he "found nothing of the sort." We are not surprised at this. We, of course, know already that the "Lenin mentality" was not revealed by his activity, extending over thirty years, as a politician and writer, but in his conversation with the English citizen. "I had been told," continues Wells, "that Lenin lectured people, but he certainly did not do so on this occasion." How indeed could one teach or lecture a gentleman so overfilled with high self-estimation?

That Lenin loved to "lecture" is, in general, not true. What is true is that Lenin was able to speak in a very instructive manner.

But he only did this when he was of the opinion that the man with whom he was conversing was capable of learning something. In such cases he spared neither time nor pains. But as regards the magnificent Gulliver, who by good fortune had been able to enter the study of the "little man," after two or three minutes' conversation with him Lenin was forced to arrive at the unshakeable conviction—perchance in the spirit of the inscription over the portal of Dante's *Inferno*—"Abandon hope all ye . . .!"

The conversation dealt with the subject of large towns. As Wells remarks, the idea first occurred to him in Russia that the outward aspect of a town is determined by the trade in the shops and in the markets. He retailed this discovery to Lenin in his conversation. Lenin "admitted" that under Communism the towns are becoming considerably smaller in extent. Wells "suggested" to Lenin that the renovation of the towns entailed a gigantic work and that many huge buildings in Petrograd only retained their value as historical memorials. Lenin also assented to this incomparable commonplace on the part of Mr. Wells. "I think," adds the latter, "that it warmed his heart to find someone who understood a necessary consequence of collectivism that many of his own people failed to grasp." Here you have an appropriate measure for judging the mentality of Mr. Wells! He regards as the fruit of his own wonderful acumen the discovery that under Communism the present concentrated urban agglomerations will disappear and that many of the present capitalist architectural monstrosities will only retain their value as historical memorials (if they do not merit the honour of being destroyed). How, of course, should the poor Communists ("the tiresome class-war fanatics" as Wells calls them) hit upon such discoveries, which for the rest have long since been set forth in the popular commentary upon the old programme of the German Social Democracy. We will not elaborate on the fact that all this was already well known to the classical Utopians.

Now I hope you will understand why Mr. Wells found that that laugh of Lenin's of which he had heard so much "not in evidence." It was not a laughing matter for Lenin. I even fear that his jaws were being moved by a reflex action directly opposed to laughter. But here Lenin had recourse to the service of his

dexterous and skilful hand, which was always ready to conceal in good time the impolite yawn from a man too much charmed with his own conversation.

As we have already heard Lenin did not teach Wells—for reasons which we consider quite justified. As compensation therefore Wells was most emphatic in lecturing Lenin. He imparted to him the very original idea that for the success of Socialism “it is not only the material organisation of society you have to build . . . it is the mentality of the whole people.” He pointed out to Lenin that “the Russian people are by habit and tradition traders and individualists.” He explained to him that Communism was “pressing too hard and too fast, and destroying before it was ready to rebuild,” and other things to the same effect. “That brought us,” relates Wells, “to our essential difference, the difference of the evolutionary Collectivist and the Marxist.” Under evolutionary Collectivism one must understand the Fabian concoction of Liberalism, Philanthropy, economic social legislation and Sunday homilies regarding a better future. Wells himself formulates the essence of evolutionary Collectivism as follows: “I believe that through a vast sustained educational campaign, the existing Capitalist system can be civilised into a Collectivist world system.” Wells himself does not explain who will carry out and upon whom will be carried out this “vast sustained educational campaign”: the Lords with the domed skulls upon the English proletariat or, *vice versa*, the proletariat upon the skulls of the Lords? Oh, no, anything you like, but not the latter! For what purpose do there exist in the world these enlightened Fabians, the men of thought, of altruistic conduct, ladies and gentlemen, like Mrs. Snowden and Mr. Wells, if not—by means of a regulated and prolonged exuding of that which is hiding itself under their own skulls—to civilise capitalist society and to transform it into a collectivist one with such reasonable and happy “gradualism” that even the Royal Dynasty of Great Britain will not perceive it?

All this was set forth by Wells to Lenin and to all this Lenin listened. “This amazing little man,” Wells graciously remarks, “with his frank admission of the immensity and complication of the project of Communism and his simple concentration upon its

realisation, was very refreshing (!)." But for Lenin? Oh, long-suffering Ilyitch! He was probably pronouncing under his breath some very expressive and spicy Russian words. He did not translate them out loud into English, not only probably because his English vocabulary did not extend so far, but also out of consideration of politeness

Ilyitch was very polite. He could not, however, confine himself to a polite silence. "He had to argue, therefore," says Wells, "that modern Capitalism is incurably predatory, wasteful and unteachable." Lenin referred to a number of facts which, among others, are contained in a recent book by Chiozza Money; Capitalism has destroyed the English national docks, has made it impossible to exploit the coal mines in a rational manner, &c. Ilyitch was familiar with the language of facts and figures.

"I had, I will confess," concludes Mr. Wells unexpectedly, "a very uphill argument." What does this mean? Is it the beginning of the capitulation of evolutionary Collectivism before the logic of Marxism? No, no, "abandon hope"! This phrase, which at the first glance appears unexpected, does not occur by mere chance; it forms part of the system, it bears a strictly outspoken Fabian, evolutionary, pedagogic character. It is expressed with an eye to the English capitalists, bankers, lords and their ministers. Wells says to them: "Just see, you behave so badly, so destructively, so egotistically, that in my discussion with the Kremlin Dreamer I found it difficult to defend the principles of my evolutionary Collectivism. Listen to reason, take every week a Fabian bath, become civilised, proceed along the path of progress." Thus the devout confession of Wells is not the beginning of self-criticism, but merely the continuation of the educational work on this same capitalist society which has emerged from the imperialist war and the peace of Versailles—perfected, moralised and Fabianised.

It is not without a feeling of benevolent patronage that Wells remarks concerning Lenin that his faith in his cause is unbounded. There is no need to dispute this. What is true is true. This fund of faith gave him, among other things, the patience to converse during those depressing months of the blockade with every foreigner who might be able to serve even as an indirect means of communica-

tion between Russia and the West. Such was the conversation Lenin had with Wells.

It was quite otherwise when he spoke with English workers who came to him. He fraternised with them in the most hearty manner. He at once learned and taught. But with Wells the conversation, by reason of its very nature, had a half-enforced diplomatic character. "Our multifarious argumentation ended indecisively," concludes the author. In other words the encounter between evolutionary Collectivism and Marxism ended this time in nothing. Wells took his departure for England and Lenin remained in the Kremlin. Wells wrote a series of choice articles for the consumption of the bourgeois public and Lenin, shaking his head, repeated: "There goes a real petty bourgeois! Good gracious, what a Philistine!"

But one may ask, why on earth have I, almost four years afterwards, reverted to such a trifling article by Wells. The fact that this article has been reproduced in one of the books devoted to the death of Lenin is no sufficient justification. It is likewise no sufficient justification that these lines were written by me in Sukhum while undergoing a cure there. But I have more serious reasons. In England at the present moment the party of Mr. Wells is in power, led by illustrious representatives of evolutionary Collectivism. And it seems to me—I think not without reason—that the lines written by Mr. Wells concerning Lenin reveal to us better than many other things the soul of the leading strata of the English Labour Party: taken as a whole Wells is not the worst of the bunch. How hopelessly behind the times these people are, how burdened with the heavy leaden weight of bourgeois prejudices! Their arrogance—the belated reflex of the great historical rôle of the English bourgeoisie—prevents them from penetrating in a proper way into the life of other nations, into new ideological phenomena, into the historical process which is sweeping over their heads. Narrow-minded followers of routine, empiricists wearing the blinkers of bourgeois public opinion, they carry themselves and their prejudices into the whole world and are careful not to notice anything around them but only their own persons. Lenin had lived in all the countries of Europe; had made himself master of foreign languages; had read, studied and listened;

made himself familiar with things, compared and generalised. Standing at the head of a great revolutionary country, he omitted no occasion to learn conscientiously and carefully to ask for information and news. He followed unweariedly the life of the whole world. He both read and spoke German, French and English with ease and also read Italian. In the last years of his life, when over-burdened with work, he surreptitiously, during the sittings of the Political Bureau, studied a Czechish grammar in order to come into first-hand contact with the workers' movement of Czecho-Slovakia; we sometimes "caught" him at this when he, not without some slight embarrassment, passed it off with a laugh and apologised . . . And there on the other hand we have Mr. Wells, incarnating that kind of pseudo-educated, narrow-minded petty bourgeois, who look around with the intention of seeing nothing and who consider that they have nothing to learn as they feel quite assured with their inherited stock of prejudices. And Mr. MacDonald, who represents a more solid and sober puritan variety of the same type, pacifies bourgeois public opinion: We have fought against Moscow and we have vanquished Moscow. They have vanquished Moscow? These are indeed wretched "little men" no matter how tall physically! To-day, even after all that has transpired, they know nothing whatever about their own to-morrow. Liberal and Conservative business people without the least difficulty bait traps for these "evolutionary" socialist pedants who are now in office, compromise them and intentionally prepare their downfall—not only as ministers but also as politicians. Simultaneously—although far less intentionally—they prepare for the coming to power of the English Marxists. Yes, indeed, of the Marxists, "of the tiresome class-war fanatics." For the English social revolution will also proceed in accordance with the laws laid down by Marx.

Mr. Wells, with his characteristic, pudding-heavy wit, once threatened to take a pair of scissors and trim the "doctrinaire" hair and beard of Marx and to render him English and respectable: to Fabianise him. But nothing has come of this and nothing ever will come of it. Marx will remain Marx just as Lenin has remained Lenin after Wells had subjected him for an hour to the tormenting effects of a blunt razor. And we venture to predict that in the not

distant future there will be erected in London, in Trafalgar Square for example, two statues standing side by side: Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. The English proletarians will say to their children: "What a good job it is that no little pygmies of the Labour Party succeeded in trimming the hair or shaving the beard of these two giants!"

In anticipation of these days, which I myself will endeavour to see, I close my eyes for a moment and distinctly see before me the figure of Lenin in his armchair, the same chair in which Wells saw him, and I hear—on the day following or perhaps on the day of the conversation with Wells—the words, accompanied by a heavy gasp: "Ugh! What a petty bourgeois! What a Philistine!"

Sukhum, April 6, 1924.

TOWARDS A NEW POLICY.—VII¹

By J. BROMLEY

(General Secretary Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and
Firemen)

I AM asked to give my views on the needs of a reconstruction of British Trade Unionism.

Frankly I fear they square so little with the popular cry of the moment that they will cut little ice, at least for a few years to come, although I believe if they could be considered by the rank and file itself they may bear some little fruit in time.

To begin with, I do not agree with the teaching of the one big union, or even that of industrial unionism, whatever that may mean, for I have scarcely found two of its exponents who agree on the point. I imagine I can hear the shrieks of horror at this bald statement of disagreement with the popular cry, so let me at once endeavour to palliate my offence.

I do believe in the workers being solidly organised so that class consciously they can present an absolutely united front to capitalism at any time and all the time, and so whilst protecting each other, they can, at the same time, pursue capitalism to its inevitable doom, and hasten it. I do not, however, agree with the teaching of amalgamation of unions into ever bigger and yet bigger unions while the present internal structure of all our unions is what it is. Let me give a few reasons why. In the first place, British trade unionism is at present dominated by the union officials, so is the Trades Union Congress, so is the Labour Party Congress (as everyone knows if they will admit it); the rank and file have very little direct and continuous management of their union, and therefore are not interested. This is the reason such an unsatisfactory percentage of workers are or-

¹Previous contributions to this series by Messrs. W. H. Hutchinson (of the A.E.U. and the Labour Party Executive), George Hicks (of the Builders and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress), Will Lawther (of the Yorkshire Miners and the Labour Party Executive), Robert Williams (of the Labour Party Executive and Secretary of the Transport Workers' Federation), A. A. Purcell, M.P. (Chairman of the 'General Council), and A. J. Cook (General Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain) appeared in first six numbers of the current volume of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*.

ganised; this is the reason for the present weakness; this is the reason for the mistrust between officials and rank and file, which friend Hutchinson speaks of; this is the reason of the unofficial strikes, and of the general apathy.

The popular cry is: whilst leaving all this as it is, make still bigger unions—which interpreted into fact and practice means: make bigger and still bigger officials, more and more out of touch with the rank and file, whilst the very size of the mass would make it more difficult for the members to direct policy and make the ponderous machine move. That is why I disagree with it. It would merely intensify existing evils.

I am not in favour of our movement being autocratically ruled by a small junta, however well intentioned they may have been *at the beginning*, for what would happen if at a moment of crisis they sided with the enemy? I would rather the movement was so reconstructed that it could be ruled by the rank and file.

Then there are certain grave defects and failures in the big union itself. You may take a thousand men to a tailor and order a thousand ready-made suits of clothes. They would all be clothed, but a few would be fitted.

Similarly with a trade union. It is not enough to tell a man he is in a big union for fighting purposes (especially if it never fights); he must feel that in between the fights his union clothes and protects him like a garment at all points of his working life; thus will confidence be inspired, membership retained, class consciousness acquired and good fighting material prepared for the battles when they come.

This is not merely groundless criticism of an idea. Ask Tom Moore what became of the big industrial unions of Canada, where the workers tried to build on these lines. Ask him what was the end of the Newfoundland "one big union," which embraced at one time all but the fishermen. What became of the Knights of Labour of America, and several big industrial unions formed in the States, without going back into history to remember the fate of the attempt in this country to run one big union?

They all perished as a result of the inertia of their own bigness, from the fact that minorities were crushed however just their grievance; that the members were out of touch with the management, and that the leaders were too big to be strong.

Is it necessary to point to one or two failures, on a smaller scale, to keep big unions together in this country even in the last few years?

Lastly, there is the very real, and to my mind the grave danger, of the strong, virile sections, or minorities with a real grievance, in a big union being dominated and indeed crushed by the apathy of the others allowing the *big leaders* to trounce the so-called malcontents for speaking out of their turn and whipping them to heel even to the extent of siding with the employers and the capitalist Press to lick them into subservience. That is not progress. It is not even standing still. It is going backwards.

In my humble opinion, you can organise the workers into a thousand unions, or ten, or even one, but if you have not made them class conscious you have failed, and therefore I say, start and reconstruct from the bottom, with greater power from the bottom, not by giving more power to the top by the extremely simple process of amalgamation of the existing wrongness. Which is the way then? Not by trying to unify the ranks by idealistic programmes. The minimum wage idea sounds well on the platform, but what would it mean in practice? Why, a danger of nothing but a mere bread-and-butter wage for all. Not by giving trades councils more representation, for in the ultimate they are dominated by the unions they may represent, either locally or if they were given representation at the T.U.C. Not by crying out that no single union can win alone—we know they cannot, because the other unions do not come to their aid, largely because of leaders, and not due to the lack of will of the rank and file.

In my serious and considered opinion the way to reorganise the movement; make living, interested members; and to obtain a united class-conscious front in our time, is to start reconstruction from the bottom, give the rank and file more power and permanent officials less.

I would advocate that each union be divided into districts, with a maximum of twelve or fourteen districts (we are not a large country); that each branch in each district send a representative to a district council, which council should have fairly wide powers in its district, except for strike action; that each district council should send a representative to a central National Council, which should replace the

present Executive Committees whether permanent or elected for a period of years.

The district councils would meet at stated intervals and concentrate their instructions from the branches, sending their representative forward with them to the national council, and would meet again to receive his report of the national council work, which they would in turn take back to the branches for interpretation into action. Thus would the branches be brought into direct control of the whole machine.

They would have the power of initiative and recall. They would instruct their delegate to district council and hear his report. He in his turn would instruct the district council delegate to the national council and hear his report. The national council would get direct instructions from the branches through the district councils, not by a host of paper resolutions but by the man himself, one of their number, who had come direct from the branches, and woe betide the representative who failed his members; he could be superseded immediately, and the permanent officials would at once become secretaries to the representatives of the rank and file. Not autocrats, but loyal servants of their fellows, knowing they were correctly interpreting the wishes of their members, who in turn would get a renewed interest in the knowledge that they were directly controlling the policy of the union.

Representatives to the T.U.C., the Labour Party Congress and all other national bodies (except to federations, who would be from the national or district councils as the position may require) should be elected by ballot vote of the members, a permanent official only accompanying them as secretary.

The General Council and Labour Party Executive should, after being nominated by the unions, be also elected by the ballot vote of the rank and file instead of as now by the block vote.

Annual and other Conferences of the unions should also be elected by ballot, with permanent officials in attendance only, but with no deciding power. Thus would the whole machine pass into the control of the rank and file of our unions, who after all are intelligent, grown men and women, and who, if I read the signs correctly, will not much longer be content to be whipped to heel by their own union officers every time they desire to move.

They may agree to be guided by their fellows of the ranks, but

that is quite a different thing, for the so-called extremists are not all the mad disruptionists they are often called, but thinking men desirous of cutting the cackle and getting to the hosses.

Such a scheme of reconstruction would, I believe, shake the dry bones of our movement, re-awaken the members, bring the workers closer together for one common object, thus giving them a conscious aim and confidence in themselves, and I feel sure we should soon hear less of division and more of progress.

I have endeavoured to set down my ideas in plain, simple language, without catch phrases or shibboleth, and with the sole desire of helping to realise the aims of the struggling mass, which under our present union structure is so often inarticulate.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND POWER

IV.—What should be the Attitude of the Left-Wing ?

By M. PHILIPS PRICE

[There are certain points in the following article which call for some editorial comment lest the views of so regular a contributor as Comrade Price should be taken in this case to correspond with those of THE LABOUR MONTHLY. The policy of THE LABOUR MONTHLY is not and never will be designed to create what Comrade Price calls "the psychological atmosphere necessary to impress the Labour Party Right Wing and the careerist element which is among them," nor to advocate the Fabian tactic of "capture by stages of the parliamentary and administrative machinery of capitalism"—which in effect means to surrender Marxism for a programme of revolution by State purchase. To suggest that the Labour Government (which contains in happy unity a Chelmsford, a Haldane and a MacDonald) is not a Government of coalition with capitalism because there is no pact with the Liberal Party is to take a very naive view of coalition; and to argue that we should not fight this policy of coalition with capitalism because the masses are still heavily under illusions (as if they were not far more heavily under illusions at the beginning of the war) is to reveal a lack of revolutionary confidence at a critical moment. This failure inevitably leads to the subsequent proposal of a nebulous "left wing" and final vacillation between the Second and Third Internationals, and even to the familiar attempt to raise the ghost of Rosa Luxembourg against Lenin. In this part, when Comrade Price's argument leads him even to give currency to the old slanderous social-democratic suggestion that Lenin stood for "sole reliance on the illegal apparatus," it is necessary to state quite plainly that Comrade Price's argument is driving him into a camp in which he will find little congenial company. We publish this disclaimer to assure our readers that THE LABOUR MONTHLY will never tolerate the exploitation of the terminology of Marxism, even by a writer of the highest reputation as a Marxist, to cloak a policy, which, while repudiating sentimental pacifism, yet inevitably must encourage the apostles of social pacification.—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.]

I HAVE in the recent series of articles¹ reviewed the situation which faces the Labour Government both nationally and internationally. It will be observed by those who have read these articles carefully that two threads run through the narrative : one indicates the failures of the Labour Government (some of them serious) to make a breach in the wall of capitalism, where a breach might be made; and the other indicates that the Labour Government has made some very important achievements, which are by no means to be despised and which indicate that the heart of the Labour Party is still sound. The Left-Wing may sometimes be inclined to dismiss the Labour Party as another of those "traitrous" Reformist parties and to predict for it a similar fate to that of the miserable Social Democratic Party of Germany. And it may be that it will go the same way as its sister party; but again it may not. Just as the social revolution has gone a very different way in Russia to what it is going in Germany, so it may go a different way in England to what it went in either. For Marxists do not ignore the fact that the rate of development and decline of capitalism varies in different countries through historic and geographic conditions and that decades of capitalist education in one country set tactical problems before revolutionary Socialists, which do not exist in a country where an immature industrial capitalism and agrarian feudalism still overlap, as they did in Russia and to a more limited extent in Germany.

And so the different conditions prevailing in this country last winter to that which prevailed in the winter of 1918-1919 in Germany, have brought it about that the British Labour Party has not, as yet, sold the pass by entering into a coalition government with the Liberals, but has nevertheless succeeded in making its influence felt in the country, although it is a minority government. It has provided better maintenance for the unemployed, prepared a comprehensive Housing Scheme, made an improvement in pensions and considerably reduced the indirect taxation, which falls so heavily on the workers. It has shown the masses what it would do in the way of stopping evictions, were it not for the obstruction of the Tories. On the other hand it has failed as yet to provide any scheme of public development of national resources to absorb the unemployed and is relying in a way which may prove dangerous to itself

¹ Previous articles appeared in February, April and May issues.

on the slight improvement in the foreign trade of the country, which has reduced the unemployed figures. Abroad it has done well to start the ball rolling with Russia and to tackle seriously the problem of making a comprehensive economic treaty with the Soviet Republic which will make a Labour Government in future less dependent on Wall Street for cotton, foodstuffs and credit to support the pound sterling. It has done well also to scrap Singapore and to adopt a friendly attitude towards the powers behind the French government, in order to avoid giving undue encouragement to the reaction in Germany. On the other hand it has failed over the Soudan loan,² it has proved itself utterly helpless to attack the hydra of the Anglo-Indian oligarchy, it has pandered to militarists over the five cruisers and has compromised itself with the robber scheme of the "Experts" to stabilise sweated labour in Germany. In short both at home and abroad the Labour Government has done some things well and some things badly. But, when all is said and done, it has a better record after six months than the German Social-Democrats had after four years.

Now the attitude of the Left-Wing in any movement should be to look ahead at the ultimate objective, to keep clear before the workers the consciousness of the probable necessity to use all methods both political and industrial to attain those ends, to keep in advance of the masses, but never to get so far ahead that it loses contact with them and their everyday practical problems. It is therefore no use clothing oneself in sack-cloth and ashes and going about croaking like ravens that the Labour Government has sold the British workers to the bourgeoisie and that all is lost. Such tactics will only make the group that does this ridiculous, and nothing kills in English politics so easily as ridicule. A general Jeremiah on the record of the Labour Party in the last six months is not likely to go down with those who have been receiving some benefit, however slight, from increased unemployment pay and lower sugar taxes, and will only condemn those who indulge in them to a splendid isolation which may be gratifying to themselves, but to no one else. Nor will extracts from the speeches of Zinovieff and Trotsky in 1920 impress those unemployed engineers, who are hoping from an

² An article by H. P. Rathbone on the subject of the Soudan Loan will appear in our next issue.—EDITOR, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

Anglo-Russian agreement to get to work again, any more than a recitation of what the Sultan of Zanzibar said in the year One. Without reflecting the least on the brilliant writings of our Russian comrades, it is nevertheless essential to adapt language to the mentality of the country in question.

An immediately practical proposition at the present time would be, I submit, to assist those elements of the I.L.P., which are not saturated with sentimental pacifism to keep along a straight course and to give them the tip when to pounce down on the Labour Government with shafts of unanswerable criticism whenever it deviates from the path. These elements are to be found in considerable numbers not only north of the Tweed, but also south of it, as the York Conference undoubtedly showed. But if they are dubbed "political bankrupts" and "agents of the bourgeoisie" from the first, the psychological atmosphere necessary to impress the Labour Party Right-Wing and the careerist element, which is among them, will be absent. The way to "steal the leadership" of the Labour Movement is not to announce the fact on the housetops, but to win the confidence of all those in the Labour Party and the I.L.P., who are seriously concerned with the task of getting under public ownership the principal key industries of Great Britain, as a first step towards the establishment of the Socialist commonwealth. This confidence can only be won by objective criticism and by showing what practical measure, which leads us one step towards our end, can be undertaken under the present balance of class power, both in Parliament and in the workshops, as existing at the present time. Such cases as the failure to extract or publish conditions from the Soudan financiers for the public money loaned to them, as the building of the five cruisers, as the failure to summon a conference of Indian nationalists and trade unionists to thrash out a new constitution for India, as the failure to prepare plans for a public development of electrical power stations at home, &c., should be shown up. They are practical steps in the direction of the ultimate end. This criticism, moreover, should not be accompanied by a personal attack on the character of the Labour Ministers and officials of the Labour Party, even if some of them are going out of their way to lick-spittle to royalty. These types can be left to their own condemnation by the healthy instinct of the rank and file.

A united front of all Left-Wing progressive elements within the Labour Party, the I.L.P. and the Communist Party is essential and can only be attained by the methods suggested above. Needless to say the task would be very much easier, if there were not in existence already certain barriers of organisation existing between the Left-Wing groups, which barriers were thrown up as a reflex action from the Continent during the years of acute revolutionary struggle immediately following the war. I refer more particularly to the splitting off of the Communist from the Centrist Socialist parties and the foundation of the Third International. No doubt it was essential throughout large parts of the Continent to carry out this severance in organisation in those countries under the conditions prevailing at that time. In Germany, Austria, Poland, the Balkans, Italy and Hungary the State machinery of capitalism had temporarily collapsed and the Centrist groups by their pacifism and inaction were aiding the Reformist parties to get capitalism back again into the saddle. A clear cut in organisation was essential in a period when capitalism was resorting to direct action to get back its powers. Only by this means was the field clear for direct action of the workers in defence. With the passing of the period of storming the fortresses of capitalism, temporarily overcome by panic, the period of besieging and trench warfare commenced again. This fact has been recorded time and again at the various congresses of the Third International since 1920. Indeed that year, when the Red Army was driven back from Warsaw, when the Italian workers retired from the occupied factories, when the German trade unionists, victorious in the general strike, which overthrew Kapp, put back the bankrupt government of Ebert and Mueller into power again, that year, I say, marked the ebbing of the revolutionary tide in post-war Europe. But though that tide has ebbed, capitalism has not established itself or solved its hopeless economic problem of how to dispose of its bloated surplus values. The necessity of guerilla warfare on many fronts has replaced the tactics of staking all on one direct action, which will probably not occur again till capitalism either in another war or by some desperate action to hack its way out of its difficulty, plunges the world into a new catastrophe. Now this guerilla warfare needs the co-operation of elements which were sundered in organisation during the period of "storm." That co-operation is

difficult, almost impossible in a country like Germany, where Reformists, Centrists and Communists were often found during these years on different sides of the barricades. This makes the task of creating the united front in Germany at the present time so thankless, especially since the Communist Party has now behind it a rich tradition of heroic struggle and sacrifice and such great martyrs to keep the fire of party patriotism burning like Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

Such conditions, however, have not existed in this country. The split in the I.L.P. in 1920 was less in response to the conditions imposed by the nature of the class struggle in England at that time and was more an automatic reflex action of what was going on on the Continent. The complete failure of the British Communist Party to capture the mind of the working class during the great industrial crisis (the only opportunity for direct action on a large scale that has occurred for years) in the following year is the best proof of this assertion. Since then the only hopeful method of attacking British capitalism, which, though weakened since the war, is in nowhere near so serious a state as it is in many Continental countries, is by guerilla warfare on the industrial front and the capture by stages of the parliamentary and administrative machinery of capitalism. For this purpose it is possible to obtain a large measure of agreement between various shades of Socialists. But the abortive parties and groups arising from the artificial splits of 1920 have been left high and dry. Their absence of fine fighting traditions and of a number of martyred leaders should, however, make reabsorption into the mass parties a matter of greater ease than in Germany. The affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party would effect this and the opposition of the Labour Right-Wing might be overcome if the Communist Party were to adopt the tactics towards the Labour Government which I have set down in the above lines.

That the writer of this article is not without precedents in the history of contemporary Marxian tactics can be shown by reference to some of the writings of Rosa Luxemburg. It is well-known on the Continent that there was for many years between Luxemburg and Lenin a difference of opinion on questions of party organisation. While Lenin was in Switzerland, preparing for the Russian Revolu-

tion, he laid down certain tactical rules for the formation of revolutionary Socialist parties. The chief aim in his tactics was the building up of the legal apparatus of the party upon the illegal basis. He saw, and rightly saw, that he could do nothing in a country like Russia with a semi-feudal government, which had not even permitted the relative freedom of speech and movement of a purely capitalist country, without a secret apparatus as his mainstay. On the other hand Rosa Luxemburg saw that for Germany, which had for some years since the fall of Bismarck and the abolition of the Socialist Law been able to build up a Socialist Mass Party on a legal basis, sole reliance on the illegal apparatus was impossible. Both Lenin and Luxemburg were right for their respective countries and for the conditions under which they had to work, and the Reformists, who try to make capital out of this difference in order to prove that Luxemburg was hostile to the Russian Revolution merely show their stupendous ignorance. Nevertheless arising out of this difference between the outlook of one working under Russian and one under German conditions, comes the difference between those who would see an early split between anti-militarist, pacifist, and emotional Socialist parties like the former German Independents and the British I.L.P. on the one hand and the Marxian Communist groups on the other and those who would see these two trends of working class psychology contending with one another in the same party organisation. Under Russian conditions so much secret work has been necessary that open discussion between groups in one party has become impossible, because party life has become dominated by illegal struggle against Tsarism and since the Revolution by the struggle against the counter-revolution. Only now with the defeat of the counter-revolution and with the coming of the economic problems of reconstruction, is healthy criticism coming in the Russian Communist Party. It is not the fault of the Party leaders, for conditions of the class struggle in Russia made this so. On the other hand even during the war, when the military censor of Kaiserism was busily at work, Rosa Luxemburg objected strongly to the attitude of several of her colleagues on the German *Spartakusbund* (the Left-Wing of the German Independent Socialist Party), who were agitating in 1917 for a split in that Party and the founding of a separate Communist Party of Germany. In a series of trench-

ant articles in the Duisburg *Kampf*, which I quote in my *Germany in Transition* (p. 236), she wrote: "The *Spartakusbund* is only another historical tendency of the German proletariat. It is characterised by a different attitude on nearly all questions of tactics and organisation. But the view that therefore it is necessary to form two carefully divided parties, corresponding with these two aspects of the Socialist opposition (Centrist and Spartakist) rests on a purely dogmatic interpretation of the function of parties." The Independent Socialist Party and *Spartakusbund* were, she added, "two complementary heirs to the inheritance of the German and the International Social-democracy, whereby the former represents the practical experience of the old movement and the latter the theoretical outlook for the future. Hence the sharp opposition between these two tendencies, which embodies at once the tragic, internal conflict of the proletarian movement. This problem, however, cannot be solved in a mechanical manner by a clean cut in organisation between the two. It can only be solved in open, constant and systematic struggle between two tendencies within one and the same party and in the long run it can only be decided by the objective historic developments."

If these words applied to Germany entering on a stage of acute revolutionary struggle, how much more so is it applicable to the present situation in England, where the Labour Party has not yet hopelessly compromised itself with reaction and, if the Left-Wing does its duty, probably never will.

LONDON AND MOSCOW

By Dr. ROBERT DUNSTAN

(Labour Candidate for the Ladywood Division of Birmingham)

TO go from London to Moscow can be likened to the passage of Alice through the Looking Glass for on the other side everything is changed—right is left and left is right, but to come from Moscow to London is like the sad awakening from a pleasant adventurous dream to face our dull everyday life under Capitalism. Not that they dream in Russia for there at least they face the stern realities of the Workers' struggle to establish securely a Communist State, whilst here too many dream, though some merely pretend that the inevitable conflict can be avoided by reform or at the worst bought off by fantastic State purchase schemes.

In Russia you find a New World. No one in his senses would say that they have Communism there, or that Communism has been abandoned—the latter cry comes well enough from Capitalists or Reforming Socialists intent on proving to the working masses of Britain the failure and impossibility of the Russian movement, but the truth is that the Workers there were able to use a revolutionary period to seize power and that they have used that power to socialise the land, to secure control over industry and capital, and on this solid foundation they have commenced to build a Communal Society of Workers. In spite of the chaos created by the Imperialistic war, the blockade, intervention, civil war and famine they are succeeding. At first living from hand to mouth amidst a series of military, civil and economic crises they have managed to survive, and now in the calm of to-day's position they steadily, if slowly, gain ground.

This is past contradiction. If you doubt, visit Moscow as I have done and there you see a City of Workers, living as workers have never lived before in the history of the world. You see them in the streets, in their factories and clubs, or crowding into the Museums. You see them marching in their May Day Demonstration, mile after mile of workers, banner after banner dipping before the tomb of their dead Lenin, and cheering the leaders on whom the mantle

of the prophet has fallen. Moscow is a Workers' City and amidst the yet remaining signs of passing ruin and disorder, it pulsates with new life. There over the Kremlin flies the Red Flag in authority, its proud position enhanced by the neighbouring crowned and gilded doubled-headed Eagle of the Spassky Tower, a reminder of the days of Tsardom now gone for ever. There is Moscow the nerve centre of Russia, the vast plain of endless possibilities. Timber, mines, oil and fertile land, all are now in the power of the workers and peasants. It is the richest part of the earth left undeveloped and this wealth is in the hands of the workers and under their care to be used not only for their own good, but for the benefit of the People's movement throughout the world in its last successful fight with capitalism and exploitation.

The struggle in Russia is by no means over and years of patient thought and hard work will be required before a final achievement can be claimed. But undeveloped as Communism yet is, life in Moscow already compares favourably with that of London. There is no lack of food, though great variety is not to be found, and the serious over-crowding that exists can but emphasise the great change that has come to Russia, for what house space there is has been equitably divided amongst the citizens. The workers move freely everywhere, there are no select quarters, as we understand the term, and since my return to England I have realised that in clothing they are better off than our own people, and when one turns to other than material things, to education, to the care of the children, to the growth of a social life, the workers of Moscow are to be envied. In Russia there is a spirit of comradeship and endeavour which is stimulating, and there you are made to feel at home.

From this I returned to London in time to hear of the glories of the Royal Court, and to see in the illustrated papers the pictures of the wives of Labour Ministers in their fineries. I discovered on the authority of Mrs. Snowden that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald makes an excellent figure in Court dress, and that the King has been not only correct in a Constitutional way to the Labour Government but extremely gracious. This is all very pretty, but it means that the *bar sinister* has been lifted from the Labour Party, and that the workers' movement under its present leadership is in grave danger of becoming a bulwark to Capitalism and the Court. Signs that

this would happen were not wanting last year when Labour leaders fell over one another to accept invitations to aristocratic functions to meet royalty, and since the coming of the Labour Government there has been a disastrous hastening of the Rake's Progress. I read of the proceedings of the I.L.P. Conference at York and the apologies offered by the official scribe in the *Socialist Review*. Of how "the I.L.P. has wonderful adaptability," which indeed it has, when one year it can condemn the attendance of its leaders at society receptions, straining at a gnat and this year swallowing the camel silently, whilst rendering almost royal honours to the Prime Minister. The misadroit apologist writes: "I wonder what Keir Hardie would have said if he had been able to attend this York Conference?" and it is not difficult to say that he would not have remained silent in face of the unctuous sophistries of Mr. Allen and the reversal of last year's vote on the armaments question, but then, says the pharisaical scribe, "increased influence means altered tactics" and one can hear the voice of Hardie adding, "What! at the expense of principle?" The Conference accepted without effective protest "the accommodations and expedients" resorted to by their members in the Government and the unpalatable fact that the word "socialist" no longer pleased the delicate taste of Mr. MacDonald seems to have passed unheeded.

Is it not clear from this that the I.L.P., in spite of its retaining proletarian members, is no longer a Workers' Party? And as a result of this is it not receiving the attachment of large numbers of well-to-do supporters? A friend and I recently whilst travelling got into conversation with a typical member of the English middle class, who disclosed an entire lack of knowledge of the Labour-Socialist movement, as well as the fact that he signed the nomination papers of a successful Liberal candidate at the recent election, and then he amazed us both by stating that he had joined the I.L.P., as he thought it was going to be a successful political party and quite a safe one. This diagnosis on his part is undoubtedly correct, and the party founded by Keir Hardie has become a vested interest bound up not with the advance of socialism, but with the political fortunes of MacDonaldism.

It need cause no wonder that our Russian comrades, who are

particularly well informed as to British politics, should laugh at the imitative "monkey tricks" of the Labour leaders at Court and be amazed at the apparent indifference of the working masses to the betrayal of their movement. They realise, however, that time must be given to the workers to see through the pro-capitalist policy of the Government, which at the best is but a Coalition. One day in Moscow an English speaking Russian comrade with a copy of Mr. MacDonald's pamphlet, *Why Socialism Must Come*, asked me what I thought of it; he was especially amused at the statements "that the Russian experiment could not succeed because it adopted methods diametrically opposed to our own" and that "Russia returns to prosperity by adopting our methods." He wanted to know what the British Prime Minister's policy was and I am afraid I had difficulty in telling him, but I did my best to sketch the various wholesale measures of State purchase schemes outlined by responsible members of the I.L.P. at the 1923 Summer School, and of the "Constructive Programme" contained in the booklet entitled *The Socialist Programme*, published by the same party. He agreed that their measures were diametrically opposed to buying out the Capitalistic system leaving the vendors in possession of their privileges, but he laughed at the idea that the improved conditions in Russia were the result of adopting any other methods than their own. He rightly pointed out that the reconstruction going forward under the Soviet Government was founded upon the Socialisation of the land without compensation and the control of industry and capital by the state, or in other words that the re-forming of society after a Revolution giving the Workers power was a very different thing to attempting to reform society without destroying capitalism.

Here is the fundamental distinction between Moscow and London. There the Workers' Government has control, whilst with us the Master Class retains power disguised for the moment by a so-called Labour Government. It is our duty to strip the mask off, and let the dispossessed masses see the grinning face of Capitalism behind.

THE GERMAN COMMUNIST PARTY

After the Frankfurt Congress

FOUR million votes were polled by the German Communist Party in the recent Reichstag elections ; that is to say, since 1920 the Communist vote has increased tenfold. And the Communist Party went into the elections with an outspoken revolutionary programme, calling on the masses to register their votes *against* bourgeois democracy and for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviet Republic.

The German Communist Party thus appears as the greatest revolutionary working-class Party outside Russia.

What is not generally known, and what makes this electoral victory the more remarkable, is that for the last several months the Party has been passing through a profound internal crisis of the utmost significance to the international working-class movement. This crisis has resulted in a complete change of leadership in the Party, and a clean sweep of the old Central Committee.

This crisis followed on the events of last autumn, when, it will be remembered, Communists joined with Left-wing Social Democrats to form Workers' Governments in Saxony and Thuringia. These Governments were overthrown at the end of October by the Stresemann-Social Democratic "Great Coalition." Simultaneously, an armed rising of the workers in Hamburg took place. But in a few days it appeared that the proletarian revolution, which had seemed imminent during the summer and early autumn, had received a severe setback.

A feeling of despondency took hold of large masses of the workers ; a feeling that the position had been surrendered without a fight. It is true that defeat might have come even if the Communist Party had led the workers forward to the armed struggle for power. But it began to be felt that defeat in itself was not necessarily a bad thing : to be defeated in a spirited and well-organised attack might be but a phase of victory. The real disaster was the evasion of battle when all the factors demanded battle.

The situation was bluntly put in an article by Maslow, one of the leaders of the Left Wing in the German Communist Party. He said :—

In October and November, 1923 . . . we had an economic crisis of unheard-of acuteness, the divisions in the camp of the enemy were greater than they had ever been, the proletariat was comparatively free from democratic illusions, the influence of the reformist organisations on the broad masses of the proletariat was almost destroyed, the influence of the Communists upon the proletariat and upon the petty bourgeoisie was greater than ever before, and the international situation was never so favourable. History demanded the struggle in October-November, 1923. Yet the proletariat was beaten, it suffered a defeat such as it had never experienced before.

At a meeting in January of the Executive of the Communist International with representatives of the German Communist Party, Zinoviev strongly criticised the attitude of the Communist ministers in the Saxon Workers' Government. He took as his theme a speech by Heckert, one of the Communist ministers, and pointed out that, though it might be considered a good Communist speech in normal times, it was certainly not so in a revolutionary crisis. He continued (according to the verbatim report of the meeting):—

Heckert did not feel himself as a leader whom a revolutionary wave had raised on to the shoulders of the toiling masses. That feeling he did not possess. That is also impossible for anyone who feels that he is responsible to Parliament and bases his position on the Constitution. (Interruption: "That wave did not come.")

No—the wave certainly did arrive—though perhaps not actually in Leipzig, yet it had obviously done so in the whole Reich. Remmele told us how the masses stayed the whole night in the streets, how excited the women were. Comrades, that is more important than volumes of elaborately drawn up theses. A feeling for the movements of the masses is absolutely necessary. . . . Even if this state of public opinion was not to be seen in Leipzig on October 25, it was to be seen in the other parts of Germany. Were you the mouthpieces for these feelings?

("That was spontaneous!")

Good—the masses acted spontaneously, but Heckert, a leader of the Central Committee, did not act spontaneously. If he is a leader he must feel what is happening in the masses. Just that which Thaelmann, Remmele and Koenig¹ reflect, that we miss in his speeches and just that is the worst. We are no Shylocks who come and ask you why you did not provide weapons in ten days. We understand that. That

¹Representatives of the Left Wing in the Party.

was impossible, and that was soon obvious. That is not our charge anyway. What, on the other hand, was it prevented you from becoming the mouthpiece of the people? That we do not understand.

The criticism of the Central Committee—now definitely a Right Wing within the Party—was carried still further by the Left. An elaborate analysis of the crisis in the Party arising out of the October retreat, and of the retreat itself, was given by Ruth Fischer, one of the outstanding figures in the traditionally Left Wing Berlin district of the Party, in an article of which the following is an abstract:—

The origin of the present crisis in the Party may be traced to the Leipzig Congress in January, 1923. At this Congress the opportunism of the Party Central Committee (with a majority opposed to the Party Left) was made clear by these facts:—

(1) Their refusal to examine the question of the Ruhr: a refusal which clearly showed that the leaders of the Party, neglecting the big industrial districts such as the Ruhr, were concentrating their attention on Saxony and Thuringia, with a view to collaboration with the Social Democrats.

(2) A wrong conception of the United Front, represented as an alliance with the Social Democratic Party, which it was proposed to convert from “the Left Wing of the bourgeoisie to the right wing of the working class.”

(3) An equally wrong conception of the Workers’ Government, which it was proposed to employ as a method of “carrying out a working-class policy within the framework and by means of bourgeois democracy.”²

What did the Party do during the decisive months of 1923, when the enormous widening and deepening of the class struggle, accompanying the terrific crisis of German bourgeois society, was apparent, *physically* apparent, to every one? It preached alliance with the Social Democrats, and put forward the Workers’ Government as a means of struggle within the framework of bourgeois democracy, together with a whole policy of “transitional stages” From January to May, 1923, the tactic of “open letters” (to the Social Democratic Party) was pursued. The Central Committee rejected any policy of active struggle in the Ruhr. As a concession to the Left the “Anti-Fascist Day” for June 29 was organised: the propaganda for this awakened the masses and foreshadowed an important Communist action. The Government forbade the demonstrations. The Central Committee acquiesced. Here already in this surrender was the germ of the October defeat.

After the general strike which overthrew the Cuno Government

²This was the actual phrase of the theses of the Leipzig Congress on the Workers’ Government.

(August, 1923), and which took the Central Committee completely by surprise, the Left declared that the struggles of the immediate future must be of a decisive character, and should have for their object the conquest of power. The Factory Councils must be transformed into Workers' Councils (Soviets) and the slogan of the Workers' Government replaced by that of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

However, the Central Committee continued its policy of a United Front with the Social Democrats, and negotiated with them in Saxony for the formation of a Social-Democratic-Communist Government.² Three Communists (Heckert, Böttcher and Brandler) eventually entered this Government on the instructions of the Central Committee, not on their own terms, but on terms acceptable to the Social Democrats — *i.e.*, they dropped one of their chief demands, that the Government should be responsible to the Congress of Factory Councils, and virtually dropped their demand for the immediate arming of the Saxon workers' defence force (the "workers' centuries"). At any rate the centuries were not armed, and their mere formation was entirely neglected: also the Workers' Control Commissions (Anti-Profiteering Committees) were not encouraged in any way.

The Executive of the Communist International had agreed to the entry of the Communist Party into the Saxon Government solely for the purpose of arming the workers and preparing for the armed struggle for power. The arming of the workers did not take place. When the White troops of the military dictatorship were invading Saxony the Communist Party proposed at a general conference of Saxon Factory Councils at Chemnitz the declaration of a general strike. The Left Wing Social Democrats would not accept this proposal, whereupon the Communist Party "in order not to break the United Front" dropped it.

A rising took place at Hamburg, under Communist leadership, but it was isolated and had no connection with the Party forces in the rest of Germany. After a few days' magnificent fighting it was bloodily defeated. That was the final and complete defeat of the Party and of the workers.

These views rapidly gained the approval and support of the great mass of the Party membership. The Right Wing ceased to count in the Party: they attempted to justify themselves, but it was a hopeless task. A Centre grouping had also arisen, which differed from the Left in considering the October retreat inevitable, but criticised the Central Committee for not organising any rearguard action to cover the retreat.

By the end of March, when the voting took place in the Party districts for the Congress which met illegally at Frankfurt in early

²See *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, November, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 5, pp. 303-305.

April, the Left had won a complete victory. The voting was approximately as follows:—

Left	..	..	..	980
Centre	..	..	..	358
Right	..	..	..	11

A very lengthy programme of action was drawn up. The points particularly stressed included:—

(1) *Consolidation of the Party.*

This means a complete break with the whole previous outlook of the Party, when the United Front tactic was falsely employed, and made the Party feel that it was *one* Party among others. The Party is *the* Party of the German working class . . . The Party's task is to *organise the revolution*: it must accomplish this task day by day, hour by hour, whether the revolution be at hand or far distant.

(2) *Party Organisation must be based on the Factory Nucleus.*

(3) *Work in the Trade Unions.*

The reformist Trade Unions have lost heavily in numbers. The Trade Union leaders expel the revolutionary workers to make the Trade Unions into strike-breaking organisations and tools of the Government. The Communist Party must in consequence do its best to link up the Trade Union opposition, both among the working-class masses who remain in the Trade Unions and the unorganised workers. The Factory Councils ought to be the organs for this work. The watchword under which the entire work of the Party in this direction must be carried on is "the revolutionary unity of the proletariat." The work in the Trade Unions must be intensified in order to get hold of the masses of the workers organised in the Trade Unions, to educate them politically, and to get them into the Communist Party.

Those who leave the Unions without the consent of the Party facilitate the work of the Reformists, damage the Party and the Revolution. Neither must we arouse illusions by making a great to do about new Federations, as if really revolutionary Industrial Unions could be set up in a moment, which would at once abolish all the evils of capitalism in the twinkling of an eye. The task of transforming the Trade Unions into revolutionary industrial organisations must be carried out systematically; such industrial organisations can only arise from the co-operation of the masses remaining in the Trade Unions with those outside them.

(4) *Parliamentary Work.*

We use Parliament simply for agitation, and in order to disorganise the bourgeois State machinery. There is no United Front in Parliament, but war to the knife against all the other Parties. In such a way will contact with the masses be maintained.

(5) *Organising the Class Struggle.*

All Party members, and particularly those in the factories and in the mass organisations of the workers, must make use of every wave of revolt among the workers and awaken the interest of the masses in order to organise and lead these struggles.

(6) *Arming of the Workers.*

(7) *Creation of Political Workers' Councils (Soviets).*

The World of Labour

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INTERNATIONAL

Executive Meeting of the Labour and Socialist International

THE Executive Committee of the Labour and Socialist International met at Luxemburg on February 16 and 17. This was its first meeting since the constitution of the International at Hamburg in May, 1923.

The Secretariat reported that a questionnaire had been sent out to the forty-three Parties affiliated, of whom twenty had furnished the necessary returns. The total membership of these twenty Parties aggregated 6,673,792, the membership of all Parties being reported as "something over" 7,000,000. The Bureau of the Executive had held two meetings, and the Administrative Committee six. Attempts to establish an *International News Service* had failed. The Secretariat concluded its report by stating that:—

The complicated political situation, repeatedly verging towards catastrophe, caused us to examine the possibility of a mass action. However, on account of the continually changing situation neither the Secretariat, the Administrative Committee nor the Bureau considered the time ripe for such action. The Secretariat has ever in mind the fact that our organisation is but in its infancy, that we must not express any exaggerated hopes . . .

There followed formal reports and discussions on finance, organisation, relations with the International Federation of Trade Unions, the Socialist Youths' International, the International Committee of Socialist Women, &c.

After deciding that there should be an additional levy of £6 per Congress vote, and that Mr. Tom Shaw should be granted unpaid leave of absence till the next Executive Meeting, the meeting turned with apparent zest to attack the Workers' International Relief. As readers of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* are aware, the W.I.R. is a non-party working-class relief organisation, which is at the moment concentrating its efforts on the relief of German workers, and which includes in its membership many outstanding Trade Unionists, Co-operators and Socialists, as well as Communists.

Adler, the secretary of the International, reported on the efforts of the Communists to accomplish their "United Front Tactics" in the form of the Workers' International Relief. Unfortunately Socialists in many countries, not understanding that this relief for Germany is but a manoeuvre of the Communist International, had given support to the movement.

It was emphasised that all contributions for German workers should be sent through a purely Social-Democratic organisation, the Central Committee for Workers' Welfare (*Hauptausschuss für Arbeiterwohlfahrt*).

The chief discussion at the meeting took place on the resolution on the Political Situation. This resolution was mainly concerned with the present position of the Reparations question. We extract the following statement from the resolution as finally passed :—

Admittedly it is a step in advance that, since the Labour Party came into power, capitalist Governments have been themselves compelled to aim at a peaceful economic settlement of the Reparations problem, but, at the same time, the Executive desires to draw attention to the fact that even a peaceful economic solution of this problem, such as capitalist Governments are now endeavouring to find, may become a serious menace to the international proletariat.

If, for instance, this settlement were to impose upon the German working class burdens which could only be borne by an extension of the eight-hour day in Germany, and by a distinct reduction in the actual wages of the German workers, the mechanism of capitalist competition would compel other countries to lengthen their working day and reduce wages . . . Capitalist Governments, which have already reduced the standard of living of the workers by disputes over the Reparations question, may try to reduce this standard still further by an agreement as to the settlement of the Reparations problem by purely capitalist methods.

It will be interesting to note the attitude adopted by the International towards the Expert Committees' Reports, which propose simply a "settlement . . . by purely capitalist methods"—the "stabilisation" of Germany under the domination of foreign imperialist finance-capital. So far its principal affiliated parties, the Labour Party, the German, French and Belgian Social Democrats, have eagerly welcomed these reports as a step towards the "Settlement of Europe."

The emphasis laid in the resolution quoted above on the dangers to the working class of a capitalist solution of the Reparations problem was due to the strong representations of Otto Bauer (Austria), whose Party has had grim practical experience of what "stabilisation" means. He insisted that the International should not in any way identify itself with such a solution. In opposition to him a delegate of the German Social-Democratic Party stated that his Party

could not adopt a purely negative attitude towards capitalist efforts for a solution.

A Czecho-Slovak delegate made a statement to the same effect: and a Belgian delegate went further, stating that the International should acknowledge any progress made, which progress would be due to Socialist efforts to a certain degree. We should not belittle the hopes which lie in this success.

Mr. C. T. Cramp, in the name of the English delegation, took the opportunity to ask the meeting

to try and understand the position of the British Labour Party, which while in office, is really not in power. The English delegation did not know MacDonald's views in detail, but they wished to point out that the resolution to be framed should not play into the hands of those adversaries who accuse the Labour Government of being under the dictatorship of the International.

A further resolution was passed calling for the defence of the eight-hour day, in view of which it seems strange that there should have been no mention of the part played by the German Social-Democratic Party in sabotaging the struggle for the eight-hour day in Germany. Indeed, the most striking omission at the meeting was the complete lack of any discussion on the German situation, and the openly counter-revolutionary and anti-working-class rôle of the Social-Democrats.

Similarly, there were no reports or discussion on imperialism, just as there were no representatives of exploited colonial races present.

Other resolutions included one on Hungary and one on Armenia: concluding with the perennial attack on the Soviet Government by way of the "Socialist" prisoners in Russia and the "occupation" of Georgia, supported by the counter-revolutionary MM. Abramovitch, Sukhomlin and Tseretelli.

ITALY

The Working Class and the Elections

As was expected, the Fascist reign of terror in Italy gave their Party an enormous majority at the elections on April 6. The electoral campaign was marked by continual Fascist atrocities, the suppression of all opposition meetings, assault and mutilation of workers and the murder of workers' candidates. On polling day Fascist militia were employed for rounding up voters, and terrorising them into voting Fascist.

On the workers' side there was confusion and hesitancy, save in the Communist Party, which from the first decided to participate in the election, and proposed to the two Socialist parties the constitution of a common "Proletarian Unity Bloc" for that purpose. The right wing Reformist Unitary Socialists immediately refused this proposal. The Centrist Maximalist Socialists wavered for some time between acceptance and refusal. Meanwhile, an acute crisis had arisen in the Maximalist Party, the workers in the Party being profoundly dissatisfied with its opportunist leadership. However, eventually, on February 13, the Maximalists refused the offer. The Third Internationalist section of the Maximalists, led by Serrati, forthwith accepted the offer, and the "Proletarian Unity Bloc" was formally constituted, a Central Electoral Committee being set up on February 20.

The voting figures for the chief parties were:—

Fascists	...	...	...	...	...	...	4,135,677
Fascists' Second List	...	...	...	...	...	...	351,080
Communists ("Proletarian Bloc")	...	...	...	...	...	...	266,415
Maximalists	...	...	...	...	...	...	362,568
Unitary Socialists	...	...	...	...	...	...	418,948
Popular Party	...	...	...	...	...	...	643,469
Liberals	...	...	...	...	...	...	139,825
Republicans	...	...	...	...	...	...	132,256

In industrial areas, such as Lombardy, where the voting was heaviest, the Fascists had either only a very small majority over all other Parties, or else were actually in a minority. In Lombardy, too, the losses of the bourgeois Liberal and democratic Parties corresponded with large Communist gains.

The Communist Party is the only opposition Party that has gained, having increased its deputies from 13 to 17. The Unitary Socialists have lost 57, and the Maximalists 18, while the Popular Party lost 66.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE UNEXPJATED CRIME

The Russian Soviet Republic. By Professor Edward Alsworth Ross, Ph.D., LL.D., Illustrated. (Allen & Unwin, 12s. 6d.).

The First Time in History. Two years of Russia's New Life (August, 1921—December, 1923.) By Anna Louise Strong, Ph.D. With a Preface by Leon Trotsky. (Boni & Liveright, New York. £2.00; The Labour Publishing Company, London, 6s.

Russia's Counter-Claims. For Socialist and Labour Speakers. By W. P. Coates. With a Preface by A. A. Purcell, M.P. (National "Hands off Russia" Committee).

AT the present moment the workers of this country are confronted with the unedifying spectacle of the Labour Government, the Government which the great mass of them fondly regard as their own, miserably truckling to the interests of the finance-capitalists in its dealings with the Soviet Union. Exactly how unedifying that spectacle is can be perceived from Professor Ross's book. For Professor Ross, who is a respected American sociologist, free from any taint of sympathy for the revolutionary working-class movement—indeed, his comments on it are invariably ludicrous—has compiled a formidable *dossier* demonstrating the frightful responsibility of the imperialist bourgeoisie of Britain for the counter-revolutionary interventions against the first Workers' Republic.

There is now no longer any doubt that the internal forces of counter-revolution in Russia were almost completely crushed by the spring of 1918. The death of Korniloff in April of that year seemed the final blow to the hopes of the Whites. While the imperialist bandits were cutting each other's throats in the fields of France and among the sands of Syria and Mesopotamia, proletarian Russia hopefully turned to the task of laying the foundations of a Socialist economy. But it was not to be.

The Whites, admitting that alone they were powerless, demanded assistance from the imperialist bourgeoisie of the Entente—after Miliukov had made preliminary soundings in Germany. And the response was no mean one. Was there not the fearful menace of the first proletarian State in the world to be combated at all costs? Were there not the vast material resources of Russia to be grabbed and exploited? So came the support of the Czecho-Slovaks, the Archangel-Murmansk adventure, the Kolchak-Denikin-Wrangel interventions *et hoc genus omne*. So, too, came the intrigues of the British secret agent, Bruce Lockhart, and other gentlemen of his kidney.

Lockhart endeavoured to buy over the commander of the Lettish Red Guard, spending 1,900,000 roubles for this purpose.

"The scheme," says Professor Ross, "was to bag the entire Council of People's Commissars at one of its plenary sessions. At the same moment the State Bank and the central telephone and telegraph stations were to be seized and all public meetings prohibited under pain of death until the arrival of the British military authorities from the North. The heads of the church were to prepare the minds of the pious for this stroke by uttering prayers and sermons all over Russia for the overthrow of the Bolsheviki. The *coup* would then seem to be the response of Divine Providence."

Fortunately the plot was frustrated, and the British Embassy, the head and centre of it, searched: it was during this incident that Captain Cromie opened fire on the search party and was very properly shot dead.

Let it be remembered, too, that it was British imperialism that most enthusiastically supported the dictatorship assumed by Kolchak, when he overthrew the wretched Avksentiev "Provisional Government" at Omsk. Let it be remembered that it was not

the popularity of the anti-Soviet cause that enabled Denikin's army to advance in the summer of 1919 till it held a fourth part of Russia, but simply the terrible execution wrought by the guns, tanks and bombing air planes provided by Great Britain.

Miss Strong recalls another typical incident. British imperialism was set on extending its dominion over the whole of the Middle East, and its eyes were greedily fixed on the illimitable treasures of Russian oil. So in the spring of 1919 a British army took Baku. Their first act was to execute in cold blood twenty-seven Communists who had been the leading figures in the Azerbaidjan government.

This is the crime that is yet unexpiated—the attempt of British imperialism to overthrow with blood and iron the Soviet Republic, to give back the land to the landlords and the factories to the capitalists, and to get its own claws into the rich prey that Russia offered. The attempt cost Britain one hundred millions sterling; the cost to Russia was incalculable. Mr. Coates estimates, in his excellent pamphlet, that, on the most conservative basis, Russia's bill for damages directly caused by the counter-revolutionary activities of British imperialism is round about the huge figure of two thousand millions sterling.

It was Mr. Lloyd George, no less, who claimed that:—

There is no country that has spent more in supporting the anti-revolutionary elements in Russia than this country has, and there is no country approaches this in the sacrifices that have been made—not one. France, Japan, America—Britain has contributed more than all these Powers put together, and I boast of it because I consider it is an obligation of honour on our part.

To the workers of Britain it is no boast, no "obligation of honour." It is a deep and bitter shame: and the only reparation possible would be a cancellation of all claims against the Soviet Republic, the full recognition of its right to nationalise property without compensation and the granting of a reconstruction loan of, say, £100 million.

That is what a British Workers' Government would have done. No one of these things has been done by the Labour Government. The formality of recognition has been accorded, but that is all. Even yet there has been no exchange of Ambassadors. At the opening of the Anglo-Soviet Conference Mr. MacDonald said in so many words that the Labour Government proposed to fight for the interests of the bondholders and the owners of nationalised property. Well might the *Manchester Guardian* remark that it must now be plain to the Soviet delegates that they were dealing with a government "essentially capitalist" so far as concerned foreign affairs!

The books before us throw into a glaring light the infamy of such a position.

An extremely interesting point on which Professor Ross lays a good deal of stress is that British imperialism only came to terms with Soviet Russia (Trade Agreement 1920-21) when the rising tide of revolt in India, Persia, &c., was seriously threatening its dominion in India and the Middle East. There can be no sort of doubt that the success of the workers' power in Transcaucasia, Bokhara, Turkestan, and the justly great influence of the Soviet Republic in Persia, Afghanistan and so forth finally disposed of British hegemony in the Middle East.

For the rest, Miss Strong gives us some good sympathetic sketches of the New Economic Policy in action. She describes, with the warm-hearted enthusiasm we have learned to expect from the legion of American "radical" journalists who have gone to Russia to see the Revolution at home, that

long year by year fight in the economic field between State capitalism which hopes to become Communism, and private capitalism which hopes to become dominant,

which is the essential fact of the N.E.P. She brings home, in a hundred little ways, the overwhelming "difference" between Russia and the rest of the world. In Russia the workers are the governing class in society—the bourgeoisie, their power shattered, are firmly under the thumb of the working class.

That tremendous fact may have escaped the notice of the present Labour Government. Or perhaps they realise it only too well, and as they are themselves but a sham "Workers' Government," so they dare not stretch out the hand of brotherhood to a real Workers' Government.

G. A. H.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- What is Socialism?* A symposium edited by Dan Griffiths. (Grant Richards. 2s. 6d.)
- Human Nature in Politics.* By Professor Graham Wallas, M.A., D.Litt. (Constable. Third edition, revised. 7s. 6d.)
- Our Work and Profit System.* By Dr. Alfred P. Schultz. (Co-operative Press, New York. 10 cents.)
- Mrs. Ramsay MacDonald.* By Lucy Herbert. (Women Publishers, Ltd. 1s.)
- The Churches and War.* By F. A. A. (The Swathmore Press. 6d.)
- The Anthracite Question.* By Hilman S. Ranshenbush. (The H.W. Wilson Company, New York. \$1.50.)
- Catalogue, Department No. 14:* Politics, Economics (including Political Biographies), Industry, Social Reform. Second-hand and New Books. (W. & G. Foyle.)
- Socialism and Sarolea.* A reply to Professor Araster Sarolea. By Ernest Trueman. (The Economics Club, Leswick, 3d.)
- People's Guide to Free Trade.* By George Frederick Emery, LL.M. (Effingham Wilson. 1s.)
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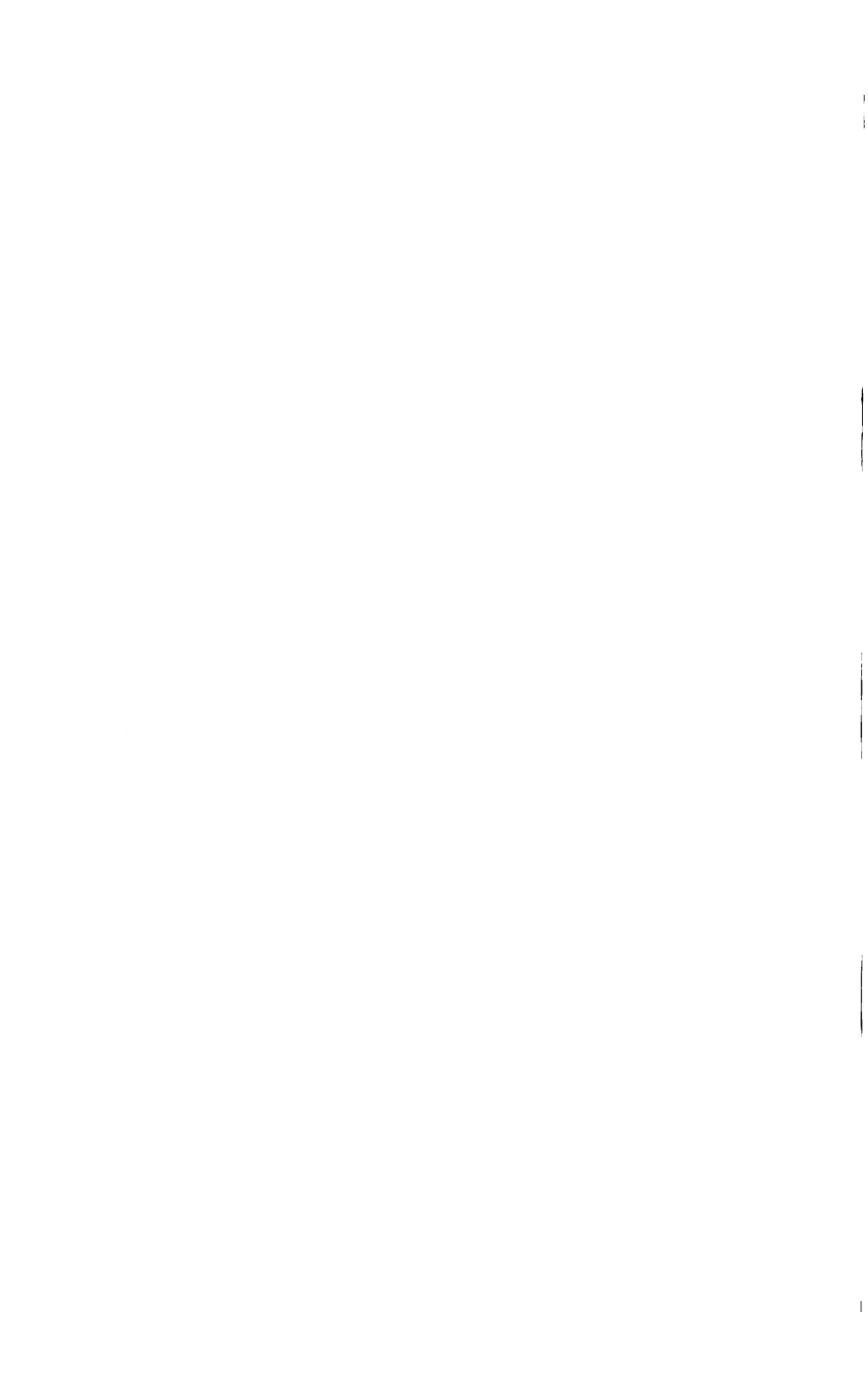
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Editor : R. PALME DUTT

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Owing to the Editor's absence on account of illness his usual "Notes of the Month" are not published in this number of "The Labour Monthly." But there appears instead (on page 457) his "Postscript" to the series of articles, "Towards a New Policy," that concludes with Mr. W. H. Hutchinson's reply in the present issue.

TOWARDS A NEW POLICY.—A REPLY

By W. H. HUTCHINSON

(Amalgamated Engineering Union and Labour Party National Executive)

What are the prospects if something is not done radically to change the position? There are two alternatives, the symptoms of both of which have already revealed themselves.

One alternative is the blind and anarchic revolt of sections of the rank and file, already shown in the growing tendency of unofficial strikes, repudiation of authority of leaders, and even break-aways from the accredited organisation. These tendencies are too often treated as simply occasion for individual blame or moral exhortation to leaders of men: but they are really the symptoms of a disease which lies deeper and for which we have to find the remedy.

THE above paragraph, written eight months ago for the first article of this series, has since received startling confirmation. The predicted effect of the lack of a new policy for the Trade Union Movement has already been shown. Under these circumstances there is no need to stress the necessity of an attempt at organised thinking, represented by such a series as this. Events themselves have provided the fullest justification.

Last December, when I wrote the first of the articles that have been appearing under the above title, I undertook to do so largely as an experiment: and I must express my appreciation of the fact that numerous representatives of the Trade Union and Labour Movement have been good enough to contribute to the series and join with me in this experiment. It is to be considered an experiment, because this habit of organised and collective discussion by representatives of the Unions has not been a feature of our movement in the past. This is the first time that anything of this sort has been attempted—and it is to be hoped it will not be the last. For these expressions of opinion, even though reserved, must surely have some beneficent effect towards finding a policy.

What I had in mind in opening this series was set forth in my article in January. I was concerned to find the causes of the fundamental weakness in the existing movement, to consider the darker

prospects that must open out if nothing is done to remedy those weaknesses and finally to suggest one or two immediate steps. The fundamental weakness appeared to be the lack of a clear common aim and objective, the attempt to continue the old haphazard policies that may have fitted the times when they were conceived, but were now hopelessly inadequate to meet the new world of to-day. The first suggested immediate step was to find a common programme that would unite all the most active elements in the Trade Union Movement on immediate common aims. The second step was the development of the Trades Councils as local unifying bodies of the working class, with a right of delegation to the Trades Union Congress. The third step was such a policy of clarifying issues and clearing away difficulties between national trade unions as would lead finally, when the time is ripe, to an extension of the powers of the General Council. In the succeeding articles contributed, three by members of the General Council, and three by members of the Labour Party Executive, there was little direct criticism of these very tentative suggestions : nor, except in one case, was any detailed alternative offered. On the other hand much was said in examination of the causes of the present weaknesses and confusion—which, it is significant, no one dreamed of denying as an objective statement of fact. With these expressions of opinion and with many other suggestions and observations made I am not concerned to argue in this article. What I wish to do very briefly is to answer one or two of the criticisms that bore directly upon my final proposals for immediate steps to be taken towards a new policy.

Let me take first Mr. Bromley's criticism. He denies that the movement can be organised by giving the Trades Councils more representation : and he proceeds to outline a structure of re-organisation of the existing unions that will give the rank and file more power in the framing of policy. But such a scheme as he outlines has been the constitution of the Amalgamated Engineering Union since 1920; and while it has given some satisfaction, it is not enough to provide that new impulse that is so necessary.

That new impulse can only come from the body of the workers themselves: and we must find the form and shape of organisation that will come nearest to them. If it is good policy for the rank and

file of each union to have the power, then surely it is at least equally good that the rank and file of *all* the unions in an area should be provided with machinery for expressing their combined opinion; and how is that to be achieved if the Trades Councils who represent the organised workers in an area are to be denied the right of representation nationally?

Quite recently, in fact since these articles have been appearing, the General Council has held a meeting of Trades Council representatives for the purpose of obtaining their co-operation. So that the *need* of their expression of local opinion is felt, though the best means of organising that expression have yet to be found and though there is considerable hesitancy in granting representation on the Trades Union Congress.

I feel, however, that when Mr. Bromley despairs of the Trades Councils, he is thinking of them rather as they are now, after thirty years of being left out in the cold since John Burns thrust them out of Congress, then as what they might become. It should be made clear that one looks to the Trades Councils, for the future must see them as developed and strengthened bodies. To this development I alluded in my first article when I said: "The Trades Councils can never play a great part until the district committees or other industrial authorities of the Unions are ready to line up with them."

But the participation of the district committees is not by any means the only change that is necessary. It seems to me certain that sooner or later Trade Unionists have got to realise that the present era of big plants and massed production demands an entire change in the old nineteenth-century fundamental unit of most of our trade unions, the residential branch. That the branch should coincide with the workshop so far as it is feasible is the end to aim at. Given a move in this direction, it is easy to see what a change it would make in the Trades Councils. Instead of being dominated by the Union, as Mr. Bromley suggests, they would be dominated by the workers themselves—or rather, since "dominated" is the wrong word to use in this connection, the Trades Councils would as nearly as possible *be* the workers themselves. And from the Trades Councils thus regenerated there would arise the thing at which we are all aiming in writing these articles—that new impulse

towards the solidarity and common action of the working class as a whole.

But if we are amending and improving, nay, creating fresh forms of organisation in the localities, the central bodies must not be neglected. On this question of strengthening the central bodies a number of interesting points were raised: to one of which I must reply.

Mr. Robert Williams seems rather surprised that Mr. Swales should sponsor a resolution to give more power to the General Council and should be opposed by one of his own colleagues on the executive of the A.E.U. But this fact, so far from militating against the resolution Mr. Swales sponsored, is to be reckoned in its favour, and for this reason: Mr. Swales was representing the whole movement, and not simply acting in the capacity of a delegate. Surely it means that the experience of the needs of the whole movement gained by members of the General Council enables them to see points that are inevitably missed by those engaged in the day-to-day work of the Unions and compels them in the interests of the movement to put forward views for which at the time their own organisations may not be ripe.

On the other hand, the Union standpoint is not hard to follow. Their position is clear. They say that until there is some more tangible evidence of a real desire to organise the workers they will not look at the proposition of giving up their executive powers. In such a situation we must not accept the position of deadlock. It becomes clear that much preparatory work is necessary before the end can be reached. We must first ripen the movement towards some such idea of a General Staff by following every concrete proposal that will bring the movement closer together, and so prepare the way for some general controlling body.

Granted that it is not easy to suggest the plan or policy that at one and the same time is able to secure the confidence of the rank and file and also be satisfactory in its working, that is no reason why every idea should not be analysed with a view to its practicability.

If the one big Union is not practicable at the moment, and the Unions are not prepared to give the power to the General Council, then some other method must be put forward which would command general support. And it would appear from indications already

given that the time is ripe to consider whether an arrangement that would secure the co-operation of Miners, Metal Workers, Builders, Transport and Textile Unions could not be obtained, It would go a long way towards securing a common programme that would unite the workers in all industries.

These suggestions would require a more detailed working out before they could be fully argued. But our propaganda for the future should be along these lines. For at all cost we must prevent the absolute defeat of the workers in the single industries which has been such a marked feature of the industrial struggles during the last five years.

But even more important than the propaganda of new and improved organisation is the propaganda for the creation of a will to struggle amongst the workers. Without that common will of the working class, that resolve to stand by one another to the end, that determination to resist the attacks of the other side, without these "new and improved organisation" will simply present us with a new and improved husk, from which the kernel has been taken away.

A POSTSCRIPT

By R. PALME DUTT

THE series of articles "Towards a New Policy" initiated by W. H. Hutchinson in the January issue of **THE LABOUR MONTHLY**, and concluded by his reply in the current issue, has constituted a serious and important experiment in working-class discussion. It has represented an attempt to secure from representative and responsible leaders a declaration of their views, not on particular problems or their own particular union, but on the position as a whole of trade unionism, of the working-class movement, and what in their view needs to be done—in fact, "where in general they are going and whether they are getting there."

Articles have been contributed by three members of the Labour Party Executive, by three members of the General Council, including the Chairman of the General Council, and by four national secretaries of important unions. The articles may thus be regarded as fairly representative of the best elements of the existing leadership, who not only hold directing and responsible positions, but who are concerned for the future of the movement, recognise the necessity of coming change and the value of the fullest general discussion now, and are prepared to take part in such a discussion in a journal circulating principally among the militant elements of the movement.

The thanks of **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** are due to all those who have taken part in the discussion and have given freely of their time to contribute articles.

* * * *

It is impossible to read this series of articles and to consider all that they imply without a sense of tragedy. It is doubtful whether in any existing document is set out with such relentless precision in black and white for future generations to read the actual range and outlook and conceptions of the existing leadership in relation to the gigantic historical situation and historical tasks of the working class to-day.

Consider for a moment the position.

The British working class is placed at the centre of the greatest modern power of world capitalism, extending over a quarter of the earth. Hundreds of millions of workers are ranged under this power, and are in various stages of struggle to free themselves from this subjection and the miseries attending it. All over the world the workers are struggling to freedom. The future of their struggle, the future of the struggle of the whole working class, turns on the rôle of the British workers.

Capitalism has reached its culminating stage of imperialist rivalry and division, parcelling out the whole earth between a few world-powers, subjecting the lives of the entire human race to the manipulations of a handful of financial oligarchs, driving the workers into world war on an undreamt-of scale, and producing the slaughter of millions, famines, blockades and economic crises more sweeping and terrible in their effect than a famine or a plague.

The workers' struggle has reached its most desperate and critical phase. In one part of the earth they have won through, and are maintaining their power with their lives. In other parts the rising workers are held down by open violence and force of arms. The smooth phrases of class co-operation and legality and democracy have given place to White Terror and open illegality and Fascism. At the head of this gaolers' and butchers' work stand the British and American bourgeoisie. Over the whole hangs the threat of new war preparing on every side on a scale more terrible than any preceding.

Production has begun to go down. Unemployment extends by millions. Over whole sections of the earth have developed conditions of economic paralysis, or artificial stabilisation, resulting in slave conditions, which in their turn react on the remaining sections. Even in the favoured centres of imperialism the workers are increasingly experiencing shortage and want. Capitalism can no longer offer prosperity even to a section. The living conditions of the British workers are steadily worsening. The workers are desperately striving to find a means to improve their conditions. Millions are turning to vote for the Labour Party. Whole sections plunge into strikes, often against their leaders and the official movement.

The old movement has proved its complete helplessness to meet the workers' needs. Already before the war the workers were moving in discontent. During the war the majority of the leaders, instead of fighting for the workers' interests, went over in a body to the service of the war machine of the master class ; and the whole trade union machine was prostituted to the service of harnessing the workers for war production. From that moment the unofficial movement of the workers became strong. After the war the workers, stirred with a new revolutionary impulse, flocked to organise in the unions in millions and pressed for new audacious demands of social change.

But the old trade union machine failed the workers with a failure so absolute and signal that it has become stamped for ever after in the memory of every proletarian in England. Open treachery, shameless disunity and unconcealed service to the master class broke the ranks of the British proletariat in the very hour of battle, and handed them over, without even the opportunity to strike a blow in common on their own behalf, to the mercy of the capitalist victors. The capitalist offensive swept unchallenged throughout the working class, striking down all without distinction. The workers, in bitter anger and disgust and apathy, passed out of the unions in millions. When this reached such a point that even the financial basis was endangered, the discredited leaders (who had been toying with the idea of an industrial truce) came forward, without a single admission for the past or proposal for the future, to urge a "Back to the Union" appeal, which, made under such circumstances, was received with the silent contempt and indifference it deserved.

Driven onward by their own desperate needs, the workers have pressed forward to struggle again, without leadership, without common plan, forcing issues on hesitating leaders, often without even the machinery of their union, and yet even so under these conditions plucking some advance from the capitalists by sheer readiness to attack and solidarity. In every struggle during the past two years the issue has been the barest needs—wages, hours and trade union rights. In every struggle the machine of the organised movement, even where the workers have forced their own sectional union into action, has been directed against the

workers. Union officials have joined hand in hand with the employers in ordering strikers back to work who have been fighting against a starvation wage or against being used to blackleg on other parts of the country. The trade union machine has been used to split the ranks of the workers, even where the workers were forging their own unity on the basis of their place of work, and has even been put into operation to compel men to blackleg under union instructions. The General Council, which was created to remedy the shameful disunity of the movement, has functioned in every dispute as a Mediation Committee on behalf of the employers, preventing the solidarity of the movement. The Labour Government, which was set up by the support of the workers, has acted as the policeman of the capitalist interests, declaring its readiness to protect blacklegs in the interests of the community, and even putting into operation against men on strike the dictatorial powers of capitalist strike-breaking legislation.

The existing leadership has wholly failed to lead. Not one atom of attempt has there been to guide or encourage the struggle of the workers, to develop and organise their resistance, to unite their ranks or to plan the movements of the working-class army. Instead there has been not only practical impotence to lead, but also actual trafficking with the enemy during a fight, denunciations of men on strike through the joyful columns of the capitalist Press, ordering men back to work at a wage that the official in question would think an insult for himself, and continual breaking the ranks through sectional divisions. All this the existing leadership has done in the name of solidarity, authority, discipline and the cause of the working-class movement. And at the same time that they have appealed to these principles for such purposes, they have themselves presented in their public dealings such a spectacle of petty backbiting, corporate sectionalism, small intrigue and cynical indifference to the wider interests of their own movement as could bear comparison with the records of the most corrupt institutions in world history.

* * * *

This is the desperate situation of the British working-class movement on the eve of the most gigantic struggles in the experience of the British working class.

In this situation comes the supreme opportunity and the supreme need for those individual leaders who are alive to the necessities of the position and of the dangers with which the whole movement is faced, to stand forward, to diagnose the situation, to interpret the demands of the workers, to point the way ahead—in a word, to provide that leadership for want of which the movement is perishing.

News comes that a group of leaders is prepared to take the responsibility, is working out a "forward" policy, and is ready to make proposals.

A heavy responsibility lies upon these leaders. We must in charity assume that they have given of their best. And this is what the revolutionary worker who comes to look to them for guidance will receive :—

My contribution is an evasion of the details of a new forward policy and a restatement of the old. (A. A. PURCELL.)

I am impressed more than ever that what we want more than any "New Policies" is the patient thorough-going application of the old policies from which we have derived tangible benefits. (ROBERT WILLIAMS.)

Our industrial programme must be one envisaged within the practical framework of the capitalist system. (GEORGE HICKS.)

We can make far-reaching progress by adhering to that policy and those measures upon which our movement has been built. (ROBERT WILLIAMS.)

No good purpose will be served by dealing at any length with the failings of the past. (WILL LAWTHOR.)

Give up searching for new methods merely because they are new, and—above all—let us cease our eternal recrimination.— (ROBERT WILLIAMS.)

The chief thing should be to go in and get something; if it comes off well, good—if not well, come again—and again—and again. (A. A. PURCELL.)

My preference is for preaching, urging, quietly, noisily, in season and out, undiluted working-class solidarity. (A. A. PURCELL.)

And this is the best, most "progressive," most enlightened leadership of the British working-class forces at a time of open failure, disruption and heavy defeats !

If a capitalist business firm were to undergo losses of twelve hundred million pounds in two years (the amount of wage reduction lost by the workers), and to lose a million and a-half customers (the number of trade unionists lapsed), and if it were a notorious

fact that many of the principal managers of the firm were in open association with enemy firms, and that none of the departments of the firm had any knowledge of what the other departments were doing, and were principally occupied in fighting the other departments, and that there was no general management or control of the firm's enterprise as a whole whatsoever, and that the greater part of the losses were demonstrably attributable to these causes, and if under these conditions the directors of the firm were to come before their shareholders to explain their position, and were to proceed to enunciate as their understanding of the position such oracular remarks as "Nothing like sound old business principles," "Stick to it—that's what wins," "No recriminations, gentlemen: above all, do not let us discuss the past," "Solvency—that's my motto: in season and out of season I preach undiluted solvency"—then those directors would certainly not remain long in the City. (It remains to add for the completion of the simile that these directors represent the more "progressive" directors, and that the majority of their more "stick-in-the-mud" colleagues would never dream of attending a shareholders' meeting to explain their position at all.)

But this simile, so far from being too strong, is actually too weak for the present position of trade unionism in Britain. For it is not here a mere question of a business enterprise and ordinary straightforward efficiency and organisation (though these simple necessities are none the less necessary), but a political task, a supreme political task, of the leadership of the British working class through the greatest struggle in history, a task demanding the most exact knowledge, the most careful study of every item of recent campaigns and failures and their reason as well as of the actual forces and possibilities of the existing situation, the most sensitive response to the demands of the workers and every opportunity of advance, the most unhesitating precise formulation of the tasks to be accomplished and the means of victory, and the most responsible collective thinking and complete elimination of all sectional and individual points of view.

* * * *

The first of the articles, the opening article by W. H.

Hutchinson, did at least show some recognition of the existing situation. Mr. Hutchinson stated:—

There is no question that the present position of the organised movement is very serious. The movement is weaker than it has been for a considerable time past; the conditions of the workers are very bad; there is very great confusion of policy and action; and there is a marked discontent inside the membership with what is felt to be a failure of the existing leadership.

Mr. Hutchinson stated nextly that the post-war position made doubtful the possibility of continuing the old line of policy.

To-day we are thrown into a new world. The economic and political crisis let loose by the war, and intensified after the war, and the changed industrial position of Great Britain, have all affected the whole situation of the working class of this country.

It becomes open to question how much longer we can hope to gain anything on the old lines; how far there can be any improvement of wages and conditions under the economic decay of British capitalism. If we are to go forward at all, we have to be ready—a united force with a positive policy of advance against capitalism.

Finally Mr. Hutchinson stated that the consequence of failure to meet the new situation would mean the danger of break up of the whole movement.

What are the prospects if something is not done radically to change the position? There are two alternatives, the symptoms of both of which have already revealed themselves.

One alternative is the blind and anarchic revolt of sections of the rank and file, already shown in the growing tendency of unofficial strikes, repudiation of authority of leaders and even break-aways from the accredited organisation. . . .

The other alternative is . . . apathy. . . .

These are the two alternatives in front of us if a serious attempt is not made to face the whole position and mark out the future path. Revolt or apathy—both alike are equally fatal to the future of the movement.

This was at any rate an attempt to diagnose the situation. The conclusions that Mr. Hutchinson drew from his diagnosis were very limited in character—admission of trades councils to the Trades Union Congress; a common programme (without indication of the meaning or method of a common programme) and a demarcation policy. These conclusions might well be damningly criticised as pitifully inadequate to the situation drawn, and to this extent revealing in the end precisely the same bankruptcy

as the other articles. But there was at any rate here an attempt to face the actual situation and draw conclusions.

Not one of the other articles made any attempt to meet Mr. Hutchinson's points or to face the actual situation. There was neither agreement, nor disagreement, but simple blankness. The nearest approach was Mr. Cook's article, who stated bluntly:—

The present form of organisation in Great Britain has almost become obsolete. Plymouth was an exhibition of tribal chiefs fighting to retain the confidence of their tribe. There was no suggestion of unity, but a fight to retain small unions and leadership.

Mr. Cook, however, confined himself practically to organisation (although his article was in substance more definite than any of the others) and did not give himself time to explain his views more fully. Mr. Bromley touched on one limited aspect of the position (again on organisation) when he said:—

British trade unionism is at present dominated by the union officials; the rank and file have very little direct and continuous management of their union, and therefore are not interested.

Mr. Lawther made a passing reference to the miners' negotiations. Perhaps it should be added to make the list complete that Mr. Williams quoted the General Council debate at the Trades Union Congress.

And that was all.

Apart from this, there was not a single reference throughout the articles to the actual situation. This is the most significant fact about the whole articles. There was not only no attempt to take stock of the existing position, of successes and failures, of objective conditions, of internal conditions, of strengths and weaknesses, and to draw conclusions from the results. There was not even any consciousness of the situation as historically governing any discussion and possibilities to be reached. There was no consideration of the forces of the capitalists. There was no consideration of the forces of the proletariat. There was no consideration of the line of direction of the movement during the past few years, or the prospect in the period immediately ahead. *There was not so much as a reference in the whole course of the articles to a single actual strike or struggle.*

Instead there was nothing but an endless succession of vague generalities about "old policies," "new policies," "programmes,"

“solidarity,” “unity,” “ever-improving standards of life,” &c., &c., accompanied by a few miscellaneous proposals of minor changes in organisation.

This fact is of tremendous importance. It means that for the present-day trade union official, even the best of them, the working-class struggle as a whole does not exist. For the affairs of their own union they have a keen strong practical historical sense, of its resources, its possibilities, its problems and its immediate objectives. But when it comes to the position of the working-class struggle as a whole, it all becomes for them abstract and remote, a matter of phrases and sporadic disconnected notions and the general genial fuzz so admirably illustrated by the article of the Chairman of the General Council:—

All these programmes, platforms, policies and manifestos have their place. I have been in at the drafting of millions of them, but never once did I believe they would do the thing the chief enthusiasts desired. My view has always been that I regarded this literature attack as an effort to get the working class to know itself. . . .

I would leave those who are desperately anxious to adumbrate new policies to their task, let them keep to it. They are quite a necessary part of our working-class mosaic. Keep them in it and at it. (A. A. PURCELL.)

From this fact follow very heavy conclusions—for this question is the decisive question for the ability of leadership.

In the first place, this fact determines the character of the articles as a whole.

From it inevitably follows the result that the articles deal only with questions of machinery. For the writers of the articles it is not a movement and a struggle that they are dealing with, but an imaginary fixed static thing that they control, a machine, which has to be “reconstructed.” Hence they not only put in the first place, but actually treat as the only issue, questions of committees, representation, ballot votes, demarcation, number of unions, &c. As if a generation of experience of left-wing chasing after amalgamation, industrial unionism and the rest, leading to the actual product of the N.U.R. and Thomas-Cramp, had not taught the utterly deceitful and misleading character of any and all such changes except and unless accompanied by the superior dominating issue of the revolutionary class struggle. This is the fact which enables Mr. Bromley to make effective play with the deification

of the big union, not, however, on behalf of revolutionary working-class organisation and action, but on behalf of craft unionism, thus offering no way forward for the working class as a whole.

Unless the proposals of General Council powers, trade union reorganisation, demarcation, industrial unionism and all the rest are accompanied by and made to give precedence to the current revolutionary issues of the class struggle, expressed through the actual conflict of opposition or minority movements, based on the class struggle, and openly fighting and defeating the existing leadership and establishing a new revolutionary direction of the whole movement, then all these proposals of changes and improvements in organisation become, not only of no use to the working class, but actual additional instruments in the hands of the reactionary leaders.

There is only one genuinely and fundamentally revolutionary issue in the whole question of organisation, and that is the issue of workshop organisation. Needless to say, that issue is wholly untouched in any of the articles. Here is the point at which the question of organisation verges into the question of the class, and therefore becomes revolutionary in its significance. Where all proposals of amalgamation, consolidation, &c., reveal themselves as in fact only questions of amalgamation and consolidation of officials, the organisation of the workers on the basis of the workshop means inevitably the organisation of the workers as a class, the unification of the workers, not in terms of machinery and classification, but in living terms and for action, the release of the common consciousness of the workers as a class to find free yet organised expression, and the preparation for the real advance, the advance for the capture of industry.

The development of a complete fighting structure of workshop organisation alongside the old obsolete shell of existing trade unionism (which cannot be "reconstructed" in a lifetime); the maximum freedom of expression and action of the workshop unit; but at the same time the absolute, unhesitating centralisation of the direction of the movement as a whole—these are the revolutionary issues to fight for in organisation.

But just because these are revolutionary issues, for this very reason they find no place in these articles, which are confined to

a cramped mechanical patching without any reference to inner change or to the direction of the movement ("success for any industrial organisation is conditional on a more perfected and efficient machine."—WILL LAWTHER).

From this complete separation from the struggle and the movement, and static mechanical outlook, follows inevitably that the whole process and functioning and objective is regarded as solely within capitalism, and that any question of revolutionary struggle is implicitly, and in some cases even explicitly, excluded. This is the second dominant characteristic of these articles, that the whole outlook is subordinate to and confined within the sphere of normal capitalist working.

This does not mean that the revolution is theoretically excluded. It remains for ornament in a corner of the picture, but it has no practical bearing on anything.¹ It survives like the Christian business man's religion—for Sundays. This point is admirably illustrated in Mr. Hicks's very clear statement. Mr. Hicks says:—

Our industrial programme must be one envisaged within the practical framework of the capitalist system.

No industry, subject to foreign competition, could grant any such demand and continue to live.

It is impossible under capitalism to get away from the Marxian law of wages.

I do not apologise for studying commercial practicability. As a trade union official I am forced to live in a real world.

What, then, becomes of the revolution? It is not forgotten. There is a corner for it away from the cruel racket of this "real world":—

I assert as my profound conviction that one thing or the other must be done: either boldly to proclaim revolutionary intention or use the power of trade unionism to make the best of the present system whilst our class are being educated in revolutionary principles.

To make the best of the present system whilst our class are being

¹ The one example of a "practical" use of revolutionary propaganda is revealingly expounded by Mr. Williams when he explains why he makes such "revolutionary" speeches:—

Only recently a wealthy shipowner asked a colleague of mine: "Why is it your friend Williams will make those wild-cat speeches on the platform when he is so able in conducting negotiations at the conference table?" I replied by saying: "Convey my compliments to the gentleman, and say that perhaps a few more wild-cat speeches would bring a little more success at the conference table."

educated in revolutionary principles. This sentence deserves to stand as the classic epigrammatic statement of the contradiction of reformism. The revolution is finally deified as a subject for Sunday school study. But it must have absolutely no relation with the present struggle and the present movement. The elementary movement of the masses, the struggle for bread, for bare rights, for peace, the growing volume of the movement, the sharpening of the issues, the ranging of the opposing armies, the decay and weakening of the capitalist order, the intensification of social divisions, and so the gradual relentless laying bare to the widest masses of the revolutionary issue and the actual inevitable driving forward into mass conflict—all this has no place in his picture. Instead the revolution becomes a kind of miraculous “conversion” to which the workers are gradually won over, one by one, by a process of peaceful education inside capitalism, until one fine day a majority are won over and the mythical transformation takes place in some unexplained manner. And all the time during this peaceful “education in revolutionary principles” the masses are being tied in actual fact to the chariot of capitalism, soaked in “commercial practicability” and submission to “what the industry can stand,” hitched on to the war machine and all its requirements, and in every way made in their practical daily lives the ordered, disciplined, unrebelling slaves of the bourgeois regime with the assistance of these “revolutionaries.”

Is not this the supreme picture of the trade union official as the mate of the capitalist ship, loyally serving the interests of his capitalist master and ordering and disciplining the crew to keep within their places and not to impair the master's profits, provided that he may read to them once a week on Sundays a chapter from his Bible of the future society (the majority of the crew meanwhile playing skittles, getting drunk or otherwise solacing themselves for their lot), and meanwhile happily and loyally driving the ship forward, out of regard for “practical” considerations, straight into the rapids of war and economic chaos.

From this follows the third great characteristic of the outlook revealed in these articles, that it is directly and actively anti-revolutionary. The attacks and criticism are above all aimed against the revolutionary section of the movement, either directly as in

Mr. Hicks's article, or indirectly by continual disclaimers of "short cuts to revolution," "impossibilist" demands, &c., &c. For the right-wing leadership, on the other hand, it is agreed that there must be "no recrimination," "no good purpose will be served by dealing at any length with the failings of the past," &c., &c. This analysis does not apply to all the articles in the series: Mr. Cook in his contribution and, with rather less clearness, Mr. Lawther and Mr. Bromley in theirs, range themselves, very broadly speaking, with the revolutionary side of the movement. But it does apply, in the deepest sense, to the essential outlook with which we are here concerned and which it is the main importance of these articles to have expressed—the outlook of "progressive" trade unionism, that is, of the typical "progressive" elements among the existing leadership.

The character of a tendency is often most clearly revealed, not by what it proclaims, but by what, and especially by whom, it attacks. When we find a certain tendency, heralded as progressive, most ready openly to criticise and attack the (very weak) revolutionary side of the movement, but explicitly refraining from attacking the dominant right-wing leadership which is actually responsible for existing conditions; and when we further find this same tendency deliberately refraining from raising any issue of principle of political or revolutionary significance, and confining its innovating zeal to questions of machinery which hurt and excite no one, and even, further, supporting and defending hostility to revolutionary principles and subordination in all practical action to capitalist conceptions and requirements, then we are justified in saying that this tendency cannot in any sense yet be greeted as revealing a new force, but is only another aspect (even though an aspect that may for certain limited purposes have value from a revolutionary point of view) of the existing right-wing leadership.

* * * *

What is the conclusion to be drawn from this for the revolutionary section of the movement?

The first conclusion is very simple. It is that there is as yet no Left Wing Trade Unionism as a force in the leading ranks of the movement, and any imagination that there is will lead to

bitter disillusionment. The signs and tendencies that exist (as revealed, for example, at Vienna) are important in many ways, and not least as signs of the changes that are going on beneath and are gradually compelling attempts at expression on top. But they represent no conscious movement, no difference in principle, no serious attempt to tackle existing problems and therefore no actual division or conflict. The corporate solidarity of trade union officialism has not yet been broken by the irruption of working-class politics. The most "progressive" officials still continue part of that machine which goes hand in hand with the employers to order men striking against a starvation wage back to work. The only irruption of a new force has been the election of A. J. Cook to the miners' secretaryship, because that has represented the introduction of an element openly based on the forces of the workers below. For this reason that event was of far more significance than any possible expression of individual officials. Only in this way, directly based on the workers below, can a genuine new movement develop in trade unionism. This is the lesson which all those officials who sincerely wish to help forward the future of trade unionism must learn and adapt themselves to in their action and position.

The second conclusion follows from this and is even more important. The struggle for the future of the working class in Britain will have to come from below. There is at present no leadership and no sign of any leadership on top, or in any section on top. A completely new force and a new leadership will have to be created. The revolutionary expression of the working class will have to drive its way into the movement against all the obstacles of the existing machine. This means a task of tremendous difficulty, involving the greatest dangers of dispersion and disruption. The failure, the emptiness, that is revealed in these articles is not only a failure of individuals or a section: it is an historical failure of the whole movement, laying bare gigantic tasks for the future. To meet these dangers and overcome this failure will demand something more serious than has yet existed in the British working-class movement. It will demand something more than a question of trade union reconstruction or of anti-official discontent. It will demand the development of the widest

possible mass movement to drive a way forward through the shell of existing trade unionism. And it will demand a powerful working-class party to give that unity and that leadership to the movement which only the common aims of the class struggle can give.

A common mass movement on the simplest basis of the class struggle operating through existing trade unionism in the form of unofficial and minority movements. Workshop organisation to overcome the division of the workers and develop the conscious solidarity of the class and become eventually the practical instrument of action. A working-class party gathering into itself the revolutionary workers and becoming the expression of their leadership. These, in barest principle, are the means by which alone the British workers will break the chains of the machine that binds them and advance to the revolutionary struggle to become the masters of their own destiny.

LEFT WING LABOUR:

Should It Cherish Illusions ?

By J. R. CAMPBELL

(Of the Communist Party Executive)

In the following article J. R. Campbell, acting Editor of "The Worker's Weekly," who is at present being tried on a charge of seducing members of the Armed Forces of the Crown from their allegiance to the King, deals with M. Philips Price's series of articles on "The Labour Party and Power" which concluded in last month's issue of THE LABOUR MONTHLY.—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

IN his first article in February, 1924, Mr. Price, in indicating that the situation of the Labour Government was new as far as Britain was concerned, pointed out that there were some striking parallels and warnings to be derived from recent European history.

The awful examples of the Russian Mensheviks and the German Social Democrats were held up before us.

The Russian Menshevik Party had "found itself faced by class opposition, and instead of using its strategic position as a leader of a class which was aspiring to power it whittled away its programme in the excuse that Russia must be saved from anarchy."

"The German Social Democratic leaders used the absence of a sufficient parliamentary majority for their party as an excuse for abandoning the most important part of their social programme, which alone would have made a beginning in stopping the anarchy in the methods of production and distribution."

The passage of the Mensheviks to White-Guardism and of the German Social Democrats to the messenger boys of General Seeckt was then explained in detail.

Those awful examples are held up before the Labour Party, which is told that by sole control of the administrative machine "We can do much to relieve the unemployed and initiate public works. Yet where shall we get the money from?"

Comrade Price indicated two alternatives: (1) Inflation ; (2) An appeal to the country on the Capital Levy. The third alternative

was, of course, the *status quo*—to refuse to “do much” for the unemployed and to put off the initiation of public works. That is a continuation of the Baldwin policy, plus some slight administrative and comparatively cheap adjustments of the machinery of the Insurance Act, such as the abolition of the gap, &c.

Price’s first article was written in February and subsequent developments have shown that the policy which he advocated has not even been considered. The Labour Party has continued the Baldwin policy, and the two descriptions of the activities of the Russian Mensheviks and the German Social Democrats given above, which Price proved to end in disaster, can equally well be applied to the policy of the Labour Party.

In his second article Price suggested that the “Budget surplus be earmarked for laying the foundations of a real Socialist policy and the extension of State at the expense of private enterprise at home.”

We know on the contrary that the Budget gave as much relief to the propertied classes as it did to the workers ; that it raised no fresh taxation from the rich and will leave no substantial surplus at all ; that the Government is unable to carry out any policy which involves immediate heavy expenditure, and the path of the Labour Government is littered with broken pledges.

In his third article Price indicates that in his opinion the Labour Party was merely doing the work of the City and armament firms in building the five cruisers. He indicated that it had not even the excuse of parliamentary necessity for doing so, as the Liberals would probably have supported it in a refusal to build the five cruisers. The building of those cruisers was regarded by Price as an Imperialist threat to France.

In the same article we are told that the experts who were at that moment considering the question of reparations were “really the nominees of the Wall Street and the City Banks.”

We are further told that “the Labour Government will be digging its own grave if it permits the British and American banks to float a loan to Germany on the conditions which they intend to exact.”

Since that has been written the Labour Party has not only accepted the report “of the nominees of Wall Street and the City

Banks," but has treated it reverently, actually making the hundred per cent. acceptance of that report a test of the orthodoxy of a Labour Candidate in a bye-election. It is cheerfully digging its own grave, and the grave of the European working class, by eagerly backing the forty million Anglo-American Loan to Germany.

These developments are significant enough, and ought to have convinced Mr. Price that the Labour Government was deliberately treading the road to disaster against which he had warned it.

Yet in his fourth article he expresses a doubt as to whether the Labour Party is going the way of the German Social Democrats. The heart of the Labour Party is, he says, still sound. It has done some things well, it has done other things badly. We must not croak and give up hope.

Now surely we are here discussing the strength of the tendencies which we see operating. Are there increasing signs that the Labour Party is fighting capitalism more energetically, gradually discarding the Imperialist policy of its predecessors, or are there signs that it is carrying out the Imperialist policy of its predecessors ever more energetically, whilst apologising for its inability to do anything for the working class? Surely the latter is correct.

Price mentions a few of the achievements of the Labour Government which he offsets against its criminal Imperialistic record. They are the Budget, the Housing Scheme, improvement in pensions, better maintenance for the Unemployed. Also it might have stopped evictions if the Liberals and Tories had let it.

Pensions and increased unemployment allowances are comparatively small changes, costing very little. Indeed the increased unemployment allowance suggested is more in the nature of a relief to the Board of Guardians and the Parish Councils than it is to the unemployed. The reduction of indirect taxation by the Budget. Well, what of it? A Labour Government, surrounded by a working class in the bitterest poverty, finds itself in possession of a Budget surplus. It gives three-fifths of that surplus to the workers and about two-fifths to the bourgeoisie, and because it does this instead of handing the whole surplus over to the bourgeoisie it is regarded as doing wonderfully well. Its heart is still sound.

We believe that the main test of the Labour Government on the Budget was whether it would tax the bourgeoisie for purposes of social reform and whether it would continue to support capitalist armament expenditure. Before the Budget all the bourgeois Press was anticipating an increase in taxation, however slight. When no increase was imposed they cheered Mr. Snowden's Budget to the echo. As for the great Housing Scheme—even granting its applicability—an acid test of that scheme is which class is going to pay the subsidy for the houses which are being built. The Labour Government has left that question open at present.

Compare that miserable record of achievement in the interests of the working class with the eager pursuit of capitalist policy in the colonies and Europe, and who can say that the Labour Government is not rushing rapidly along the same lines as the German Social Democracy.

After all, declares Mr. Price, the Labour Party had a better record after six months than the German Social Democracy had after four years. There Mr. Price is comparing the Labour Party after six months with the German Social Democratic Party whose policy has been tested and found wanting over a period of four years.

All that we can say with regard to the statement is that in the first six months of office the German Social Democrats were able to show as big results on paper, to create as many illusions as to the possibilities of peaceful progress, as the Labour Party has in its first six months. The hopes raised were illusory as subsequent events showed, and they will prove just as illusory in Great Britain.

In face of the most obvious facts Mr. Price declares that the Labour Party has not hopelessly compromised itself with reaction. It all depends on the blessed word "hopelessly." It has at any rate compromised itself seriously with reaction. How can it attack any capitalist government for participating in an armament race after the five cruisers ramp? How can it logically attack any capitalist government for engaging in acts of brutal repression in the colonies after Mr. Leach's defence of the Irak bombing? How can it accuse any capitalist government of heartlessness in regard to the unemployed when on the approach of the fifth winter of unemployment it is allowing things to drift? How can Labour propagandists

indulge in condemnation of useless, heartless displays of luxury in the midst of grinding poverty when a large section of the Labour leaders have shown themselves only too ready to indulge in such displays themselves ? The Labour Party has seriously compromised itself and unless the present leadership is removed the chances of carrying on a vigorous fight against Capitalism are absolutely nil. Does Mr. Price forget the first years of the Coalition Parliament when the Labour Party, heavily compromised by its own war record, was unable to offer serious opposition to the policy of Lloyd George ?

Now before discussing what steps can be taken to combat the Imperialist policy of the Labour Government we might pause to ask ourselves what this policy really is. Are we faced merely with the mistakes of a government sincerely anxious for the triumph of the working class, sincerely desirous of winning greater influence for it, or are we witnessing the consistent carrying out of a reformist political policy ? Is it merely mistakes of detail which are being made, or is it the whole conception of how to improve the conditions of the workers which is behind the day-to-day actions of the Government absolutely false ? We are convinced that the Government's policy results from the consistent application of reformist politics to a given situation, and what the left should be concerned in criticising is not merely this or that point of detail but the whole conception of reformism underlying the practice of the Labour Government. We have to destroy the idea that by co-operating with the capitalists, by continuing the policy of its predecessors, or that by passing a series of small reforms we will be able gradually to transform Capitalism into Socialism. Is this Mr. Price's conception or is it not ?

If Mr. Price does not believe in the gradual democratic transformation from Capitalism to Socialism what does he mean by suggesting that the Communists should win the confidence of the I.L.P. left wing by "showing what practical measure which leads us one step towards our end can be undertaken under the present balance of class power both in Parliament and in the workshops as existing at the present time" ?

Now if it is suggested that a whole series of practical measures which will lead us one step towards our end can be taken up

and passed by the Labour Government under the present balance of class power then we are in the presence of the most credulous reformism. It is not the business of any serious Socialist to suggest that there is a whole series of first steps to Socialism which could be passed by the Labour Government under the present class balance of power, if it would only sit up and take notice. It is our business to point out to the workers that under the existing balance of class power one cannot do anything for the working class without the permission of the capitalist class, that if the workers want anything done the present balance of class power has got to be altered. It is the business of a real left wing to agitate in the Labour Party for that party to bring forward a series of immediate measures, not in the expectation that the kind capitalists will stand aside and allow us to carry them into operation, but for the purpose of rallying the masses for a struggle to change the existing class balance of power.

Can Capitalism be conquered step by step by parliamentary means? That is the question Mr. Price comes near to raising.

He tells us truly that the period of open storming of the Capitalist fortresses has passed by meantime and then suggests that we must carry on a "guerrilla warfare on the industrial front and the capture by stages of the parliamentary and administrative machinery of Capitalism."

If the suggestion in the latter part of the quotation is that the Capitalist State can be conquered stage by stage and then used in the interests of the working class then we have here a complete reversion to MacDonaldisms in theory which will sooner or later reveal itself as a reversion to MacDonaldisms in practice.

It may of course be necessary to insist that the Labour Party fight for the various items in its programme. It may be necessary to agitate that it fights for certain immediate aims. It all depends on how we regard those aims? Whether we regard them as reforms which can easily be carried out within the frame work of Capitalism, a gradual accumulation of which will transform society from Capitalism into Socialism, or whether we regard them as rallying demands around which the masses will engage in struggle which will consolidate their forces for the revolution: in short,

do we regard immediate demands as a method of avoiding revolution or as a method of rallying the masses for revolution? It is one thing to ask the Labour Government to bring forward a programme of immediate demands and call the masses to its support in struggling for those demands and so intensify the class struggle; it is quite another thing to suggest that all that is required is for the Labour Party to bring forward immediate demands and the bourgeoisie like the old soldiers "will simply fade away."

Before we talk then about the co-operation of the I.L.P. and Labour Party Left with the Communists for a common struggle within the Labour Party this much has got to be made clear. The Communists are desirous of seeing the Labour Party fighting for certain immediate aims, of rallying the masses in the struggle for those aims, in order that the class struggle may be intensified and the workers prepared for taking power into their own hands.

If any of the I.L.P. left are prepared to struggle alongside the Communists against the Imperialist tendencies of the Labour Government, if they are prepared to struggle in order to make that Government fight for the workers in Parliament, then the Communists are prepared to help them as they would help any other bodies of workers engaged in the same task. But if that same I.L.P. Left spreads the illusion that a more vigorous policy on the part of the Labour Party in Parliament is all that matters, that the State machinery of Capitalism can be gradually conquered and used on behalf of the workers in order to transform society gradually from Capitalism to Socialism, then the Communist Party will very definitely oppose the idea. A more vigorous policy in Parliament may rally the workers' forces and to that extent is valuable, but the final struggle to set up a real workers' Government is not a Parliamentary struggle, not a struggle between a Labour Parliamentary fraction and Capitalist Parliamentary fractions, but the organised struggle of the whole working class against Capitalism.

If that struggle is to be successful then there must be unity of aim and common direction of the decisive majority of the working class at the decisive moment. The Communist Party while willing to co-operate with any other groups within the Labour movement is not going to allow itself to merge its identity in a

formless left block, but is going to preach the need for a revolutionary party to lead the workers in their struggle and is going to endeavour to build up that party from the advanced elements of the Labour Movement.

In fighting reformism in the Labour Movement we will have to criticise individuals and explain to the workers the rôle which they are playing in the social movement. Much as Mr. Price dislikes it, we may have to dub certain individuals "agents of the bourgeoisie" or a simple equivalent if we can find it.

We cannot carry on serious political propoganda at all, political propoganda which really explains the existing situation, without stressing the fact that there is in the Labour Movement an upper stratum amongst the leadership which has been corrupted by Imperialism and which is in all its acts consciously or unconsciously an agency of the bourgeoisie. If we find that that particular phrase conveys nothing to a British worker we will have to find an equivalent, but we must not in order to avoid wounding the feelings of hyper-sensitive persons omit the mention of one of the most important facts in the Labour Movement at the present time.

Now as to our attitude to the I.L.P. Left and the left wing of the Labour Party it is somewhat difficult to lay down general rules because the left is what Robert Burns would have called "a mighty, machty, queer hotch potch," and is not a homogeneous body. One thing may be said to all the non-Communist left, however, and that is that if they are opposed to the present policy of the Labour Party in whole or in part and want to change it then they must oppose it in a more open fashion. At the moment practically the whole of the non-Communist left in the Labour Party are drifting complacently down the stream of MacDonaldisim, salving their consciences by occasionally muttering against MacDonaldisim under their breath. The attitude of this Left in the Dawes Report has been cowardly in the extreme and the first thing they must learn if anyone is going to take them seriously at all is to display a little political courage.

Secondly, we desire to point out to the I.L.P. Left that so long as it remains associated with a middle-class pacifist wing which is virtually the right wing of the Labour Party all its efforts are being nullified by people within its own party.

However, as there is such a Left the Communists are prepared, while combating reformist illusions, to unite with it on any points on which there is common agreement.

We would suggest on this head that if agreement could be reached on the following points:—

- (1) Repudiation of the Dawes Report.
- (2) A serious campaign in the Labour Movement to force the Labour Government on this the eve of the fifth winter of unemployment to put the six point charter into operation on behalf of the unemployed.
- (3) The organisation of the trade union forces alongside the Labour Government in the struggle for a national living wage.
- (4) The Nationalisation of the Mines and Railways and the development of a National Electrical Service not solely in the interests of cheap motive power for the employers, but in the interests of the community as a whole.
- (5) The repudiation of an Imperialist Labour policy and the granting of complete self-determination to all the subject races within the British Empire.

If the I.L.P. and Labour Party left is prepared to work, not only in a clandestine fashion within the Labour Movement, but openly upon a public platform to rally the broad masses behind those or similar demands and force them upon the Labour Government then there may be a basis for an arrangement which will bring the left forces within the Labour Party together in a definite pact. If that is what Mr. Price is out for there is a basis for discussion.

If, however, he is out to suggest that the Communists should kindly water down their policy, moderate their criticism and whisper to the active workers within the Labour Movement that after all the Labour Party might be a little more extreme but we must not say so too openly in public, then the Communist Party is standing none of that nonsense: such a Left position either implies gross stupidity in not recognising that it is not only the minority of active workers in the Labour Movement who have to be won over, but the broad masses, or it is the politically dishonest position of men who are unable to square their intellect with their ambitions.

THE SUDAN "SCANDAL"

By H. P. RATHBONE

THE story of what has been called the "Sudan Scandal" began with the raising of the question by Thomas Johnston as to whether a loan to the Sudan Government should properly be guaranteed by the British Government under the Trade Facilities Act 1921, in view of the following facts:—

(1) That H. H. Asquith was the man who introduced the deputation which went to the committee set up under the Trades Facilities Act to advise the Government whether to guarantee these loans or not. For was not Asquith's son a director of the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, which was already in receipt of a loan from the Sudan Government and which would be the company which would get part of the profits from the cotton grown in the area, for which the Sudan Government was wanting the loan to develop? Further, Asquith represented Paisley, a constituency which it was maintained would directly benefit from the scheme owing to the existence there of Coats' sewing cotton factory.

(2) That the loan to develop cotton plantations in that area would not provide employment for British workers.

(3) That S. Pearson & Sons, Ltd., Lord Cowdray being its president, had obtained the contract for the scheme while Lord Cowdray was financially interested in the scheme.

The facts of No. 1 are correct except so far as Coats' wage earners are concerned. No. 3 has apparently never been proved, but that does not mean that it is untrue. No. 2 was apparently wrong, as certain of the plant for the dam which would provide irrigation facilities for the cotton plantation, was ordered in England.

But the whole affair involves further questions than were raised by Thomas Johnston.

As far back as 1900 efforts have been made to develop cotton cultivation in the Sudan. In 1904 an "agreement" was reached "under the auspices of Lord Kitchener, who was then in command in the Sudan"—as Lord Stanley put it in the debate in the Commons

on April 5, 1924 (col. 1458)—between the Sudan Government, the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd., and the native cultivators. This agreement laid it down that the proceeds from the sale of cotton grown under the agreement should be divided as to 40 per cent. to the native cultivator, 25 per cent. to the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd., and 35 per cent. to the Sudan Government.

Though it is admitted that the native cultivators had unimpeachable title to the land they cultivated, in 1921 the Sudan Government issued the Gesira Land Ordinance whereby they obtained a lease of the land, owned by the natives, for a period of forty years, and at the same time took power to re-let it out to these same natives on annual tenancy, "the landowners being given full opportunity to take up as cultivating tenants so much of their own land as in practice they are able to cultivate on an artificial irrigation system involving regular and careful cultivation, with which, of course, they are not familiar." (Report on Egypt and Sudan for 1920, Cmd. 1487, 1921, p. 136.) Thus the natives were practically expropriated from their land and were only given back certain portions of the land to cultivate on condition that they cultivated it on the system laid down by the Sudan Government and the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd., and were liable to be expropriated altogether if that cultivation did not meet with the approval of these "authorities." Lord Stanley in the same speech, quoted above, said that in return for the 40 per cent. proceeds from the cotton sales the native "gave his labour." Thus the native owner became practically a wage servant of the "authorities."

Now these "authorities" though nominally the Sudan Government, were in reality the Sudan Plantations Syndicate, Ltd. For the while the Sudan Government in return for its ratio of 35 per cent. from the proceeds of cotton sales, undertook to get the dam and the large irrigation works constructed by which alone the cotton could be grown, the concession for the growing and marketing of the cotton was handed over to the Syndicate. For the 25 per cent. share, the Syndicate undertook to carry out minor operations concerning the irrigation works, and to educate the native cultivators in the best methods of growing cotton. "They also had to act," again in the words of Lord Stanley, "as land banks in financing the cotton crop on behalf of the native cultivator." The native cultivator, though he was interested in getting the best price for his cotton, would thus be

completely in the financial grip of the Syndicate. That the people behind the Syndicate were by no means unaware of the benefits that such an agreement would give them is shown by a minute of 1913 of the British Cotton-growers (now Growing) Association, quoted in the *Manchester Guardian*, January 26, 1923.

Another difficulty, and a serious one, is the unearned increment in the value of land. The land without irrigation is worth, say 2s. per acre, with irrigation possibly as much as £10 to £20 an acre (p.a. E.M.G.). It does not seem reasonable that the whole of this large increase which is due to large expenditure on the part of the Government and consequently of the whole community should go into the pockets of individual owners.

The Government incurs the expenditure; the price of the land goes up; how is the Syndicate to get this increased increment? That was the "difficulty" and a "serious" one. The solution was found as we show above by "requiring" the Syndicate to be the bankers of the native cultivators, by "requiring" them to "finance" the cotton crop on behalf of the native cultivators.

How profitable the financing of a cotton crop can be, will be seen from the following quotation taken from a Supplement to the *Commerce Reports*, the weekly publication of the U.S.A. Department of Commerce, on Egypt for 1922. The writer of this report is urging the establishment of an American bank in order to get a share in the financing of Egyptian cotton. Such a bank, he maintains, "would yield large returns on an absolutely safe basis." He then explains how this is done.

It is customary for banks as well as large exporters to receive cotton from planters for storage in warehouses controlled by banks and exporters, and to advance loans against the cotton so held, usually up to 60 per cent. of its spot value, with the right to dispose of the cotton if the margin narrows. Not only is interest charged on the loan, but storage charges are also made on the cotton while it is being held in warehouse. Cotton so held is almost invariably sold through the bank or exporter under orders from the owner, and for this service the bank or exporter receives a commission.

It will, therefore, be seen that with adequate security a bank operating a cotton department would earn profits as interest on loans, storage and commission on sales, and throughout would be adequately protected by holding in its possession cotton which can promptly be liquidated on the spot market.

The scheme itself involves the irrigation of the Gesira plain, which lies between the Blue and White Niles south of Khartoum.

It is estimated that production by 1925 will reach 70,000 bales of Egyptian long staple cotton (c.f. the total consumption of cotton in England equals 3,500,000 bales) and, according to the *Morning Post* (November 6, 1922), 250,000 bales in the next ten or fifteen years and 1,000,000 bales later.

The scheme was first launched in 1913, but no public issue of money was made till October, 1919, when an issue of £3,500,000 5½ per cent. bonds at £95½ per cent. was made under a guarantee by the Imperial Government under the Sudan Loan Act of 1919. The financiers and others who floated the loan thus appropriated £157,500, being the difference between the issue price and the par value of the Stock on which interest would have to be paid, leaving a net amount available for the Sudan Government of £3,342,500. A further issue was made in February, 1921, of £2,880,000 at £92 per cent. The financiers again appropriated £230,400, thus leaving a net amount of £2,649,600 for the Sudan Government. Out of these two sums £1,000,000 was reserved to paying the interest on the loans until the scheme became sufficiently productive to the Government. Thus while the Sudan Government was responsible to paying interest at 5½ per cent. on a total of £6,380,000, only £4,992,100 was available for the construction of the dam which it was intended would earn this interest.

This is by no means the end of the story. For the contract for the building of the dam was originally placed with a man called Alexandrino, to whom Thomas Johnston referred in the Commons Debate on March 4, 1923 (col. 1285). For he asserted there that this man got the contract on the basis of being paid "10 per cent. on everything he spent, including his wages bill, and it was after the Sudan Government had become aware that this money was being wasted that they cancelled the contract and paid him a heavy sum in compensation for cancelling it." This charge of wastage was not denied by William Graham, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, in his reply.

The Sudan Government then proceeded to place the contract with S. Pearson & Sons, Lord Cowdray's firm. A further £3,500,000 was found to be necessary. An issue of £3,250,000 4½ per cent. guaranteed stock at £93 per cent. was, therefore, made in January, 1923. Here again the financiers obtained a sum of £227,500 on the deal, leaving a net amount of £3,022,500 for the works. In 1924, the Advisory

Committee under the Trades Facilities Act approved of a further £3,500,000 to be guaranteed by the Imperial Government; no doubt on this issue also, if it is made, the financiers will levy their toll. The excuse given for this guarantee of a further £3,500,000 is that if this money is not made available—and it was maintained that it would not be got without a guarantee—the British Government would become liable for interest and principal under their guarantee on the whole of the remaining £9,630,000 as the whole scheme would collapse without further cash.

It is not surprising that the Sudan Government with all this unproductive debt on which it must pay interest, has increased the burdens of taxation and these burdens fall on the native cultivator. Thus the revenue from some taxes in 1913 and 1921, the last year for which complete figures are available, is as follows:—

	1913		1921
	£		£
Date tax	16,380	..	22,781
Animal tax	81,599	..	190,161
Customs department	186,837	..	487,280
Land Tax			
(a) Taxed land	45,078	..	39,832
(b) Ushur (tithes) ¹	122,430	..	315,277
	<u>£452,324</u>	..	<u>£1,055,331</u>

The result of the transaction is as follows:—

The Sudan Government constructs a dam and other irrigation works, being robbed in the process of immense sums of money,

¹This is a tax equivalent to 10 per cent. of the value of the crops assessed; thus if three cotton crops a year are harvested the tax has to be paid on each of the crops. According to the report of the Sudan Government on the position of the native cultivators this tax, however, has been definitely remitted in the case of the cultivators under the Syndicate scheme. This is merely a device to get more labour to work on the scheme, and not as the report tries to make out, a magnanimous gift from a generous and openhanded government. For by this means these Sudanese who at present cultivate rain-grown cotton (*i.e.*, cotton grown in areas which have not been artificially irrigated) and thus remain liable to the tax, would be tempted to work under the scheme; in addition the prospect of freedom from this tax would attract the many pilgrims returning from Mecca, when, *i.e.*, a previous report on the Sudan cast jealous eyes as a further source of labour for the scheme. It will then happen that when a sufficient labour force has been accumulated, the Sudan Government will cancel this exemption or increase other taxes such as the sugar monopoly tax or even introduce new taxes always, of course, under the hypocritical excuse that the budget must be balanced, and that all classes must bear their share of this most regrettable situation.

some of which goes to financiers and some of which goes to contractors who fail to construct the works.

The native cultivator, previously in undisturbed possession of his land, is compelled under threat of expropriation to cultivate cotton on a system under which he practically becomes a wage labourer. What freedom remains to him is indirectly valueless by the fact that on the one hand he is tied to his employers' banks, who kindly finance him and on the other burdened by increased taxation—increased in order to pay interest on the money which was obtained to enslave him.

The Syndicate on the other hand is in effect the employer of the native, is the marketer of the cotton, is the banker to the native, and finally receives a loan from the Sudan Government for the purpose which it is required to undertake under the agreement.

In addition the Syndicate is developing another region, the Kassala region, for cotton growing; in order that this cotton may become marketable it induces the Sudan Government to construct a railway from this area to join the main Government line to Port Sudan, the chief port on the Red Sea; it further induces the Government to hand over the management and profits, of course, of the line for a period of thirty-one years to a company—the Kassala Cotton Co., Ltd,—in which a controlling interest is held by the subsidiary it sets up, in order to grow cotton in this same region, Kassala. Finally, in order that the railway may have all the benefits of Government knowledge and yet be able to pay revenue to the Syndicate, one of the directors is the consulting engineer to the Sudan Government Railways.

This is the scheme which the Labour Government has supported. The only points on which they have agreed to ask for further information are:—

(1) What is the system of taxation, particularly with regard to its incidence in the area in question.

(2) The exact system under which the tenant cultivators will develop their plots with particular reference to the security of tenure enjoyed by the tenant cultivators (note well the phrase “tenant cultivators”; according to the Land Commission of 1908, these “cultivators” were confirmed in their *ownership* of these lands; now they are called “*tenant cultivators*”).

(3) Whether the cotton produced can be offered first for sale in Great Britain, and

(4) Whether a maximum price could be fixed for it to prevent corners.

Yet Mr. Graham tried to minimise the profits of the Syndicate by averaging the dividends of the company since its formation, and yet asserted in the same speech that he could not deal with the question "as to the position of the native and to his taxation and other problems of that kind" (Hansard, March 4, 1924, col. 1294), affirming that these "problems" would be satisfactorily answered by the queries (given above) which had been sent to the Sudan Government (as if any satisfactory answers to such questions could be sent by a Government of such a nature).¹

As to the effects of the production of long staple cotton under this scheme on Lancashire. The present crop of cotton grown in Egypt amounts to 450,000 bales, only part of which is long staple cotton. The supply in 1925 from this scheme in the Sudan is reckoned to be 70,000 bales, increasing to 250,000 bales in fourteen or more years. The whole basis of the scheme is to keep the price of the cotton high: the heavy taxation will mean high prices: the Syndicate itself has a number of cotton interests which, so long as they remain connected with the Syndicate, will not lose by the high price.

The situation in Egypt will contribute towards maintaining the price of cotton, so long as the Soudanese crop remains small. For there the land has been completely alienated from the native and is in the hands of the land companies. They let this out to the native at rents of £10 to £15 (pre-war rents) which, according to E. M. Ginders, of the Power Engineering Co., Trafford Park, writing in the *Manchester Guardian* (January 16, 1923) makes it the most expensive agricultural land in the world. As he goes on to say: "It would appear in order to pay this tremendous toll the price of Egyptian cotton must be kept up by judicious curtailment of acreage under crop." This curtailment has been carried out under Egyptian

¹ Since this was written, the reply of the Sudan Government has been published and as was to be expected it leaves the position just as it was. It merely tries to show how generous the Sudan Government has been especially with regard to taxation to which we refer in a previous footnote; but, of course, it makes no reference to the future position or to the land banking operations "required" of the Syndicate.

Government auspices by restricting the acreage of cotton to one-third of its normal amount in the years 1921, 1922, 1923.

The result is that though there is a cry for increased production of long staple cotton and millions of money are sunk in an effort to do this, at the same time the production of this cotton is being curtailed in Egypt in order that the expropriated natives may be able to pay the tremendous toll of rent to the Egyptian land and mortgage companies such as the Land Company of Egypt, the Mortgage Company of Egypt, and the Agricultural Bank of Egypt.

In the Sudan the position though on the surface different is essentially the same. The native, though nominally in full possession of his land, is in reality a tenant cultivator, who can be expropriated if he does not cultivate his cotton to the liking of the Syndicate. Though there are no land speculators and land banks under the scheme, the syndicate is "required" to be the financier of the native. Each "partner" in the scheme, the Government, the Syndicate, and the cultivator is interested in maintaining the price. The Government to balance its budget, the Syndicate to pay increased profits, and the cultivator to pay taxation to the Government and toll to his financiers, the Syndicate.

This means that there is no prospect of lower-priced cotton. Capitalists are now in the position that, however much they think that increased production would increase their profits, increased production is impossible because the profits to be made for the various interests prevent the output from being increased: the gangrene of the bondholders' toll, whether in the form of interest or Government loans or dividends on the capital lent to the Syndicate, is retarding production. The cultivation of cotton in the Sudan will be restricted in the future to pay this toll of the bondholder, just as it is now being restricted in Egypt. Such is the position.

The Labour Government supports this position. The Labour Government then agrees to exploit the Sudanese cultivators in order that the Syndicate may retain its profits. The Labour Government therefore refuses to abandon the Sudan. The Labour Government is an Imperialist Government. Is any other conclusion possible?

RELIGION, ART AND MARXISM

By A. BOGDANOV

THERE are two great problems for the proletariat to solve in the field of the arts. The first is that of independent creation: the perception of self and of the world in harmonious living images, the expression of its mental forces in artistic forms. The second is that of acquiring its inheritance: it must master the artistic treasures created in the past and assimilate all that is great and beautiful in them, without submitting to the spirit of bourgeois and feudal society reflected in them.

This second problem is not less difficult than the first. We shall inquire into the general methods of its solution.

A religious person who seriously and attentively studies a strange creed exposes himself to the danger of being converted to it, or acquiring from it beliefs which are heresies from the viewpoint of his own religion. Thus it has happened that learned Christians, having devoted themselves to a study of Buddhism, have become Buddhists themselves, or at least have been converted to the moral teaching of Buddhism; the reverse has also happened. The same religious systems may be studied by a freethinker, who sees in all religion only a revelation of the poetic creation of the peoples (this is not the whole truth about religion, but part of it). Is he exposed to the same danger as the religious scholar? Of course not! He may exult in the beauty and depth of the teachings which have attracted hundreds of millions of people, but he perceives them not from the religious but from another and higher viewpoint. The immense richness of thought and feeling which is revealed in Buddhism will certainly appeal to his heart and mind more than to the heart and mind of a learned Christian who cannot get rid of the hidden resistance of his own faith, struggling against the "temptation" of the strange religion; but the fact is that there is no temptation to become a Buddhist for the freethinker—his

mind is so constructed as to assimilate the religious material in a manner of its own.

Both the Christian and the freethinker take Buddhism "critically." But the main difference is in the type of their critical attitude, in its bases—"criteria." The believer is not standing above the subject of his study, but approximately on a level with it. He criticises from the standpoint of his own dogma and his own feelings, and he tries to find contradictions in the strange myths and in their moral revaluations; when he discovers such contradictions he is unable to appreciate the poetic or vital truth which is frequently hidden behind them. And even when he penetrates to this truth, he pays for it by a contradiction with himself—he "submits to temptation." He is unable to regard Buddhism as a cultural heritage from a strange world; and if he receives this alien favourably, it conquers him and compels him to become an apostate from his former creed.

The case of the violent atheist is about the same. He is a representative of the progressive, but not sufficiently developed, bourgeois consciousness, who sees in every religion only superstition and deception. He is an "inverted believer." He has risen above religion sufficiently to renounce it, but not enough to understand it. For him religion is also not a heritage; and sometimes it is even a temptation; he comes to feel that it is not only deceit and superstition, but does not understand what it really is.

In quite a different position is our freethinker, representative of the highest stage which may be attained by bourgeois consciousness. His view of religion as a product of the poetical creation of the people allows him, within the limits of this viewpoint, to appreciate his subject quite freely and in an unprejudiced manner. For him it will not present a difficult inner contradiction to learn that the laws of Manu, among the ancient Aryan Hindus, are by the depth of their ideal much more sublime than either ancient or modern Christianity, or that their relation to death, as expressed in their burial rites, is incomparably higher than the Christian in nobleness, sublimity, and beauty. He who is free from all religious consciousness, who will struggle against it whenever it tends to obscure the thought or pervert the will of man, is still

in a position to make all religions a valuable cultural heritage for himself and for others.

The attitude of the proletariat to all the culture of the past—of the bourgeois world and of the feudal world—passes through the same stages. In the beginning the worker takes it to be merely culture, culture in general; he does not imagine that culture in its essence can be anything other than that; he is all on a level with it. There may be blunderings in its science and philosophy, there may be false motives in its art, injustices in its morals and laws; but all this is not connected with the essence of it; these are its faults, deviations, imperfections, which further progress would improve.

And though he later on begins to notice in this culture something “bourgeois” and “aristocratic,” still he understands these traits only as a *defence of the interests* of the ruling classes, a “defence” which falsifies the culture; but he still has no doubt as to the essence of this culture, its methods and viewpoint. He is wholly on its level, and while trying to assimilate “whatever is good in it” he is not protected against it even as much as the Buddhist or Brahmin is protected against the temptations of Christianity, or *vice versa*. He absorbs the old way of thinking and feeling, and the whole attitude towards the world based upon those ways. His own proletarian class viewpoint is preserved only at the moment or the place where he hears sufficiently clearly the imperious voice of class interest speaking. When there is no such clearness and conviction and the problem of life is difficult and complicated, especially when the problem is still new, he does not solve it independently; either a ready-made solution is taken from the surrounding social environment, or even his proletarian class interest is considered and understood from an alien point of view.

Both tendencies have been clearly manifest in the attitude which the working-class intellectuals of the European countries assumed towards the war. Some gave themselves up to the wave of patriotism, almost without stopping even to consider; others were “able to understand” that the “higher interests” of the working class demanded unity with the bourgeoisie to protect or save the fatherland and its wealth, because “their destruction

would throw the working class and the whole of civilisation back." This great and cruel experience revealed quite clearly the fact that as long as the proletariat had not worked out its own attitude towards the world, its own way of thinking, its own all-embracing viewpoint, a proletarian cannot master the culture of the past as his inheritance; that culture will master him and use him as human material for its own aims.

If the proletarian, convinced of this, arrives at a mere anarchical negation of the old culture, *i.e.*, if he renounces his heritage, then he puts himself in the position of the naive atheist with his crude attitude towards our religious heritage. But he is in an even worse case, for it is, after all, possible for the bourgeois atheist to do without an understanding of religion—he has other cultural values to depend upon; only the breadth of his thought and the swing of his creation suffer. But the worker is not in a position to put up anything at all to counterpoise the rich and developed culture of the hostile camp; he is unable to create anew anything on a similar scale. It remains a splendid tool or weapon in the hands of his enemies—against him.

The conclusion is obvious. The working class must find and develop to the greatest possible extent a viewpoint that is higher than the culture of the past, just as the viewpoint of the freethinker is the higher in the world of religion. Then it will become possible to master this culture without submitting to it, to turn it into a tool for the construction of a new life, a weapon for the struggle against that same old society from which this culture comes.

Karl Marx made a beginning in the mastery of the mental forces of the old world. The revolution that he accomplished in the field of social science and social philosophy consists in the fact that he revised their basic methods and their results from a new, higher standpoint—which was the proletarian standpoint. Nine-tenths or even more, not only of the materials for his gigantic construction, but also of the methods of their application, were taken by Marx from bourgeois sources; he used the bourgeois classical economists, the reports of the English factory inspectors, the petty bourgeois criticisms of capitalism made by Sismondi and Proudhon, and as a matter of fact all the intellectual Socialism of

the Utopians, the dialectics of the German idealists, the materialism of the French Encyclopædists and of Feyerbach, the social class theories of the French historians and the admirable descriptions of class psychology by Balzac, etc., etc. All this received a new form and was arranged in new combinations, it was turned into a tool for the building of a proletarian organisation, a weapon for the struggle against the rule of capital.

How was this miracle accomplished ?

Marx established that society is primarily an organisation for production; this is the basis for all the laws of its life and the development of its forms. This is the standpoint of a socially productive class, it is the *standpoint of a toiling collectivity*. With this for his starting point, Marx accomplished a criticism of the science of the past, he purified its material, remelted it in the fire of his ideal, and created out of it proletarian knowledge—scientific Socialism.

Thus we see the way in which cultural achievements of the past have been turned into an actual inheritance for the working class: *it is by critical rearrangement from the standpoint of collective labour*. This is how Marx himself understood his task ; it was not by chance that Marx characterised his main work, *Capital*, as a “ Critique of Political Economy.”

This is not only true in regard to social science. In all other fields the method of acquiring and assimilating the heritage of the past is by means of our criticism, by proletarian class criticism.

We shall now look more fully into the basis of our criticism. We must find the essence of the standpoint of collective labour.

Three stages may be distinguished in the social process, or, to be more accurate, there are three sides to it: the technical, economic and ideological. On the technical side society struggles against Nature and subjugates it, *i.e.*, *it organises the external world* in the interests of its life and development. On the economic side—the relations of co-operation and distribution among men—*society organises itself* for this struggle against Nature. On the ideological side society *organises its experience*, creating out of this experience the tools for the organisation of its life and development.

Consequently, every task in technique, in economics and in the sphere of mental culture is an *organisational* task, a work of social organisation.

There are and can be no exceptions to this rule. An army may have for its aim destruction, annihilation, disorganisation. But this is not its final aim; the army is itself only a means—a means by which to reorganise the world in the interests of the community to which the army belongs. An artist, an individualist, may imagine that he is creating only for and out of himself; but if he really worked only for himself, his creation would not appeal to anyone beside himself. It would have no relation to mental culture, just as passing and incoherent (but beautiful) dreams are not related to it. And if he tried to create only out of himself, without making any use of the material, the methods of work, creation and expression that he receives from his social environment—then he would not create anything at all.

The standpoint of the labour collectivity is all-organisational. It could not possibly be otherwise with the working class, which organises external matter into products in its labour, organises itself into a creative and fighting community in its co-operation and in its class struggle, and organises its experience into class consciousness by its whole mode of life and by its creative work.

It could not be otherwise, with a class which has to accomplish the historical mission of organising harmoniously the whole life of humanity.

We shall now return to our first illustration. Can and should the whole world of religious creation become a heritage for the working class, against whom every religion has up till now been used as a weapon for enslavement? What use could it find in such an inheritance, what could it do with it?

Our criticism gives a clear and comprehensive reply to this question.

Religion is the solution of an ideological problem for a certain type of community, namely for the authoritarian community. It belongs to the collectivity built upon authoritative collaboration, upon the leading rôle of some men and the executive rôle of others, on authority and subordination. Such was the patriarchal

clan community, such was feudal society, such were the serf and slave organisations, and such are the bureaucratic police States of to-day; the same state of things prevails in the modern army, and upon a smaller scale in the bourgeois family; and finally capital builds its enterprises on the principle of authority and subordination.

What is the organisational use of a system of accepted ideas? To organise harmoniously the experience of society in such a manner as to suit material organisation, so that cultural achievements may, in their turn, serve society as a means of organisation, to preserve, form, strengthen and further develop the given type of collective organisation. And it is quite easy to perceive how all this is arranged in an authoritarian order of life.

This order is simply transplanted into the field of experience and thought. Every action, whether human or elemental, every phenomenon is represented as a combination of two links—of the organising active will and the passive execution. The whole world is represented as an image of the authoritarian society. At the head of it a supreme authority, a “deity,” is put, and, with the complication of the authoritative combinations, a series of subordinated authorities—lower gods, “demigods,” “saints,” etc., are added, who manage different fields or sides of life. And all these representations are accompanied by authoritarian feelings and moods: admiration, humility, respectful awe. Such are the relationships in religion. It is merely an authoritarian ideology.

It is quite plain what a perfect organisational tool this is for an authoritarian order of life. Religion simply introduces man into this order, assigns to him a definite place in its system, and disciplines him for the execution of the rôle assigned to him in this system. In feeling, thought and experience the personality is fused with the social environment. It forms an indestructible unit.

The form of religious creation is, for the most part, poetic. This was correctly noted by our freethinker, who did not discern, however, the main thing—the social contents of religion. During those stages of social development when religion is in process of formation, poetry is not yet differentiated from practical and theoretical knowledge, it still includes them in its scope. Religion

then includes all and every knowledge, it organises the whole experience of men; knowledge is then understood as a revelation emanating from God, either directly or through some intermediary agents.

What kind of inheritance, then, is religious culture for the proletariat? A very important and valuable one. After it has passed through the worker's criticism it becomes for him a tool not for the support of, but for the understanding of all the authoritarian elements in life. The authoritarian world has decayed, but it is not dead; its vestiges surround us on every side, sometimes openly, but for the most part under the most various and sometimes unexpected disguises. In order to conquer such an enemy, it is necessary to know it, know it thoroughly and seriously.

The question is not only one of renouncing religion; though even in this respect the worker who has acquired the new critical attitude will prove considerably better armed than the furious but naive atheist, who renounces all creeds because of logical calculations, or opposes them with the childish assertion that religion was invented by the priests for the exploitation of the people. More important still is the fact that the possession of this inheritance enables us to form a correct estimate of the significance of the authoritative elements in present-day society, their mutual connection, and their relation to social development. If religion is a tool for the preservation of authoritarian organisation, then it is clear that in the relations of the classes religion for the workers serves only as a means to ensure their subordination, a means to preserve in them the discipline that the ruling classes desire them to possess, in order to keep exploitation secure—in spite of what various religious Socialists say. It is clear that the formula adopted by most Labour parties to the effect that "religion is a private affair" is but a temporary political compromise with which we cannot rest content. It becomes evident why there is such a perpetual alliance between sabre and cassock, between the military and the church; both have a strictly authoritarian organisation. It also becomes clear why the patriarchal petty-bourgeois and peasant family is so attached to religion, to the "law of God"; and at the same time we can see the great danger in the way of social progress that this fecund

seed of authoritarianism may represent if it is preserved. A new light is shed upon the rôle of party leaders, on authorities and the significance of collective control over them.

Further, the whole artistic treasury of the experience of the people, preserved and crystallised as it is in the various holy traditions and letters, pictures of a strange original life with a harmony of its own, is continually broadening the vision of man, giving him a deep insight into the universal motion of humanity, urging him towards new independent creative work which will not be tied down by the usual environment and habits of thought.

Does it, then, not pay the working class to take its religious heritage?

The above article consists of notes taken at a series of lectures delivered by A. Bogdanov in Moscow during 1920 and published in Russian as a series of three articles.

The first two of these articles, which deal with "proletarian poetry and proletarian criticism, were published in THE LABOUR MONTHLY last year, and copies can still be ordered. The conclusion of the third article illustrates the Communist attitude to the artistic inheritance of the working class by reference to "Hamlet" and other classics. We hope to publish this in a future number.

A Bogdanov is, of course, the noted economist and the author of "The Short Course of Economic Science."

STABILISATION

By GEZA SCHÜTZ

(We publish below an article by a member of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party, at present in exile for the part he took in the Hungarian Commune of 1919. The article deals principally with the effects of the League of Nations' "reconstruction loan" to Austria, whereby the League has proved itself a tool in the hands of Allied capital for the colonisation of Austria. With the issue of the Hungarian Loan bearing £8 16s. per cent., the process is about to be repeated. Some time ago THE LABOUR MONTHLY requested Count Michael Karolyi, who was Radical Prime Minister in the Social Democratic and Liberal Coalition Government which was formed in Hungary at the time of the Armistice and the first revolution, and which gave way to the proletarian dictatorship in the following year, to contribute an article on the subject of the League of Nations, the British Labour Government and Hungary. Count Karolyi, who was refused an interview by Mr. Snowden at the time the Chancellor of the Exchequer was receiving the financial representatives of Horthy's White Terror, agreed subject to an assurance being received from official quarters that his position as a political refugee in this country would not be prejudiced. An inquiry on our part to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was answered by Mr. Ponsonby to the effect that he could give "no such assurance" and that "Count Karolyi must himself take the risk involved, if any."—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.)

AFTER Austria it is to Hungary that those nations who have the cash to spare for transactions both lucrative and humanitarian are giving credit under the auspices of the League of Nations, in the name of economic reconstruction of the country in question. From the moral point of view this act enters into the category of State philanthropy, which is the parent of private philanthropy. Its ethical foundation is to give in order to receive back multifold: to receive dividends sooner or later—but the sooner the better; as soon as possible, and

accompanied by laurels honouring the humane gesture of having saved a people from black misery.

Let us not seek in high finance for human morality. Let us look rather for the motive of gain.

In technical jargon this business is called financial stabilisation. We already have the almost final result of the stabilisation of Austria; we should therefore draw useful and fertile conclusions as to the prelude of Hungary's stabilisation. For if the same mistakes are committed, the consequences will again be the same. And if these consequences are to be avoided, there must be haste to eliminate the causes which fatally provoke such consequences.

Austria had received, as is known, a credit of 650 million gold crowns. This sum was guaranteed by Great Britain, France, Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and by Switzerland.

The interest on the loan is at 8 per cent., that is to say, at a rate sensibly in excess of that usual for State issues. To guarantee that interest the lending Powers have taken as security the customs revenues and the receipts of the tobacco monopoly. These advantages furnished the golden key to the bankers' safes; the smiling prospect of Profit had a charm wherewith to open purses. In London and New York the list was subscribed several times over within five minutes. It will be evident from what follows that this great devotion was not influenced by the desire or intention to relieve suffering among the workmen and their children, who for ten years have indulged themselves in the luxury of starvation that they might have the pleasure of giving the bankers a good opportunity for a humane act.

The League of Nations had sent its Commissioner to Vienna to supervise the execution of the plans for administrative and financial reforms. He performed the task which he was set. He was not asked to ameliorate the general condition of the workers, or to raise their standard of life, that the children of the working class might be fed with a view to reducing the appalling rate of infant mortality and the spread of tuberculosis and phthisis. He was not told to work towards such ends. But he was instructed to balance the budget, to harmonise, in a way shocking neither to the ear nor

to eyesight, expenditure and income. So the *leit-motif* of this melody was not the succouring of the people but the saving of the budget. That these two things are not necessarily the same is proved by numerous examples in both past and contemporary history.

The High Commissioner balanced the budget in the manner of a Richelieu, for good or for evil, but rather for evil than for good. On the one hand he cut down expenditure, on the other he increased revenue. So far, so good—there can be no objection in principle to that. But look more closely at what constituted the increased receipts and what the diminished expenditure.

The number of ministries was last year (1923) eleven. For the sake of economy four of them were suppressed. The number of ministries was reduced, but not the sums allocated to their support, because with the regrouping of offices and of *personnel* these expenses remained practically the same. This fact was established by the High Commissioner, Mr. Zimmermann, himself.

The dismissal of civil servants and workmen employed by the State was begun. The serving of notices on State employees bore a direct relation to the process of denationalising the State factories. The object aimed at was to widen the field of enterprise for private capital. According to the scheme, the number of employees affected was fixed at 100,000. During the first year—that is to say, up to November 17, 1923—there were 51,043 dismissals; then, up to February of the present year, 63,307.

Most of these, who so lost their employment, were recruited from the working class and not from among the Civil Service. The salaried officials retained their sinecures—and I am not here thinking of the small employees and petty officials, but of the army of departmental heads, assistant heads and their colleagues who exist in more than superfluous numbers—meanwhile that quantities of workmen had to experience the benefits of stabilisation. The statistics prove this, half of the State employees being in the service of the Austrian railways, one-fifth in the nationalised industries and so on—only one-third of the total consisting of strictly administrative officials.

The consequence was that the “*Abbau*” (as the process was

called in technical phraseology) considerably increased the number of those unemployed in industry.

There were 30,967 drawing unemployment pay in August, 1922, that is to say, just before the negotiations commenced at Geneva. In November, 1922, this figure had risen to 58,008; in November, 1923, to 75,809, and then on March 15, 1924, to 126,734. The above shows that the number of unemployed increased more than 400 *per cent.* during a period of eighteen months under the regime of stabilisation.

At the same time the number of those drawing unemployment pay has been reduced to such a point that half of those unemployed have no pecuniary resources whatever.

In order to increase the receipts of the Austrian budget the Government has raised direct taxation to such a high level that the revenue from these sources amounts to more than twice the sum foreseen under the stabilisation project. Taxes paid were seven to ten times greater in March, 1924, than in September, 1922.

In addition to this direct taxation the indirect taxes, the "breakfast-table taxes," which in the end only hit the working classes, also followed the prevailing fashion—towards the heights. It is further obvious that new taxes were not missing from this Tenth Symphony of high finance; among these the most unbearable for the proletariat was the synthetic "*Warenumsatzsteuer.*" So as to balance the budget the more effectively, the quack economists had the energy and courage to raise even further the customs tariffs. That the consequences of these high tariffs had again to be borne by the working class is evident. The effect of this policy was at first a rapid, and then a gradual rise in the cost of living. The index number shows month by month the ever-increasing cost of living, the impossible price of food and necessities.

According to the budget plans of the Austrian Ministry of Finance for the year 1924, the revenue from taxation and customs dues is as follows:—

Direct taxes	1,516,700	millions of paper crowns
Food taxes	556,500	" "
Customs	1,238,400	" "

These figures show that more than 50 per cent. of the revenue is to be paid by the poor, since in the last resort it is always the proletariat which has to pay for customs duties and food taxes. Would it not have been juster to levy a 50 per cent. tax only on big fortunes and so to raise the money required to cover the deficit?

What went on in Austria is beginning in Hungary. The procedure is being duplicated step by step. We cannot yet speak of the results of the financial stabilisation of Hungary because the spectacle has only just opened. But there are certain precise indications which enable us to foresee already a general crisis breaking out. Hitherto Hungary has been plunged in the slump following inflation; the new period is the crisis of stabilisation. Day by day the amount of unemployment is increasing; so is the cost of living; misery marches in ideal harmony with its predecessors and tuberculosis follows after its creators. If the living are unemployed, Death is not; a rising death rate is often profitable, and at the same time it has the virtue of solving the social problem: a radical reduction of the number of "*les misérables*," of the slum population.

Malthus would blush to see how he has been surpassed.

KARL MARX ON ROBERT APPLE- GARTH

(Readers of THE LABOUR MONTHLY may be interested in the following note from our contributor, Max Beer, containing extracts from letters of Karl Marx referring to Robert Applegarth, the veteran English Labour leader, who died at the age of ninety last month. Applegarth, who became Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (now the Woodworkers) in 1862, when it was newly formed and one of the largest unions in the country, was the last survivor of the Central Council of the International Working Men's Association (the "1st International") formed in July, 1864, and of the group of five who formed in 1867 the Conference of Amalgamated Trades, which may be regarded as the predecessor of the present Trades Union Congress.)

IN the correspondence of Marx with his friend Frederick Engels there are several passages concerning the late Robert Applegarth. In one of the letters, dated December 4, 1869, there is a characteristic one of general interest.

Marx, in reporting at some length the discussion of a resolution moved by him on Irish affairs at a meeting of the Central Council of the International Working Men's Association, in which Odger, Mottershead, Milner, &c., took part, writes at the end of his letter:—

“Enclosed a note sent to me by Mr. Applegarth, which you will only appreciate from the following. At the conclusion of the last council meeting, in which Applegarth behaved very decently, he took me aside and related to me as follows:—

“An eminent member of the House of Commons, on instruction from an eminent member of the House of Lords (Lord Leachfield), asked him whether it was true that he (Applegarth) had voted at the Basle International Congress for the abolition of all private property. He (Applegarth) was determined to tell those fellows his opinion on the matter, but wanted me to give him a short draft of the reasons of the Basle resolution.

“My state of health, aggravated by the atrocious fog of Tuesday evening, prevented my doing any work at all, so I wrote to him on the following morning that I could at present send him

nothing, but that I was ready to support him in any controversy which might ensue on this matter. Whereupon he, with English tenacity, wrote me the enclosed note. I was thus willy nilly obliged to give him the reasons for the Basle resolution in a letter of eight closely written pages, dealing with landed property and the necessity of its abolition. You must know that Mr. Applegarth is regarded on the part of both Houses of Parliament as the official representative of the English trade unions."

Here is another passage. In a letter of April 28, 1870, Marx writes:—

"Last Tuesday the Central Council unanimously adopted my motion (seconded by Mr. Mottershead) 'to sever our connection with the *Beehive*.' Mr. Applegarth sat opposite to me, while I spoke in support of my motion, with a diminished head, since he and Odger are on the Editorial Committee of the *Beehive*. I denounced this paper as being sold to the bourgeoisie (Sam Morley, &c.)."

The World of Labour

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GERMANY

Social-Democratic Congress

THE Congress of the United¹ German Social-Democratic Party opened at Berlin on June 11. It is significant that, in spite of the crisis through which Germany has been passing for the last eighteen months, this was the first Congress held since the Unity Congress of the Majority and Independent Social-Democratic Parties at Nuremberg in September, 1922.

The membership returns for the end of last year were given as 1,260,000, including 130,000 women. This represents a decline of some 10 per cent. on the 1922 figures, which were approximately 1,400,000. It was reported that membership was increasing. The Party has 169 daily papers, no one of which has been suppressed by the Government.

From the Press reports of the Congress it appears that the chief speeches and reports consisted for the most part of diatribes against the Communists and attacks on Soviet Russia. Typical of the latter was the remark of the Communist renegade, Dr. Paul Levi, to the effect that Europe could not find peace, not because of capitalism, but because of the "imperialism" of Soviet Russia.

Dr. Rudolf Hilferding delivered a report, "warmed not by any revolutionary glow, but by a kind of affable optimism" (*Manchester Guardian*), on the result of the Reichstag elections, in the course of which he declared that Social-Democracy has a vital interest in the maintenance of a calm and peaceful development of economic conditions. He further stated that Mr. MacDonald has carried out the new methods of Socialism in his foreign policy, that the Experts' Report must be accepted, that the Social-Democratic Party would defend the eight-hour day and that Socialism and the Republic are inseparable.

Hermann Müller reported on the policy of the Reichstag fraction of the Party. He confessed that he could not understand the criticisms directed against the Reichstag fraction because it had not intervened to have the state of siege raised,

"For" he said, "the state of siege does not contradict democracy: it was directed against the Communists."

He further declared that in future the Social-Democratic Party would have to work in even closer co-operation with the bourgeois Parties. He threw

¹ One of the Congress decisions was that the United should be dropped from the name of Party, as it was a reminder of "past internal differences."

an interesting sidelight on the state of mind of the Party when he observed that one of their difficulties had been the desertion of misguided members to Fascism.²

A striking feature of the Congress was the collapse of the Left Wing in the Party. They were at such pains to dissociate themselves from the Communists that they naturally played right into the hands of the Right Wing Bureaucratic Leaders. Most of their resolutions of criticism were either not pressed or were very rapidly disposed of. The resolution approving the policy of coalition with the bourgeois parties and declaring that these questions should be left to the Party Executive and the Reichstag fraction was passed, against Left Wing opposition, by 262 votes to 105.

The Right Wing were also successful in forcing through a resolution (only one vote being cast against it) declaring that no member of the Social-Democratic Party could at the same time be a member of the Workers' International Relief. Previously the Social-Democratic Left Wing have vigorously combated the assertions of the Right Wing (based on police-forged documents) that the W.I.R. is a "Communist propaganda organisation." They now accepted this position and dutifully resigned from the W.I.R.

The comments of the bourgeois Press, both German and foreign, on the Congress have been instructive. The Berlin papers generally agreed that the Social-Democratic Party was no longer a workers' party. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* appropriately headed an article on the Congress "Sentimental Reflections on a Congress" and declared that:—

The Social-Democratic Party is lost in opportunism and only lives now from hand to mouth.

The Berlin correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote:—

And what of the ideas that once were the very life of German Socialism? The Congress performed the silent burial of them all . . . The great edifice built by Karl Marx, Engels, Lassalle, and Bebel, crumbled into ruins that are nothing more than a relic of the dead past.

And, then, more damning than all:—

It is the masses who have borne the brunt of a long series of struggles, harder and more bitter than almost any in the history of German labour. [Referring to the great strikes this year—Hamburg dockers, Ruhr miners, Central German chemical workers—in defence of the eight-hour day.] But for these obscure, inarticulate masses the Socialist Congress had hardly a word of genuine recognition.

FRANCE

Elections and Socialist-Liberal Collaboration

LAST March these notes reported the decision of the French-Socialist Party to join in the "Left-Wing" coalition (*Bloc des Gauches*) with the Liberals (the "Radical-Socialists," &c.) for the purpose of the General Election.³

This remained the position. The Communist Party went ahead alone as the class Party of the workers and peasants, the *Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan*.

² See also *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, June, 1924, Vol. 6, No. 6, p. 379.

³ *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 185-187.

The general results of the election are sufficiently well known: and in view of the extremely complicated nature of the French electoral system it is almost impossible to discover any rational basis on which to calculate voting figures that have any comparative value. The following table is, however, of interest:—

	1919	1924
Socialists	1,715,338 ⁴ ...	—
Radicals, &c.	1,366,943 ...	—
<i>Bloc des Gauches</i>	(3,082,099) ⁵ ...	3,898,357
Briand group	774,944 ...	662,288
<i>Bloc National</i>	3,739,099 ...	3,503,275
Communists	— ...	875,812

The present state of parties is:—

Socialists, Socialist-Communists, &c. ...	108	} 299
Radicals, &c.	191	
Briand group ... ..	...	49
<i>Bloc National</i> ... ..	...	210
Communists ... ..	...	26

The majority (61) of the Socialist deputies were elected on the Radical and Socialist coalition ticket, receiving 2,107,545 votes. Some forty Socialist deputies were elected on an independent ticket, and received votes variously given as 687,668 and 749,647. From these figures the official Socialist organ *Le Populaire*, calculated that the Socialist vote must be at least 1,700,000, *i.e.*, not less than the 1919 figure. Hence it deduced that the Socialist Party was the one real working-class Party. This piece of electoral mathematics is given for what it is worth.

Most significant about the Communist vote was its strength in Paris. In the great working-class suburbs which surround Paris the Communist list came top of the poll.

Having participated with the bourgeois Liberals in an electoral victory, the Socialist Party found itself faced with the problem whether it should or should not take the further step of participation in a coalition government. To decide this question a special national Congress was summoned which met on June 18 although the Marseilles Congress in January-February of this year had already decided against it.

The National Congress was preceded by congresses of the local Federations of the Party. The Federations of the Rhone, Var, Herault, Vaucluse, and Tarn voted for participation. The Haute Garonne voted for participation "under certain conditions." The Bouches-du-Rhone and Somme Federations voted against participation.

Perhaps the most remarkable argument in favour of participation was the appeal of M. Emile Vandervelde, the leader of the Belgian Labour Party to the French Socialist Party. It was printed in the Toulouse paper, *La Dépêche*. He said:—

"We are a class party, of course, but who has demonstrated better than Jaures by his every speech and action that the class-struggle has never been

⁴ In 1919, of course, the majority of the Socialist Party had not yet become the Communist Party.

⁵ There was, of course, no *Bloc des Gauches* in 1919: the entirely arbitrary total in brackets is inserted for purposes of comparison with the 1924 figures.

exclusive of coalitions or temporary *ententes* for a determined end? And in a country like France, where the stratification of classes is so altogether unlike that of England, Germany or Belgium, where the working-class proletariat (*sic*), nay the proletariat as a whole, is a permanent minority, is it not, may be, a crime against the spirit of Marxism not to regard the coalition of victorious Radicals and Socialists as the true *bloc* of workers and peasants—I mean, of course, the Radical-Socialists, the Radicals who already call themselves Socialists, and who may be really Socialists to-morrow, or whose electors in the country may be Socialists to-morrow!

When the National Congress met, however, it soon reached a deadlock between the supporters of coalition on the one hand and those on the other, who simply wished to give parliamentary support to a Herriot Cabinet. The one or two delegates who wished to maintain the independence of the Party were completely isolated: and a letter from the Communist Party proposing once more the *Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan* was turned down without ceremony.

One of the supporters of coalition, M. Marius Moutet, declared that:—

He and his friends were prepared to take the responsibility of entering the Government. If any other decision was taken, he could not associate himself with it. It is absolutely necessary to accept the responsibilities that face us The refusal of coalition means the end of the Party. The hour has come for the Party to send its chosen representatives to share in governmental power.

M. Varenne (now one of the Vice-Presidents of the Chamber of Deputies), foreshadowed what was to be the eventual way out of the deadlock when he said:—

We do not ask the Party to say here and now: We must enter a coalition government; but do not force us to say that we shall not do so in the future.

The final resolution, which was unanimously accepted, “put on one side” the question of participation in the government, “under the circumstances of the moment.” However, it was expressly stated that the question could be re-opened if “exceptional circumstances should arise.” Further, in case of urgency, the Executive was empowered to call a special national Council “to which the full powers of the Congress are delegated.”

The comment of the *Manchester Guardian's* Paris correspondent was very just. Writing before the Congress, he said:—

It is fear of the Communists and the jibes of *l'Humanité* rather than pious respect for an old dogma of the Socialist creed that prevents French Socialists from taking their share in M. Herriot's Cabinet The attitude of the Communist organ shows the reality of the risk that the Socialists would run in forming an alliance with the bourgeois party, a risk which might mean eventually new scissions in the Party or the loss of vast masses of the workers, yet which would seem to be almost as great under the alternative course of a pledge of support and voting of the Budget.”

This alternative course was the one adopted by the Party in the resolution prefacing its reply to the letter sent by M. Herriot to the Congress, setting forth his typically Liberal “democratic-pacifist” social reform programme (a programme very little different from that on which the Socialist Party had fought the election). It should be noted that the voting of the Budget was a step without precedent in the history of French Socialism: and the resolution had expressly to absolve the Socialist deputies from the Party rule which forbade voting for the Budget.

The record of the Herriot government to date is common knowledge. It culminated in the refusal to evacuate the Ruhr (a step explicitly approved in a speech made by M. Renaudel, the well-known Right Wing Socialist), and the consequent demand for the voting of credits for the Ruhr occupation.

The Socialist deputies, despite the injunction of the Congress that a united vote should be strictly maintained, split over the issue, which Herriot declared to be a vote of confidence. Forty-three voted for the credits: sixty-one abstained, not one voted against. A singularly disingenuous attempt was made by M. Leon Blum in a leading article in *Le Populaire* (now only a fortnightly) to explain away the whole affair as simply a "parliamentary incident," due to a series of "purely fortuitous misunderstandings"—as the Party executive declared in a special vote on the subject.

The position of the Socialist Party has been very clearly put by M. Paul Faure, the General Secretary of the Party, in an editorial article in *Le Populaire*:—

If any one section of the bourgeoisie rather than another offers us at any given moment more guarantees, more security in the political and social system and in the field of foreign relations, then we may be led to adopt a particular policy towards it . . . Hence our policy of support (for the Herriot cabinet . . . because it is better—or less bad—than Poincaré and the Bloc National).

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NOTES of the MONTH

The New Social Order in Europe—Capitalism's New Model—The Spoils of the Experts—Policing the Revolution—Capitalism after the Peace—France, Britain, America—Bondholders in Public—Pacifist Socialism as the Tool—Imperialism Laid Bare—War

THE foundations of the New Social Order for Europe have been laid by the British Labour Government and the French Left Bloc with the very visible assistance and inspiration of American finance. The triumph of Pacifist Democracy is being celebrated in suitable terms amid the applause of Baldwin, Asquith, the City, Wall Street and other notorious friends of peace and the common people, and the submerged protests of a few Labour back-benchers. The Conference at which this result has been achieved has been aptly termed a second Versailles Conference (the Labour Government, declared a Conservative leader unchallenged in the House of Commons, has "re-established the authority of the Treaty of Versailles"). But the Versailles Treaty in its settlement of Europe was by comparison a crude and bungling attempt at brigandage. The Dawes Report is the most scientific and highly developed form of capitalist exploitation yet devised. For the first time the whole production and resources and future labour of an advanced industrial nation are directly mortgaged to a single international financial combine. This is a tremendous advance on imperialism as so far known. With the London settlement the real meaning of Pacifist Democracy and the Left Victory is being revealed to the workers of Europe. And if they look behind the curtain they will find written the words International Finance. And if that is not clear to them, they will find still further the words Longer Hours, Lower Wages, High Profits, War.

WITH the Dawes Report, Capitalism enters on a new stage in its uneasy progress since the war. The Dawes Report is the New Model of capitalist exploitation. It is the most ambitious scheme of capitalism yet attempted.

Already Imperialism has shown us the subjection of economically backward nations to Finance Capital with the open use of armed power. But this is the first time that a highly developed and organised industrial nation, once a leader of imperialism itself, with a population of fifty millions, with an elaborate and absolutely modern productive plant, with a conscious and organised working class, is to be subjected as a single unit, a single enterprise, to the control of an international financial board with an elaborately regulated system for extracting the last possible drop of tribute. And all this tremendous power is to be secured by an initial payment of no more than forty million pounds by the international financiers, in return for which through their bank of issue they control the currency, credit and industrial life of a nation worth thousands of millions as well as the operations of the payment of tribute of 125 millions a year. It is a gigantic extension of financial imperialism. If this New Model is successfully established it will impose its characteristics on the rest of the world. With it the old type of capitalist production will be superseded. The old loose individual unregulated capitalist enterprise will be finally out of date. Competition will compel similar organisation. The gradual extension of the area of systematic subjection and extreme exploitation of the workers on the one hand, and the increasing conflict and concentration of power within the controlling financial group on the other, become the characteristics of the next stage of capitalist organisation. For the workers the alternatives become revolution or slavery.

IT is not surprising that a prize of such richness should have been fought for with such tenacity by the bankers. The economic meaning of the Dawes Report was expressed with clear precision by the leading exponent of British official economics, Sir Josiah Stamp. Germany, he declared, as "a country with all the equipment for great production, with adequate hours of labour, wages kept within economic possibilities, and a scheme of taxation heavy enough to make a balanced budget, has the factors for safe development." All that is needed is money stability to unlock this tremendous profit-making machine. And this is what the Dawes Report provides. French dreams of industrial hegemony are

pushed out of the way to make room for the international financiers to take the cream. It is the richest prize of the bourgeoisie (in hope) since the spoiling of India or the intended spoiling of Russia. *Adequate* hours of labour. *Economic* wages. These are the rewards of the German workers for their constitutional revolution. This is their outcome for following Social Democracy and the Second International. And it is a fitting culmination that these chains should be imposed on them by the hand of the official representatives of the Second International amid the applause of the bourgeoisie of their respective countries. Once it was hoped to make such a prey of Russia ("Russian bonds the cream of the financial market" as the British vulture press anticipated). But the Russian workers fought International Capital on Bolshevik lines; and to-day they are free, shaping their own lives and destinies, and feared and hated by International Capital. The German workers succumbed to the Wilsonian promises of Social Democracy and the Second International, of socialism and peace without struggle; and to-day the outcome for them is the slavery of the Dawes Report. In bitter experience the German workers are learning their lesson, as the four million Communist voters at the last election showed. Will the workers of the "victor" countries learn alongside them, or will they too have to go through the mill?

THE capitalists are well aware of the revolutionary force of the German working class and its supreme danger for themselves. The Dawes Report is not only a system of economic exploitation. It is also a direct combating of the revolution, as direct as the Versailles Treaty, aiming at shackling and binding down the revolutionary centre of the international working class outside Russia. The events of last year have shown them Germany as the impending battleground of the spread of the world revolution. Their answer is the London Conference and the Dawes settlement—at once an attempted composition of immediate capitalist differences and a tying down of the German working class. They worked under no illusions as to the significance of the situation. "The situation of Europe is such," wrote *The Times*, "that, if the Dawes Report is not applied at once and as a whole, any rational direction of events will become impossible, and the forces of

economic and political disorder will be finally released from control." And again: "The immediate future of civilisation depends on their agreement." The Dawes Report, in fact, like the Treaty of Versailles, which it endeavours to replace, is at once an instrument of imperialist exploitation and an instrument of counter-revolution. On the armed suppression of the German working class the London settlement of "peace and reason" is established. "It is stated," writes the Press, when the representative of American finance, the Secretary of State, Mr. Hughes, went to visit Berlin to survey the arrangements for the new acquisition, "it is stated that Mr. Hughes was much impressed by the number of armed police on guard at the railway station when he arrived, and that the impression was deepened by the still greater numbers at the celebration outside the Reichstag."

WHAT is Capitalism after the war? Why does it take on this violent and "irrational" character, typified in the Versailles Treaty, and so perplexing to the traditional liberal economists of capitalism? Why does the triumph of Pacifist Democracy, five years after the conclusion of the war, mean, not the re-establishment of peaceful "normal" conditions of capitalist exploitation, but the intensification of war conditions ("re-establishment of the authority of the Treaty of Versailles") and the tightening up of a system of violent subjection? Is it the arbitrary accident of "politics" and "politicians" cutting across the smooth play of economic forces, as the traditional liberal economists would have us believe? To say this is to confess failure to explain the whole character of the modern capitalist world, and to live in sentimental regrets for a vanished age. When Capitalism entered the era of Imperialism it left behind it the era of liberal economics, and therefore of liberalism, pacifism and democracy. The old "free play of economic forces" was no longer possible, because Capitalism had entered the stage of Monopoly. Monopoly Capitalism, with its concentration and continually increasing power of production, cannot find an adequate sphere for itself ready made; it has to make and carve out for itself its sphere of operations, its sources of supply and market; it has to subject whole territories and populations to its needs.

Thus every act of Monopoly Capitalism becomes an act of politics involving the armed power of the State ; the day of "pure economics" is over. The early stages of Imperialism already revealed this. The war was only a continuance of the same process when the limits of the earth's territory inevitably brought rival monopolist forces into conflict. But the end of the war, resulting in the crushing out of one set of forces, and the still further concentration of monopoly, only intensified, and did not diminish, the need. Still more desperate and violent means had to be employed, and the expression of these is in the Treaty of Versailles and the Dawes Report. Thus the triumph of Pacifist Democracy has only meant, and could only mean, not the re-establishment of peaceful normal conditions of capitalism ("stabilisation"), but only a still further stage in the decay of capitalism and the intensification of revolutionary issues.

ALREADY repeated attempts and approaches have been revealed towards the new form expressed in the Dawes Report. At the time of the Versailles Treaty, Britain was mainly preoccupied with the destruction of the German Navy and with colonial conquests, while America, after dallying with the rôle of arbiter in European politics, withdrew from a costly game of doubtful profit to concentrate on the New World and leave the Powers of the Old to wear one another down. France was consequently free at first to concentrate on its schemes of industrial and military hegemony in Europe by means of the Versailles Treaty. But this menace to British industrial interests led to increasing friction and at length an open breach on the part of Britain and a determination to counter France's plans. At the same time America, with the mounting gold reserve from all over the world in her coffers, was inevitably turning to Europe again as now a ready field for investment. The basis for co-operation between British and American finance was present ; with the debt settlement of 1923, by which Britain placed itself under tribute to America, the bargain was struck ; with the Dawes Committee the unofficial arbitrament of America was introduced (made unofficial, Mr. Hughes explained, to avoid the inconvenience of "hopeless debate") ; and with the London Conference the

victory of International Finance was achieved. Three years before Mr. Lloyd George, in his scheme of European Reconstruction Ltd., as a supreme investing company with a capital of twenty millions, had attempted the same type of thing ; but the time was not yet ripe. A year and a half ago Mr. Bonar Law, with his plan of an International Loan for Reparations of £1,250 millions, bringing in to the financiers 10 per cent., was working in the same direction ; but Britain alone was not strong enough to face France, and France went into the Ruhr in open defiance. Thereafter International Finance proceeded to experiment more cautiously with separate countries. First Austria was eaten up under the auspices of the League of Nations, and then, only a couple of months back, Hungary (at 8½ per cent.). And now with Germany comes the supreme attempt.

THE Bondholders now come out into the open. The Chairman of the Finance Committee of the League of Nations reappears as the "Trustee for the Bondholders" of the Hungarian Loan. Under the coy disguise of "Experts" or "independent authorities" or "a citizen of the United States" the financiers proceed to take a direct hand in control of the European estate. Wall Street descends on London. At one point, even, "the Bankers" come right out into the front of the political limelight (an unexpected and sensational intervention at a point when the ordinary process through MacDonald-Herriot as puppets had failed, and MacDonald had given away the position he was intended to maintain). This in itself is certainly a sufficiently striking development for its meaning to be plain to all. As the French Press angrily declared : "Agreements reached by the heads of the Allied Governments have no value unless Sir Montague Norman and Mr. Lamont consent to ratify them." And again: "It therefore depends upon the bankers to regulate the policy of Europe." Loans, investors, collateral security and financial return become the open subject matter of diplomacy and politics (under a Labour Pacifist regime). And this is the kind of sentence that becomes the normal item of the day's political news :—

Mr. Snowden and his colleagues had suggested in the interests of the bondholders that the contingency of a default should be

safeguarded, as far as possible, by a provision that it should be established only on the double and concurrent evidence of the Agent-General of Reparations and the Bondholders' Trustee.

Mr. Snowden was once a young and ardent propagandist of Socialism and denouncer of the evils of capitalism. What would he have said if in a sudden moment in his impassioned crusade there had appeared before his eyes as a grim presage of the future the silent testimony of the newspaper cutting, "Mr. Snowden and his colleagues had suggested in the interests of the bondholders, &c."?

IT is the crowning irony of the position that this supreme subjugation to International Capital should be accomplished through the chosen instrument of the "Labour and Socialist International." That the bankers and financiers should feel themselves not to be very popular or presentable figures, or inspiring as rulers, is natural, and equally in consequence that they should seek to veil themselves under any popular form, best of all, pacifist democracy and socialism, provided that it will obey their will. But what "Labour and Socialism" is to expect to gain from this rôle of slave-driver for finance capital is a more difficult question. The official representatives of the Labour and Socialist International have acted as the direct agents of their national bourgeoisie. We find the French Socialists supporting the Dawes Report because "the financial credit of France would be strengthened" (Leon Blum). We find British Labour threatening France with war in the event of no settlement. "Such a difference may bring us eventually to a point at which co-operation will prove impossible. That possibility must be faced. If the day comes we shall have nothing with which to reproach ourselves. And the world will have no difficulty in fixing the responsibility for the further troubles which must come if no settlement is reached."—*Daily Herald* leader. We find the French Socialists voting the Ruhr credits, so that the net effect of the "left" victory made possible by the Socialists is the carrying of the Ruhr credits by a larger majority than ever and the establishment of the Poincarist General Nolle as Minister of War, with five other Poincarists in the new Cabinet, on a basis of Socialist support. We find the British Labour Government "re-establishing the authority of the Treaty of Versailles." We find

the Labour and Socialist International together with the International Federation of Trade Unions officially approving the Dawes Report as "the only immediate solution possible at the present time." It is in fact literal truth to say that, if the Dawes Report, the most fiendish instrument of capitalist slavery, is successfully fastened on the German workers, with all its attendant horrors and reactions for the whole European working class, it will have been made possible only by the direct, deliberate and conscious act of the Labour and Socialist International.

UNDER what plea can the Labour and Socialist International attempt to defend or justify this open service to finance capital and imperialism? Is it their desire for Reparations which has led them to this result? But it has long been clear that the question here is in no sense a question of Reparations. On the very eve of the Conference the Reparations Commission issued its official half-yearly report of moneys and value received. The all-inclusive total up to June 30, 1924, that is for effectively four years, after deducting expenses of occupation, &c., showed a grand sum of ten million pounds for Britain and five million pounds for France. And we are to suppose that for the sake of this magnificent ten million pounds and five million pounds the supreme capitalist forces of Britain and France have been engaged in continuous political and diplomatic conflict and effort to the full extent of their powers almost to the exclusion of every other European question. The hypocrisy of Reparations is long worn through, and the naked imperialism beneath laid bare. And with it the hypocrisy of the policy of the Labour and Socialist International is equally laid bare and their direct service to finance imperialism stripped naked. The policy of the London settlement is the same as the policy in the Sudan or India, the same policy that hands out millions to Sudan exploitation syndicates and then sends cruisers and aeroplanes to crush the revolt of the Sudanese, the same policy that holds the first full Naval Review since the fateful days of August, 1914, and then celebrates it in the official "Labour" organ as "the most powerful instrument of national armed force which the world has ever seen." And it is a fitting accompaniment of this that this open pursuit of the policy of imperialism should

be accompanied at last by the open profession of imperialism, and that a "left" Labour M.P. in an advanced "socialist" organ should propound, for the purpose of defending the armed retention of the Sudan (cruisers and aeroplanes meanwhile merrily shelling the Sudanese), the interesting question whether Socialism may not after all be quite compatible with the Empire—an exact repetition of German Majority Socialism and the arguments of Parvus, &c.

THUS it is not a contradiction that the policy of "peace and reconciliation" should be accompanied by a policy of increased armament. They are both part of one and the same policy. Armaments, as Mr. MacDonald sagely remarked in the past, are only the expression of policy. The policy of imperialism is a policy of war. The dream of peace by "stabilisation," of peace by surrender to finance capital, is an idle dream, as poisonous and dangerous as the dream which lulled the German workers to their present misery. The conflicts of finance capital only grow greater by its growth. On the one hand French Imperialism makes clear that it still stands by the Versailles Treaty and the Reparations Commission and only waits its chance. On the other the German bourgeoisie only submits in order to win the means to prepare for the future struggle to throw off the yoke. The British bourgeoisie already cries out at the danger of the restoration of German capitalism and the menace to British industry. The rivalry of British and American capital lies deeper than all the phrases of co-operation. The world of the imperialist states bristles with preparations for war. In the midst of the friendly sentiments of MacDonald and Herriot, the British and French Staffs under their orders are preparing poison gas and chemical warfare for mutual destruction. On the very anniversary of the war the Labour and Socialist International gave out two expressions of its policy—one in words, the other in deeds. The expression in words was a manifesto against the danger of war, couched in exactly the same conventional terms as they used before the last war and proved by their actions to be hypocritical cant. The expression in deed was the Naval Review at Spithead. Of the two the expression in deed was the safer guide to the proletariat. The next war is preparing now, and it is being prepared by the Labour and Socialist Inter-

national. The fight against it will not be waged by listening to the fine phrases of the Labour and Socialist International and obeying their imperialist policy. The fight against it will only be waged by fighting imperialist policy now, by fighting the hypocrisy of the Labour and Socialist International, and by awakening the revolutionary forces of the working class here and in the colonies.

R. P. D.

THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS

By HARRY POLLITT

THE Fifty-sixth Trades Union Congress, which meets at Hull this year, marks a new period in the history of the Congress. For the first time a definite and organised Opposition faces the existing leadership, and raises unreservedly the banner of revolutionary working-class politics in British Trade Unionism.

The Plymouth Congress was the culminating demonstration of the old regime. The Plymouth Congress revealed a complete failure of leadership; no attempt at a serious programme or policy or facing the problems of the movement, nothing but confusion and petty jealousies of sectional leaders. The exposure was so complete that the official leaders had themselves to confess the sorry failure of the Congress and their determination to make amends for the future. "The Congress," declared Mr. Tillett, "has been discovered on its ugly side." "It was not a Congress," said Mr. Sexton; "it was a laundry." "Most Trades Union Congresses," said Mr. Clynes, "have been good. Of the bad ones I have known this has been the worst." And Mr. Hicks stated in the *Daily Herald*: "The Congress has proved that what is needed is for about half-a-dozen trusted men to draw up a programme clear and direct, which can be the acknowledged trade union platform, and then a properly organised campaign to preach it."

What has happened since the Plymouth Congress? Can it be said that there has been any change in leadership? There has not. Certain tactical changes have taken place because of the developing outside situation, changes seen in the approach to the Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement and to the Trades Councils, and in the stand made at Vienna for the admission of the Russian trade unions into the Amsterdam International. But these developments have not been accompanied by any change in the character of leadership. On the contrary, all the old evils have

been repeated a hundredfold during the past twelve months. We have seen not merely sectional disunity in the face of the common enemy. We have seen a great union issuing manifestos to the capitalist Press against the strike of another union in the midst of the struggle, and actually calling its own members "blacklegs" for daring to come out alongside their fellow-workers on strike in the same occupation and employment as themselves. We have seen the General Council, not merely repudiating any duty to attempt to organise and unite the action of the unions, but once again performing its old mediating rôle and coming forward with proposals from the employers to recommend them to a union on strike which the union's own executive could only describe as a "gross betrayal" of the workers. We have seen prominent trade union leaders entering into Cabinet positions and forthwith proclaiming their sacred duty to suppress strikes, maintain blacklegs and call in the military in the name of the interests of the community.

The need for a complete change in policy in British Trade Unionism is greater than ever. This is the fight which must now be inaugurated at the Hull Congress to give a new direction to the movement.

For the challenging forces of the future are already at hand. The past twelve months have seen the increasing stagnation and decay of the old leadership. But they have also seen a great revival of working-class activity, to which the official movement has been wholly unable to give direction. This has revealed itself in the repeated and formidable unofficial strikes, no less than in the strikes forced on particular unions. The strikes which have taken place, both official and unofficial, give the lie direct to that favourite platitude of trade union officials that the workers have got no fight in them. On the contrary, they prove that the fighting spirit of the workers is not only unimpaired, but that this spirit, properly organised and led in a common movement, could be made to achieve a great victory.

What is the meaning of the unofficial strikes? Great play has been made against the unofficial strikes which have taken place. Yet every worker knows that no unofficial strike ever takes place unless the workers are driven by sheer desperation to take such

action. The unofficial strikes are the most damning evidence of the failure of leadership of the existing direction. They reveal the revolt of the workers against intolerable conditions and rotten leadership, and the readiness of the workers for the future struggle once a real lead is given.

This revolt has got to force its expression through the channel of the organised movement. Already the beginnings of a new development are visible. The organisation of the National Federation of Trades Councils as a means of working-class expression has developed such strength as to compel the General Council to enter into negotiations of its own with the Trades Councils. The Unemployed Movement has also compelled recognition from the General Council. Minority movements have developed in different unions, and in some cases won notable successes, as in the election of the official Minority Movement candidate to the miners' secretaryship. New tendencies are revealed in several significant resolutions which have found their way to the Trades Union Congress agenda, bearing on the General Council and the affiliation of Trades Councils and the unemployed.

The series of articles by leading trade union officials in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* has also shown the stirrings in official circles created by the new forces and conditions. Here many prominent trade union leaders have recognised the seriousness of the situation. But it is a striking commentary on what has appeared that at the end of these discussions there has been no agreement amongst those writing these articles that they have any common programme or policy, or are prepared to take the initiative and use their influence and following to get something like a common agitation going. Mr. Hicks's proposal twelve months ago of a programme "clear and direct," drawn up by "about half-a-dozen trusted men," has not so far shown fruit. It is not here that the workers can look for leadership for the future.

The gathering of the new forces has got to find its own means. This is the achievement of the National Minority Conference held just on the eve of the Trades Union Congress. Here for the first time the revolutionary forces have met together in a common movement to shape their programme and face the existing leadership at the Congress as an organised Opposition with a

definite platform. The claims of working-class policy at home and abroad will be pressed forward at the Congress.

What are the issues facing the Hull Congress?

The first and most important issue facing the working class in Britain is the question of the Labour Government. This is not a question outside trade unionism, but the central question for the Trade Union Movement. Every question of working-class advance, of working-class policy, turns on the question of the Labour Government and the action of the organised workers in relation to it.

Modern conditions have compelled the recognition that trade union questions are inseparably bound up with politics. Even the most reactionary official no longer disputes this in principle. Economic and political forces far beyond the control of any single union govern the living conditions of the workers, and compel the workers if they are to go forward at all to be prepared to handle these forces. The example of the miners is the most vivid and significant example of this experience. The barest question of miners' wages and conditions has led straight to the economic reorganisation of the industry, to nationalisation, to Government action, to international politics. A powerfully organised section of the workers has been thrown from a leading position to the most desperate and pitiful straits by the play of international forces in bourgeois politics. On every side it is admitted that trade unionism alone is not enough, and that only a Workers' Government can solve these problems. The whole force of the working-class movement has been slowly turning in this direction. For this purpose the combined power of trade unionism has been organised into the Labour Party to win the power of government.

But what is the so-called Labour Government which has been set up, and which has won its way to power on the basis of the trade unions, doing now that it is established? Instead of taking a single step towards the only object of working-class organisation, the working-class conquest of power; to break the power of capitalism and establish working-class control of economic and social conditions, it is doing the opposite of this. It is supporting the capitalists against the working class. At home and abroad it has declared itself the servant of the capitalist State,

of Imperialism, of the capitalist army and navy and police, of all commercial and financial interests. It is supporting the imperialists against the subject workers all over the world, it is supporting the international financiers against the German and European workers, it is supporting the employers against the workers on strike at home. This has reached such a pitch that this "Labour" Government has even ranged itself in direct opposition to the trade unions on which it is based, so that we find the National Joint Council, officially representing the whole working-class movement, "deploring" steps which the Labour Government is actually taking.

If the Hull Trades Union Congress, representing the organised working class and holding the Labour Government in its power, fails to speak clearly on this, the most vital topic to the working class, it will have failed in its principal task. A Labour Government can only become a Government of the working class, serving the interests of the working class, when it is subject to the organised workers and represents their will.

It is not only necessary to declare definitely and clearly on the action of the Labour Government in industrial disputes, and its duty to regard itself, not as the impartial arbiter on behalf of capitalist interests, but as the active representative of the workers and their interests. It is also necessary to deal with the whole policy of the Labour Government at home and abroad, to outline the programme of measures which in the view of the organised movement it should adopt, and to declare the readiness for the whole power of the organised movement to be placed behind the Labour Government to secure the successful establishment of those measures.

Such a programme must be accompanied by a no less definite ultimatum to the Labour Government, laying down those lines of policy which it must abandon, or surrender power, failing which it will be repudiated by the organised movement.

Alongside the question of the Labour Government must be taken the question of war and the international position.

Never has the danger of war pressed so closely on the whole world. The imperialist rivalries which sought in vain to find a solution in the world war of 1914 and the ruinous "peace"

which followed it, are now, within ten years of the outbreak of the last war, preparing to plunge the world in an infinitely more deadly conflict which will endanger the whole future of the human race. The armament race presses forward in new forms, and the lead is being given by the British Labour Government.

The imperialist Powers are carrying out a world offensive against the workers. The Dawes Report represents the subjection of the German working class to the position of an industrial colony of British, French and American capitalism. The success of this measure, to the achievement of which the Labour Government has pledged itself, means the reduction of the German workers to the ten-hour day and starvation standards. By universal admission such a reduction will react directly on the standards of the British workers. The same applies to the policy of Empire development, opening out new fields of exploitation of cheap native labour, which the British Labour Government is also actively assisting.

A working-class policy which is not able to face these dangers is failing to face the greatest dangers before the working class. Only the international power of the working class, exerted in direct opposition to the whole power of international capitalism, can meet the present world situation.

The International Federation of Trade Unions of Amsterdam has passed resolutions against war, and even for international working-class action and the international general strike against war. But these resolutions are not worth the paper they are written on, any more than the old resolutions of the Second International, unless they are accompanied by a genuine fight against Imperialism now and active preparation for the future conflict.

The British Trades Union Congress, as the leading body of the Amsterdam International, has the duty to give the lead to other sections by showing the way to a direct and practical fight against armaments, against the capitalist army and navy, against imperialist politics and the Versailles Treaty, and for practical international working-class solidarity in union with the Russian revolution and the workers of Asia, Africa and the whole world.

At home the position facing the workers is equally urgent. The losses inflicted by the capitalist offensive have not been made

good. The defeat of sections still continues. There are still over a million unemployed; there are no definite signs of a trade revival; the wages of the workers are still below the 1914 level; food prices and rents are still exorbitant; taxation still imposes a crushing burden on the workers; workshop exploitation is keener than ever; production has been speeded up and piece-work prices cut to the lowest level; and machine production is continually displacing thousands of workers. The capitalists are forced by the economic crisis to use every effort to lower the cost of production.

What is the greatest need of the Trade Union Movement in this position? It is the need to be able, not merely to adopt general principles and resolutions, but to organise common action. The type of resolution proclaiming the six-hour day, introduced by the National Union of Railwaymen last year and carried by a two million majority, is the type of resolution that makes the Trades Union Congress a laughing stock. Everyone knows that it means nothing, and the union introducing it immediately after is negotiating spreadover agreements which eat away the eight-hour day. What matters is to adopt a common wages and hours policy, no matter on how modest a scale to begin with, and stick to it and stand together to carry it out. This is what every workers sees as plain as a pikestaff when he sees the employers playing with section after section. Let us start with a plain minimum wage of £4 a week and a forty-four-hour week. But let us then employ the common force of the whole movement to establish this, and accept no settlement for any section until every section is satisfied on the common basis adopted. This is the only practical immediate policy for trade unionism in face of the combined forces of the capitalists.

It is a practical question that the Congress has to face. Is it prepared to mobilise the workers in a campaign not merely for propaganda purposes but for fighting purposes in order to secure (1) a minimum wage of £4 a week; (2) a forty-four-hour working week; (3) the General Council's own proposals on unemployment as outlined in the Six Point Charter; (4) the suspension of all forms of luxury building and the taking over of every available empty residence in order to find accommodation for workers needing houses, and to speed up building of houses for workers?

We of the Opposition declare that a common fighting policy for demands such as the above must be adopted by the Congress.

To accomplish this will need a transformation of the present character of the Trade Union Movement. The anarchy of separate competing unions with hundreds of little autocratic executives and an unreal powerless General Council is utterly unfit to lead a united and disciplined working-class army. Amalgamation, necessary as it is, is far too slow and ineffective to deal with this question. The power of the whole movement has got to be centralised in order to combine its force. A General Council must be established with ruling power over all the separate unions, and responsible to Congress for carrying out the common policy adopted.

But along with the centralisation of the movement, if it is not to result in bureaucratic stagnation, must go a definite clearing of our aim and objective. The common organised force of the whole movement is needed, not simply for some immediate demand of wages and hours, but to carry out the common object of the whole movement, the advance to the control of industry. The objective of trade unionism must be set out clearly before the whole Trade Union Movement—namely, the control of production by the workers, by the workers engaged in production organised on the basis of production, from the smallest workshop to the highest directing board. Unless this is recognised as our supreme objective, trade unionism becomes simply a part of the daily apparatus of capitalism. To achieve this necessarily implies the political conquest of power, and the breaking of the power of capitalism, which means the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Trade Union Movement can only realise itself when it enters unhesitatingly into the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and organises all its forces for its objective of capturing the control of production. But this means organisation on the basis of production, which is organisation on the basis of the workshop.

Workshop organisation, workshop agitation and struggle, and the propaganda of the control of industry must be the supreme concern of the whole Trade Union Movement. This is the line of unity in the present confusion and division, and the line of advance for the whole working class. This, leading to and united with

the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat, is the supreme revolutionary objective in trade unionism.

To sum up. In the above I have outlined briefly six of the principal issues facing the Trade Union Movement at the Hull Congress. They are (1) the Labour Government ; (2) war prospects and the international situation ; (3) an action programme on wages, hours, unemployment and housing ; (4) centralised trade union organisation ; (5) workshop organisation ; (6) workers' control of industry.

Now let us turn to the agenda prepared by the General Council and see what we find. Is there any evidence of preparation, or even of a desire to face the problems confronting the working-class movement ? Is the Congress going to lead the way for the working class by resolutions on the " Humane Slaughtering of Animals " or " Civil Servants and Party Politics " ?

The General Council has prepared what it calls an " Industrial Workers' Charter." What is this Industrial Workers' Charter ? Is it an attempt to formulate a programme of action for the working class ? It is nothing of the kind. Throughout the proposals there is no hint of action or of any consideration how to face the immediate pressing problems of the working class. It is nothing but a collection of the old generalities, an attempt to crystallise many of the hardy annuals that come up at these congresses. It is a grand codification about as important to the working class as a manuscript out of the tomb of Tutankhamen. This Industrial Workers' Charter is in fact simply a piece of clumsy window dressing which will take in no one.

At the same time the General Council prides itself on the fact that it has been pursuing a policy of amalgamation (the results of which are certainly invisible without a microscope) and holds out to the working class the grand hope of ultimate trade union reorganisation in this way (when all official interests have been satisfied) in about a thousand years. But of the immediate needs of the working class for unity and common action now—not a word.

It is not along this way that the working class will go forward. The revolt against this leadership must be organised to victory. The National Minority Movement points the way. The urgent

needs of the situation compel the growing of the forces of revolt. The National Minority Movement must gather up all these forces under a common leadership until there is achieved a powerful mass movement which will sweep away the old leadership with its ideas of class-peace and limited trade unionism that can never bring the workers freedom from their exploiters.

Year by year the movement must grow until it is powerful enough to transform the present Trades Union Congress from being a picnic and annual re-union of officials into the Congress of the working-class movement which will unite and direct the workers in their fight and will relentlessly carry on the struggle to the final conquest of power.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND FRENCH IMPERIALISM AFTER THE LONDON CONFERENCE

By A. ROSMER

THE Conference of London marks the beginning of a new phase in the carrying out of the Treaty of Versailles and in the enforcement of the Peace. Its essential characteristic is, obviously, the rôle played by America. Not only does she participate actively, for the first time, at the Conference, instead of being satisfied with the rôle of observer, as formerly, but, in fact, she dominates it. Her bankers are there and have the means of imposing their conditions, without its being necessary to resort to the brutal method of ultimatum. If the Conference does not want them they withdraw—themselves and their dollars; no loan and the Experts' plan fails. Once again, America succeeds in playing the part of the pacifist nation which benevolently consents to aid Europe in a difficulty, at the very same moment as she assures her hegemony by the omnipotence of riches accumulated when the belligerents were exhausting themselves in an endless butchery. She is the grand profiteer of war and of peace.

All the same it is not this aspect of the Conference which has been the most generally underlined. The English, French and German Press has principally referred to the discussions between the Allies, and then between the Allies and the Germans, when the Premiers had at last found a compromise. The evacuation of the Ruhr, which was not formerly on the agenda of the Conference, nevertheless imposed itself because such was the wish of the bankers, and because, in the end, it could hardly have been otherwise. In France the newspapers of the "Left Bloc" speak emphatically of the results of the Conference: it is the beginning of a new era. The *Entente Cordiale*, threatened by Poincaré's policy, is reconstituted. It is the theme also developed by MacDonald. These problems have too their importance. Have English Imperialism

and French Imperialism found a common ground of understanding; can they find a common ground of understanding? That is the subject of this article.

In order to answer this question it is necessary to recall the conditions in which the *Entente Cordiale* was realised and on what points British Imperialism and French Imperialism came into conflict on the morrow of the German defeat.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND THE WAR

At the opening of the present century the foreign policy of Great Britain underwent a radical transformation. One witnesses a complete reversal of the policy of the preceding period. With Germany, England had cordial relations. Russia was the enemy which, by its proximity, threatened India, and by its watch on Constantinople and the Narrows threatened the route from London to India. Between Great Britain and France as a result of the latter's colonial ambitions there broke out conflicts, which at times went so far as threats of war.

The South African War was a disagreeable surprise for the British jingoes. It put the Empire in a difficult and humiliating position. The enemies of British power publicly showed their joy. There even were on their part hints of intervention. When the affair had been liquidated, an examination of the situation, suddenly revealed by these hostile manifestations, became necessary. The result of this examination was a total reversal of foreign policy. Peace would be made with Russia and with France, and Germany would be regarded as the sole enemy against whom all blows should be directed.

It is interesting to note that the idea of this radical change, whose consequences were to be so serious, was originally expressed by the ultra-nationalist *National Review*. The proposal, at first stupefying, was justified in the following manner:—

Perhaps the main fact which should impress itself upon Englishmen in considering the actual international outlook is not merely the extraordinary growth of Germany—who has achieved greatness by trampling on her neighbours—but the fact that this formidable community is becoming increasingly dependent on a foreign food supply, as well as on foreign supplies of raw and partially manufactured articles. This necessarily involves the development of Germany as a Sea Power, and it is a matter for every European State to ponder over.

. . . She (Germany) is becoming transformed from an agricultural into an industrial community, and if the process continues for another quarter of a century, while remaining secured against actual starvation by her land frontiers, she will become no less dependent on the ocean highways for her prosperity as we are. Great Britain is therefore confronted with the development of a new sea power founded on the same economic basis as herself, and impelled by a desire to be supreme. *But l'océan ne comporte qu'un seul maître.* We have secured in the past the sovereignty of the seas, and our sceptre cannot be wrested from us without a desperate and bloody struggle.

The article was published in a way which emphasised its importance. There was no author's name and this fact was explained by stating that it expressed a collective opinion rather than the views of any particular individual. Naturally it was emphatically declared that it had not, in any way, been inspired by "those responsible for the conduct of British Foreign Policy."

In spite of its exceptional importance, the French Press commented very little on it. Clemenceau, who was editing a weekly, *Le Bloc*, reproduced from it some important extracts. His commentary was, as a whole, sympathetic, although discreet. The vague Anglophobia, let loose by the Boer War, was still too strong for a period of patient preparation not to be necessary. This was perfectly understood by the *National Review* and to establish cordial relations with France advances were made *via* the detour of Russia. In case of success, two birds would thus be killed with one stone. The conclusion of the "prolonged contest" with Russia would bring England back to friendly terms with France, perhaps the only nation, it was candidly added, ready to make sacrifices and to run risks in favour of those who rejoice in her friendship.

The war plan outlined by the *National Review* was to be realised by Edward VII., whom too zealous servitors saluted at his death as Edward the Peacemaker. An agreement was reached with Russia in 1907 on the subject of Persia. It was a real partition of this country in the form of zones of influence. The signatory for the British Empire was the Liberal Sir Edward Grey. The *Entente* with France had occurred several years before. Edward VII. had found a servile ally in the person of the Radical Delcassé. The encircling of Germany was followed out successfully, and the consequence of this policy was the war of 1914. With the crushing of Germany, the reduction to nothing of its fleet, the division of its

colonies, Great Britain saw her essential war aims realised. In spite of this she hurled herself against French Imperialism.

FRENCH IMPERIALISM AND THE WAR

With Delcassè, France had unreservedly lent herself to the achievement of the policy of Edward VII. Russia found in Poincarè an instrument equally docile and in full agreement with its aims. The correspondence of the Ambassador Isvolsky, discovered in the archives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and published by our Russian comrades, furnishes proof positive of that. Moved by the latent spirit of revenge, France could easily and at the chosen hour be dragged into a war against Germany. It is what happened in 1914. But it was on France that the war weighed most heavily ; it was she who furnished the largest contingent of victims, and it was her territory that served as battlefield.

At the conclusion of hostilities Great Britain and France found themselves in very different positions. The former's war aims were achieved. The latter could only count its ruins. Yet it was her generals who had conducted the war. It is they who wear the halo of victory. That the war might " pay " impossible indemnities must be demanded from Germany, and to win the hegemony of Europe what remains of Germany must be encircled, but this time under the direction of French policy. This policy must dominate the new states which have arisen from the war and are grouped in the Little *Entente* : Jugo-Slavia, Czecho-Slovakia, Roumania. France provides them with military instructors and munitions. She does the same with Poland. She manœuvres in such a way that the left bank of the Rhine may be occupied for a long time. To consolidate that occupation and at the same time to satisfy the ambitions of the *Comité des Forges*, France decides, with Poincarè, to occupy the Ruhr. French Imperialism is on the way to attaining its aim. Yet there is a weak point : its finances. The French State is, in fact, bankrupt. It is at this weak point that British Imperialism—anxious at the French hegemony of Europe—delivers its attack. In that it is aided by American finance. A redoubtable offensive is let loose against the franc whose fall takes on a catastrophic appearance. To stay the fall Poincarè has to issue an appeal to the American and English bankers and to

accept their conditions. Under menaces, he has to resign himself to accept the terms of international finance, which he had denounced until then as an occult and evil-doing power. Before his fall, he accepted "without restrictions or reserve" the plan of the experts, which involves the evacuation of the Ruhr.

THE RUHR AND THE LEFT BANK OF THE RHINE

On leaving for the Conference M. Herriot had committed himself before the French Parliament in the following terms. "I am going to London," he said, "but the question of the evacuation of the Ruhr will not arise." All the same this question did arise. It even dominated the Conference; M. Herriot was obliged to consent to that, and to agree to fix a latest date for evacuation. He frankly explained this contradiction. "I could," he said, "have maintained my point of view: it would have meant the rupture of the Conference. That was a heavy responsibility which I was unwilling to take."

But it is not only the question of the evacuation of the Ruhr that M. Herriot had to allow to be posed at London. It was also that, even more essential in the eyes of the French Imperialists, of the evacuation of the left bank of the Rhine. M. Jacques Bardoux, after a characterisation of the methods of British diplomacy, adds that the representatives of the Foreign Office did not let all their attention be absorbed by the immediate objectives of the Conference, and that they by no means forgot "that they have for centuries been charged with the task of barring France from the left bank of the Rhine." With this aim in constant view they permitted themselves a manœuvre which consisted in associating the occupation of the Cologne zone with that of the Ruhr.

French Ministers, and Poincaré in particular, have always affirmed that since Germany has not fulfilled its engagements the allotted period of occupation has not yet begun to expire. England would be brutally repudiating that contention in insisting on the evacuation of the Cologne zone at the same time as that of the Ruhr, that is to say, on August 15, 1925. She would further demand that her troops, on leaving Cologne, should proceed to occupy the next zone to be evacuated, that of Coblenz, in order to be able five years later to carry out the evacuation of this second zone. And,

in conclusion, cries M. Jacques Bardoux dramatically: "Is the Rhine barrier lost?"

The left bank of the Rhine is, in fact, a principal objective of French Imperialism. During the war, at the very time when the governments of the *Entente* were solemnly affirming that they had but one objective—to beat back German Imperialism—and were swearing that they did not dream of dismembering Germany, it is now known that they were concluding among themselves secret treaties by which they shared out in anticipation the spoils of victory.

It was thus that France obtained Tsarist Russia's co-operation in support of its claims on the left bank of the Rhine. The negotiation was carried through by the Radical Doumergue, to-day President of the Republic. A letter from France's ambassador at Petrograd, Paleologue, to his Minister, dated January 30 (February 12), 1917, informs us exactly as to the French pretensions. This is the text:—

Monsieur le Ministre,

On January 21 (February 3) last His Majesty the Emperor was good enough to grant a special audience to the first delegate of France at the Inter-Allied Conference.

In the course of this meeting, His Excellency M. Gaston Doumergue informed His Majesty of the claims and territorial guarantees which the Government of the Republic proposes to be imposed on Germany. They may be summarised as follows:—

(1) Alsace-Lorraine to be returned to France.

(2) Its frontiers will reach at least as far as those of the ancient Duchy of Lorraine and will be traced, at the pleasure of the French Government, in such a way as to cover all strategic needs and to re-integrate in French territory all the iron basin of the region, as well as all the basin of the Sarre valley.

(3) The other territories situated on the left bank of the Rhine, which are actually incorporated in Germany, will be entirely detached from the latter and separated from all economic or political dependence on her.

(4) Those of the territories that are not incorporated in French territory will form an autonomous and neutral State, and will remain occupied by French troops "as long as the guarantees insisted upon by the allies to safeguard a durable peace shall not be realised, and in a general way so long as the hostile States shall not have integrally satisfied all the conditions of peace."

It is known that at the time of the Peace Conference this question was one of those which embarrassed the negotiators. Clemenceau

defended tenaciously the ambitions of French Imperialism. But there was no longer any Tsarist Russia to back him up and he found himself faced by Lloyd George and Wilson, who energetically resisted him. J. Maynard Keynes, and others subsequently, have thrown light on the laborious and secret negotiations. They have shown how Wilson, in the end, gave in, and how a compromise was reached. The French only secured a limited occupation, but, in their heart of hearts, they held the conviction that once the French army was installed on the left bank of the Rhine it would be easy to find pretexts for keeping it there indefinitely and thus to obtain, in spite of all, their end.

The occupation of the Ruhr was the tangible manifestation of an offensive spirit on the part of French Imperialists. The London Conference, on the other hand, is evidence of a retreat. Once the Ruhr is evacuated and the evacuation of the left bank begun, the plan of French hegemony in Europe would find itself seriously threatened. But it remains to be seen just how far M. Herriot will be able to go. The Conferences, which have followed one another since the signature of the Treaty of Versailles, have already tried the gentle method of conciliation. Everything has been tried, even direct accord with Germany. But what France can receive from Germany in the name of reparations is so infinitesimal compared with what Clemenceau's ministers looked to and compared with what would have to be received to cover even a poor part of the financial deficit, that a return to the nationalist offensive is always possible.

M. Herriot has at the moment a sound enough political position. But the foundation on which it is based is rather narrow. He has been put in power by the *petite bourgeoisie*, by the peasantry, by the official class, which, frightened at the cost of the grand imperialist policy, brutally rejected the men of the *bloc national* to whom they had accorded an unreserved confidence four years ago. They constitute the strata of the population the least politically conscious, and it will always be possible to dupe them as long as M. Herriot is unable to offer them substantial realisations. He can make speeches about peace, but he cannot bring them peace. French policy must waver between the brutal activity of the *Comité des Forges*, representing the interests of heavy industry, and the hesitant

pacifism of the Radicals, representing the *petite bourgeoisie* and the peasants, such as M. Herriot.

British Imperialism and French Imperialism had one aim in common during the war, when they each wanted to beat Germany. But as soon as the war was finished their fundamental antagonism revealed itself. Great Britain, turning back immediately to its traditional policy, wants at all costs to bar the road to French Imperialism, impatient to establish its hegemony on the continent. But France, who wants compensation for the heavy losses she suffered, seeks it in the development of her power, while the *Comité des Forges* dreams of realising, under its own domination, the union of the iron of Lorraine and the coal of the Ruhr, thus securing metallurgical hegemony. So that numerous and deep causes of conflict exist. One can endeavour to disguise them. That is what MacDonal and Herriot compel themselves to do. But they arise again at the first opportunity as soon as the field of oratory and of pacifist phrase-making is left.

British Imperialism and French Imperialism which MacDonal and Herriot find themselves forced to serve as well as Lloyd George and Poincaré, though by different ways, will not give the world peace. They are powers of rapine and domination. The first rests on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of men in Asia and in Africa. The other is, above all, the agent of the Counter-Revolution in Europe. It is a permanent menace to the working class of all countries, impatient to free itself from the Capitalist yoke. One and the other they constitute together the greatest obstacle to the emancipation of the workers. The latter have got to direct against them their attacks and to prepare to beat them.

Workmen of Great Britain and of France do not know each other enough. While the governments of the two countries frequently meet and make plans together, the two proletariats remain practically isolated, ignoring each other. That is a position unfavourable to their common struggle and which must disappear. Each conference of the Franco-English Government representatives ought to be accompanied by a simultaneous Franco-English working-class conference, which, closely following the proceedings of the other, would reveal its real motives to the working masses. It is difficult for the workers to know where they stand in the midst

of all these proceedings, all the more as the Capitalist Press is engaged in cleverly presenting them in such a way as to conceal the meaning. Successively as they develop their double character should be exposed, on the one hand, the inability of the Capitalist States to solve the problems presented by the great imperialist war, and, on the other hand, the desire to make the workers alone bear the expenses of this odious slaughter. Once well informed the workers could no longer be duped by the lacqueys of capitalism. The conviction that their real enemies are the capitalists of their own countries would take root in them. Uniting their forces, learning co-ordination in the common struggle, basing all their activity on the solid rock of the Russian Revolution, aided by the Communist Parties of France and of Great Britain, they could engage in the decisive battle against the two great instruments of war and of reaction, British Imperialism and French Imperialism, which constitute a permanent menace to their security and an obstacle to their emancipation, and so lead this hard fight to the final victory.

France, August 23, 1924.

IRELAND AND THE ILLUSION OF MACDONALDISM

By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

OUT of a sky upon which there were visible no signs of an impending storm, at any rate of such a character and upon such an issue, there has suddenly come a shaft of forked lightning and there is heard reverberating around the heavens the rumble of an all too familiar thunder.

The question of the Boundary between Northern Ireland and the Free State has assumed an importance which can hardly be exaggerated, not for what it is in itself but for what it portends in the way of political crisis in the United Kingdom. The old sectarian and racial feuds which for generations delayed the formation of an organised industrial and political movement of the labouring masses in the great manufacturing and mining areas of England, Scotland, and, to some extent, of Wales, are again coming to the fore, not because they are vital in themselves but because they are of the utmost utility to the master class.

It seemed upon the face of things as if not only in Scotland, but in certain hitherto impregnable citadels of Toryism and of Unionism such as Liverpool and Birmingham, the next General Election would see breaches made and the Labour Party flag firmly planted where hitherto it has failed to carry the day or has only recently begun to make its appearance.

At the last election, Lancashire and, to some extent, Yorkshire were prevented from going to the Labour Party by the raising of the fake issue of Free Trade as against the Tariff. Liberalism and Toryism were able in these centres of fiscal tradition to fight upon a matter that had in it no more than a spurious interest for the vast masses of the electorate.

At the next election there was the gravest danger of the industrial areas on either side of the Pennines going definitely Labour. Not only would they go Labour, but owing to the

prolongation of the crisis in the cotton industry and the realisation in the woollen and worsted towns of their dependence for employment upon Russian demand, they would, perhaps, go pronouncedly Socialist and with a strong disposition towards the Communist Left.

There is intense unrest, likely to express itself in political rather than in industrial activity meanwhile by reason of the poverty and lowered *morale* of the workers in every mining area of Great Britain. The position of the coal export trade has, with the resumption of production and export from the Ruhr, become desperate, and the general rule is for collieries working for the foreign market to be idle from two to three days in each week.

Even the iron and steel towns—hotbeds of reaction—such as Middlesbrough, Motherwell, and the Black Country—have been suffering so badly that there has seemed every likelihood of them going over to Labour and deserting their respective standards of Liberalism and Toryism.

The revival of the Irish question as an issue antagonising the Protestant North and the Catholic South in the present circumstances, and in those that are now developing, would be a veritable godsend to the apologists of the old political parties and to the defenders of the existing economic system.

It is an indubitable fact that will be made clear by any analysis of the hold of the parties upon them that the ports are, with the exception of London and Swansea, almost all unrepresented, or only represented to a small extent by Labour. The ports are centres of casual labour, and are dominated by a proletarian electorate, however ready to come together to fight upon some specific wage issue, easily and continuously deluded by the raising of the bogeys of religious strife and nationalist prejudice. In most of them the Irish element is considerable, and between the Irishman and the native, English, Welsh or Scotch, there blow up feuds upon slight provocation.

The coal mining, iron and steel, and dockside industries—as also the chemical industry—are, by reason of the date of their maximum development and the manner of their evolution, very largely staffed by men of Irish origin or descent.

In three towns and a number of villages to whose rise I have

given particular attention, viz., Motherwell, Middlesbrough and Barrow-in-Furness, and the smaller centres of Consett, Cleator Moor, Ebbw Vale and St. Helens, the Irishman, exiled by the potato famine, and the subsequent depopulation of his countryside with the decay of corn raising and cattle grazing, entered in such a way as to sow very deep the seeds of bitterness between the native worker whose standard was being depreciated, and the immigrant whose standard was being appreciated.

The mining areas are the strongholds of the Labour Party, but, at the same time, they are places where the religious and racial antagonisms die hard. The capitalist politicians know this, and they know, also, that in a period of bad trade when employment is slack, it is not difficult to inflame sentiment against a man of alien faith and race.

In the west of Scotland, especially in Lanarkshire, since the sweeping advances made by the Left, the most frantic endeavours have been made to renew the superstitious reverence of the Catholic proletariat for shrines such as the Carfin Grotto, erected last year into a British Lourdes, within about a mile of Motherwell. In Liverpool, we saw in the pageantry and ceremonial of the consecration of the first Anglican cathedral, the first cathedral consecrated in such manner since the Reformation, a definite working up of English State Protestant consciousness in the one city of England where Irish Catholicism is most militant.

Hard upon all this, and into a situation by no means so unfavourable as some of our optimists and illusionists would have us believe, we have introduced the perennial topic of Ulster and of the ultimate constitution of the Irish nation.

For there can be no doubt that if Ulster shows fight or rather maintains the hard-faced bluff that no British Government is likely to call—and Ulster will maintain that bluff—the Irish Free State will declare itself indeed a politically Free State—a Republic.

Britain is menaced to-day by revolt within the Empire, within the Empire of Exploitation, viz. India, and by virtual secession of the great self-governing Dominion of Canada.

It is quite within the range of possibility, and even of probability, that the Union of South Africa may also, in fact if not in name, secede from the Empire.

Egypt, actually if not formally a portion of the Empire, and the mandated territory of Mesopotamia are but awaiting their opportunity to break away.

France, when her *bourgeoisie* has not got its eyes upon the Rhine, ever looks out from Marseilles across the Mediterranean towards Syria and Egypt. France is conscious that to-day, more than ever before, the Mediterranean is a part of the spinal column of the British Empire and a vital trade route of the British merchant marine.

France has been checked upon the Rhine. If her bourgeoisie yields in that quarter as is probable it will, under the combined pressure of Britain and the United States, France will seek an alternative and compensating outlet towards the East. Moreover, the United States will encourage her in seeking such compensation, using her as a cat's paw in Asia Minor, and in Africa as she has used Britain in the Ruhr.

Finally, it should be noted that M. Herriot represents the bourgeoisie of Lyons, and the Liberal South, and that this section of the French bourgeoisie has never, since the days of Rouget de l'Isle and the artillery officer from Corsica (Napoleon), required much inducement to direct its diplomacy and its arms towards the Nile and the Isthmus of Suez.

England's difficulty has ever been Ireland's opportunity. Ireland, the Ireland of Cosgrave, the Ireland of the ambitious, but somewhat impecunious, petite bourgeoisie of Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Limerick and Wexford, is, like the ambitious bourgeoisie of Italy, looking for cheap credit and greater freedom of facilities to contract loans.

Cosgrave and his colleagues know full well the strength of their position. They can bargain with America. They can bargain with Britain. They can sell their country as a strategical outpost of England either to that Power or to the United States.

Ruthlessly, relentlessly, this Irish Free State is going to drive home its advantage. Moreover, the bourgeoisie of Southern Ireland has, almost as much as the tottering bourgeois ascendancy of Northern Ireland, everything to gain by raising once more the issue that cuts clean across the class issue.

How miserably has Ramsay MacDonald, that "astute"

wire-puller, been hanged in his own braces! He has aimed, above all, at achieving success as the man who made peace in Europe, stabilised the exchanges, made safe the Continent for credit, and so set running smoothly again the wheels of trade. Following that will-o'-the-wisp, he has plunged deeper and ever deeper into the quagmire of compromise and the bog of broken promises.

He has jettisoned (always "for the time being," and never with any other thought than that "presently" he would redeem his pledges) his programme of unemployed relief schemes; his project of nationalisation; his policy of the capital levy. He has sought to be more respectable and more conservative than his predecessors. He has endeavoured to excel the bourgeois politicians at their own game. He has believed in making gestures, penning notes, drafting resolutions, proclaiming aloud his belief in "the eternal verities." He has been the brightest bubble that bourgeois democracy has so far blown. As he goes wafting down with the wind the dreamers and illusionists call us to wonder at the fairy fantasies, the iridescent hues of this magic creation. But the bubble is just about to be—pricked!

THE WORKERS' ARTISTIC INHERITANCE

By A. BOGDANOV

IN dealing with religion¹ as an example of the artistic inheritance of the working class I intentionally started out with the most contested and difficult question. In this manner it will be easier for us to master the main problem. It is clear that the weapon with which the working class can and should master that inheritance is that criticism of ours which I have already described, with its new "all-organisational" standpoint of collective labour.

How should our criticism approach its subject?

The soul of a work of art is what we call its "artistic idea." This is its plot and the essence of its treatment, the problem and the principle of its solution. Of what kind, then, is this problem? We know now. No matter how it has been considered by the artist himself, in reality it is always a problem of *organisation*. It is this in two senses: in the first it is a question of how to organise harmoniously a certain sum total of the elements of life and experience; in the second sense, it is a question of how to ensure that the unity created in this way may serve as a means of organisation for a certain community. If the first is not accomplished we have no art, but only confusion; if the second is not accomplished, then the work has no interest for anybody except the author himself, and is of no use whatever.

We shall take for an illustration one of the greatest works of world-literature, the finest diamond of the old cultural heritage—Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

What is the "artistic idea" of this work? It is the organisational problem of a human soul torn by the difficult contradictions of life, divided between the striving towards happiness, love and

¹ See "Art, Religion and Marxism," in the last issue of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* (August, 1924; Vol. VI, No. 8); also "Proletarian Poetry" in the May and June issues of last year (Vol IV, Nos. 5 & 6), and "The Criticism of Proletarian Art" in the December, 1923, issue (Volume V, No. 6), all by the same author.

harmony, and the necessity of waging a painful, stern, merciless struggle. Where is the way out of this contradiction, how can all this be reconciled? How can the thirst for harmony be prevented from weakening a man in the inevitable struggle of life, be prevented from robbing him of the strength, firmness and coolness which are necessary for this struggle? At the same time, how can a man avoid the involuntary cruelty of the blows, the blood and dirt of the wounds, destroying the whole joy, the whole beauty of existence? What should be done to restore harmony to the soul rent asunder by the sharp conflict between its deepest and sublimest need, and the imperious demand dictated by the hostility of his environment?

We perceive at once how vast is the scale of this organisational problem, how great is its significance for every man. It is not a problem which faces the Danish Prince alone, nor the numerous "Hamlets" and "little Hamlets" of our middle class and its literature. This problem is an inevitable moment in the life of every man; he who is strong enough to solve it is raised by it to a higher stage of self-consciousness; for the man who cannot solve the problem becomes a source of spiritual ruin, and sometimes even leads to his destruction.

This tragedy penetrates perhaps most acutely the soul of the proletarian idealist, and even more so the collective psychology of the working class. Fraternity is its ideal, the harmonious life of humanity is its highest aim; but how removed from all this is its surrounding environment, how difficult and at times gloomy and cruel is the struggle forced upon it! Yet it must fight if it does not want to be deprived of all that has been attained by previous innumerable exertions, if it does not want to lose its social dignity and the very sense of life. Little joys have been given it, and great is the thirst for them; but even that little is constantly threatened with destruction or deformation by the inevitable elements of social hatred and anarchy. Why, the very ability to love and rejoice may be killed in the exasperation of the fight, in the despair of defeats and in the rage of the countering blows!

The tragedy of Hamlet enfolds itself on just such a basis. He is a very gifted man, with a fine artistic nature; and at the same time life has favoured him. His education as a prince and heir to

the throne, several years of wandering in Germany in the capacity of a student, the fullest enjoyment afforded by occupation in the sciences and arts, life in an environment of friendship and good cheer: finally his serene poetical love for Ophelia—it is seldom that a man has an existence so happy and harmonious. Hamlet takes it as a matter of course. He has never experienced, nor can he imagine, any other existence. But then the time comes, the horror and hideousness of life breaks in upon him—at first in dark foreboding and then with painful clearness.

His family has been destroyed, the lawful order of his country has been shattered to the ground. A traitor and fratricide has seized the throne of his father and seduced his mother; at the court, hypocrisy, intrigue and licentiousness are reigning; decline of the old good customs is spreading over the country, breeding confusion. It is necessary to restore law, to cut short crime, to avenge the death of his father and the disgrace of his family. Such is the sacred duty of Hamlet, as defined by the whole order of his feudal conceptions.

Is he sufficiently strong to accomplish all this? Yes, in his rich nature there are the requisite powers. For he is not only an artist and a favourite of fortune, he is not only a “passive æsthetic” for whose life harmony is as indispensable as air. He is, besides, the son of a warrior king, a descendant of the great Vikings; he has received a perfect military education. There is a fighter in him—but one that has not had the opportunity to unfold, to put himself to the test; and, what is worse, the fighter is combined with the passive æsthete.

Here is the essence of the tragedy. The struggle demands from Hamlet resort to cunning, deception, violence and cruelty; but these are repulsive to his mild and refined soul. And more, he has to direct them against his nearest and dearest: in the camp of his enemies he finds his beloved mother, and he sees that Ophelia herself is used as a tool in the intrigues against him. His enemies put them forward, and thus play skilfully upon the weakest sides of his soul. His hand, which is raised for the blow, is stopped; the inner struggle paralyses his will, the momentary resolution gives way to hesitation and inaction, time passes in fruitless meditation—the result is a deep duality and for a time even the

wreck of his personality: everything is confused in the chaos of unavoidable contradictions, Hamlet "becomes insane."

An ordinary person would have been crushed by the circumstances and would have perished before he could do anything. But Hamlet is a figure not of the ordinary. He is an heroic character. Through the tortures of despair, through the sickness of his soul, he still goes step by step to the real solution. The elements of the two separated personalities in one—of the æsthete and the warrior—penetrate each other and are welded in a new personality: the active æsthete, the champion of the harmony of life. The main contradiction disappears: the thirst for harmony finds an outlet in the exertion of fighting, the blood and mire of the struggle are directly redeemed by the consciousness that it serves to purify life and raise it to a higher level. The organisational problem is solved, the artistic idea has been clothed in form.

Hamlet, it is true, perished; and in this the great poet is objectively right, as always. The enemies of Hamlet had this advantage: while he was gathering the forces of his soul, they acted, and prepared everything for his destruction. But he dies a victor: crime is punished, the lawful order is restored, the fate of Denmark is entrusted to firm hands: to the young hero Fortinbras. He is not so great a man as Hamlet, but has an harmonious character imbued with the principles of the feudal world, whose ideals inspired Hamlet also.

Here another aspect of our criticism comes in. The organisational problem has been solved; but which collectivity was it that gave the author the vital material for the embodiment of this problem? Of course, it was not the proletarian, which did not exist then. The author of Hamlet, no matter who he was—as is well known this is a disputed question—was either an aristocrat himself or a fervent adherent of the aristocracy. It is from this world that he draws the greater part of the material for his dramas, and his works bear the seal of the feudal monarchical ideal. The bases of that social order are authority and subordination, faith in a deity managing the world, faith in the holiness and infallibility of the order which has been established since ancient times, and the recognition that some people are higher beings, by their very birth destined to manage and rule, while others are lower and

must be ruled, being incapable of any other function but that of subordination. Now, does not all this destroy the value of the work for the working class ?

I shall answer by another question. Is it necessary for the working class to know other organisational types besides its own ? Moreover, is the working class in general able to work out and form its own type otherwise than by way of comparison with others, by the criticism of others, by working them over and using their elements ? And who else, if not the great and skilful artist, can lead one into the very depths of an alien organisation of life and thought ? It is the task of our criticism to expose the historical significance of that organisation, its connection with lower stages of development, its contradiction with the vital conditions and problems of the proletariat. As soon as this is accomplished there is no more danger of submitting to the influence of the strange type of organisation; the knowledge of it becomes one of our most precious tools for the creation of our own organisation.

And here also the objectivity of the great artist affords the best support for our criticism. Without making it his aim he happens to delineate all the conservatism of the authoritarian world, its inherent narrowness, and the weakness of the human mind in this world. It is worth while to recollect the appearance of the hero Fortinbras, which serves as an impulse towards a change in the soul of Hamlet himself, urging him to enter the course of action leading to the solution of his problem. With a proud conviction of his own right, without any doubts or hesitation, Fortinbras leads his army to conquer a stretch of land which is not worth, perhaps, the blood of one of the soldiers who will perish in this war. . . .

Finally, great significance attaches to the fact that while the organisational problem is set before us and solved on the basis of the life of a society strange to us, while the solution in its general aspect preserves its validity for the present time, and for the proletariat as a class also, whenever the thirst for harmony clashes with the severe demands of its struggle. Here art teaches the working class the universal setting and the universal solution of organisational problems—which is necessary for it in the accomplishment of its universal organisational ideal.

The Belgian artist, Constantine Meunier, in his sculptures depicted the life of the workers. His statue, "The Philosopher," represents a worker thinking, deeply absorbed in the solution of some important philosophical problem. The naked figure makes an integral and strong impression of exerted thought, concentrated on one thing, and overcoming some great invisible resistance.

What is the artistic idea of the statue? The organisational problem is the following: How to combine hard, physical labour with the strain of thought, with mental creative work? The solution of the problem . . . ?

It is only necessary to look at the figure of "The Philosopher," which is penetrated throughout by reserved effort, in which every visible muscle is fully exerted—an exertion not manifesting itself in any external action, but seeming to pass into the inner depths—and immediately the solution comes forward with the greatest vividness and impressiveness. It is this: "Thought is a physical exertion in itself; its nature is the same as that of labour, there is no contradiction between them, their division is artificial and passing." The results of exact science, of physiological psychology, confirm this idea; but it is more intimate and comprehensible in its artistic expression. And its enormous significance for the proletariat does not need proof.

But our criticism must put the question: On the standpoint of which class or social group does the artist stand in his creative work? And then it will become plain that although he represents workers, he does it not as an ideologist of the working class: his is the standpoint of labour, but not of collective labour. The worker-thinker is taken as an individual; those connections which fuse the exertion of his thought with the physical and mental exertions of millions, making it a link in the universal chain of labour, are not felt at all, or at best are delineated very vaguely, almost indiscernibly. The artist is an intellectual by his social position; he is accustomed to work individually himself, without noticing to what extent his labour is connected with the collective labour of humanity both by its origin and by its methods and problems. In this the standpoint of the toiling intellectuals is very little different from that of the bourgeoisie—it is just as

individualistic—and here also our criticism must supplement that which the artist could not give.

Thus the tasks of proletarian criticism in relation to the art of the past define themselves. By carrying out these tasks it will give the working class an opportunity to master firmly and use independently the organisational experience of thousands of years crystallised in artistic forms.

The usual conception of the rôle and sense of proletarian criticism is different. It most frequently defends the position of "social arts," and deals with the problems of its agitational significance in defence of the interest of the working class. Some years ago the worker Ivan Kubikov invited the proletarians to study the best works of the literature of the old world, regarding art's educational influence in the following manner. No doubt there is in this literature "not only pure gold, but also elements of alloy which are harmful for the proletariat." These elements are the "conservative moderating forces." But they are not to be feared, because the worker has his class sense which allows him to distinguish between the gold and the alloy. "If we observe attentively the impressions received from art we shall find that only the gold affects, the alloy passes by the consciousness of the worker. . . . I have personally had the opportunity during my observations to see the very surprising way in which a rebel worker manages to draw revolutionary conclusions from the most innocent works of art." ("Nasha Zaria," *Our Dawn*, 1914, No. 3, pp. 48-49). This is a naïve standpoint, and faulty at its base.

There is very little good in such a sense which "manages" to draw revolutionary conclusions from a really innocent work. Misrepresentation is misrepresentation. What does it prove? That there is a great force of direct feeling and a lack of objectivity. It proves that the thought is lower than this feeling and submits to it. Should that be the consciousness of a class destined to solve the universal organisational problem?

As an illustration of the interrelation between "gold and alloy" Kubikov takes Schiller's *Don Karlos*; he thinks that the detection of tyranny and the fiery orations of Marquis Posa are the gold, while his dreams about monarchy absolute, but

enlightened and humane, is the alloy. This is not true. On "fiery words," accompanied by vagueness and weakness of thought, the reader might well be brought up in the direction of revolutionary phraseology alone. On the contrary, the live and deeply artistic expression of the ideal of enlightened monarchy is not at all "alloy" for the historically conscious reader who has the standpoint of proletarian criticism. The ideal is the mental model of organisation; the knowledge and understanding of such models which have been worked out by the past is indispensable for a class which is called upon to organise the future. In the struggle of the heroic personalities presented by the artist it is necessary to discern the struggle of social forces which have defined and determined the thought and will of the men of that epoch, and the necessity of the different ideals called forth by the nature of those forces. To get an artistic insight into the soul of perished classes or of those which are passing from history, as well as into the soul of the classes which occupy the scene of history at present, is one of the best means to master the accumulated cultural and organisational experience of man, the most precious inheritance for a class that comes to construct.

And as far as the art of the past can educate the feelings and moods of the proletariat, it should serve as a means to deepen and enlighten them, to extend their field over all the life of humanity, along all its path of toil, but it should not serve as a means of agitation, a tool for propaganda.

The critic who manages to present to the proletariat a great work of the old culture, in the theatre for instance, after the performance of a piece of genius, who can explain to the spectators its sense and value from the organisational standpoint of collective labour, or give them such an explanation in a short and comprehensible programme, or perhaps can explain in an article in a Labour newspaper or magazine the poem or novel of a great master—such a critic will accomplish a serious and important work for the proletariat.

Here is our broadest field for work, for work which will be important and lasting.

THE REVOLUTION IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Struggle for Power in Holy Bokhara.—II

By EVELYN ROY

*The opening section of this article appeared in the July number of
THE LABOUR MONTHLY*

THE first reaction to the Russian Revolution of March, 1917, in Central Asia was the publication in April of a Manifesto by the *Mlada Bukharsi*,¹ in which a programme of reforms was laid down, including, among other things, the limitation of the authority of the Amir and a decrease in the power of his officials, as well as the granting of civil rights to the population. These demands amounted to something less than the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, but they proved too much for the Amir. When the masses turned out to celebrate this proclamation by a peaceful demonstration, the soldiers and hired hooligans of the state provoked some violence, whereupon hundreds of the demonstrators were arrested and thrown into jail, there to be beaten and tortured to death, and one of the leaders was shot. This was the beginning of a reign of terror in Bokhara. All those suspected of sympathising with the *Mlada Bukharsi* were arrested and executed; thousands were forced to languish in prison without trial. In one demonstration alone, six hundred revolutionaries were shot or hanged, and three thousand sympathisers arrested. The entire population turned against the Amir, even those who had formerly been Moderates. The revolutionary party gained in strength, though forced to go underground. Part of *Mlada Bukharsi* emigrated to Turkestan, which, being directly under the Kerensky regime, offered them some protection. The property of all those belonging to revolutionary organisations was confiscated and their lives declared forfeit. Such was the

¹ Central organisation uniting all the revolutionary parties and factions in Bokhara, which was formed after the Russian Revolution of 1905.

effect of the first revolution of 1917 upon Bokhara el Sharif, whose ruler trembled for his hitherto undisputed power over the destinies of his unfortunate vassals. How much greater was his alarm and indignation when the Kerensky regime was overthrown, and there was proclaimed a Soviet Republic of Workers and Peasants, not only in European Russia, but in the very heart of Central Asia as well—in the neighbouring district of Turkestan.

The years 1918-1919, marked by a desperate struggle on the part of the new-born Russian state against invasion from abroad and counter-revolution at home, saw the rise of an equally deadly and determined struggle for power in Central Asia, between the forces of revolution—represented by the various nationalist movements of Young Sardis, Young Kirghiz, Young Turcomans and Young Bokharans aided by the Red Army on one side—and the forces of counter-revolution on the other, including Russian White Guards, native aristocracy and clergy, openly aided and encouraged by foreign gold, munitions and troops, in which the most conspicuous to figure were the British. These years saw the recrudescence on a wide scale of peasant riots and rebellions in Bokhara, provoked by the increasing economic misery due to the high taxes and currency inflation of the Amir's government. Metal coins had all been confiscated by the latter after the events of 1917; worthless paper money was issued in its stead, which the people were commanded to accept in return for their grain and goods. The export of foodstuffs was forbidden, and trade with Russia, which had formerly been the mainstay of the population, was destroyed since the revolution—white guards and British troops having cut off all connection between the two. Trade depression and civil war ruined the Bokhara peasantry no less surely than it did those of the neighbouring Khanates, while governmental exactions and oppression drove them ever onward to the brink of open rebellion. But for an impoverished and disarmed people to make a successful rebellion arms and money are required, no less surely than it is required by their oppressors who seek to prevent them from rising in revolt. *Mlada Bukharsi*, with its headquarters in revolutionary Turkestan, entered into relations with the Soviet Government there, which was itself engaged in a life and death struggle for existence. On one side were the forces of Koltchak and Dutoff at Orenburg, who, by seizing the only

line of communication, had cut off all connections with Moscow ; on the other side was Denikin, and the British in Trans-Caspia, whose headquarters were in Ashkabad. In addition to these main fighting fronts, there were hostile bands in all the surrounding districts, financed and fed by the same source which fed the main stream of counter-revolution. The very centre of intrigue and conspiracy against the Soviet power was none other than Holy Bokhara, whose nominal independence and neutrality rendered it a most convenient hotbed of counter-revolution.

Already in March of 1918, one attempt to ensure constitutional rights to the Bokharan people had been drowned in blood, when Kolesov, Chief of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Government of Turkestan, presented an ultimatum to the Amir to grant the demands of the Young Bokharans on twenty-four hours' notice. The reply of the Amir was a secret order to his army for a general massacre of the Bolshevik emissaries and Young Bokharans. Kolesov barely escaped with his life and a part of his following. Subsequent events prevented the Soviet Republic from immediately avenging this dastardly act on the part of the Bokharan Amir.

Amir-al-Khan, Amir of Bokhara, Commander of the Faithful and Shadow of God on Earth, had been approached by the British General Mallison, representative of His Most Gracious Majesty King George V, with an offer to increase the influence of the Amir in Bokhara, Samarcand and Tashkent, and with that end in view, to take British (Indian) troops into the territories of Turkestan. His Majesty at first refused this valuable offer of assistance because the Mussulmans of his own state were against accepting any British help so long as the Treaty of Sèvres remained unaltered. This was a bit of Islamic solidarity which the Commander of the Faithful very soon regretted, and by 1918 he found a way to reconcile his Mussulman conscience to the acceptance of British munitions and weapons of war from this same General Mallison, who became his joint ally, together with the Russian White Guards, Generals Koltchak and Dutoff, and the so-called "Trans-Caspian Government." The captured records of certain Russian counter-revolutionaries show that at this period a British major (name unknown)

came to Tashkent from Meshed and offered the Russian White Guards :—

1. Money, munitions and British troops.
2. To make Turkestan an autonomous (White) Republic.
3. In return for which Great Britain was to receive concessions in railways and mines for ninety-nine years.

Money, munitions and troops were freely given, but the rest of the agreement remained unfulfilled, despite the most indefatigable efforts. The repeated defeats of the Russian white generals (at Ossipov and Khokand in 1918–1919) caused the removal of the centre of counter-revolution to Kashgar, in Chinese Turkestan. Relations had previously been opened with the British Consul there, by name Mr. Esterton. A treaty was actually made between the counter-revolutionaries and the English to clear the Osh corridor, that through this passage munitions might be sent from India to Ferghana (headquarters of the counter-revolution in Eastern Turkestan). The corridor was cleared, but the munitions failed to arrive in time to save the Whites from ignominious defeat. The failure of the White Guard movement led to the organisation of the *Basmachis* (bandits) of Turkestan in an effort to crush the Soviet power. False letters, telegrams and brochures were printed and distributed among the ignorant population, repeating the lies about the nationalisation and violation of women by the Bolsheviks and their alleged persecution of religion. No means was too low to stoop to for the defeat of the great revolution which threatened to sweep onward in its triumphant course to the very gates of India.

But by the end of 1919 communications between Moscow and Turkestan were re-established, and the “*Centroviki*,” or troops and responsible workers from the Centre, began to arrive, who quickly organised the campaign against the *Basmachis* and remaining bands of Whites. Efforts were made on the part of the British Consul in Kashgar to bring about a rising of the Kirghiz, the nomadic peoples of the Asiatic steppes, but these proved unsuccessful. The real check to British intrigue in Central Asia came from the victory of the Red Army over the Whites; the removal of the Trans-Caspian front and the capture of Resht; the evacuation of Northern Persia by the British, and the successful revolution in Bokhara, resulting in the

banishment of the Amir and the establishment of a People's Soviet Republic.

Renewed efforts of the struggle for power in Central Asia came about a year later, in the revolt of Enver Pasha, who sought British help in his realisation of a dream to establish a Pan-Islamic kingdom there, with he himself as ruler.

But let us return to the revolution in Bokhara. With the beginning of the year 1920 a new situation arose. The Soviet Republic had beaten back most of its foes. Foreign intervention had ceased to manifest itself openly in the form of invading armies from abroad, and confined itself to secret subventions of the Whites and other counter-revolutionaries, who for the moment had been driven back on all fronts. It was the first breathing-space for the young Republic, giving it a chance to survey the situation in all the far-flung regions of the former Russian Empire. The first to claim attention was the party of Young Bokharans, who for two years had been preparing the moment, already long overdue, for revolution in their own country. The necessity for some kind of action was made all the more pressing by the fact that Bokhara had become the stronghold for all the defeated forces of counter-revolution and intrigue, which took shelter there under cover of the Amir's hospitality.

Trouble began in August, when, taking advantage of one of the innumerable mass-revolts which had become a commonplace since 1917, a group of young Bokharans put themselves at the head of the movement in Charjui, arrested the ruling Begs and declared the establishment of a People's Government. Within two days, the revolutionary movement had spread throughout the country. The rising in Charjui was reinforced by open rebellion in Emirabbad and other vital points. Encouraged by this popular support, the Revolutionary Committee of Young Bokharans in Charjui declared the abolition of the Emirate, and passed the first decrees on land, taxation and the establishment of a Republic. They followed by appealing to the Soviet Republics of Turkestan and Russia for help in putting down the counter-revolution.

Help was not slow in coming, for a revolutionary army of Young Bokharans had been organising themselves in Tashkent in anticipation of this moment. They marched at once, helped by the Soviet

Government of Turkestan and the Red Army. The Amir stood not upon the order of his going, but fled in all haste, incognito, to Eastern Bokhara, lest he fall into the hands of the irate populace whom he had so abused throughout his reign. In Eastern Bokhara he paused, hoping to organise a counter-revolutionary army with the help of the Whites and their British supporters, among the Basmachis of that region. There he lingered, sending agents to India and to Meshed to ask for help in putting down the infidels who had deposed him. The son of the former Prime Minister of Bokhara was sent to Meshed, and there drew up a treaty in the name of the Amir with the War Attaché of the British Consulate. The terms of this Treaty¹ include the following provisions: That the British will restore the Amir to his throne, and unite Samarcand with Bokhara; in return for this service, His Majesty's Government would receive mining and other concessions in Bokhara, and British officers would control the government institutions of that country, including finances and the re-organisation of the Bokharan army.

But the British, not for the first time in history, had espoused a lost cause. The popular movement against the Amir and his corrupt government was so strong that, by the close of 1920, that dignitary was forced to flee from Eastern Bokhara and seek refuge in the court of his brother-monarch, Amanulla Khan, the Emir of Afghanistan. In the course of his flight, the ex-Amir and his bands performed their last act of wanton destruction against the unfortunate population over which they had so long ruled. In revenge for the successful revolution they burned millions of poods of grain, killing the cattle and devastating the land in a final effort to ruin the peasantry and reduce them to utter starvation. Having performed this last act of patriotism, the Commander of the Faithful and his suite took up their residence and continued their intrigues from the neighbouring court of Afghanistan. But as Amanulla Khan concluded, early in 1921, a Treaty of Friendship and Recognition with the Russian Soviet Government, little material help was given from this quarter to the deposed Shadow of God upon

¹ For the full text see Appendix I, published at the conclusion of July's instalment.

Earth, who found no worthy collaborator in his plans for revenge and restitution until there appeared on the scene as an ally the figure of Enver Pasha, who took up his stand in Eastern Bokhara against the Soviet Power and endeavoured, with British help, to establish himself as the head of a Pan-Islamic kingdom in Central Asia. This was the last adventure of Enver Pasha—an adventure which ended with his own death on the field of battle in Hoveling, in the summer of 1922.

It was also the end of the Amir's hopes of regaining his lost throne by force of arms. He has now taken refuge in Appeals to Public Opinion, to rescue himself from obscurity and oblivion into which the world has permitted him to sink. But, oddly enough, Public Opinion, though a variable quantity, seems loath to bestir itself in his behalf (though he is alleged to have good friends among the British), and the Bokharan People's Republic continues to exist and to prosper, firm in its friendship and alliance with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

The old taxation-system of the former Amir, which claimed one-half the peasants' income, has been abolished; the land formerly monopolised by the Commander of the Faithful and his Begs has been confiscated and distributed among the peasants. Wide reforms have been introduced, granting full civil rights to the entire population without exception, making education free and compulsory, and for the first time in the history of Bokhara stabilising and balancing the budget. A national Bokharan army has been organised, to defend the People's Government against counter-revolution, banditry and intrigue. The government is Soviet in form, the representatives elected by the people. In the last All-Bokharan Congress of Soviets, out of eighty-five delegates, sixty-three were peasants and ten handicraft-workers, the rest being drawn from the revolutionary intellectuals and middle class who support the nationalist cause. The President of the Republic is a young Bokharan by the name of Faizulla Khajaiëff, son of a rich Bokharan merchant. The Nazirate of Foreign Affairs is filled by a peasant, that of Finance by a former shoemaker. Thus it may be seen that democracy has made great strides in a country which but yesterday was a synonym for mediaeval oppression, corruption and greed. For the first time in its history, the peasantry receives help from the

government in the shape of credit, seed and cattle to cultivate their land. Economic rehabilitation would have been faster but for the depredations of the Basmatchis under the leadership of Enver Pasha and his band of Turkish officers, who laid waste the land and terrorised the people till the close of 1922. But means have been found to lay down new railway lines, map out new routes across the sandy deserts, erect caravanserais and re-open economic trade centres for commerce with Russia and the outer world. The workers of Bokhara are mainly peasants and handicraftsmen; the bulk of these have been organised into strong co-operative unions for the improvement of their economic condition.

Twenty-five per cent. of the Budget of 1923 was devoted to the Nazirate of Education. For the first time, schools are accessible for the education of the rich and the poor. In addition to regular elementary and high schools, there are eleven professional schools for training teachers, doctors, engineers, &c., and special categories of schools for the education of women, for music, art and drama, &c. There are Bokharan students in Russia, Germany and Turkey being trained for expert service to their country—among them are twenty-five young Bokharan women, emancipated from their life of semi-slavery by the experiences of the revolution. There are social centres, libraries, clubs and theatres, created for the cultural uplift and improvement of the population. A campaign for the abolition of illiteracy is being waged. Translation on a wide scale has been undertaken of foreign literature and scientific works in cheap editions published by the State. At the same time, native Bokharan art is protected and fostered, and the people's own culture preserved. There are, for the first time in the history of Holy Bokhara, medical clinics, hospitals, rest-houses, crèches and veterinary centres; a struggle has been inaugurated against the spread of malaria and of venereal disease. In short, new life and a new future has dawned over Bokhara el Sharif with the dawn of the Social Revolution.

Religion has been separated from politics and the life of the state, but is permitted free and unrestricted expression, so long as it keeps clear of all subversive political action against the State. The relations between the Bokharan People's Soviet Republic and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, to which it is federated, are of

the closest co-operation, friendship and confidence. It is fully realised by the leaders of Young Bokhara, as well as by the masses, that had it not been for the great Russian Revolution of November, 1917, their own revolution would have remained a distant and impossible dream; while had it not been for the help and sympathy extended to them in the trying days of 1920-22, when the counter-revolutionary forces were at their height, the young Republic must have succumbed to its foes, and the People's Government overthrown to make way for the Amir, propped up by the soldiers and machine-guns of Imperial Britain, the successor to the defunct imperialism of the Tsar.

The struggle for power in Central Asia is destined to continue, for the interests at stake are too vast to surrender with ease. But in that struggle, the forces of autocracy and imperialism are on one side, pitted against the ever-increasing army of freedom and emancipation on the other. Who can doubt which will conquer in the end ?

APPENDIX II

The following are extracts translated from a letter from the Emir of Bokhara to Ishan-Sultan and Daulat Min Bey :—

TO THE GREAT OF THE GREAT, SULTAN OF THE WORLD AND OF ISLAM THE SOVEREIGN

After greetings and our prayers, Glory to Allah, here is everything well under the protection of the Just Amir of Gaza (High) Afghanistan. . . .

It appears from the letter of Khizinachi that Khodji-Mira Khur-Bashi and Mirza Mushgaph have come to complete agreement with the British Government and have arranged for armies, aeroplanes and batteries, which are to arrive through Shugney, Chitran and Darvaz by spring.

His Highness himself, with armies and batteries, will operate from Kabul and through Mazari-i-Sharif they want to come to Sharabad.

As it was done before, appoint men and send letters to the elders of the tribes of Manghit, Kangara, Altiruch and Kukhistan. Let them collect as much as they can of cereals and products.

You yourself also act in every respect. Allah grant that the Government be well. We shall never yield our crown and throne to the Djadids.

If some of the Tribes did not hear, let them know of the High and Supreme Order. Take measures to that end. . . .

As many five-cartridge rifles and Berdanka rifles as will be necessary shall be delivered to you thence, rest assured.

In the name of God and the Prophet, pray never forget the hospitality of His Highness, and as long as you are alive, do not sit inactive. When His Majesty will come to power, Khisar and all this government will be yours.

Dear Friend, fight as much as is in you. Allah grant that the Almighty give you strength.

Alaa Maleikum,

(Signature) AMIR ALI KHAN.

(Signatures of translators, &c.)

The World of Labour

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BELGIUM

Trade Union Campaign Against Communists

AT its meeting in Brussels early in August the Belgian Trade Union Congress (*Commission Syndicale*) devoted two whole days to the hearing of a special report by the Secretary, Mertens, on trade union discipline. This report was in effect a detailed piece of special pleading on behalf of the trade union bureaucracy in their attempt to exclude Communists from all official positions in the Trade Union Movement.

An international character was given to this issue by the presence of fraternal delegates from the International Federation of Trade Unions, including two of the latter's most prominent figures, MM. Jouhaux (France) and Oudegeest, one of its secretaries. The attitude of these gentlemen in particular found reflection in the resolution which was finally passed. This resolution declared that the *Commission Syndicale* :—

After taking note, not only of the fight waged by the Communist International and its affiliated Parties against the (Amsterdam) International Federation of Trade Unions and its affiliated organisations, but also of the means which are employed to split and weaken existing organisations, including the blind submission to participation in this shameful task, which is part and parcel of the duty of members of the Communist Party ;

Is of the opinion that any official position, of whatever grade it may be, in a present-day Trade Union affiliated to the *Commission Syndicale* is incompatible with membership of the Communist Party, and that such positions cannot be entrusted to anyone who, by the fact of his membership of the Communist Party, is obliged to fight against the International Federation of Trade Unions, and, therefore, the *Commission Syndicale*.

The force of the reformist attack was directed particularly against Jacquemotte, one of the leaders of the Belgian Communist Party, who was a delegate to the Congress. Jacquemotte managed to secure 38 votes for trade union unity, as against 324 votes for the resolution: there were 23 abstentions.

This exclusion of Communists from official positions in the trade unions is likely to prove the precursor of an attempt to exclude them even from membership. It is interesting to recall that a year or so ago the Belgian

reformists contented themselves with sneers at the "gallant 517," this being the official figure of membership of the Communist Party at the time. Since then its increasing influence among the Belgian workers has been reflected in the foundation of a daily paper, *le Drapeau Rouge*, which has been in existence since January 1 of the present year.

INTERNATIONAL

Fifth Congress of Communist International¹

THE Fifth World Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from June 17 to July 8 last. There were 504 delegates, and 51 national sections were represented: of these 336 were admitted with full votes, and 168 with consultative votes only. The tendency to restrict the number of delegates with consultative votes and guests, and to make the Congress—as distinct from the "Parliament of Labour" of the old international Socialist Congresses—a real working assembly of the world revolutionary movement is very noticeable.

The Congress was preceded by a meeting of the enlarged Executive, at which numerous commissions were set up to investigate certain special questions and other preliminary arrangements made. An agenda was drawn up including

- (1) Lenin and the Communist International.
- (2) Report on the Work of the Executive Committee.
- (3) The World Economic Situation.
- (4) The Question of a Programme.
- (5) The National and Colonial Question.
- (6) Fascism.
- (7) Trade Union Policy.
- (8) The Agrarian Question (the Peasant International).
- (9) The Youth Movement.
- (10) The Economic Situation in Russia.
- (11) Special Problems of the various National Sections (British, German, French, &c.).
- (12) The Question of the Intellectuals.

Other subjects included Organisation, Work among Women, the International Red Relief, the Co-operative Movement and so forth.

The major part of the proceedings was occupied by the report of Zinoviev on the work of the Executive Committee of the International, and the ensuing discussion.² In this report and discussion the points on the agenda dealing with the special problems of the various National Sections and with Organisation were exhaustively dealt with.

¹ For the fullest reports of the Congress at present available in this country, the Special Numbers of the *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 4, Numbers 34, 38, 41 and 52. (Zinoviev's report and concluding report, with resolution) 42, 47, 49, 50, 51, 54, 55 and 57, should be consulted.

² The detailed Executive Report on the position of each National Section is published by the Communist Party of Great Britain under the title *From the Fourth to the Fifth Congress*. (Price 6d.)

Zinoviev laid special stress on the conflict of tendencies in the International—the tendencies to Right Wing opportunism (inherited from Social Democracy) and the ultra-revolutionary “Leftist” tendencies. Against the ultra-Left Zinoviev quoted the words of Lenin:—

The supreme danger, and perhaps the only danger, to a true revolutionary is to exaggerate the revolutionary situation, as well as to forget about the limits and conditions for the appropriate and successful application of revolutionary methods. True revolutionaries have frequently come to grief by writing the word *revolution* in large letters, and by making a fetish of “Revolution,” thus losing their heads and the ability to weigh the circumstances calmly and soberly, and to discriminate between the moment when one has to act in a revolutionary manner and the moment in which one has to proceed in a reformist fashion.

True revolutionaries will certainly go under (not as a result of the external defeat, but as a result of the internal collapse of their cause) if they lose their sang-froid and imagine that the “great” victorious world revolution can and must solve all problems in all circumstances of time and place, exclusively in the revolutionary manner.

But he went on to state that in the past year 90 per cent. of the internal struggle of the International had been against digressions to the Right.

On the international political situation Zinoviev referred to the prophecy of the Fourth Congress in 1922:—

In the resolution of the Fourth Congress we said:—

“The characteristics of the international political situation at this moment are Fascism, martial law, and the growing wave of white terror against the working class. But that does not exclude the possibility that in the near future in very important countries, open bourgeois reaction will be replaced by a ‘democratic-pacifist’ era.”

That was written in 1922. Thus, a year and a-half ago the Communist International directly prophesied this democratic pacifist era.

Hence, when martial law prevailed, we foretold the coming of the democratic-pacifist era. I believe we must now do exactly the reverse: during the “democratic-pacifist” era we must foresee the return of the period of martial law and of Fascism, and raging bourgeois counter-revolution.

We actually have an entirely new situation before us, a sort of democratic-pacifist period in the most important countries of Europe: in Great Britain—the Labour Government; in France, the Left Bloc, with the Social-Democrats forming a *de facto*, but not a *de jure* part of the government; in Denmark, a Labour Government; in Austria, a great victory of the Social-Democrats; in Belgium, Vandervelde will probably enter the Government soon; a new government in Japan; in Czecho-Slovakia and in Poland, new phenomena, or at least new *nuances* will arise in connection with the victory of the Left Bloc in France, for Czecho-Slovakia is nothing but a vassal of this bourgeois State. In America we have the acceptance of the “Experts’ Report” by the bourgeoisie, and the beginning of the movement for the so-called *Third Party*. There is also the recognition of Soviet Russia by various countries.

All this taken together represents this democratic-pacifist era. This will undoubtedly awaken new illusions not only among the Social-Democratic workers but also among the less-hardened comrades among us, and encourage the semi-conscious “right-wingers.” We must see this clearly.

The bourgeoisie has now started to substitute "therapeutics" for "surgery." They know the Experts' Report. I have already said in my opinion this is a noose round the neck of the German working class. But it is a silken noose, and it will be gradually tightened—with pauses for breath—and this is what the Social-Democrats call pacifism and the triumph of democracy.

On the situation in this country Zinoviev declared that:—

It is clear now that in Great Britain the MacDonald Government will not be merely a passing phase. The Labour Party has become too strong, and the power of the bourgeoisie has been much too shaken for it not to remain a factor in the government for many years to come. . . .

Social Democracy has become the "Third Party" of the bourgeoisie. Even the British bourgeoisie can no longer rule by the old methods; it resorts to a Labour Government. The bourgeoisie turns now to a Labour Government, now to Fascism, and then to Social Democracy. The Fascists are the right hand, and the Social-Democrats the left hand of the bourgeoisie. That is the new phenomenon in the situation. The problem of power has now arisen, and this is the best symptom of the precariousness of the whole situation. This is the best symptom of the instability of the position of the bourgeoisie.

With this may be coupled his remarks on the left-wing trend of the British Labour Movement:—

The British Labour Movement is a peculiar movement. Recently, I read a report by Max Beer. He was formerly a Social-Democrat, but he left the Social-Democratic ranks. His opinion is very valuable. What has he to say on the Labour Movement in Great Britain? He says that he knows three revolutionary facts in England's history. Firstly, the Chartist movement, secondly the formation of the Labour Party and the beginning of the struggle against old-fashioned Trade Unionism, and thirdly, the epoch-making fact of the beginning of the emancipation of the British Labour movement from reformism. This process, he says, commenced in 1917 in connection with the Russian Revolution. . . . He says further that evidences are observable of divergences between the best elements of the Trade Unions and the Labour Party.

I believe this to be true on the whole. Just look what is going on in that country. Suddenly a comrade so near to us as A. J. Cook wins the leadership of a great Trade Union. Of course, these are merely signs and symptoms, and they must not be over-estimated, nor must they be under-estimated.

The attitude of the British delegates to the Vienna Congress of the Amsterdam International was also symptomatic. To be sure these people are inconsistent, but they are driven by the masses.

The matter was summed up in the statement that politically the most important section of the Communist International was not the German or the Russian, but the English section.

The main task of the Communist International in all spheres lies now in *England*. A communist mass party in England would mean half the victory in Europe. The circumstances are ripe for it. Therefore we should not under-estimate what is going on in England. We know England so little; almost as little as America.

In discussion these remarks of Zinoviev were underlined by M. N. Roy (India) who stated that:—

The stronghold of bourgeois dictatorship was now England, and if we did not take note of this we should not reach our desired goal of world-revolution. The English bourgeoisie was now taking the lead towards the recovery of the bourgeoisie throughout the world.

We tended to forget the fact that the British Isles were only the apex of a much greater economic and financial domain. If we ignore the existence of the roots which fed this central body we should continue to make mistakes. We must remember the historical development of the British working class. We know that the British Labour movement developed simultaneously with British imperialism. The British proletariat is soaked through and through with the spirit of British imperialism. The British Communist Party must get to grips with this fact.

The task of the British Communist Party transcends the boundaries of the British Isles. Because of the fact that the British bourgeoisie depends upon the existence of a proletariat which is bribed at the expense of workers in the other parts of the British Empire, the British Party must make its activities "imperial" in scope. The formation of the desired mass Communist Party could not be accomplished only by activity in England, but must be achieved by activity throughout the Empire.

The report on the *World Economic Situation* was delivered by Varga.¹ He discerned three new outstanding phenomena:—

(1) *The end of a unified capitalist world economy*

This is shown by the division of world economy into two parts : America and the British Dominions, where capitalism is still on the up-grade ; and the old European industrial system where capitalism is definitely on the down-grade and in a state of continued crisis. The booms that take place (e.g., America and France) are isolated. The currency position steadily deteriorates. There is a standstill in the international movement of capital : although capital in Europe costs ten or more times as much per cent. per annum in Europe as in America, no capital is flowing from America to Europe because the security is not considered good enough.

(2) *The special crisis in the European industrial countries*

These countries were built up on the economic basis of the import of large quantities of foodstuffs, which were paid for with industrial products. During the past decades the possibility of this process has become smaller and smaller, because of the industrialisation of the countries overseas and because of the agrarian crisis. Nowadays, all states are striving to set their own industries on their feet. Even the British colonies are erecting tariff barriers against the industrial products of the mother country. By this process the basis of life for the industrial countries of Europe is continually being narrowed. And in addition there is the agrarian crisis, which seriously reduces the capacity of the agrarian countries to absorb industrial products.

(3) *The agrarian crisis*

The basis of the agrarian crisis is the fact that, in almost all countries in the world, there is a great discrepancy between the price of industrial products and the price of agricultural products. The trustification of industry, which made great strides during the war and post-war period, is the chief cause of the

¹ See his brochure, *The Decline of Capitalism*, published by the Communist Party of Great Britain. (Price 6d.)

agrarian crisis. Nearly all manufactured articles are sold at artificially put up monopoly prices, while prices in the agricultural industry are still regulated by the ordinary markets, as it is impossible to amalgamate the millions of small agricultural producers into big concerns.

Special stress was laid on the serious industrial crisis that is beginning in the United States; and the falseness of the hopes of a peaceful solution of the reparations problem through the Experts' Report were exposed.

Elaborate reports were made by Bukharin and Thalheimer on the *Programme*, and by Rykov on the *Economic Situation in Soviet Russia*, which last included a summing-up of the discussion in the Russian Communist Party. The great length and detail of these reports unfortunately renders an intelligible abstract impossible.

The essence of all the various reports was contained in the final resolution on the Executive Report, of which the most important passages were as follows:—

In this period of one and a-half years¹ the capitalist offensive, which was earlier begun, has developed in most capitalist countries into fierce attacks upon the revolutionary proletariat. . . .

These violent attacks have inflicted severe losses on the Communist Movement, and the manner in which the movement has met these attacks was not altogether free from serious mistakes and back-slidings. In no country, however, was the power of capitalism able to break up the organisation of the Communist leaders of the fight, or to cut their connection with the masses.

During these great class conflicts, the Executive Committee undertook a series of steps destined to be of decisive importance for the correct direction of the sections of the Communist International. The Congress points out in particular the following cases:—

Germany

After the surrender in October, which took place almost without a struggle—circumstances rendered possible by the treachery of the Social-Democratic leaders and by the failure of the Communist Party leadership—it became both proper and necessary for the Executive to criticise severely the opportunist attitude of the German Party leadership, and above all the distortion of the united front shown in the Saxon Workers' government. The Executive determined to profit from its political and organisational consequences by an *increased and relentless fight against opportunism*. It had also become aware of the strong Left tendency in the German Party, by which it was supported in its decision.

The Executive brought about a union of the Left and Centre for the campaign against the Right Wing and gave over the leadership to this bloc, trusting that the masses of the party membership would confirm and approve this elimination of the politically bankrupt Right Wing, and so it happened. This resolute action of the Executive helped the German Communist Party to recover, as well as to overcome the menace of a split arising from the dissensions within the Party, and it also arrested the growth of the German Party crisis which threatened to become a crisis of the whole International.

¹Since November, 1922.

United Front and Workers' Government

In view of the danger of the "right" aberrations, which were revealed in the application of the tactics of the united front to a far larger extent than could be anticipated, the Executive rejected as an opportunist interpretation any attempt to construe the tactics of the united front into anything more than a revolutionary method of agitation and mobilisation of the masses, as well as any attempt to make use of the slogan of the "Workers' and Peasants' Government"—not for agitation in favour of the proletarian dictatorship, but for a coalition government within bourgeois democracy. At the same time the Executive exposed the true character of Social Democracy as the left wing of the bourgeoisie.

Organisation on Factory Basis

On the basis of the lessons of the events in Germany, in relation to the development of Party organisation, the Executive has taken energetic steps, in Germany and elsewhere, for the building up of factory nuclei as the foundation of Party organisation. These steps have already led in some countries to a noteworthy beginning of the factory nucleus system.

Trade Union Policy

In Trade Union work progress towards the unification and intensification of the work was made in several countries (above all in France) and some striking successes were won (for instance in England). In Germany last winter the result of the anti-Labour Policy of reformist and bureaucratic trade union leaders was to produce a wholesale exodus of Communists and sympathisers from the Trade Unions. As the German Communist Party did not put up a determined opposition to this dangerous error for some time, the Executive intervened against it in a most decided way and later on the decisions of the Frankfurt Party Congress, energetically supported by the Executive, ordered an end to be made of this catastrophic policy and produced a total change of feeling in favour of revolutionary work among the trade unions.

Anti-Fascist Work

Propaganda among the semi-proletarian and petty bourgeois middle classes was constantly encouraged among the different sections in order that the ground might be cut away from Fascism. The German Communist Party has had striking success in this direction, but the Italian Party has hardly had any success at all.

Winning the Peasantry

The Executive has impressed upon all sections the great importance of a steady and active agitation towards winning over the masses of the poorer peasantry for the support of the proletarian revolution. With this end in view the slogan of the "Workers' Government" has been extended and made into the slogan of the Workers' and Peasants' Government. The formation of the Peasants' International, which has shown itself to be a most important development, occurred with the active help of the Executive. There is no doubt the development of an independent communist agrarian policy must be one of the most important tasks for almost all sections of the International in the near future.

National and Colonial Question

On the National Question the Executive has had frequent occasion to remind many sections for whom this question is one of the greatest importance that they

were not carrying out the decisions of the Second Congress satisfactorily. One of the fundamental principles of Leninism, that communists should resolutely and constantly fight for self-determination, rights of nationalities (secession and the formation of independent states), has not been applied by all the sections of the Communist International in the desired manner.

In addition to winning the support of the peasant masses and of the oppressed national minorities, the Executive Committee, in its instructions, always emphasised the necessity for winning over the revolutionary movements for emancipation of the colonial peoples and for all peoples of the East so as to make them the allies of the revolutionary proletariat of the capitalist countries. This requires not only the extension of the direct contact between the Executive and the national emancipation movements of the Orient, but also very close contact between the sections in the imperialist countries with the colonies of those countries, and, in the first place, a constant struggle against the imperialist colonial policy of the bourgeoisie in every country. In this respect the activities are everywhere still very weak.

Anti-Militarist Work

As regards work in the army, the Executive, in conjunction with the Executive Committee of the Young Communist International, has been able to perform some excellent practical preparatory work (agitation in the Ruhr). However, the sections which had to fight against the strongest imperialist powers too often forgot the teachings of Lenin regarding the fight against war, and the Executive had frequently to call them to order.

Towards a Leninist World Party

This line of Leninist strategy, tactics and organisation pursued by the Executive, this and no other must continue to serve as the guiding line of the Communist International in future. The bolshevisation of the Communist Party is to be pursued in exact accordance with the teachings of Lenin, attention being paid, however, to the concrete circumstances in each country. The beginnings of this process already exist. The party leadership, the organisation and the individual members in many sections are beginning to display increasing, if slowly increasing activity. In case after case the best parties are beginning to show the revolutionary initiative, the determined energy and striking capacity, the shrewd ability to manoeuvre and the conscious iron discipline of a truly revolutionary fighting organisation.

These beginnings of bolshevisation must be steadily, systematically, indefatigably and consciously developed. The consciousness of the Communist Party and the Communist International as the leaders of the revolution must become part of the blood of every party organisation and of every individual member so that out of this consciousness of a communist fighting fraternity may arise the iron faith which will fuse the Party into a bolshevik organisation and the International into a victorious *World Party*.

At present much is still wanting for the development of the Communist International into a real world party. The Congress reminds the sections of their duty to assist collectively with greater energy than hitherto, by sharing in the solution of international questions, by regular information and correspondence, and by their members on the Executive in the further development of the leadership of the Communist International.

The Congress instructs the Executive to demand a more iron discipline than hitherto from every section and from every party leader. The Congress notes that in certain cases the Executive, in order to spare the prestige of well-deserving

comrades, did not act sufficiently energetically against breaches of discipline. The Congress empowers the Executive to act with greater decision if it becomes necessary and not to shrink from adopting even the most extreme measures.

With this resolution, the Communist International goes forward to the next stage of the struggle, richer in the will to fight and confident of victory.

The resolution detailed at length the mistakes, mostly of a right-wing opportunist tendency, committed by the various Parties, more particularly those of Bulgaria, Norway (where the Labour Party has left the *Comintern* and a Communist Party has split off), Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, England, &c. It also criticised the extreme Left tendency of Bordiga in the Italian Party, which it stigmatised as

an un-Marxian dogmatism which refuses on principle to take account of the concrete fact of the situation when laying down the rules of tactics, and in this way greatly hinders the capacity of the Party for active manœuvring.

Bordiga actually presented a counter-resolution, demanding the united front on the economic field only and not on the political field, opposing the slogan of the Workers' and Peasants' Government and making reservations with regard to the formation of nuclei in non-party organisations. This counter-resolution received only eight votes.

Red International of Labour Unions

The Third Congress of the R.I.L.U. opened at Moscow on July 8. The keynote of the congress was, in Losovsky's words, the organisation of the struggle for unity of the International Trade Union Movement. In this connection the formation of a Left Wing in the I.F.T.U. (Amsterdam International), as its Vienna Congress (see below) showed, gave rise to discussion. The general opinion was that this Left Wing was far from being revolutionary in outlook, but that it reflected a very definite leftward tendency among the trade union masses: consequently the R.I.L.U. should take every advantage of this situation to force the Amsterdam Left Wing to choose between reformism and revolution, and also to bring about international unity.

It was decided that the International Propaganda Committees set up by the R.I.L.U. for the various industries should be dissolved in so far as unity was realised in the various International Trade Secretariats.

Emphasis was laid on the importance of Factory Councils as the true unit of trade union organisation, and as the best means of realising a united front "from below" of all workers.

A special report on the struggle for the eight-hour day was delivered by Heckert (Germany). He declared that the eight-hour day was simply and solely a revolutionary class-struggle slogan: not the sentimental philanthropic theme of so many reformist Labour perorations. The slogan of the eight-hour day is in fact a concrete means of organising the class struggle—it is not simply propaganda, which rules out the proposal of Tom Mann for a six-hour day.

There was also a special report and discussion on strike strategy, in which the technical details of organising strikes were gone into at length.

The anti-imperialist activity of the R.I.L.U. was exemplified by the report on the conference of transport workers of the Pacific, which was held under its auspices at Canton, at the end of June.

I.F.T.U. Congress

The Biennial Congress of the International Federation of Trade Unions (the Amsterdam International) was held at Vienna from June 2-7, 1924. One hundred and fifty-one delegates were present representing nineteen countries, together with representatives of eighteen International Trade Secretariats. In future the Congress is to be triennial.

The congress was largely a machine-made affair. The chief reports, which were of a formal nature, had been printed and circulated, and were adopted automatically: on such subjects as international social legislation, the eight-hour day (which was relegated to the last item on the agenda before the election of officers), night work in bakeries, &c.

The first item in which any interest was displayed was the question of relations with the Russian Trade Unions. It was on this question that the Left Wing opposition first made itself evident. It centred in the British delegation and Edo Fimmen (Secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation). The British delegation moved that negotiations should at once be re-opened with the Russian Trade Unions on the basis of the statement in a letter from Tomsky (chairman of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions) that

What interests us is common Trade Union action against our class enemies.

The view of the British delegation appeared to be that it was intolerable for strained relations—or, rather, no relations—to exist between the Trade Unions of Western Europe and the Trade Unions of Soviet Russia at a time when the British Government and the Soviet Government were amicably negotiating an agreement.

In reply to this, Grassmann, delegate of the German Social-Democratic Trade Union Federation, delivered a violently anti-Bolshevik speech, supported by copious quotations from Lenin, *Die Rote Fahne*, &c., concluding with the statement that not until the Russian Trade Unions were completely separate from the Soviet Government and the Communist Party would he be prepared to admit them into the I.F.T.U.

It was the translation of Grassmann's speech which led to the reported interjections—which should become classical—from the British delegation, "Where is Rosa Luxemburg? Where is Karl Liebknecht?"

Eventually it was decided, with French and German support, against the opposition of the Left Wing, to instruct the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. to resume negotiations with the Russian Trade Unions "*in so far as this is compatible with the dignity of the I.F.T.U.*" On these terms a delegation of five has subsequently been appointed to meet a similar delegation from the Russian unions.

The relations between the I.F.T.U. and the International Trade Secretariats were also complicated by this question of relations with the Russian Trade Unions. The Metalworkers', Food and Drink Trades and Transport Workers' Internationals have either admitted the respective Russian unions or are in negotiation to that end. Attempts of the I.F.T.U. to

bring the Secretariats to heel failed, and there appeared to be a danger, if the I.F.T.U. persisted in its attitude, of the Secretariats kicking over the traces. The difficulty was smoothed by a resolution, approved by the congress, that the Secretariats should agree to treat the resolutions of the I.F.T.U., *not as binding*, but as "guiding principles": and that they should refer to the Bureau before contravening them. This is a very definite defeat for the present governing clique of the I.F.T.U.

A revision of the statutes was voted, by which three representatives of the Trade Secretariats were admitted to the Congress Commission, with a consultative vote only.

The resolution of the Rome Congress (1922) on the campaign against militarism and war (general strike against war, &c.) was confirmed. The Trade Unions were recommended to work in close co-operation with the Labour and Socialist International in this campaign, and were further recommended to push forward the propaganda desired by the British delegation—the refusal of military service.

M. Jouhaux remarked that "war will only be ended by pacifist action, not by resolutions," and then proceeded to justify the inaction of the I.F.T.U. in the past in the following terms:—

What could we have done . . . to enforce results? Perhaps the general strike? It presupposes a powerful workers' organisation and the support and the goodwill of public opinion. We had the duty to protest and we have done it with all our forces.

His words were belied by Mr. Ben Tillett, who declared roundly:—

We must fight more energetically than hitherto against war. Till now the Communists have been the only energetic opponents of war: we must not leave them this position of monopoly.

We must take timely preventive measures against war, *for if a war breaks out, everyone of us stands by his own country.*¹

The Congress was addressed by M. Albert Thomas, Director of the International Labour Office, on behalf of that organisation. He said:—

In the International Labour Office, by collaborating with the employers, we cannot, it is true, insist on the workers' point of view: but it often happens that the employers agree with our opinions, which is a great success. Our task is to realise the promises made to the workers by the Peace Treaty. . . .

It may be that the masses do not always understand the delicate legal arrangements which bind us, and according to which we labour in their interests. Nevertheless, this labour is necessary in the interest of general progress . . . "

¹ Our italics.

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NOTES of the MONTH

A Vital Discussion—The Left Wing—Conditions Favourable—Mass Movement and Leaders—A Grave Failure—"Agents of the Bourgeoisie"—"Talking Down" to the Masses—Centrist Confusion—The Cardinal Error—False Lefts—Fruitful Lefts—What is a Left Wing?—Does It Differ from the Right?—Compromises and Compromises—Disrupters, not Uniters

AN article by Philips Price in a recent issue of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*¹ touched on the whole question of the "Left Wing" in British Labour politics. We make no apology for returning to this article in view of the discussion that it has raised. The discussion was continued in a subsequent issue² from another point of view by J. R. Campbell, to which a reply by Price has already appeared elsewhere. The series of articles³ initiated by W. H. Hutchinson, and contributed to by members of the Labour Party Executive and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, has thrown a light on another aspect of the same question; while the recent holding of the National Minority Conference has brought into relief the possibility of an organised unofficial movement. It should now be possible to take stock of the various tendencies that exist and of the possibilities to which they point. It is of extreme value that this whole question should be discussed in the most open possible manner.

THERE exist at present many signs and tendencies and individual expressions which are loosely spoken of as "left wing." The term is used very vaguely, and it is necessary to ask what it means. When there are proposals afoot to organise or develop a "left wing" movement, it may mean one of two things. It may mean in practice an attempt to create under the name of a left wing in fact a new party on a centrist basis. Such a proposition we may rule out at once as out of the question: were it to be seriously made, it would be manifestly only adding to the

¹ Volume VI, No. 7, July, 1924.

² Volume VI, No. 8, August, 1924.

³ Volume VI, Nos. 1—8.

existing confusion and would have to be fought unreservedly as the most reactionary step that could be taken for the British working-class movement. But it may also mean, and can be more generally taken to mean, an attempt to create a wider mass movement, embracing all workers prepared to fight on definite immediate issues on which it is possible to unite, as a stage in the development of the whole movement. This is the sense in which the possibility of a "left wing" movement is of very great importance in this country to-day.

THERE is no question that the present conditions are favourable to the development of a wider mass movement. The mass of the workers are slowly awakening in this country as in other countries. The bankruptcy of bourgeois politics, the pressure of economic conditions and unemployment and the danger of renewed war are driving the workers and the lower middle class to look to more radical solutions. On the basis of this the ruling group which constitutes the present Labour Party leadership has been able to raise itself to power. But the very fact of their coming to power compels them to reveal themselves as nothing but another version of bourgeois rule with no possibility of fundamental change. Wider and wider circles of workers are compelled to realise the need of something more. The direct economic struggle of the trade unions has brought this point even more rapidly, the recognition of the exhaustion of the old methods of advancement within capitalism and the necessity of facing the struggle with the whole forces of the bourgeoisie or falling into impotence. The practical treachery, whether conscious or unconscious, of the old leadership, its more and more open coalition with the bourgeoisie, its fundamental inability to help the masses, open the road to new forces. The process may be slow. As Price correctly points out, the mass of the workers, so far as they are becoming conscious, still, on the whole, place their confidence in the Labour Government (though every day diminishes the truth of this). But the process is inevitable. The Liberal Government of 1906 was for a long time able to hold the support of the masses, though at a diminishing rate. But the eventual discrediting and

crumbling was none the less inevitable. Therefore the question of the Opposition in the Labour Party and its character is of the greatest importance.

IN speaking of a "Left Wing" we must distinguish very sharply the movement of the leaders and the movement of the masses. The gradual groping of larger and larger masses of workers towards a policy of fundamental change is the most important fact in the present period. Such an evolution must necessarily pass through many phases, try many false paths and become disillusioned, and take on many forms of vague and confused semi-revolutionary expression before assuming the full consciousness and confidence of the revolutionary working class. In this sense the development of a left wing is a necessary and all-important phase. It is also true that those who seek to perform the task of leaders must march with the mass and show themselves able to point the path immediately ahead, and not simply a remote and abstract future. But it is none the less true that those leaders who show themselves *only* capable of giving expression to the passing left-wing tendency, and who therefore (whether through natural temperament and inability to see more clearly or because they believe these the correct tactics to pursue) commit their credit as leaders to the vague, confused, halting, half and half and therefore invariably false views of the actual situation which are the hallmark of a left wing in a reformist movement, by so doing not only condemn themselves as leaders for the future, but also are hindering and thwarting, and not assisting, the development of the masses. If they do this through natural inability they reveal themselves at the mercy of the same illusions as the masses they seek to lead. If they do it through a belief in tactics, they are committing the gravest mistake in tactics that a revolutionary can commit, the failure of confidence in the masses and the failure of confidence in the power of revolutionary truth.

NOW this is the first great outstanding fact in Price's article which overrides all the issues that he raises, because it determines them all. The other issues can be discussed later. But this character must be nailed down first, because in it

Price has given unconscious expression to the deepest and most universal weakness of the British movement, and in doing so has passed over, for the space of this article at least, from Marxism to "Englishness." Price writes:—

It is no use clothing oneself in a sackcloth and ashes and going about croaking like ravens that the Labour Government has sold the workers to the bourgeoisie and that all is lost. Such tactics will only make the group that does this ridiculous, and nothing kills in English politics so easily as ridicule. A general Jeremiad on the record of the Labour Party in the last six months is not likely to go down with those who have been receiving some benefit, however slight, from increased unemployment pay and lower sugar taxes.

He therefore goes on to argue that our policy should be, instead of talking about "agents of the bourgeoisie," to confine ourselves to proposals of "practical measures" and to specific pieces of criticism, such as over the Soudan, the five cruisers, &c., and to make no general or "personal" attacks on the Labour Government or Labour Ministers as a whole. Now there is in all this an important issue which needs discussing, and to which there is a definite answer: namely, that all the specific issues in the world, Soudan, cruisers and all the rest, are of null and zero importance in comparison with the central question of the position of the Labour Government in the struggle of the working class and the bourgeoisie, and that all the detail questions in fact follow from that and only have significance in relation to it. But this is not the point that is at present important to consider. What is necessary to step back and look at hard in this case is the type of argument, the *method* of argument that is here revealed.

IF Price were only concerned to point out that we should not use the phrase "agents of the bourgeoisie" because the phrase has no effect on English ears, because it sounds in English, owing to the lack of conscious understanding and experience behind it, like a piece of insincere conventional jargon, and therefore ridiculous, he would be making a point of definite importance. It would be a stylistic point, not a political point; but stylistic points can be of very great importance in propaganda, particularly in the present situation in this country, where it might almost be said

that half the problem of Marxist propaganda in England is the problem of finding a suitable language. The conclusion would then be that we should endeavour to find a more suitable and effective way of bringing home to the workers so that they cannot fail to understand what we mean when we say that the Labour Ministers are acting as agents of the bourgeoisie. But this is not Price's argument. Price's argument is that we should abandon the fact because the expression might seem ridiculous. In other words, he uses a stylistic argument to determine a political policy. He does not discuss whether or not the Labour Government is acting as the agent of the bourgeoisie. Instead he points out that we cannot say this, because it would appear ridiculous, "and nothing kills in English politics so easily as ridicule." The English bourgeoisie may indeed sleep quiet in their beds, since they have only to cast a little ridicule over dangerous thoughts and the good English revolutionaries will steer clear of them. It does not occur to Price that this self-same "ridicule," this fear of being laughed at, the fear, that is, of passing outside the set bounds of ordered thoughts, is the most familiar traditional weapon of every ruling class, and that capitulation to it is exactly a vast unconscious symbolic form of capitulation to the bourgeoisie; that so far from not treating the Labour Ministers as agents of the bourgeoisie, this is precisely what *in fact* it is necessary to make clear, even though the manner of our propaganda must be such as to achieve its purpose and not give the effect of a shibboleth, and that if fear of being laughed at holds us back from making a clear statement of the position (surely, one feels, an argument of this character at a critical point could only have appeared in an English magazine article), then we shall never achieve anything.

BUT there is very much more involved in it than this. For Price goes on to argue that *because* the workers have received increased unemployment benefit and lower sugar taxes, *therefore* it is impossible to tell the workers that the Labour Government is betraying them to the bourgeoisie. And here in this moment is revealed the political meaning of what seemed to be a mere stylistic argument; the capitulation, which seemed at first simply to take the æsthetic form of a desire not to appear

“ridiculous,” is revealed as a political capitulation. For Price does not argue that because the Labour Government has granted increased unemployment benefit and lower sugar taxes, therefore it is not betraying them to the bourgeoisie. He knows that such an argument is impossible to defend. He knows that the Liberal Government of 1906 could show much more “benefits” to the workers in the shape of pensions, insurance, trade union rights, &c., and yet be handing over the workers to the slavery of imperialism and finance capital, and that the task of a working-class advocate was to denounce it in spite of the “benefits.” He knows that the imperialist and financial policy of the Labour Government can have a hundred times more effect on the lives of the workers and their families than any amount of reduced sugar taxes and increased unemployment benefit. But though he can understand these things himself, he does not think that the workers can understand them. He does not think that it is the first duty of a revolutionary in this position to tell the workers that if they let increased unemployment benefit and lower sugar taxes lull them into a sense of false security and confidence, while the major issues of government and imperialism and finance and war are being settled along absolute bourgeois lines, then they are heading straight for disaster—and to tell them so even against their first feelings, in the sure confidence that they will understand as time goes on by the very force of facts. And it is this lack of confidence in the masses, this lack of revolutionary confidence, this continual belief in the necessity of only stating half a position and “talking down” to the masses, that is the innermost character of the whole “left wing” school to which Price is here giving expression, and which necessarily leads to the sense of isolation and helplessness and vacillation, and so inevitably to continual capitulation to the ruling class and their lieutenants (“the psychological atmosphere necessary to impress the Labour Party Right Wing and the careerist element which is among them”).

FROM this inevitably follows the confusion of judgment which is unable any longer to view the actual facts of the situation with clearness, and insensibly becomes, not only practically and politically, but also ideologically, at the mercy of

the ruling section; which endeavours to persuade itself that the Labour Government is good in parts and bad in parts (as if it were possible to be on both sides of the class struggle at once); which argues that the Labour Party "may" become treacherous, like the German Social Democratic Party, and "may not," but has not yet gone the way of that "miserable" party (as if the British Labour leaders have not publicly proclaimed and feasted and celebrated their unity with the British Tirpitzes and Ludendorffs and every design of British Imperialism every bit as openly and even more openly than the German Social Democrats); which actually tries to believe that a Labour Cabinet, containing the old fox of Liberal Imperialism, Haldane, and the Conservative Imperialist ex-Viceroy, Chelmsford, as full members without reservation, has not entered into any form of coalition with the bourgeoisie; which holds forward as "the only hopeful method of attacking British capitalism" "the capture by stages of the parliamentary and administrative machinery of capitalism"; which concludes a crushing indictment of the Dawes Report with—a pathetic appeal to the Labour Bureau of the League of Nations; and which, in fact, in every line and phrase reveals all the most familiar traits of just that Centrism which the same writer a short time back, under the revolutionary influence of conditions in Germany and Russia, most contemptuously attacked. No longer here are the arguments in all this important, or needing to be answered, but the process of mind which makes these arguments possible.

WHAT is the cardinal error that leads to these pitiful results? It is the belief that, in order to reach a mass movement, the revolutionary must approximate himself to the Right Wing, because these are strong. In other words, two completely different processes are confused. The desire to overcome revolutionary isolation, to reach out to the masses, to establish a mass movement on however simple and elementary a basis—this desire is absolutely sound and correct and the most important revolutionary task in England to-day. But the belief that the way to accomplish this lies, not in the discovery of the most direct and

immediate needs of the masses, and voicing and pressing them against the sophistries of the right-wing leaders, but in approaching closer to the right-wing leaders, in minimising differences and veiling real opinions and using ambiguous language and discovering false points of similarity—that way lies complete confusion and helplessness and practical servitude to the Right Wing. That way leads, not to the masses, but to the reactionary leaders. It is to mistake the Labour Party official machine for the workers. The move to a “Left Wing” becomes in reality a move to the *Right*.

WHAT must be the character of a movement to be of real value to the workers, that is to say, to be, not a capitulation to the Right Wing, but an advance of the working class? For it is clear that in any discussion of this question the first and foremost thing to recognise is that there can be a *false* Left Wing which leads only to the Right. A few examples will illustrate this. The Vienna International was a species of left-wing movement within the reformist ranks. Nevertheless it was in fact purely and simply a manoeuvre on behalf of the Right, for its only purpose was to forestall the revolutionary streaming of the workers away from the discredited Second International and to prevent them passing into the Communist International, and when it had performed its task to shepherd them back into the Second International it went out of existence. The Bloc des Gauches in France to-day is an even cruder example of the use of a Left to canalise off a popular movement away from imperialist politics and skilfully and gently to bring it back to the same channels. The Socialist Peace Negotiations movement, which occupied so much prominence during the last year of the war, was in the same way a nominally left-wing movement, whose practical purpose was to divert the growing popular anti-war feeling away from the revolutionary example of the Russian workers and occupy it instead with fanciful imaginings of a “democratic socialist peace,” to which the bourgeois statesmen were to be persuaded, and by the hopes of which the practical support of imperialism was prolonged. All these “Left” movements are examples of movements which in no way made for the liberation of the workers or helped their advance, but actually vitiated and confused their advance by

raising false issues and frittering away the popular energy on illusions, so that in the end only the practical purposes of the right were served.

NOW to take examples of a different type of movement—movements which have grown out of sharp antagonisms and developed into something real. The Zimmerwaldian Left during the middle years of the war was a movement which combined within itself at first all forms of opposition to war within the socialist world from the purest pacifism to revolutionary Marxism. Nevertheless, it stood for a genuine and actual fight against the warmongers and the patriotic socialists, and therefore it developed and matured and grew until it passed into the experience of the Russian revolution and the organisation of the Communist International. The German Independent Socialists were a Left which at first embraced all elements in opposition to the treachery of the Kaiser Socialists; but because this fight was a genuine fight and not a polite “difference of opinion” (with “no personal attacks”) they matured and grew in strength, shedding elements here and adding there, until they passed into the powerful German Communist Party. To take even another example, though of limited scope, from this country. The Independent Labour Party thirty years ago was a Left which was fighting for independent Labour politics apart from the Liberal and Conservative Parties; they attacked the existing Labour leaders, and were attacked by them; but because they were not afraid to fight at that time and had a clear object, they achieved their object by the establishment of the Labour Party—the most important achievement in British working-class politics of the last generation. All these examples are examples of a Left which stood for, not a vague and ambiguous alternative to the Right, but a clear and definite division, and therefore bore fruit.

WHAT, then, do we demand of any “left-wing” movement that it should be of service to the workers? We demand one very simple thing: and that is that a Left Wing should genuinely differentiate itself from the Right. If a Left Wing begins at the outset, not by setting out a clear line

of distinction from the Right, but by attacking and criticising that section which is in its opinion too distinct from the Right, then there is something wrong with that Left Wing. What is a genuine differentiation from the Right? It is certainly not some such phrase as the following:—

The attitude of the Left Wing in any movement should be to look ahead at the ultimate objective, to keep clear before the workers the consciousness of the probable necessity to use all methods both political and industrial to attain those ends, to keep in advance of the masses, but never to get ahead so far that it loses contact with them and their everyday practical problems. It is *therefore* no use going about croaking like ravens that the Labour Government has sold the workers to the bourgeoisie, &c.

This Left Wing means precisely nothing. The one and only definite thing in that definition, namely, the statement that the Labour Government has sold the workers to the bourgeoisie, is only mentioned to be disowned. Thus the only precise thing in the statement is the differentiation from the Left, not from the Right. The imagination that a daring mention of a mythical possible *future* use of "all methods both industrial and political" (whatever that may mean) has a halfpennyworth of *present* importance as a differentiation is pitiful—and yet that is all the difference Price sees between the Left and the Right in the British Labour Movement.

A GENUINE differentiation must be established on a fundamental basis, and the only fundamental basis in the working-class movement is the class struggle. A Left Wing in the working-class movement must be based upon the class struggle; or it becomes only a manœuvre to confuse the workers. It must be a union of all who seek to carry forward and advance the class struggle in current issues against those who oppose and deny the class struggle. Only on such a basis can a wider mass movement be developed. But this means first and foremost to be able to see the class issues and the friends and enemies of the class struggle. And this is where Price's greatest failure comes. For he not only fails to see MacDonald as a class factor one way or another, but he actually discusses the whole time the policy of the MacDonald Cabinet, its acts of commission and omission, and the

rest, *as if it were* a piece of tactics in the class war, with mistakes and successes, boldnesses and weaknesses, &c.—in the face of every public act and declaration of MacDonal'd that the whole of his policy in every principle and detail is directed primarily and fundamentally in opposition to the whole conception of the class war. The complete sophistication and self-deception of this process is the greatest crime of Price's article.

THAT sophistication is compelled to come out into the open with his reply subsequently published to Campbell's article. In that reply, Price in a single sentence comes out with the classic expressions of just that menshevism, centrism and social treachery which he once attacked. He is arguing (in exactly the same way as all the leaders of the Second International) that the "compromises" of the British Labour Government in its voluntary association and alliance with the British bourgeoisie against the workers and subject races may be compared with the "tactical compromises" of the Russian revolution faced with the armed hostility of all the forces of international capitalism. This is exactly the argument of the British Labour leaders in Russia which Lenin so crushingly analysed in the fourth chapter of his *Infantile Diseases of Left Communism*. And in using it Price shows himself uneasily aware that there is something wrong; that in the one case the compromises are *after* the conquest of power in order to maintain the revolution, while in the other they are *before* the conquest of power in order to maintain the capitalist State and stabilisation to prevent the revolution. And because this awareness cannot escape him, he adds the sentence which betrays his position:—

"This is" (he says, speaking of the Russian new economic policy) "for the stage after the workers have come into power, but, as Radek and other Communists see, the same principles of tactical compromise may be necessary in the long-drawn-out period which precedes the coming into power of the working classes in Western Europe."

With that sentence peace is made between Price and the reformists.

THUS the particular move towards a "Left Wing" of which Price has made himself the exponent is not in any sense a move towards a combined effective working-class opposition to the policy for which MacDonalld stands. It is in fact exactly the contrary: it is a dispersal and weakening of the Left. It is an individual retreat of one or two ex-revolutionaries who have lost confidence in the revolution to compromise with the Right Wing: it is a separation from the main body of the growing working-class opposition, and it takes in practice the form of attempting to raise rival and confusing issues within the Left, thus leading to a dissipation of forces and a blurring of real issues. A united working-class opposition to the open betrayal and menace of the MacDonalld policy must and will arise: but it will arise through clear fighting and clear statement of the issues, and on the basis of the forces that are already prepared to fight, and not on the lines of confused retreat and wavering and self-deception and approximation to the Right, of which Price's article is the expression.

R. P. D.

THE LABOUR PARTY'S ALTERNATIVE

By P. BRAUN

"For over one hundred years the Whigs have played the game of gagging their dangerous rivals."—Keir Hardie, 1903.

"The Labour Party is becoming a wing of the Liberal Party."
—A. W. Humphrey, 1911.

"The Prime Minister turns down his Party's most typical appeal."—"Observer," Sunday, September 14, 1924.

THE Twenty-Fourth Annual Conference of the Labour Party will be the first political gathering of the whole Labour Movement since the advent of the Labour Government. As a matter of fact the Fifty-Sixth Trades Union Congress refused to discuss any of the questions that concern the actions and policy of the MacDonald Government. The leaders of that Congress preferred to shun all burning problems, in order to avoid the unpleasant subject of the Labour Government's policy, and unfortunately they succeeded. But whether pleasant or unpleasant, the Labour Party Conference has been left not only to discuss but to decide upon the duties of its Government in office.

A few weeks ago it was still possible to assume that the Conference would centre all its attention upon questions of minor importance, as for instance the medieval ceremonies of the ministers at Court, and so on. After the appearance of the new edition of MacDonald's book, *Socialism, Critical and Constructive*, with a preface dated June, 1924, it has become impossible for the Labour Party to take up such a position in regard to the policy of the Labour Government. The merit of MacDonald's preface is that he states the issue clearly enough, and the Labour Party has been faced with the choice between an independent Socialist policy and a "new gospel" of Labour-Liberalism, as proposed by the Prime Minister, MacDonald.

We are not inclined to over-estimate the significance of declara-

tions, statements and resolutions. We know how often resolutions are carried with the sole purpose of fooling the people. In political life only actions count. And the actions of the Labour Government are, as a matter of fact, of greater importance than the article by Mr. MacDonald. Still, under the present circumstances the political value of this Preface should not be under-estimated. Until it was published many of the members of the Labour Party tried to persuade themselves, as well as the movement as a whole, that the MacDonald Government had not had a chance to accomplish the pledges given to the constituencies. Now Mr. MacDonald comes out and says that the old pledges have lost their validity, and that the time is ripe to revise the old programmes and the old tactics in accordance with the new ideas born in the offices of Ministers. If this Preface passes unchallenged, then it will mean that the Labour Party, together with MacDonald, repudiates Socialism in order to replace it by a new edition of old, worn-out Liberalism.

The Labour Party's alternative is this: to go with MacDonald against Socialism, or to consolidate the Socialist forces against MacDonaldism.

The Press discusses MacDonald's Preface as something new and unexpected. The fact of the matter is, that MacDonald, who started his political career as a Liberal, has only completed the circle by coming back to his old gospel. Furthermore, a careful study of the past of the Labour Movement, especially of that chapter which records the facts of the formation of the Labour Party, will show us that MacDonald instead of making a new step forward is returning back to the old days when the Labour Movement of this country was still in its cradle.

Post-war conditions have confronted us with many very complicated problems. Many of us have not cared to look back to history, concentrating all our efforts on finding the key to the future. Nevertheless we have got to make a pause and look to the past if we want a better understanding of present conditions, as well as of the means and way to change them.

According to its constitution, the Labour Party is a federation of Trade Unions and of various Socialist organisations. This definition alone is enough to enable us to realise that the Labour

Party embodies a mosaic of different shades of opinion and political thought. Studying the history of this composite political body, we shall immediately come to the conclusion that it was the co-operation of three elements in the Labour Movement that resulted in the organisation of the Labour Party. These three elements are : (1) The Trade Union Movement pure and simple; (2) the Labour Representation Movement ; and (3) The Socialist Movement.

Let us first glance at the main steps through which the Labour Representation Movement passed. We all know that the defeat of the Chartist Movement resulted in a very long period of political inactivity in the Labour Movement. It was in the years of the formation of the First International that a certain revival on the political field of the Labour Movement was witnessed. Many political labour organisations—local and national—were formed. The most important of those organisations was undoubtedly "The Labour Representation League," which was formed in 1869. The main task of that body was to promote Labour representation in Parliament. The whole history of that League proves that the movement as a whole was to a very great extent under the direct control of the Liberal Party, notwithstanding the fact that some of its leaders, as, for instance, Applegarth and Odger, had been in close connections with the First International guided personally by Karl Marx. The League was in fact a Radical wing of the Liberal Party, and John Stuart Mill was quite correct when he said, commenting upon the results of a by-election in 1870, writing to Mr. Odger: "The result of the by-election in Southwark proves that you have the majority of the Liberal Party with you." Not till 1874 did two working men succeed in getting returned to Parliament—Alexander MacDonald and Burt—both officials of the Miners' Union.

The Labour Movement is at the present moment wondering deeply at the Liberal Imperialist speeches of MacDonald, Thomas, Snowden and others. Let us quote only one sentence from the manifesto of Alexander Thomas after he was returned to Parliament. There we read: "All questions affecting the interests of Capital and Labour would have my constant and undivided attention, believing as I do that it is only by a more peaceful relation of these interests that the greatness and strength

of our country can be maintained." Let the careful student compare this sentence with all the "new" declarations of our Labour statesmen, and he will come to the conclusion that the Labour Government, instead of moving forward, drags us back to the time when Labour made its first efforts to constitute itself as a new class, with a new historical mission. But in making these comparisons we should not do injustice to the pioneers of the political Labour Movement. They worked under very hard and peculiar conditions. Liberalism was still promising. It was still considered as the movement leading the political fight against the oppressors. The Liberal Party had the reputation of being the party which had broken the back of the landed aristocracy. In such circumstances those who fought for Labour Representation and remained loyal to the Liberals should be considered as pioneers, as men moving forward. It is quite different when MacDonald, Thomas and others repeat the same ideas as their early predecessors, after Liberalism has proved to be one of the wings of the dominant classes. For the sake of justice we should also mention that even in those days there were men in the Labour Movement who understood the real nature of Liberalism. William Harry, for instance, stated that "the Tory acted the part of an open foe, but the Liberal that of a false and perfidious friend, who, while professing sympathy with and proffering service to the cause of working men, sought only to overthrow it." William Harry was quite correct. The false and perfidious friend watched eagerly every step of the Labour Movement, with the sole purpose of hampering its development. Later on, *i.e.*, in 1903, Keir Hardie in his open letter to Lloyd George said: "No one can read the records of the past 130 years without being struck by the skill shown by the Liberals in inveigling the leaders of the people into their net, and always with the same result."

Yes, the Liberals have been very successful. The Tories have exhausted their flexibility by adapting themselves to the general requirements of Capitalism. It was the mission of the Liberals to adapt themselves to the general conditions of the Labour Movement in order to vitiate its progress.

The disappearance of the Labour Representation League was the first success of the Liberals and their policy towards Labour. But skill alone could not bind the life of a new class, which is called upon by history to accomplish a great task. In 1886 new machinery

was created—the Labour Electoral Committee—which was the beginning of the Labour Electoral Association. The success of this association was at the same time a great success for the Liberal Party. The ten Labour men returned to Parliament were all Liberals and followers of Gladstone, whom they praised as “the man of a hundred fights, the champion of liberty, of the people’s cause and the public peace.” These Labour M.P.’s, although connected with the Labour masses, were obedient servants of the Liberal Party.

There was an instinctive feeling among the workers that Labour-Liberalism could not represent the cause of the working classes. This feeling was strongly sustained by the Socialist organisations, mainly the Social Democratic Federation, which were already in the field. *Independent* Labour Representation was the natural reaction against the Labour-Liberals who followed the lead of the Liberals. But the Liberals were very watchful. They understood quite well the meaning of *Independent* Labour Representation, and when Keir Hardie stood in 1888 as an Independent Labour candidate he was offered £300 a year and a safe Liberal seat to withdraw. This cynical offer was rejected and it served only to strengthen the movement for Independent Labour Representation. We may even say that this issue was the sharpest at the time when the Independent Labour Party was first organised. The endeavour of the Liberals to sterilise the seeds before they struck roots in the soil met with results the reverse of those intended. In 1899 the Plymouth Trades Union Congress instructed its Parliamentary Committee to convene a special Congress to secure the election of Labour men representatives. This Congress may be considered as the first important victory of the idea of Independent Labour Representation.

But the Liberals were on the watch. Although the conferences called by the Labour Representation Committee repeatedly expressed themselves in favour of an Independent Labour Group in Parliament still the moderate Labour element—the Labour-Liberals—tried their very best to make the new organisation a tool in the hands of the dominant classes. The same Newcastle Conference (1903) which adopted a Labour Party policy rejected all Socialist resolutions as well as the proposition that class war should be the policy of

the Labour Movement. At the Conference in 1905 an attempt was even made to exclude the I.L.P. and other Socialist bodies from the Labour Representation Conferences. But this resolution was lost, and in 1906 the Labour Party came into being as a federation of Trade Unions, Socialist Parties and other Labour organisations.

The Liberals made a desperate step to hamper the development of this organisation. On March 6, 1906, one of the Liberal agents sent a letter to the Labour-Liberals in which we read: "The opinion has been freely expressed to me by Liberal leaders (who have promised considerable financial support) that a separate organisation should be formed to represent the views of the Liberal-Labour members of Parliament and to secure a substantial increase in their numbers at the next General Election." At the end of the letter was a note: "This letter has not been issued to the twenty-nine Labour M.P.'s pledged to the L.R.C. Programme."

The stratagem of the Liberals was very simple. Their idea was to have a strong Labour-Liberal Group to fight the Independent Labour Group. But the idea of Independent Labour representation had already got well rooted in the soil, and this attempt was a failure.

The dominant classes were compelled to reckon with the fact of the independent existence of the Labour Party. It was the task of the Liberals to find some new cards to play in order to continue the game of gagging their dangerous rivals. In this work the dominant classes of Great Britain were not alone. The political leaders of capitalism all over Europe were confronted with the same problem. They were all looking for ways and means to corrupt the growing independent political movement of the toiling classes in order to make the Socialist Parties into tools of capitalism. Let us bear in mind that it was just the time of the greatest success of imperialist policy. The dominant classes in Europe had taken advantage of the fact that the Socialist Parties everywhere were dominated by skilled workers and paid officials. The problem was how to make these upper sections of the working classes partners in the colonial robberies, and so take the wind out of the Socialist sails. The great conflagration of 1914 proved that this policy of imperialism was successful.

The collapse of the Second International was especially disastrous

for the Labour Movement in Great Britain, where Liberal traditions were rooted very deeply and Socialist ideas were scattered and mixed with prejudices and conservatism. On August 1, 1914, we read a strong appeal against war signed by Keir Hardie. Several days later a political truce replaced the struggle between the political parties. The political truce was only an introduction to the cessation of industrial hostilities. So, in the moment of the greatest crisis, the "Independent" Labour Movement with all its organisations became a very useful tool in the hands of the capitalist classes. When the war was over the dominant classes succeeded in using the machinery of the Labour Movement as a tool against the revolt of the Labour masses.

The Labour Party became a strong factor in the political life of Great Britain. But the Liberals, following up the development of the Labour Party, could say—and did say—that Liberalism had returned embodied in the policy of the Labour Party. And the Liberals understand that in the long run such a situation cannot last. A Labour Party pursuing a Liberal policy must sooner or later lose its support among the toiling masses. In other words, the Liberals hope that the disruption of the Labour Party will be the inevitable outcome of present conditions. This is the reason why the Liberals gave their consent to the formation of a Labour Government. As long as the Party is in opposition the leaders of the Labour Party have a good chance to hide their Liberal tendencies. The situation changes the very moment when those leaders of the Labour Party are called upon not to speak but to act.

In this light we can easily understand the absence of unity in the Liberal Party towards the Labour Government. Asquith says clearly and plainly: "We still sleep more or less comfortably in our beds. Capital steadily pursues its old routine of continuous and on the whole prosperous investment." And he is prepared to sleep as long as necessary, until the Labour Party discredits itself. Those Liberals who are not so experienced in politics are simply either joining the Labour Party or supporting it very actively. The third group of Liberals is composed of those ambitious politicians who have not patience to wait, and are not satisfied to see Liberalism embodied in the Labour Party but would like to keep the reins of power in their own hands. The inner fight

between those three groups we can see at every turning point in the history of the Labour Government. The three tendencies of the Liberal Party are especially clear-cut on the question of the Anglo-Russian Soviet Treaty.

The leaders of the Labour Government know perfectly well that at this moment no danger threatens them from the Right. They know that they have not only certain support from Liberalism as an organised political party, but also from those middle elements who followed the lead of the Liberals.

The danger is from the Left, or to be more correct, from the Labour Movement itself, and it is against the Labour Movement that Mr. MacDonald, the head of the Government and the leader of the Party, has drawn his sword.

In the Preface that we have already mentioned Mr. MacDonald comes out as an unrepentant Liberal. But that is not the main point of the Preface. The Preface as a whole should be considered as a deliberately devised attack upon the Labour Movement.

First of all MacDonald makes clear to the workers that the Labour Government is in no way bound by its pledges. He gives a perfectly clear construction about the difference between words and deeds, promises and performance. He says:—

The pledges he (the Socialist) gives do not concern his achievements of the morrow as much as the purpose which underlies and impregnates all his continuing action. He has ideals and they guide him, and he rejects everything of the nature of violent breaks and brand new systems.

Let us try to understand these sentences. A Socialist Prime Minister may have pacifist ideals. He may even believe in the Programme of the I.L.P. on freedom for subject nations, but he could continue to nourish civil war in China, to bomb the unarmed population of Irak, in order to avoid "violent breaks" in the general Imperialist policy of the dominant classes of Great Britain. He may have in his programme the Capital Levy, but this programme does not concern his "achievements of the morrow." The worker is simply called to believe that whatever the Labour Government does against Socialism and for capitalism is impregnated by an ideal which has nothing to do with the every-day work of the Government.

Still, this is only a theoretical consideration about pledges and achievements. MacDonald passes from the defence to attack. He states :—

Profiteering has become universal, and reaction has shown a deplorable tendency to centre in self. The evil has not been confined to the classes generally designated as "profiteers," but has infected all sections. That workmen should not tolerate without a struggle to remedy their conditions, which are not only hard, but unjust, is good, but *in their struggles to secure their ends they are tempted to forget that they are all dependent members of a social unit, and that consequently they only injure themselves by punishing those against whom they have a grievance to such an extent that they injure the society to which they belong.*

I have italicised the last part of this paragraph. Its meaning is clear without comment. Workers who fight capitalists may injure the capitalist society to which they belong. Acting so, they become profiteers, and the Socialist Government is justified in fighting, in using arms against them as against profiteers. This is the new gospel of the Labour Government. We knew the acts behind this new gospel. Now we have a theoretical enlightenment. I am quite sure that there can be no mistake in saying that in this creed MacDonald is not only below the heights of Gladstone's oratory about social welfare, but does not even reach the level of some of the speeches made by Lloyd George. At any rate the dominant classes may feel satisfied. No Prime Minister of any capitalist party would dare to call workers, fighting for the amelioration of their conditions, "profiteers." Such an attack upon Labour could be made only by a man who knows how to use Socialist phrases to cover capitalist actions. MacDonald goes much further. He calls upon the workers to give their very best to serve capitalism. He writes :—

Socialism calls men to give unstinted service in return for a reasonable reward measured in terms of life, and no one should be more impatient than the Socialist with the fallacy that a man cannot be expected to give the service before he gets the reward.

This appeal to the workers is very easy to understand. The question is only: what has this appeal to do with Socialism? In present circumstances the worker is serving not Socialism but Capitalism. MacDonald as a servant of Capitalism has a perfect right to invite the workers to give unstinted service, and to ask only for a reasonable reward. That is exactly the ideal of the capitalists towards Labour: to get more and to pay less. But if the workers

follow this friendly appeal by MacDonald we shall only perpetuate capitalist slavery, without a chance even to dream about Socialism.

MacDonald knows that Socialist garments have brought him into office, and for the sake of these garments he uses Socialist phrases in making a clearly and plainly capitalist appeal.

The attack upon the worker includes a certain promise. The promise reads :—

It is only when the worker by brain or by hand does his best for society that he will create in society that sympathy and support without which the Labour Movement will never attain its goal.

This promise could be translated this way: "If you workers behave well and do your best for capitalist society, you will get the sympathy of that Capitalist society."

So far so good. The only thing which we cannot understand is how "the Labour Government will attain its goal." Are we to understand that if the workers give unstinted service to capitalist society in return for a reasonable reward, society will out of sympathy allow the workers to introduce Socialism? We hope that even MacDonald would not dare to defend such a statement. The words about the goal of the Labour Movement were only necessary to decorate the open threat made by the Prime Minister to the working class of this country. The threat reads:—

The Socialist, therefore, looks with some misgivings upon some recent developments in the conflicts between Capital and Labour. They are contrary to his spirit; he believes they are both immoral and uneconomic, and will lead to disaster.

Of course, even a pacifist is justified in using force to prevent disaster and to fight the immoral and uneconomic steps of the workers. We do not know yet exactly which developments in the class struggle the Prime Minister considers as immoral and uneconomic. In the Preface, only four things are mentioned, viz., public doles, Poplarism, strikes for increased wages and limitation of output. If we have correctly understood the meaning of the Preface we shall expect the Labour Government to redraft the Emergency Powers Act, in order to allow the Government to prohibit strikes and to prosecute bodies such as Poplar Council, which dares to try to ameliorate the conditions of Labour against the public opinion of the dominant classes.

The Preface is a part of a new programme. A careful study of that new programme was made at the I.L.P. Summer School. Socialism, in the new interpretation of MacDonald and of the I.L.P. Summer School, is much nearer to General Dawes than to Marx, about whom MacDonald writes in his book that he "became the personal embodiment of the working-class revolt against capitalism and its fight for Socialism" (see page 47).

And so strikes are immoral and uneconomic. Poplarism is a very bad thing. Violent breaks and brand new systems are dangerous. The workers are profiteers. Under such circumstances the best way to introduce Socialism is to work out a Reparations Scheme by which generations of workers have to give unstinted service in order to foot the bill of the finance magnates. Such a scheme is the best way not only to ridicule but in practice to repudiate Socialism. The "kept" press greeted the scheme of the I.L.P. Summer School and the Preface of the Prime Minister in the same terms.

The *Observer* summed up the Preface of MacDonald by saying that the Prime Minister "turns down his Party's most typical appeal."

Labour's alternative is now either to turn down its leader or to follow him in turning down Socialism.

THE WORKERS AND THE ANGLO-SOVIET TREATY

By C. M. ROEBUCK

(i) *Two Points of View*

THE crisis that is rapidly approaching over the question of ratifying the Anglo-Soviet Treaty should be a lesson both to the present Government and to British Labour. It is the outcome of a conflict between two entirely opposed and contradictory methods of approach to the problem of improving relations with the Union of Soviet Republics. These two methods, unfortunately, not only both found their advocates within the same Labour Movement and the same Labour Cabinet, but were even confused in practice by many Labour men who might have been expected to distinguish them.

One method is that of the capitalist. The Union of Soviet Republics is the legal successor of the Tsarist Empire: therefore it accepts all the Tsar's obligations, and is bound by the same laws. If the Tsar owed money, the Soviet Government must pay it; if British subjects suffered losses because the Russian workers allowed themselves the luxury of a revolution, the Soviet Government must recoup them; if it nationalised factories belonging to British subjects, the factories must be handed back or paid for. The Soviet Government has no claim against Great Britain for the damages wrought by intervention and blockade, as the British armies were only defending the sacred rights of property; and in any case Britain does not pay indemnities.

The whole of the Capitalist Press, from the *Morning Post* to the *New Statesman*, has at one time or another said all this pretty plainly.

The other method is that of the worker. The Union of Soviet Republics is the first Workers' State, and has destroyed the rule of capitalism over the workers. The only laws which bind it are the laws of loyalty to the working class. It is not in the least liable to pay back the debts contracted by Tsardom in order to

maintain the unholy Triple Alliance of landowners, bankers and industrialists. The dispossessing of the capitalists without compensation is the economic foundation of the revolution: to repay them means to undermine that foundation. If a handful of British capitalists suffered private losses during the revolution, those losses are as nothing compared with the frightful disasters of famine and disease—to say nothing of loss of life in actual fighting—inflicted wantonly on the many millions of the Russian workers and peasants. If there is any balance due, it is in favour of the Soviet Union, not in favour of the British capitalist class.

Not only have most of these principles been subscribed to, at one time or another, by all spokesmen of organised Labour (from Mr. J. H. Thomas leftwards), but there is practically no class-conscious worker who will not subscribe to them to-day.

It was the first conception which prompted intervention in 1918 and 1919, the attempt to support Poland in August, 1920, the refusal of Government assistance to the famine stricken in 1921, the sabotage of the Genoa and Hague Conferences in 1922, and the Curzon ultimatum in 1923. It was the second conception which created the "Hands Off Russia" mass movement, which brought about the Council of Action, which secured for the Workers' International Russian Relief the support of hundreds of thousands of non-Socialist workers, and which prompted hundreds of Labour organisations in the localities to reply to the Curzon ultimatum by active preparations for a mass upheaval. In each case their own class instinct told the opposing sides clearly and unmistakably what to do.

(ii) *The Policy of Compromise*

But, while this was so in a moment of grave crisis, there were long periods of slow development or negotiation in which the issues did not appear as sharply. And here the powerful hold which the middle-class elements in the Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party still maintain over the proletarian rank and file made itself felt. Instead of pressing home and clarifying precisely the *class* significance of the fight for the Soviet Republic, the parliamentary and other champions of an agreement had recourse to other arguments. These arguments aimed at avoiding

the class roots of the difference between Capitalist Britain and Socialist Russia, at concealing its existence or blurring its outlines, at enlisting the support primarily of the lower middle classes and enlightened bourgeoisie—whom the Labour Party leaders have been, of course, assiduously courting ever since 1918.

Of such a non-committal nature were the arguments about non-intervention in the affairs of any foreign State, about freedom for the Russian people to work out their own salvation, about a great experiment in democracy, about devious paths leading to the same great goal, about the wickedness of restoring the *Romanoff* despotism (instead of the despotism of the *landlords, bankers and manufacturers*). These arguments were reinforced, thanks to the existence of a number of legal and other flaws in the capitalist case. Thus, in the case of the bondholders, it was recalled that not merely the Soviets, but also the whole of the Liberal and progressive sections of the Duma had in 1905 expressly repudiated beforehand any loans which Tsardom might float in the future. In the case of the property claimants, it was recalled that international law has long released all Governments from the obligation of treating foreigners better than their own subjects: and, as a corollary, that no British subject doing business abroad can complain of nationalisation without compensation if the same principle is applied to all the citizens of the country where he is living. Cases in which other States have not paid their debts, or have expropriated foreigners without compensation, were cited. And so on.

All these were excellent subsidiary arguments, which would have helped to salve the formula-loving conscience of the middle classes, had they been incessantly accompanied by direct class appeals to the workers which would have made the pressure continuous. Here, however, the leaders of the Labour Movement took the wrong turning. Instead of making the middle-class arguments subsidiary, they almost entirely *substituted* them for the arguments and the demands dictated by purely working-class interests. Anyone who looks over the pages of the *Herald* or the *New Leader*, or refers to Labour speeches on Russia in "Hansard," will find ample evidence to prove this up to the hilt. The Communist Party was left alone in advocating a purely working-class policy towards Russia.

(iii) *Compromise at Work*

What were the consequences of the official policy, dictated in some cases by an opportunist middle-class outlook and in others resulting from a state of utter political confusion?

In the first place, the arguments about self-determination, liberty, democracy, &c., proved double-edged. It was (and, unfortunately, still is) sufficient for a handful of Georgian adventurers, masquerading as Socialists and democrats, to organise (on French gold) a gang of brigands in the mountains and let them loose on the small hamlets and towns of the Georgian countryside, and at the same time to utilise to the full the capitalist control of the world's Press agencies, for the whole world to be given to understand that the indignant Georgian masses have risen against their Bolshevik oppressors, &c. And many class-conscious workers, whose *instinct* told them that the whole story was a lie, that the Georgian workers and peasants were for the first time using their own freely elected Soviets to build the new order, were betrayed into the foolish belief that a Workers' and Peasants' Government was acting in flagrant defiance of its whole previous policy and reason for existence. Or men who, in more reasonable moments, realised the deadly part the priesthood had played in Russia, and the constant espionage and counter-revolution that pours in even yet, day and night, over the Soviet border (and *must* continue to pour in so long as Capitalism and Socialism continue to exist side by side), were swept away, at the time of the Butkevich trial, by the same emotionalism which they had called into play on behalf of Soviet Russia, and led into actions, manifestoes, telegrams, &c., which played straight into the hands of the counter-revolution.

Secondly, the capitalists of Britain and France were enabled again and again to gather their strength for a new attack, instead of experiencing a decisive defeat once for all. Defeated and cowed by the naked fist of the proletariat in the autumn of 1919, they plucked up courage again a year later. Thwarted once more, they tried their chances again in the spring of 1923, and, again defeated, tried yet again in the autumn of the same year (the refusal to admit Rakovsky). And, though they were beaten down at each of these critical moments, it was at the price of infinite energy—and

of long periods of sabotage between whiles. Let us not forget the weary months of subterfuge and delay in withdrawing the British troops from Russia (1919-20), the long haggling and threatening over the Trade Agreement (1920-21), the acts of sabotage, great and small, in 1921-22 (the encouragement of the Border States, the famine, Genoa and the Hague), the refusal to extend the Trade Facilities Act and Export Credits Scheme to Russia.

Finally, when at last a Labour Government was formed in this country, out of the very elements who were most diffuse, vague and "above-all-classes" in their advocacy of friendship with Soviet Russia, the middle-class influence became so strong that it led the Labour Government away from the path of Labour altogether. First, a long delay in actual recognition. No one should be surprised that ten days is called a long delay; such was the furious campaign of the capitalist Press that every day of silence, every day on which some courteous gesture of recognition did not take place, could only mean one thing—fear, which required to be prodded by vigorous protests from the active Labour workers before it yielded to duty. Then the omission to pay any tribute or any simple courtesy to the memory of Lenin, apart from formal condolences delivered through the British Mission in Moscow, which could not be avoided and which remained unknown or unreal to the working masses in Britain. Then the refusal to extend any of the existing credit schemes to Russia—a demand which had throughout been treated as something quite independent of *de jure* recognition. Then the long-drawn-out second thoughts on the appointment of a Labour Ambassador to Moscow—a suggestion which the working-class movement had hailed with enthusiasm, but which was stormed at or jeered at by the capitalists. And, lastly, the support of the bondholders, property owners and other claimants throughout the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, with the natural sequel of a rupture on the question of recognising liability in principle to compensate the former owners of nationalised property.

(iv) *The Treaty*

Let it be remembered that this was not the result of a tactless or unaccommodating attitude on the part of the Soviet Delegation.

In the first place, a number of outstanding questions were cleared up by the clauses (2-4) dealing with former Russo-British treaties. Elaborate provisions were made on the vexed question of fishing in Soviet waters, involving the concession of the three-mile limit and of a considerable new fishing area in British interests (5). On the old question of propaganda, the Soviet Delegation accepted a formula far more extensive and provocative even than that drawn up by Curzon in 1923 (16).

And secondly, in spite of all the misrepresentation of the Capitalist Press, the Soviet Delegation made big concessions to the bondholders and other claimants. Before the Treaty, the bondholders had neither the money nor the promise of any. To-day, they have the promise of satisfaction on all foreign bonds other than those acquired for speculative purposes. The same is the position of the claimants for goods supplied, or services rendered, or small private losses. Before the Treaty, claimants for nationalised property had neither the property nor any hope of compensation. To-day, they have the prospect of compensation on their claims, the justice of which will be examined by a mixed commission.

True, the Soviet Delegation made certain reservations. It recognised that it must pay for the opportunity to develop its commercial relations with Britain—the half-hearted and compromising attitude of the spokesmen of British Labour, already referred to, made that inevitable. But the Soviet Delegation had no power to renounce the vital conquests of the revolution, and it could not place on the exhausted shoulders of the Russian workers and peasants greater burdens than they could bear. Consequently, all the payments promised were expressly stated to be *in exception to* the Soviet laws concerning annulment of the Tsarist foreign debts, nationalisation of large-scale industry and cancellation of concessions. Secondly, the payments themselves were made conditional upon a loan—not, as the Capitalist Press, with characteristic effrontery, has put it, to pay back one set of British capitalists with the money procured from another set, but in order to revive industry and agriculture, which were ruined by British gold, and thus make any payment at all a practical possibility.

These reservations were made in order to make the Treaty a compromise and not a surrender. For a surrender would not merely have been a humiliation to the U.S.S.R., it would simply have been intolerable for the workers and peasants. The Treaty would have been rejected by them, and the claimants would have been as far off any prospect of hard cash as the Soviet Government from any prospect of large credits.

(v) *The Rupture and Its Sequel*

But the middle-class policy had to show itself in its true colours. The Labour Cabinet, which had abandoned the working-class standpoint at the very outset, by adopting an "above-all-classes," purely "national" point of view, and openly proclaiming that its main object was to secure "justice for British traders," during the negotiations acted more and more openly as the representative of organised capital, not of organised Labour. And it completed its evolution by forcing a rupture on the very point of principle which the Soviet Delegation could not accept—liability to compensate former owners of property as a matter of right. It cannot be too often emphasised that this was the inevitable end of the road on to which the Labour Government had stepped, and the Labour Party leaders before it, by their non-committal, equivocal, general phrases about "a just settlement," "the interests of both Russia and Britain" and so on. All that was required was, first, the relaxation of the direct brutal pressure of the masses, and, second, the presence of a number of skilful lawyers and adroit officials to meet the purely technical arguments already referred to, and to put the necessary capitalist *content* into the general *formule* about "justice," "fair play," "non-intervention in internal affairs." While the bankers and the Capitalist Press called a spade a spade, and said what they wanted, the Labour Government was allowed to save its conscience by using non-committal phrases.

Fortunately, the working-class instinct was not dead. That section of the Labour leaders, both in Parliament and in the trade unions, which had the closest connection with the masses, realised what was happening. Their energetic fists banged down on to the table just as when Curzon was acting for the bondholders and creditors saved the situation. Whatever apologies and explanations

the Labour Government offers in order to avoid acknowledgment of its class connections, whatever general phrases it uses about "intervention," "mediation" and "a new formula," the working class knows perfectly well that the question was not of a *new* formula, but of substituting a formula that protected the interests of the workers for a formula that asserted the rights of the capitalists. When the crisis came, it was a case of the workers' viewpoint against the capitalist viewpoint, just as it was when Lloyd George and Baldwin were Prime Ministers.

(vi) *The Next Step*

The Treaty has been signed. Parliament has to decide on ratification three weeks after it meets. The Capitalist Press has opened a desperate campaign against the Treaty, sticking at no legal quibbles, no distortion, no lies. The Trades Union Congress and Labour Party leaders have begun a national campaign in support of the Treaty. The fate of the Government depends upon the issue.

What is to be done? First and foremost, to explain to the workers the real meaning of the Treaty, and of the whole struggle for peace and friendship with the Union of Soviet Republics. Whatever may have been the motives of MacDonald and his Cabinet in drawing up the Treaty, whatever may have been in their minds when they signed it, the workers must know that it is they themselves who saved it—the *working class*, and not the "nation," or the "community," or even the "people." They must know that they saved it, not from "malignant hostility," or "unreasoning hatred," or "blind prejudice," but from the cool, calculating, tenacious *capitalist class*—that same capitalist class which exploits them and which they have to fight at every turn in their daily life. They must be shown how, ever since the proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917, this fight has been going on between the British workers and the British capitalists, first to prevent the crushing of the Soviet Republic, and now to consolidate its position.

Secondly, they must be told frankly that there is no half-way house between the capitalist and the working-class view, even if objective conditions are such that in practice a compromise has

to be effected. They must be shown how, every time working-class pressure has been remitted or relaxed, capitalist pressure has been renewed and plots against Soviet Russia have reappeared. They must understand that, just as when they are supporting their comrades by a strike of solidarity, there can be no thought of the interests of the capitalists, and every such thought is a weakening of the workers and an encouragement to the workers' enemies. They must realise that the Soviet Republic has fought and they have defended it, that they have forced first its recognition and then the Treaty, because of the interests, not of the British "nation," but of the British working class, which are identical with the interests of the Russian working class. Those leaders who are now mobilising the British proletariat in what is essentially a class fight must have no hesitation in telling the masses that their friends and allies are the Russian workers and peasants, while for foreigner and enemy is the British capitalist.

Finally, the Treaty must be ratified. That the masses must demand without equivocation, and MacDonald must ask for their support in a new election if the capitalist M.P.'s refuse. (In parenthesis, we may see how the very threat of mass action has begun to sober a large group of capitalist M.P.'s.) But it must not be forgotten that the Treaty itself is a compromise, forced on the Soviet Republic by the weakness and ambiguity of the position taken up by the leaders of the Labour Party. The Treaty provides for cash payments from the ruined workers and peasants of Russia to the wealthy bankers and property owners of Britain. Still more, the loan which will render swifter and easier economic reconstruction possible (in Britain as well as in Russia) will be, and is already, the subject of a virulent and desperate capitalist attack, quite apart from the present Treaty. That attack can only be broken by a counter-offensive; and the counter-offensive should begin now.

The Communist Party has already put forward a programme for the counter-offensive. Those workers who disagree with the Communists on other matters need not fear, the programme does not commit them to the dictatorship of the proletariat, or to civil war, or even to the principles of the Communist International. The points of the programme are simply practical demands which

follow from the hard logic of practical experience, demands which aim at placing the working-class victory on this particular field beyond the possibility of a peradventure for some time to come, and simultaneously *keeping the capitalists on the run*. The programme is one which every class-conscious worker, big or little, must admit is only adequate to meet the present conditions. Its points are (1) not a penny of compensation for bondholders, property-owners or any other claimants who worked or fought against the Soviet Government; (2) £100 million loan (the amount spent on Kolchak and Denikin) to the Union of Soviet Republics; (3) dispatch of a British Ambassador, nominated by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, to Moscow; (4) repudiation of the British approval given to the Roumanian seizure of Bessarabia; (5) joint action with the Soviet Government to summon a World Disarmament Conference, to which the workers' organisations in each country shall send a number of delegates equal to those of their respective Governments.

By the time these lines appear, the Labour Party Conference will be assembling. The reopening of Parliament will be near. There will still be time for a clear and uncompromising declaration, on behalf of the organised workers of Great Britain, that will advance the cause of international peace between the toilers and strike a blow at the common enemy—capitalism.

ENGLISH PACIFISM AND ENGLISH AVERSION TO THEORY¹

By V. I. LENIN

IN England there has existed up till now an incomparably larger measure of political freedom than in any other European country. Here the bourgeoisie has been more used to governing than is the case in other countries, and understands the art of governing better. The relations between the classes are more developed and in many respects clearer than in other countries. Freedom from compulsory military service affords the people greater liberty in respect to their attitude to war in so far as everybody is free to refuse to enter the army. The Government is therefore compelled (in England the Government constitutes in its purest form a committee for conducting the business of the bourgeoisie) to exert all its forces in order to arouse "popular" enthusiasm for the war. It would be quite impossible to achieve this aim, without committing a fundamental breach of law, were the proletarian mass not completely disorganised and demoralised by the minority of best paid and qualified workers organised in the unions going over to Liberal, that is, to bourgeois politics. The English trade unions comprise one-fifth of the wage workers. The leaders of these trade unions are Liberals for the greater part, and Marx long ago designated them as agents of the bourgeoisie.

All these peculiarities of England enable us on the one hand to understand the nature of present-day social chauvinism the more easily, as it is precisely the same in the countries with a despotic form of government as well as in the democratic countries, in the militarist countries as well as in those without compulsory military service. On the other hand, they help us, when regard is had to all the facts, to estimate the importance of those reconcilia-

¹ This article by Lenin has only lately come to light. The manuscript was undated, but it is conjectured that the article must have been written about the beginning of 1915.—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

tory tendencies with social chauvinism which find expression, for example, in the glorification of the slogan of peace, &c.

The most complete expression of opportunism and of Liberal-Labour politics is undoubtedly to be seen in the Fabian Society. In this connection the reader should carefully peruse the exchange of letters between Marx and Engels and Sorge. He will there find a brilliant characterisation of this society by Engels, who treats Messrs. Sidney Webb & Co. as a gang of bourgeois scoundrels, who wish to poison the workers and to influence them in a counter-revolutionary direction. We can be quite sure that not a single one of the influential and responsible leaders of the Second International has at any time attempted to refute this judgment of Engels, and that none of them have attempted to cast any doubts upon the correctness of this judgment.

Let us lay aside theory for a moment and compare the facts. We shall see that the attitude of the Fabians during the war (see for example their weekly paper, the *New Statesman*) and that of the German Social Democratic Party, including Kautsky, is *exactly the same*. The same direct as well as indirect defence of social chauvinism, the same uniting of this defence with the inclination to utter all sorts of kind, humane and almost Left phrases regarding peace, disarmament, &c., &c.

The fact exists, and there follows from it, no matter how disagreeable it may be for various persons, the inevitable and indisputable consequence: that the leaders of the present-day German Social Democratic Party, including Kautsky, are in practice just as much agents of the bourgeoisie as the Fabians, whom Engels long ago characterised as such. The repudiation of Marxism by the Fabians and its "recognition" by Kautsky & Co. make not the slightest difference to the matter when it comes to actual policy, but only proves the transformation of Marxism into Struvism by certain writers, politicians, &c. . . . Their hypocrisy is not their personal sin; they can, under certain circumstances, be the best fathers of families. Their hypocrisy is the result of an objective contradiction in their social position. Ostensibly they represent the revolutionary proletariat, and in reality are agents for the promotion of bourgeois chauvinist ideas in the ranks of the proletariat.

The Fabians are more honest and sincere than Kautsky & Co. as they have not promised to go in for the revolution—but politically they are of the same kidney.

The "deep-rootedness" of political freedom in England and the high stage of development of English political life in general and of the English bourgeoisie in particular have resulted in the various shades of bourgeois opinions in this country finding quickly, easily and freely a new form of expression in new political organisations. One of these organisations is the Union of Democratic Control. The secretary and treasurer of this organisation is E. D. Morel, who is at present a constant contributor to the central organ of the Independent Labour Party, the *Labour Leader*. Morel was some years ago the candidate of the Liberal Party in the constituency of Birkenhead. When Morel, soon after the outbreak of the war, spoke *against* Russia, he was informed by a letter from the Birkenhead Liberal Association, dated October 2, that in future his candidature would not be acceptable for the Liberal Party, that means he was simply expelled from the party. Morel replied in a letter dated October 14, which he then published in a special pamphlet under the title, *The Outbreak of War*. In this pamphlet, as well as in a number of other articles, Morel exposes his Government by proving how incorrect it was to point to the violation of Belgian neutrality as being the cause of the war, and to claim that the object of the war was the destruction of Prussian imperialism, &c., &c. . . . Morel defends the programme of the Union of Democratic Control: Peace, disarmament, the right of self-determination of all territories on the basis of a plebiscite and democratic control of foreign policy.

From all this it is to be seen that Morel, as a person, undoubtedly deserves recognition for his sincere sympathy for democracy, for his turning from the chauvinist bourgeoisie to the pacifist bourgeoisie. When Morel proved by facts that his Government deceived the people when they denied the existence of secret treaties, although they existed all the time; that the English bourgeoisie, even in the year 1887, was perfectly clear as to the inevitability of the violation of Belgian neutrality in the event of a Franco-German war and emphatically rejected every idea of intervention (Germany at that time was not yet a dangerous

competitor); that the French militarists of the type of Colonel Boucher have before the war, in a number of books, openly announced their intention of conducting an *aggressive* war on the part of France and Russia against Germany; that the well-known English military authority, Colonel Repington, in the year 1911 characterised in the Press the increase of armaments in Russia since 1905 as a danger for Germany—when Morel proves all this we must admit that we are dealing with a courageous bourgeois who is not afraid of breaking with his own party.

Everybody must, however, immediately perceive that he is nevertheless a bourgeois, whose phrases regarding peace and disarmament remain empty phrases, as without the revolutionary action of the proletariat there can be no talk either of a democratic peace or of disarmament. And Morel, who has now fallen out with the Liberals on account of the question of the present war, remains on all economic and political questions a Liberal. Why is it regarded, not as a piece of hypocrisy, but as a merit when Kautsky in Germany uses the same bourgeois phrases concerning peace and disarmament, decorated with Marxist terminology? Only the backward development of political conditions and the lack of political freedom in Germany prevents a bourgeois league of peace and disarmament springing up, on the basis of the programme of Kautsky, with the same ease and rapidity as in England.

Let us recognise the fact that Kautsky adopts the standpoint of the pacifist bourgeois and not of the revolutionary social democracy. We are living in the midst of sufficiently great events to have the courage to recognise the truth "regardless of persons."

In their aversion to abstract theory, proud of their practicality, the English often approach political questions in a direct manner. They thereby help the Socialists of other countries to find the real content within the husk of every kind of terminology—including the Marxist. In this connection the pamphlet, *Socialism and War*,² which was published before the war by the chauvinist paper, the *Clarion*, is instructive. The pamphlet contains a "declaration" by Upton Sinclair, the American

² *Socialism and War*. The Clarion Press, 44 Worship Street, London, E.C.

Socialist, against war, and the reply of the chauvinistic Robert Blatchford, who has for long occupied the same imperialist position as Hyndman.

Sinclair is a sentimental Socialist without theoretical training. He puts the question "simply," he is incensed at the approach of war, and seeks salvation from war through Socialism.

"We are told," writes Sinclair, "that the Socialist movement is still too weak, that we must rely upon evolution. But evolution proceeds in the hearts of men; we are the instruments of evolution, and if we do not fight, then there will be no evolution. We are told that our movement against the war will be suppressed. But I declare, and I am profoundly convinced of it, that the suppression of all activity which has as its aim, on the ground of the highest humanity, the prevention of war, would constitute the greatest victory of Socialism, the greatest it has ever gained, as this would rouse the conscience of civilisation and stir up the workers of the whole world as never before in history. Let us not be too anxious regarding our movement; let us not attach too much importance to numbers and the appearance of outward strength. A few thousand with enthusiastic faith and determination are stronger than a million of more cautious and respectable people. And there is no greater danger for the Socialist movement than the danger of becoming an accepted institution."³

As we see, this is a naive, not well thought out theoretically, but a thoroughly right exhortation against allowing Socialism to become rotten and a summons to revolutionary struggle.

What is Blatchford's reply to this?

"That war is caused by capitalist and militarist interests: all this is quite true. And I am striving, not less than any other Socialist, for peace and the overcoming of capitalism by Socialism. But Sinclair will not convince me by means of rhetorical and beautiful phrases, he will not be able to get away from the facts. Facts, my dear Sinclair, are obstinate things, and the German danger is a fact. Neither we nor the German Socialists are in a position to prevent war. Sinclair tremendously overestimates our forces. We are not united, we have neither money nor weapons nor discipline. There only remains one thing for us: to help the

³ Retranslated from the Russian.

English Government to increase its fleet, as there is and can be no other guarantee for peace."

On the continent of Europe the chauvinists, neither before nor after the outbreak of the war, have ever proclaimed themselves so openly. In Germany there prevails in the place of such sincerity the hypocrisy of Kautsky and the playing with sophisms; the same is the case with Plechanoff. It is especially instructive, therefore, to observe the conditions in a more developed country. Here it is impossible to mislead anybody by sophistry and by a travesty of Marxism. Here the questions are stated directly and correctly. Let us learn from the "advanced" English.

Sinclair, in his appeal, although this appeal is at bottom thoroughly correct, is naive, as he has neglected to observe the fifty years' development of the Socialist mass movement and the struggle of tendencies within this mass movement; he fails to observe the conditions of growth of revolutionary action along with the existence of an objective revolutionary situation and a revolutionary organisation. One cannot make up for this lack by "sentiment." One cannot by means of rhetoric evade the hard and ruthless fight of powerful tendencies in Socialism—the opportunist and the revolutionary tendency.

Blatchford baldly proclaims the truth, and puts forward the concealed argument of the Kautskyites who fear to speak the truth. We are still weak, and that is all, says Blatchford. But through his sincerity he immediately reveals and lays bare his opportunism, his chauvinism. That he serves the bourgeoisie and the opportunists is to be seen at once. After having admitted the "weakness" of Socialism, he *weakens it himself* by advocating an anti-Socialist bourgeois policy. Like Sinclair, but on the other side, not as a fighter but as a coward, not as a hot-head but as a traitor, he also fails to take into account the conditions for the creation of a revolutionary situation.

But in his practical conclusions and in his policy (renunciation of revolutionary action and of the propagation and preparation of this action), Blatchford, the vulgar chauvinist, follows precisely the same path as Plechanoff and Kautsky.

Marxist phrases have nowadays become a cloak for the complete denial of Marxism. In order to be Marxist one must expose the

“sham Marxist saintliness” of the leaders of the Second International, one must fearlessly keep in view the struggle of two tendencies in Socialism and think out the questions of this struggle to their logical conclusion. This is the inference to be drawn from the English conditions which reveal to us the *Marxist* essence of the matter *without Marxist* phrases.

THE WRITINGS OF LENIN

An extremely important announcement regarding forthcoming publication of a series of articles in THE LABOUR MONTHLY is made elsewhere in this issue ; see inside page of back cover.

THE WORLD SITUATION AND THE DAWES PLAN

By EDO FIMMEN

WITH the London Conference the representatives of the international bourgeoisie were seeking a definite and final solution of the reparations problem on the basis of the Dawes Report.

This Report of the Experts has been hailed with satisfaction in certain working-class circles, and attempts are being made to find in the discussions in London a source of hope and confidence. Such is the satisfaction expressed, the confidence in the future, and so joyful are the voices raised, that one might be excused for regarding this report as one of the marvels of the twentieth century.

I therefore feel that it is necessary to give some explanation of the real significance to the working class of this Experts' Report. It would be a serious mistake to give the sanction of approval, or even to pass in silence, the Pact of London, whose importance is certainly not less than that of the Treaty of Versailles.

Now, what is, briefly, the tenor of the Dawes Report, and what will be the consequences of its acceptance for the German and international workers?

Let us first of all examine the burdens the adoption of the report places on Germany's shoulders.

For the first year the amount is to be one milliard of gold marks; this is raised to one and one-fifth milliards in the second and third years; again to one and three-quarter milliards in the fourth; and finally from the fifth year, which is regarded as the first "normal" year, the amount is to be two and a half milliards a year.

These amounts do not include the proceeds of the sale of the bonds which are to be issued and handed over to the Reparations Commission or its agents. These bonds are :—

Eleven milliards of gold marks in first mortgage railway bonds;

Five milliards of gold marks in industrial debentures.

The sources of the payments to be made are to be the Budget, the German State Railways and industry in general.

On the Budget the taxation revenue is to be levied to the extent of 110 millions of gold marks, up to the financial year 1926-27; 500 millions the fourth year, and from the fifth year onwards 1,250 millions of gold marks.

During the first two years foreign loans are to be allocated to the payment of reparations.

The German State Railways constitute the second category of these sources of reparations. As I have already said, the Reparations Commission will issue 11 milliards of first mortgage bonds, bearing interest at 5 per cent., plus 1 per cent. for sinking fund. The full amount of interest and amortisation will only be payable from the financial year 1927-28 onwards, and will amount to 660 millions of gold marks. During the year 1924 it will be 330 millions; during 1925, 465 millions, and during 1926, 550 millions.

To these amounts that are to come out of the railways must be added, starting with the financial year 1926-27, 290 millions of gold marks to come out of a Transport Tax.

The burdens on industry in general are relatively much smaller. The industrial debentures to be issued and handed over to the Reparations Commission or its agents amount to 5 milliards of gold marks, bearing the same interests of 5 per cent. and 1 per cent. to a sinking fund. The full burden of interest and amortisation, amounting to 300 million marks, starts from the financial year 1927-28. For the first year (1924-25) nothing is payable, for the second year the amount is to be 125 millions of gold marks and for the third year 250 millions.

Formidable as these burdens appear to be, even at first sight, the really damnable part of the Report is less easy to understand. Far worse than the annual payments to be made are the conditions attached thereto on the pretext of guaranteeing the execution of the scheme.

To start with there is a clause which at first glance would actually seem to lighten the burden to be imposed on Germany. I mean the clause which makes the payments variable and adapted to the

degree of economic development of Germany. The cloven hoof hidden under this apparently harmless clause has already been laid bare by Poincaré. In a speech in the Senate on July 10, he described this clause as an integral part of the Report. He declared that on the most conservative estimate the payments of Germany, under the clause in question, would amount to three milliards in 1936, three and a-half milliards ten years later, and after a further ten years, four and a-half milliards. And as Poincaré himself emphasised, these figures are probably very much below the reality.

. Let us take a glance at the other principal features of the Experts' Report.

It is proposed to set up a Bank of Issue under the control of the Reparations Commission ; to transfer all the State Railways to a joint stock company, and to place them under the control of a commissioner to be appointed by the Reparations Commission ; and finally to place a lien on the proceeds from certain loans.

This will mean that Germany and all German Governments, so long as the provisions of the Dawes Report hold sway, will be deprived of its sovereign rights in the two spheres where they are perhaps of the greatest importance—finance and transport.

These provisions are not by any means accidental. They are not to be regarded as an incidental feature of the " recovery of a debt," as alleged by the Experts. Together with the clause providing for variable payments, which I have already mentioned, they constitute the very kernel of the Report, and apparently also an expression of the real intentions of the bankers and industrialists who have been appointed as experts by the Reparations Commission. Germany must on no account be allowed to get on her feet again. Every obstacle must be placed in the way of her reconstruction, which is only to be permitted in so far as it serves the interests of her creditors, and the limit of which it is not hard to guess—the point where Germany threatens to be a competitor in the world market.

Nobody who reads the Experts' Report without any preconceived ideas can avoid the impression that its essential clauses are inspired by the fear of German competition. There can be no other explanation of conditions which will reduce Germany to a state of absolute dependence for many decades; and there can be no other explanation of the fact that the Report omits to fix a date

when the annual payments are to cease. If due account is taken of these impositions and omissions it is not so difficult to find an explanation of M. Poincaré's enthusiasm for the Report ; because in view of the possible—though until actually achieved uncertain—evacuation of the Ruhr, it provides the means, in certain circumstances, for the even more complete strangulation of Germany. The financial burdens are mere secondary considerations compared with these stipulations. After all what does an annual sum of two and a-half milliards of marks mean to the Allies, when it is considered that according to the calculations of the Italian statistician Bongart the war has cost Great Britain 44,029 millions of dollars (170 milliards of marks); and France 25,813 millions of dollars (105 milliards of marks)? Even if the whole of the reparations payments went to France they would not suffice to pay one-half of the interest on her war costs. At the outside the two and a-half milliard marks would only cover the interest on the nine and a-half milliard dollars, or forty milliards of marks, which represent the Government loans placed in the United States by Great Britain, France, Italy and Belgium. This amount does not include the other Government debts contracted abroad by the creditor nations. There are also loans made by Great Britain to France, Italy and Belgium amounting to 1,137.2 millions of pounds sterling, or 25 milliards of marks.

Even for Germany these charges are quite bearable, as the old Government bonds as well as fixed interest bearing industrial obligations have been practically wiped out by the depreciation of the currency.

As a matter of fact the extinction of Germany's old internal debt is the starting point for the provisions of the Report. The creditor nations are afraid that Germany may gain enormous advantages, from this financial unburdening, in the competition with countries which have hesitated to go in for inflation, or have not dared to do it to the same extent, or who have heavy obligations abroad as a result of the high rates of exchange. The efforts of the Experts are almost exclusively directed to deprive Germany of the advantages of the situation she has created. That is the reason for making her burden a variable one, for the control of German finances and transport and, last but not least, the silence as to the term within which the payments must be completed.

Nevertheless, it should not be concluded that the Experts want to make things particularly hard for the German bourgeoisie. It is clear that they quite realise that the depreciation of the currency has had quite varying effects on the different layers of the German population. In this respect the Report makes some very just remarks; but the recommendations and practical proposals of the Report, as far as fiscal questions are concerned, are in flagrant contradiction with these remarks. The only fiscal recommendation which can really touch the possessing class is that relating to the death duties, and it may be mentioned that the Report states that "there is considerable room for increased taxation under this head." Apart from the imposition of a mortgage debt on German industries, there is no proposal in the Report seriously affecting German capital. There is, therefore, not only a danger, but actually a practical certainty that the greater part of the proposed burdens will fall on those layers of the German population at whose expense the State has extinguished its debts and the wealthy have become wealthier. The principles of social justice which one finds scattered here and there make no essential difference. They are only put there to hoodwink public opinion in general and the working class in particular. The real tendency of the Report is directly opposed to these principles. The conclusions scrupulously and cleverly avoid any attempt to involve capital, directly proving once more that dog does not eat dog.

The recommendations as to taxation take no account of the reduced capacity for taxation of the working and middle classes which has been a consequence of the currency depreciation; and neither do they allow for the increase of this capacity for taxation among the possessing classes.

But these are not the only facts which justify our point of view. It finds even more justification in the premises upon which, for example, the estimate of the profit-making capacity of the railways is based. I am thinking particularly of the opinion of the two railway experts about railwaymen's wages. They look upon the proposed raising of railwaymen's wages to an average of 93 per cent. of the pre-war rates as "eminently reasonable," and also regard it as final.

If we consider that the cost of living is from 60 per cent. to

70 per cent. higher than it was before the war, it can only mean that the experts regard as normal a *real wage* which is only a fraction over half what real wages were before the war. And as experience has abundantly proved that the fact that railwaymen live scattered more or less over the whole area of a country has a very powerful influence over the general level of wages, the implication is that real wages of 60 per cent. to 70 per cent. of those usual before the war are regarded as the normal and proper wages for Germany.

Of late years manufacturers in all countries have pointed out and complained on many occasions of the dumping of German goods, manufactured on the basis of starvation wages. The Experts had an opportunity to sow the seeds of a new policy in this respect, but instead of doing so they have based their reparations proposals on wages very much lower than a reasonable standard of living requires.

Not only the German proletariat, but the whole international working class, has good reason to regard this part of the Experts' Report with considerable uneasiness ; for it concerns not only the German railwaymen, and after them the German working class in general; but it is also a serious threat for the workers in other countries. The existence and maintenance of so unfavourable a wage level in a country of the importance of Germany cannot but have an unfavourable influence on the wage level in other countries. But a still more serious result will be its weakening of the fighting spirit of the German working class in their struggle to reconquer and preserve the eight-hour day. The prevailing distress has forced many groups of workers to give up the eight-hour day, and this makes it very much more difficult to maintain it in other countries.

And this danger of the permanent oppression of the German working class to workers in other countries is not by any means counterbalanced by the possible increased revenues of the victor States. Whatever may be got out of Germany will not lighten financial burdens and taxation, especially as the possibility of transferring such large sums to other countries seems to be a little uncertain—even to the Experts. The Report does not contain a solution of this question of transfer. As a provisional measure it is suggested that the amount be transferred to the Bank of Emission which is to be established, to be credited to the account of the agent of the Reparations Commission, who, together with five Currency

and Financial experts from the Allied and Associated Powers, will decide how the money is to be disposed of.

It is quite clear that there are only two possible ways in which the money can be used so as to benefit the creditors :—

(1) The purchase of Germany's exportable surplus of manufactures ;

(2) The purchase of German property in Germany itself.

The second of these could be effected by the agent of the Reparations Commission buying with the money at his disposal German industrial shares, to be sold later abroad. In the long run this would result in a preponderant foreign influence in German industry, and it is clear that to avoid this danger every effort will be made by Germany to make it possible for the creditor nations to dispose of the reparations payments abroad—in other words she will increase her exports as much as possible, and limit her imports to what is strictly necessary. This would mean more intensive German competition in the world market, while the importance of Germany as a market for foreign products would decline considerably. These two factors would result in an increase of unemployment abroad.

From whatever point of view one considers the Experts' Report, and whatever the political consequences of its adoption and carrying into practice may be, there is no doubt that economically speaking it will lead to the strengthening of the international foundations of the capitalist system, to the injury of the German and international working classes. It shows lack of judgment and even blindness to greet the Experts' Report and its reparations proposals with joy and satisfaction. On the contrary, the working class should do all it can to prevent the carrying into effect of a report which means a further step to slavery. If it cannot be prevented it means the opening up of a new era for international capitalism—the colonisation of Europe and the international exploitation of the workers of all lands, who will provide the coolie labour for this colony.

It is my firm conviction that it is our duty to declare unequivocally and unreservedly against the acceptance of the Experts' Report, and against the solution of the reparations question on the basis of that report. We should take up this attitude firstly in the spirit of international solidarity towards the German workers, who,

as I think I have demonstrated sufficiently clearly, will otherwise be delivered, bound hand and foot, to the exploitation of international capitalism; and secondly in our own interest—for our own sakes and for that of the workers in all lands, upon whose heads will inevitably recoil the enslavement of the German proletariat.

I will go further, and say that we would do well to declare openly that the representatives of the workers are definitely opposed to all payment of the so-called reparations, and that they regard the Peace Treaty of Versailles as a lie and a mockery. The stipulation that Germany should pay reparations only means in practice that the German working class, and with it the working classes of all lands, must be bled white and pushed down into misery. We should be making a great step forward if the international trade union movement would not only decline all responsibility for the Treaty of Versailles, but actually refuse to have anything to do with it, and refuse also to be any longer a tool—a kind of conciliatory instrument for the “pacific” enforcement of the payment of reparations.

AFTER THE HULL CONGRESS

By A DELEGATE

THE Hull Congress of the Trade Unions is universally admitted to have been one of the most successful and forward-moving congresses of recent years. It is true that no sensational departures in trade union policy were undertaken, and that much work remains to be done before we have a really united and clear-sighted trade union movement. Nevertheless, in contrast to the spectacle of gibbering futility furnished by previous congresses, the Hull meeting is a big step forward. Several reasons might be adduced for this.

In the first place some of the most notorious reactionaries in the Trade Union Movement have been elevated to positions of importance in the Labour Government, and if they continue to hinder the progress of the workers in that sphere they are no longer able to do so directly in the Trades Union Congress. Secondly, the previous Plymouth Congress had created such intense disgust in the minds of the active workers in the Trade Union Movement that even the most reactionary leaders in the conference were forced to feel that if the Plymouth exhibition was repeated at Hull it would rouse the working class against the existing leadership, with great danger to themselves. Over and above these two causes the main influence playing upon the congress was the rising fighting spirit of the working-class movement, and the spreading of advanced ideas among large sections of the workers which has accompanied this revival of the fighting spirit.

The speech of the chairman of the congress was something more than a re-hash of the stale platitudes which is the customary mixture served up by Trades Union Congress chairmen. True, it was extremely confused, "left-wing" phrases mingled with "right-wing" apologies for the Labour Government. Important questions, such as those connected with the Dawes Report and the struggle of the workers in the Colonies, were mentioned, but

not faced. The importance of the workshop as the centre of trade union activity was touched upon, but no conclusion for practical activity was drawn. The fact that the workers' struggle is something more than a mere parliamentary struggle is indicated in the following phrase: "Even the Labour Party having a sufficient majority and in power leaves us still confronting Capitalism on the field, capable of resistance and with the will to resist to the last ditch." This is an interesting departure from the ordinary "right-wing" faith in the omnipotence of parliamentary democracy; but again, no conclusions were drawn from this fact, while on many practical questions that were raised before the congress the president took the line of supporting the Labour Government and praising it in an unmeasured fashion.

It would be a mistake, however, to regard Mr. Purcell and the group of trade union leaders whom he speaks for as being consciously insincere. They are, in our opinion, genuinely seeking a new policy which will increase the activity and effectiveness of the Trade Union Movement. They are not quite clear as to what this policy is to be; they are mortally afraid of advancing too far in front of rank and file opinion. Nevertheless, there are a few leaders, like Mr. Purcell, who are not merely right-wingers making concessions to the "left," but who are genuinely seeking to improve the trade unions as a fighting instrument.

The main practical decisions of the congress were connected with the proposals to grant greater power to the General Council, to organise material support for workers in dispute with the employers, to take steps towards the creation of greater unity in the various industries, and to form a Trades Union Congress programme—and the adoption of the suggestion thrown out by the chairman that the British Trade Union Movement should use its influence within the Amsterdam International to call all Labour elements in Europe together with a view to forming one united International. There were also resolutions on the agenda dealing with the affiliation of the Trades Councils and the Unemployed to the Trades Union Congress, but here craft union conservatism was too strong, and those resolutions were defeated for the time being. While therefore a step forward has been taken, much yet

remains to be done before the British Trade Union Movement is able to fight effectively against trustified capitalism.

To a certain extent the new General Council can do much to further increased activity. While the powers that have been given them are not comprehensive enough to ensure its working as an effective General Staff, if it really uses the power it has in a manner that will increase the effectiveness of the union movement in their struggle the way will be cleared for the granting of further power. If it makes a serious attempt to put into operation the resolution for greater unity it will be able to advance the organisation of the movement materially.

The main urge towards a more effective Trade Union Movement will, however, come from below. The General Council can either help or hamper this urge. What we are facing in the movement to-day is not merely the need for slightly improved machinery but also the need for a new outlook as to the rôle of the trade unions in the struggle of the workers, and also a new leadership which will express that outlook. If the old leadership is merely driven forward unwillingly in new directions, it will not have the same results as would a new leadership supporting the new policy and willingly leading the movement on the new lines.

The task of pushing the movement in this direction falls to the National Minority Movement, which was organised definitely the week before the congress met. While the programme of the Minority Movement did not receive any consideration from the congress, its proposals nevertheless influenced the delegates to a certain extent, and will continue to influence them as the Minority Movement grows.

In this respect it is worth while noticing the remarks of Mr. E. E. Hunter of the Independent Labour Party, who indulged in an all-round sneer at the Trades Union Congress, the Minority Movement and everyone who does not agree with Mr. Hunter, in a recent issue of the *New Leader*. Referring to the Minority Movement he stated that it did not belong to the trade union future, but belonged to the trade union past, and that the Trade Union Movement had to be permeated more with the spirit of Socialism than it is at the present moment.

The Minority Movement's objective is clearly defined in its programme as the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, and it can hardly be said that this objective has in the recent past been part and parcel of the trade union outlook.

While, however, the Minority Movement has a Socialist objective, it recognises that it is not merely a matter of propagating this objective in the abstract in the hope that some day, somehow, under some circumstances the Trade Union Movement may seek to realise it. The Minority Movement has for its objective the struggle to develop the movement from its present position to a position when it will accept the revolutionary objective as a matter of deeds, not words. That Minority Movement has had to take the situation as it exists, put forward a series of proposals which will take the workers a step further along the road to the objective that it desires them to reach.

These proposals and objects have been discussed exhaustively in left-wing trade union circles for the past few years. They have sprung directly out of the bitter experiences undergone by the workers in that period. None of them belong to the trade union past, but mark a definite move forward. The immediate programme of the Minority Movement, as far as action is concerned, is a common trade union struggle for definite demands relating to hours and wages. We are not aware that these demands belong to the trade union past. We believe that, on the contrary, the trade union past was dominated by sporadic struggles for sectional aims. We believe that the trade union "present" is still dominated by similar aims, and that the fighting spirit of the workers is being wasted in futile struggles so long as this snarling sectionalism continues. The idea of common struggle, and the creation of machinery which will enable this struggle to be waged effectively, belongs most emphatically to the trade union future.

Mr. Hunter is no doubt disappointed in the fact that the Minority Movement would not draw up a purely decorative programme for theorists to admire. The Minority Movement is, however, definitely of the opinion that it is much more important to unite the working class around a common demand arising from working-class needs than it is to draw up a window-dressing

programme that no one is likely to pay the slightest attention to, and which does not lead to action in any way.

The Minority Conference also laid down lines for the closest linking up of the forces between the employed and the unemployed, which has already been partly realised, but which we hope will be realised to an even greater extent in the future. This does not belong to the trade union past. In the trade union past the unemployed were an industrial reserve army continually used by the capitalist class for the forcing down of wages. As unemployment is still with us—nay, still increases—a development of policy on those lines is most important.

With regard to the structural changes in the Trade Union Movement which were suggested by the Minority Committee, it is true that many of the things advocated have been more or less frequent features of left-wing proposals in the trade unions in recent years. They must cease to become proposals and become part of the machinery of the union movement.

If the trade unions have to struggle for Socialism, then the machinery of workers' control must be developed in the only place where it can effectively function, namely, the workshop. The Minority Conference discussed this most important phase of trade union activity, arrived at a programme with regard to setting up workshop committees, and is immediately going to undertake a nation-wide campaign for the popularising of this programme. The workshop is important inasmuch as it provides a rallying place for the workers. Here the workers divided into different craft unions as a consequent development are forced to co-operate together in the service of one employer. If we can establish the co-operation of the workers through an all-inclusive workshop or factory committee which will deal with questions of non-unionism, with the enforcement of Factory Acts and trade union regulations, with the extension of workers' control over the discharge and taking on of employees, then we are creating an instrument which will be much more important in the struggle for Socialism than any theoretical theses drawn up by an intellectual burning the midnight oil previous to going to an I.L.P. Summer School to place before that assembly the thousand-and-first method of painlessly transforming Capitalism into Socialism.

The workshop committee movement is also important in that recent trade union developments have clearly increased the power of the trade union bureaucracy and lessened the power of the workers. The workers, through their committees in the workshops, must be stimulated into taking a greater interest in working-class affairs and so help to eliminate the bureaucracy in trade union headquarters. Not only so, but situations are constantly arising, and will do so in the future, when the workers are coming to serious grips with Capitalism, where it is necessary for the workers to take speedy mass action. The old trade union machinery is not sufficiently capable to enable this to be done, and consequently a new organ which will rally the workers quickly for the mass struggle is necessary. That organ is the workshop committee. It will be clearly understood by every worker that if we can unite the workers in the workshops that unity secured at the bottom will impress unity upon the trade union officials at the top, and that we will be able to have, instead of the hundreds of competing unions, a few large industrial unions based on the workshop, with a minimum of bureaucracy.

The other part of the programme of the Minority Movement which is important is that of transforming the Trades Councils from merely local electioneering bodies into local general staffs dealing with all sections of the workers' struggles. Several important Trades Councils have already taken steps in this direction—London, for example—and many more are likely to follow when the power of the Minority Movement increases. This development is opposed by those who would like to see the local movement develop into a mere agency for advancing careerists to positions on political bodies, but to the workers who realise that the workers' struggle is not merely a parliamentary struggle, but a struggle of the mass, it is a development of the very utmost importance. In the transformed Trades Councils, which deal with all phases of the workers' activities, we will develop the new local leadership which is so essential if we are to have a real solid movement. It is only by increasing the functions of the Trades Councils and giving the active workers in them the necessary experiences that we will be able to create a really effective mass movement.

The giving of more power to the General Council is also a

step in this direction. It must not be considered as isolated from all the previous steps to effect unity which have been taken in the workshops, but must be the culmination of all those efforts to create a real united movement. It will be the task of the Minority Movement, in spite of the sneers of political theorists, to popularise this programme, to win over and organise the many discontented working-class elements in the Trade Union Movement who realise the difficulties of that movement but who are not too clear as to how they should be remedied.

Those elements will be grouped, not merely around a general programme, but also around a programme which will face the necessities of their respective industries.

Thus when the General Council is trying to create unity from the top, the pressure from the workshops and the pressure from the various union branches grouped in the Minority Movement—the pressure, in fact, of “the united front from below”—will create unity much more speedily than has been the case previously.

In attending to these concrete aims, and to others which may be adopted from time to time to suit the changing circumstances of the struggle, the Minority Movement has the task of spreading among the workers a sane revolutionary understanding, particularly as to the rôle that the Trade Union Movement must play in the workers' struggles. Every movement on the trade union field must be made after full consideration of the situation that faces the workers in this country at the present moment, and of the immediate measures that are necessary to deal with that situation. The Minority Movement will not for a moment countenance the dangerous division between political and industrial work. The theory which is expressed by Mr. Hunter in his article that it is the business of the Labour Party to deal with political matters, and the trade unions to deal with industrial matters, is foolish and futile. We cannot have at the present moment a large-scale industrial struggle without the political element entering into it. We cannot have a real mass struggle leading up to the formation of a Workers' Government unless the organisations in the unions and the workshops are playing their part in that struggle.

Such matters as the question of Imperialism and the Dawes Report are not merely questions which can be passed over to the

Labour Party as being an electoral machine, but are questions which must be taken into consideration by the Trade Union Movement, not merely mapping out the part which the trade unions are going to play in the struggle for power, but also in mapping out the part that they are going to play in the partial day-to-day struggles.

The greatest mistake which the Hull Congress made was in refusing to face the situation created by the existence of a Labour Government which occupies its present position, not in virtue of having defeated the capitalists, but because of an arrangement arrived at by the capitalists amongst themselves.

Mr. Purcell, in his presidential speech, expressed amazement at the fact that while Labour Governments were coming into existence all over the world, the power of the financier was growing.

If Mr. Purcell had inquired further into the matter he would have realised that there are only two courses open to a Labour Government which takes office, not as the result of a victorious struggle, but with the consent of the capitalists. A Government in this position has either to do what the capitalists expect it to, or it has to rally the masses for a struggle which will lead to the overthrow of the capitalists and the setting up of a real Workers' Government.

The Labour Party has taken the first course. It is a course which will land the Trade Union Movement into disaster. It is imbecile for the Trade Union Movement to refuse to take such developments into consideration. The Minority Movement will work to get the Trade Union Movement to push the present Labour Government towards the fight with capitalism, at the same time helping to prepare it for the mass struggle for power.

The Minority Movement will then carry out three tasks:—

The task of creating the united front of the workers in the struggle for immediate demands.

The task of bringing about structural alterations in the Trade Union Movement.

The task of creating a revolutionary outlook and of developing

a new leadership which will express that outlook in the Trade Union Movement.

We are confident that if the active workers who have been discontented, who have been struggling in a sporadic fashion, will rally to the Minority Movement and assist in its work, then the next Trades Union Congress which takes place will be as big an advance upon the Hull Congress as the Hull Congress was upon that of Plymouth.

The World of Labour

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Labour Movement and the Presidential Elections

THE political development of the American Labour Movement since the Farmer-Labour convention at Chicago in July, 1923, has not led to the formation of the hoped-for united Farmer-Labour Party on a national scale. That convention, under the dominating influence of the Workers' Party, formed the Federated Farmer-Labour Party¹: but the Federated Party did not develop into a centralised national Party, and remained in effect a propaganda organisation which set itself the task of giving some sort of direction to the scattered anti-capitalist forces among the workers and farmers for the 1924 campaign for a Labour Party. The presidential elections, of course, fall due this November.

In November, 1923, a conference was held at St. Paul, in which the Workers' Party and six or seven State Farmer-Labour Parties participated, and which elected an Arrangements Committee to organise the 1924 campaign. A call was issued for a national Farmer-Labour convention to be held at St. Paul on May 30.

This call, propagated with great vigour in the daily organ of the Workers' Party, *The Daily Worker* (founded in January of the present year), met with a considerable response: indeed, it seemed that the response was beginning to assume the character of a genuine mass movement.

Accordingly, those elements in the Labour movement which were unwilling to see the formation of a Labour Party under the militant leadership of the Workers' Party devoted their energies to propagating the old classical Gompers "non-partisan" policy—"rewarding Labour's friends and punishing Labour's enemies"—through the Conference for Progressive Political Action.² The great railroad Unions, who have always been the most potent influence in the C.P.P.A., were desirous of supporting William G. McAdoo as Democratic candidate for the Presidency. However, the unfortunate association of Mr. McAdoo with the Teapot Dome oil scandal threw the issue into doubt. Whereupon the C.P.P.A., at its meeting at St. Louis in February, called a

¹ THE LABOUR MONTHLY, September, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 3, pp. 182-185.

² THE LABOUR MONTHLY, February, 1923, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 122-123.

convention for July 4 at Cleveland. It refused to co-operate with the St. Paul committee for the organisation of a single all-in convention.

Meanwhile, Senator La Follette had come out against the St. Paul convention, and a struggle began on the St. Paul Committee itself between the supporters of La Follette and the Workers' Party. The latter had a difficult fight to maintain unity. La Follette wanted the Convention postponed: and the date was ultimately altered from May 30 to June 17. Finally, on May 28, La Follette made public a letter denouncing the St. Paul Convention because of the participation of the (Communist) Workers' Party.

The St. Paul Convention, which duly met on June 17, was attended by five to six hundred delegates, of whom 127 were from the State of Minnesota alone. From the first the Convention was sharply divided on the questions of support for La Follette and the immediate organisation of a national party. The Workers' Party eventually succeeded in getting the Convention to agree to a programme of immediate demands, drawn up on a class struggle basis, and to the formation of a campaign committee which should definitely organise the Farmer-Labour Party on a national scale after the elections.

The programme was very similar to that adopted by the Federated Farmer-Labour Party last year,³ with the addition of clauses on the Negro problem, and on Imperialism and Foreign Affairs, demanding the recognition of Soviet Russia and full self-determination for all American colonies.

Duncan McDonald, a miner, and William Bouck, a farmer, were nominated by the Convention as its Presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates respectively: and the Committee was instructed to negotiate with the C.P.P.A. on the question of a united ticket.

On the La Follette issue the position of the Workers' Party was made clear in a statement that—

in the coming negotiations between the National Committee of the Farmer-Labour Party and other groups relative to combined action upon a presidential candidate, the only basis upon which the Workers' Party will accept La Follette as a candidate is, if he agrees to run as the Farmer-Labour candidate, to accept that Party's platform and its control over his electoral campaign and campaign funds.

When the Cleveland Convention met on July 4, it signally failed to comply with any of these desiderata. Attended by 650 delegates, of whom no less than 339 directly or indirectly represented the railroad Unions, by delegates from the Liberal "Committee of forty-eight," from over seventy Trade Unions and other Labour bodies, from Co-operative groups, from the Socialist Party, from a score of miscellaneous political organisations, including three delegates from the old Party of Daniel De Leon, the "revolutionary Marxist" Socialist Labour Party—the Convention from its opening moments revealed itself as completely dominated by the personality of Senator La Follette.

Judging from the Press reports the atmosphere of the Convention was a combination of unbounded and universal enthusiasm for La Follette with a resuscitation of the glories of 1776 and the Declaration of Independence. La Follette was nominated for President on his own personal programme—of a nebulous "progressive" character, the keystone of it being the sentence :

³THE LABOUR MONTHLY, September, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 185.

"We are unalterably opposed to any class government." Co-operation with the St. Paul Committee was naturally refused.

The question of organising a Party was left over till January, 1925, and the choice of a Vice-Presidential candidate was virtually left to La Follette: he chose Senator Wheeler, a "progressive" Democrat and the first exposé of the Teapot Dome scandal. Senator La Follette has latterly received the official endorsement of the American Federation of Labour.

The Socialist Party, the "advanced" Unions such as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Farmer-Labour organisations, all participated in this complete surrender to the personal dictatorship of Senator La Follette. The effect of this was to precipitate a serious crisis among the followers of St. Paul, and to raise doubts as to the advisability of running Farmer-Labour candidates against La Follette.

This led the Workers' Party to decide on putting forward its own candidates, which was done by a specially summoned National Party Conference on July 10. William-Z. Foster was nominated for President and Benjamin Gitlow for Vice-President. The St. Paul Committee withdrew the candidatures of MacDonald and Bouck, and a majority of the Committee signed a statement calling upon all Farmer-Labour adherents to support the Workers' Party candidates.

The Position of the Socialist Party

The Socialist Party held its Convention at Cleveland after the convention of the C.P.P.A. An address to the members of the Party was drawn up in which, after adverting to "the inspiration of the Labour Government in England, the Socialist Government in Denmark and of the recent elections in France and Australia," the C.P.P.A. was characterised as:—

The first national, political outpouring of the toilers of America. While a Labour Party has not been formed in name . . . a party of Labour is being realised in fact. The first great step has been taken. Relations with the capitalist parties have been broken. The rest will inevitably follow.

By an overwhelming vote of the convention of the Socialist Party it was decided that our place is in this political revolt of the American workers. . . .

It is likewise our duty to maintain the autonomy and integrity of the Socialist Party, and as an organised party to continue with renewed energy and in larger fields our mission of enlightenment and our struggle for the complete release of humanity from the thralldom of capitalism.

The consecration of this American *Bloc des Gauches* was achieved by a special message from the veteran Eugene V. Debs, who wrote:—

I think it wise for our party to make no nominations under the circumstances, but at the same time to hold the Socialist Party intact, adhere rigidly to its principles and keep the red flag flying . . .

In this crisis, as in the past, the Socialist Party is the party of the working class and faces the future with absolute confidence and without fear.

However, Mr. Debs wrote in the same issue of the New York Socialist organ, *The New Leader*, which carried his above-quoted remarks:—

I have to confess frankly that with certain features of the convention of the Progressive elements and with certain actions in their proceedings I could not possibly, under ordinary circumstances, find myself in agreement. . . .

But the situation that confronted our delegates at Cleveland was . . . indeed unprecedented and extraordinary in every sense of the term. . . .

No fundamental principle of Socialism has been or will be compromised. . . .

Though he is not a Socialist we need not blush or apologise to give our support to Robert M. La Follette in the life-giving and hope-inspiring struggle of the present hour. All his life he has stood up like a man for the right according to his light, &c.

He adumbrated this position in a second letter to the delegates of the Socialist Convention. He denied emphatically that the Socialist Party had been "wrecked" by its decision to support La Follette, and evoked the authority of Lenin for "wise compromise and masterly retreat." He had previously appealed to the shades of Marx, Engels and Liebknecht.

A writer in one of the American Labour periodicals heads a note on the rôle of the Socialist Party in the Cleveland Convention: "The Exit of the Socialist Party." This appears to be a fair comment.

THE FAR EAST

Pacific Transport Workers' Conference

AT the end of last June the Red International of Labour Unions convened, at Canton, the first Conference of Transport Workers of the Pacific Ocean. The conference was attended by representatives of the railwaymen and seamen of Northern and Southern China, of the Philippine Islands and Java.

Apart from discussions on trade union organisation and propaganda, the conference devoted its chief attention to the formation of a united anti-militarist and anti-imperialist front.

The real proletarian left wing in the conference was represented by the North China and Javan railwaymen, both of whom have, in the past two years, fought severe strikes in the teeth of unbelievably savage Government repression. The position of the North China railwaymen is illustrated by the fact that their delegates were only able to be present at the conference illegally.

These elements demanded a united anti-imperialist front under a definitely revolutionary leadership—that of the working class or that of the Communist-influenced left wing within the national revolutionary movement. Against this point of view the fraternal delegate of the Kuo-Ming-Tang (the Chinese national revolutionary party led by Sun Yat Sen) proposed a general united front of all sections of the oppressed Eastern peoples, ignoring the social and class distinctions. This was supported by the delegates from the Philippine Transport Workers' Union and the "Labour Legion."

The South China (Hong Kong) seamen took up a position midway between these two extremes.

A manifesto to the toilers of the Far East and to the workers of Europe and America was issued by the conference. Its chief passages were as follows:—

Since the world imperialist war six years have elapsed. All the promises made by the big Capitalist Governments to the oppressed nations of the East, whose man-power, raw materials and other necessities were taken in order to help win the war, were not only not fulfilled and the promised independence not given, but instead, in almost all the colonies and semi-colonial countries,

the imperialists strengthened their oppressive governmental apparatus, increased their military punitive forces on land and sea and assumed a more high-handed colonial policy.

In this respect there is no fundamental difference between the policies of all the imperialist States. The oppression of Korea by the semi-feudal and militarist Government of Japan; the oppression of British India by the so-called Labour Government of England, which is in fact a bloc of Labour aristocracy and Liberal bourgeoisie transacting the affairs of British finance capital; the oppression of the Philippine Islands by "democratic" America; the oppression of the East Indian islands by Holland and the united oppression of China by all the imperialists, all have the same exploiting aim, all bring great sufferings to the oppressed peoples, depriving them of the possibility to live and develop freely. . . .

The imperialists are particularly watchful regarding the development of the Labour Movement in the colonies and semi-colonies, and there is no limit to their cruel persecution and suppression of the organised workers, especially those engaged in transport.

The history of recent years is full of examples. It is sufficient to recall the strike on the Peking-Hankow railroad in February, 1922, when workers by the score were killed by soldiers; labour leaders were decapitated in public at railway stations and hundreds of workers were sentenced to many years' imprisonment. Or to recall the strike of the Hongkong seamen, in the same year, when the British Government murdered many of them and instituted mass arrests. It is sufficient to recall the strike of the railwaymen of Java in May, 1923,¹ when the Dutch Government set in motion its entire military and police apparatus in order to wreck the best, most revolutionary and compact organisation of the Javanese proletariat, declaring martial law and ordering mass arrests and deportations of active workers. It is enough to recall the events in North China, this May, when five railwaymen of the Peking-Hankow line were shot by General Wu-Pei-Fu because they were active in both the organised Labour and nationalist movements.

The imperialists of all countries know very well the significance of working-class organisation in liberating the oppressed nations and classes, and attack vengefully even the beginnings of a Labour Movement.

Toiling masses of the East! Revolutionary proletarians of Europe and America! We, the representatives of the transport workers of the East, declare that the best proof that the peoples of the East can and will govern themselves lies in the very fact that they are now conducting a revolutionary struggle for independence. The imperialists will not grant independence to any subject people voluntarily.

We further declare that the toiling masses in the colonies and semi-colonies will achieve their national, economic and political independence only as a result of an organised struggle against world imperialism, against native feudalists, militarists and capitalists who compromise with the imperialists.

Such an organised struggle of the colonial peoples against imperialism necessitates the formation of militant peoples' parties in the colonies, consisting of workers, peasants, intellectuals and non-propertied classes in the cities. Such parties will not only unite the struggling forces for independence inside the colonies, but will bring the colonies into closer contact with each other, and will also bring the national revolutionary movements of the East in contact with the world revolutionary Labour Movement.

¹ THE LABOUR MONTHLY, August, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 114-115.

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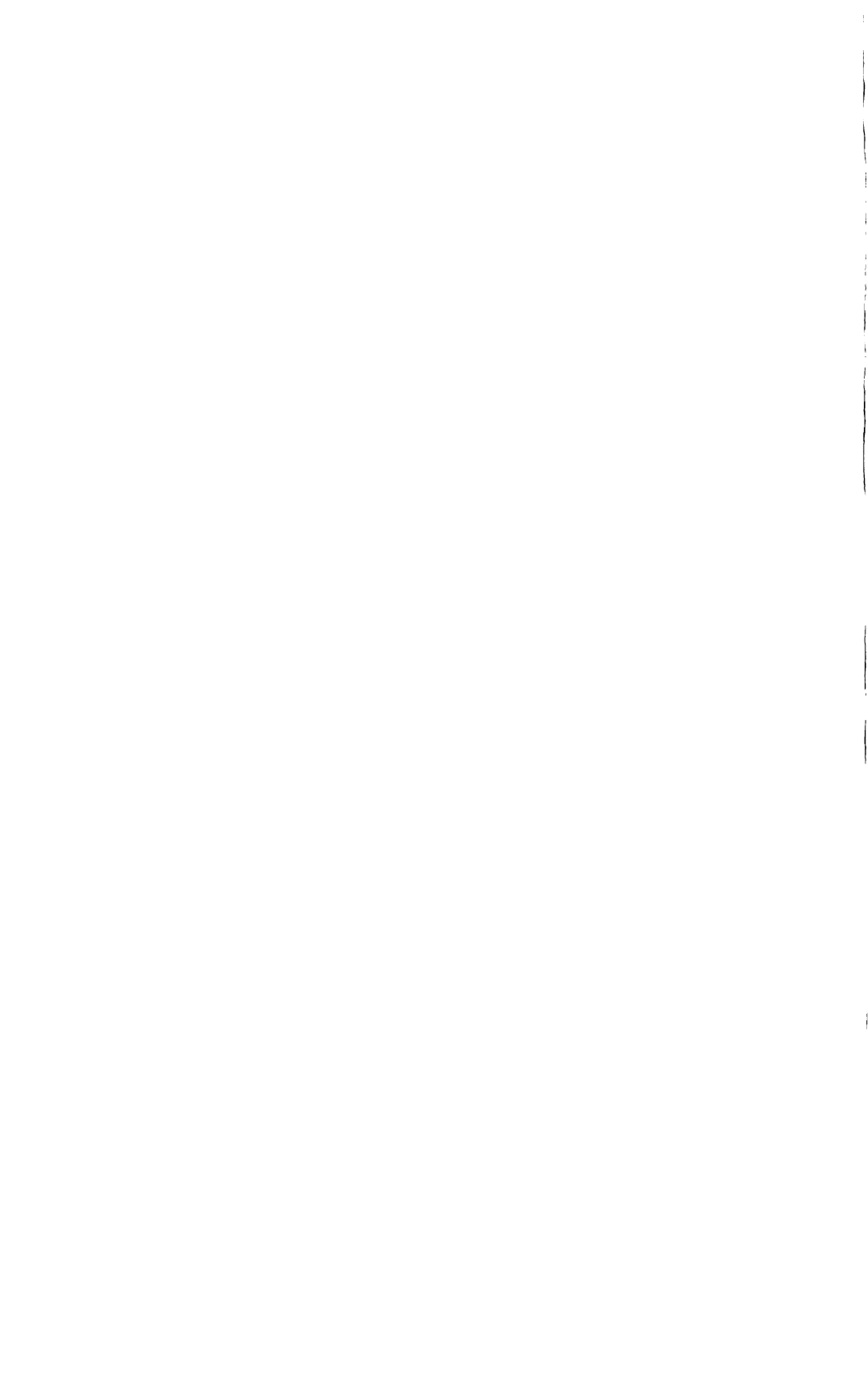
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NOTES of the MONTH

*The Class Struggle and MacDonald—"Nobody Wanted It"—
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Workers Finding Their Way*

THE present election reveals the sharpening class struggle in Britain. It has been an election approaching nearer in character to direct political class struggle of the workers and the bourgeoisie than on any previous occasion. And this, not because of Mr. MacDonald and the Labour Cabinet, but in spite of Mr. MacDonald and the Labour Cabinet. This is the significant fact about the election and the crisis which led to it. Mr. MacDonald, the apostle of class conciliation, the unrelenting antagonist of every conception of class struggle, has had to appear at the head of the workers' forces engaged in what his principal lieutenant has not unjustifiably termed "political class struggle." More than that. He has had actually to assume the posture of calling an election and risking his own government in order to defend the right of Russian Communists to borrow money from the City of London and of British Communists to conduct seditious propaganda. Could there be a more pitiful stroke of comic Nemesis for the hero of anti-Bolshevism? What is the explanation of this extraordinary position? Why, after having suffered eleven defeats with equanimity, should Mr. MacDonald have found it necessary on these two issues to call an election? Are we to suppose with the bourgeois propagandists that a mysterious hidden hand of Communism has held the Cabinet in its grasp? Nothing of the kind. At the very same moment we find Mr. MacDonald and his

colleagues engaged in the most savage and ferocious warfare against not only the Communists, but against all Left elements in the Labour Party (Poplarism, strikes, &c.), even to the length of expulsion and excommunication. It is clear that it is not Mr. MacDonald who has been converted to the class struggle. It is the class struggle that has proved stronger than Mr. MacDonald. Not through the will of MacDonald, but against his will and over his body, the class struggle forces its way forward. The class struggle, which the MacDonald Cabinet existed to conceal and deny, has taken its revenge on the MacDonald Cabinet.

WHY did Mr. MacDonald decide to dissolve? It is clear that he did not dissolve for the love of the two issues on which nominally he called the election. On the contrary in all his speeches he seeks to minimise and conceal these issues, treat them as "minor" matters, "pretexts," &c. It is clear, therefore, that if he decided to dissolve on these issues, it was because in his view the general situation compelled him to do so, and not for the sake of those two issues. What, then, was the character in the general situation that compelled him to dissolve (according to his own repeated statement) against his own wishes? Are we to say with the official Labour propagandists that the bourgeoisie "forced" the election? But nothing is more certain than that the bourgeoisie did not want the election. Three days before the crisis we find the official Labour organ sneering at the bourgeoisie for their fear of an election.

All its newspapers, Liberal and Tory alike, are now wailing over the idea of a General Election. . . . *They throw out any suggestion they can think of for avoiding the election that they dread.*—*Daily Herald*, October 7, 1924.

And after the dissolution we find the Editor of the *Daily Herald* declaring :—

The truth was that neither Conservatives nor Liberals wanted an election.—HAMILTON FYFE, at Tunbridge Wells, October 10, 1924.

The notorious *New Statesman* article is even more unhesitating :—

For it is he [MacDonald] and he almost alone who is responsible for the present undesired crisis.

Thus there is some basis for the complaint of each of the parties

against the other in the present election that "nobody wanted it" and the accusation of each against the other that "they began it." The election of 1924 that "nobody wanted" came as relentlessly and suddenly in its own fashion, and out of apparently as small an immediate issue, as the war of 1914 that also "nobody wanted."

THE fact is that a stage in the class struggle has been reached with this election at which none of the regular parties can any longer recognise the facts clearly for what they are, because they can only be recognised on the basis of the class struggle. The whole official Labour propaganda has to twist itself into the most monstrous shapes in order to succeed in not seeing a situation which shouts class struggle from the housetops. We are told that the election was forced by a cunning "plot" of the capitalist parties to "murder" the Labour Government on the "pretexts" of the Communist prosecution and the Soviet Treaty. Yet if one thing is more certain than another, it is that the Communist prosecution and the Soviet Treaty are anything but "pretexts" in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. On the other hand it is far more doubtful whether their intention was to remove the Labour Government already at this point, and not rather to put up a strong fight to control it and only to remove it if compelled. At any rate, as soon as the Labour Government revealed its intention to dissolve, the alarm of the bourgeoisie was immediate, and they made the most frantic efforts through their Liberal section to reach any and every kind of accommodation with the Labour Government. Thus the exact opposite of the official Labour propaganda would seem to be the case. Instead of the bourgeoisie using the "pretexts" of the two Communist issues to "murder" the Labour Government, it is clear that they were perfectly serious on the two Communist issues to get the decisions reversed, but it is very doubtful whether they were yet ready to remove the Labour Government. But the climax of picturesque imagination is reached when the official Labour propagandists have to deal with the Communist prosecution itself. Here is a perfectly simple case in which an active Communist and responsible member of his Party Executive issues a party appeal to fellow workers in the army and navy to stand by their class and organise for the future struggle. There is no misunder-

standing this, which is an ordinary part of all revolutionary working-class propaganda all over the world and the duty of any Communist to propagate. The thing is of course absolutely indefensible *except* on the basis of revolutionary working-class solidarity. And this is what happens to it when the official I.L.P. Election Bulletin proceeds to tell the story of the case:—

J. R. Campbell, a young man who had, incidentally, been disabled for life in the war and won the military medal for gallantry in the field, was temporarily in charge of the *Workers' Weekly* when it printed an appeal to the troops not to allow themselves to be used in industrial disputes—technically “sedition.”—*Independent Labour Party Information Committee. Special Election Note No. 1*

Whoever wrote that knew that he was writing with his tongue in his cheek, and probably most of his readers knew it too.

THE fact that the official Labour propaganda of the election has to be built upon a lie is very significant of the present stage of development of the Labour Party. It is not an accident, but from this time forward an essential fact of the situation to-day. It means that the official Labour Party has reached such a stage of dependence on the bourgeoisie and denial of the class struggle that, in the face of the growing insistence of the class struggle, it can only maintain itself by direct lying. Henceforth it will have to lie, and lie more and more shamelessly as time goes on; every Communist issue, that is to say, the issues of the class struggle, as they occupy more and more the centre of the arena, will have to be “pretexts” and “sham issues” and “trumped-up stunts” or else “sectionalism” and “anti-social greed” and “immoral agitation,” &c., &c.; until with the final development of the revolutionary stage the remains of the right wing of the Labour Party will have to tread the familiar path of their fellow social democratic parties of the Continent in a debauch of lying about the workers’ cause. The divorce between the Labour Party and the class struggle has reached a point at which it can no longer be covered up under a mask of phrases.

IT is therefore necessary to state the position definitely. The immediate issues of the election, the Communist prosecution withdrawal and the Soviet Treaty, were not issues of the Labour Government. They *were* issues of the working class, just as they

were issues of the bourgeoisie, and were fought for between the working class and the bourgeoisie; but they were *not* issues of Mr. MacDonald and the Labour Cabinet. Mr. MacDonald had no wish to fight on such issues of a Communist, that is to say working class, character, and indeed endeavoured to relegate them to the background in his speeches as "minor" matters. He was concerned to hide them rather than to display them. In spite of the nominal position of defence he had to assume, his point of view with regard to them was essentially the same as the point of view of the bourgeoisie—namely, the point of view of the defence of capitalism. Working-class pressure had in either case compelled certain *acts* from the Labour Cabinet in reversal of acts previously carried out and announced (the Soviet Treaty was reached *after* the failure of the negotiations had been announced; the Communist prosecution was withdrawn *after* the proceedings had been initiated with Government sanction), but in either case, apart from the superior strategic position of the working-class forces, the acceptance of these acts by a Labour Cabinet was not essentially different from their acceptance by a bourgeois Cabinet; that is to say, the acts were accepted in fact as a result of the given political situation, but they were not accepted in the spirit. The working-class outlook which lay behind them was not accepted. In the case of the Soviet Treaty, Mr. MacDonald made it clear in his speech at Derby, not only that he regarded himself as the representative of British capitalism in relation to Soviet Russia, but that he was completely prepared to retreat from his position and so fundamentally to alter and amend the Treaty in accordance with the wishes of the British capitalists as to lead the Soviet Press justifiably to complain that the old Treaty was being torn up and a new one proposed. In the case of the Communist prosecution withdrawal, not only did Mr. MacDonald at first endeavour on September 30 to wash his hands of the whole affair and imply that he had nothing to do with it and would leave his Attorney-General to face the music alone, but even when altered circumstances led him to take up the defence, the defence put forward by the Labour Government was in complete opposition to the position of the whole Labour Movement. This fact is so important in relation to the inner situation of the movement as to merit special attention.

THE Campbell Case, apart from its immediate importance in relation to the crisis, is of very great educational value for its extremely clear display of the forces of the political situation. Here is revealed with a wealth of detail the workings of the holy "State" in bourgeois democracy; the worker may see, stripped of all trappings, the function of the State as the guardian of capitalism, whoever may be His Majesty's Ministers; he may learn the police distinction between "harmless" and "dangerous" socialism (meaning "harmless" and "dangerous" to the bourgeoisie); in these hasty colloquies of police magistrates, public prosecutors and Ministers in their West-end clubs as to what sentence to give a particular working-class offender or whether to let a prosecution drop and under what formula, he can see the workings of "pure" bourgeois justice far removed from the odious class character of workers' tribunals; and in the delicate negotiations "in the Prime Minister's room" following on the indignant agitation of working-class organisations and representatives, followed in turn by the furious campaign of the capitalist Press and the heated political controversy he can see the bare confrontation of classes through all the sacrosanct institutions of the "classless" State. But although these permanent results of the Campbell case, and the consequent broadcasting of the Communist working-class message to the British soldiers and sailors all over the world to stand by their class in the struggle of the future, are probably of more lasting importance than the whole agitation of the crisis, still even more immediately important is the lesson the worker can learn of the situation of his own working-class movement.

WHAT was the offence in the Campbell case? It was an appeal to soldiers and sailors to stand by their class (*not* a humanitarian appeal to lay down their arms, as subsequent Labour apologists have tried to pretend, but a revolutionary working-class appeal for a common front against the common enemy). To oppose such a proposition before a working-class audience would not be easy; to uphold the political prosecution of a Communist by a Labour Government for such working-class propaganda impossible at present. The whole Labour Press from Left to Right condemned the prosecution. "A stupid prosecution

which should never have been begun," said *Forward*. "A shocking error of judgment," said the *New Leader*. The *New Statesman* found the whole thing a foolish mistake. Even the *Daily Herald*, which had taken no part in the agitation for release, came out with discreet satisfaction after the withdrawal as a "rap" for "the war mind"; "we hope there will be many more." Thus the whole Labour Press, speaking for the whole Labour movement, condemned the political prosecution by a Labour Government of a Communist for Communist propaganda as a mistake; and the greater part of the Labour Press, including the *Daily Herald*, *Forward* and the *New Leader*, expressed sympathy with the point of view of the defendant as a traditional working-class point of view. But what was the position of the Labour Government? The position of the Labour Government was in complete opposition to the view of the whole Labour Movement. The official defence of the Labour Government was that the prosecution was only dropped because there was a danger of it being unsuccessful; that the prosecution was rightfully instituted and only withdrawn because they had got hold of the wrong man; and that if they had got hold of the man they wanted they would have carried it through without hesitation. In other words the Labour Government declared that they stood for the political prosecution of Communists. The Labour movement declared that they were against the political prosecution of Communists. The Labour Movement demanded the withdrawal of the prosecution because they were afraid it might be successful. The Labour Government decided on the withdrawal (so they tell us) because they were afraid it might be unsuccessful.

THIS complete division between the Labour Government and the Labour movement, and still more the fact that not a single comment or criticism has been made upon this division and the completely double and contradictory character of the official Labour statements, is deeply symptomatic of the present artificial situation of the Labour Party. For it is not confined to the present case, but runs right through the position. The whole issue behind the Campbell case, the issue of the propaganda of working-class solidarity in the army and navy, was not and could not be discussed in the Labour Press. It was impossible to attack a conception

so close to the deepest traditions of the working-class movement. It was impossible for a Labour Government to defend it. If this is an offence, declared a Labour Member, half of us on these benches should be in the dock. If the offence could only be successfully proved, the Labour Government had to declare, we should at once put the offender in prison. Only a year ago the official Labour Party had moved an amendment on the very lines of giving the individual soldier the right to refuse service in industrial disputes. The Labour Government in office had to repudiate the amendment they had moved in Opposition.

WHAT is the meaning of this division? Does it mean that there is a conflict within the leading circles of the Labour Party? Does it mean that the *Daily Herald* and *New Leader* are carrying on a campaign against the Labour Government? Nothing of the kind. The elements that are carrying on the Labour Press and publicity are essentially the same as are carrying on the Labour Ministry. But it does mean that there is a conflict deep down which the leading elements have to take into account. It means that from this point on the propaganda of the Labour Party has to be twofold in character, one side for the working class and one side for the bourgeoisie. Just as MacDonal issued two May Day Manifestoes as Prime Minister, one for the workers on working-class solidarity and the Socialist International, and one for the bourgeoisie on the union of peoples and the League of Nations, so in more serious matters. It means once again that from this time on the whole policy and propaganda of the Labour Party has to be built upon a lie. In their Press and on the platform they have to maintain contact with the working class on the basis of whom they have won their position; in their practice and their policy they have to perform their service to the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois State to which they are tied and where real power resides. Thus they are unable to face directly and honestly a single fact when that fact is a fact of the class struggle. Just as in their propaganda on the cause of the election, so in their treatment of the Campbell case. In their press and on the platform they have to appear to misunderstand the Campbell article as a kind of pacifist article (see *Forward*, the *New Leader* and the *Daily Herald*). In their Press and

on the platform Campbell has to appear as an innocent offender, "a crippled ex-soldier," prosecuted

because he preached the doctrine of Human Brotherhood.—*Daily Herald* leader, October 6, 1924.

But in the House of Commons, faced by the hostile bourgeois benches, they sternly condemn the illegality of the article and roundly declare that

His Majesty's Government are determined that, so far as they can help it, the propaganda of Communism is to have no chance in this country.—The LABOUR PRIME MINISTER, House of Commons, October 8, 1924.

The promises maintained before the bourgeoisie must be carried out within the movement. And so we get the expulsion policy at the Labour Party Conference. The elements that are too honest to conform to the new diplomacy and call the facts of the class struggle other than what they are must be excluded. The Lie must be preserved from the harsh breath of militant working-class criticism. The movement must be safely shepherded into the pen of bourgeois slavery, still with the old phrases and banners flying as near as may be, though a little tattered ("England Arise" replacing "The Red Flag"), and those that rebel must be thrown out. The consequences of building the movement upon a lie will be no less terrible than in 1914 when the movement was no less built upon a lie.

IT is now necessary to return to the central question of the character of the crisis which led Mr. MacDonald to dissolve. Important as are the Campbell case and the negotiations of the Soviet Treaty for the part they play in the general situation, and in particular for the light they throw on the situation of the working-class movement, they do not by themselves provide the key to the crisis. We have seen that Mr. MacDonald dissolved of his own decision, in the face of the offers and even of the appeals of the bourgeoisie. We have seen further that, although Mr. MacDonald dissolved nominally on two issues of a Communist character, he certainly did not dissolve for the sake of those two issues or because of the importance he attached to them, but on the contrary he has consistently tried to hide those issues, to minimise them and even

to distort them. It is, therefore, necessary to ask what were the factors in the situation which impelled Mr. MacDonald to decide to dissolve so hastily after so short a tenure of office, in spite of the heavy disadvantage of appearing to dissolve on two issues of so inconvenient a character to himself and so advantageous to Communist propaganda. For the answer to this question it is necessary to consider the general conditions governing the existence of the Labour Government.

THE Labour Government was formed as a result of a situation common to this and other European capitalist countries after the war. This was a situation of very great economic instability, of considerable capitalist disorganisation and division and uncertainty of direction, and of growing working-class consciousness. The immediate revolutionary dangers after the war had been overcome; but there was no sign of restoration of normal capitalist working, and the workers, though beaten down, were gathering force anew. In this situation the pre-war capitalist technique was no longer adequate, and various new experiments in forms of government were made, which were all symptoms of the weakness of the post-war bourgeoisie. These experiments took two dominant forms: Fascism and Social Democratic Ministerialism. In countries where the revolutionary forces were strong or threatening in the working class, Fascism became the ruling type. In countries where the corruption of the working-class movements by the traditional capitalist democratic practices had been long established, the initiation of a period of Left Blocs, Pacifist Democracy, Socialist Ministries &c. became the alternative method. In both cases the aim was the same: to carry over capitalist power secure from working-class attack through a difficult period of weakness.

IN no country was this general situation more marked than in England, the traditional home of the most experienced and cunning capitalist ruling class in the world, now mortally stricken by the consequences of the war and the loss of their old monopoly and entering on a period of economic decline. The merciless blows of the capitalist offensive had already stricken down the workers, ill shielded as they were by old-fashioned middle

nineteenth century forms of organisation and without leadership or staff work or any revolutionary tradition. But the workers were beginning again to recover, and it was necessary to find some form of spiritual consolation to reconcile them to their lowered estate of cut wages, intensified labour and chronic unemployment. There was no sign of improvement in the situation; successive bourgeois ministries were discredited, and the growing four million Labour vote was a portent of what might well become a deluge. To continue to let the growing anger and resentment at the inevitable failures and difficulties in front fall upon the head of bourgeois ministries was to invite the deluge. It was necessary in accordance with the traditional policy of the English bourgeoisie to draw off a section of the approaching forces and by seeming concession to them to lull the awakening masses, to divide and dishearten their own supporters, to use them to combat and discipline all rebellious elements far more intimately and effectively than the bourgeoisie themselves could do, and finally by letting the brunt of the inevitable future failures fall upon them instead of upon the bourgeoisie to discredit them and throw them aside when their purpose was served. After prolonged consideration and discussion the bourgeoisie decided to give the Labour Party leadership the opportunity to form a government—under control.

WHAT was the new element that was thus drawn into the magic circle of capitalist rule? To all appearance it was a strange enough motley company of ex-pacifists, lay preachers, political agents and trade union secretaries that now trooped on to the stage to occupy the historic offices of British bourgeois administration. But on examination the character of the new stratum readily lends itself to definition. The composition of the new Cabinet (apart from the direct bourgeois representatives—Chelmsford, Haldane, Thomson—inserted in key positions to facilitate control and guide the hands of the new apprentices) reveals two principal types: representatives of the professional and salaried classes, the most able and intelligent members of whom had, after the decline of the old capitalist parties, been increasingly finding scope for their energies in the new Labour Party; and representatives of the trade union bureaucracy, which for the past twenty

years and more had been slowly pushing its way forward, on the basis of their control of the organised movement, to Parliamentary position. These two elements had been in marked divergence during the war; the radical middle-class elements, representing a social stratum ground down by the triumph of Big Capital during the war, had been in common with the rest of left liberalism more or less timidly pacifist and opposition in tendency, and driven into the wilderness; the trade union bureaucracy, on the other hand, receiving an enormous accession of power from open alliance with Big Capital, was strongly jingo and entered into direct governmental coalition. These divergencies were now, however, forgotten, and a happy union cemented on a basis of common opposition to the revolutionary working class. (It was the fight with Bolshevism, declares the biographer of MacDonald, which "ultimately proved the means by which he at once saved and conquered the Labour Party.") Thus if we take simply the new elements which were drawn into the Cabinet, we see at once that we are dealing with petty bourgeois elements entering into a coalition with the representatives of the big bourgeoisie. But we have still to answer the question of the basis of their power in order to determine their class position and therefore their political rôle.

THE basis of power of the new elements, which made it worth the while of the bourgeoisie to take them into association, was the Labour Party. The Labour Party contains within its ranks about three million workers, or nearly 25 per cent. of the British working class, but the strongest and organised section. It is not, however, based directly on its working-class membership as a class organisation organising the workers equally and unitedly on a class programme: were that so, the workers would be able to control it; but in point of fact the local Labour parties, through which the workers are most directly represented, have the least, and indeed an infinitesimal, power. Instead it is based on the national trade corporations of the workers, which grew up in the nineteenth century as the historic form of British working-class organisation, and which, although organs of class struggle, enshrine within themselves all the sectional traditions and privileges and monopolies of trade groups of a minority of the workers from

the period of capitalist peace and stability. Thus the Labour Party is an organisation of the workers, but it is a "weighted" organisation of the workers. And the "weighting" is just on the side of those exclusive privileges and sectional interests within an accepted capitalist framework which serve to separate off the workers thus organised from the common interests of the working class and the common struggle of the world working class. That is to say, the "weighting" is on the side of making the Labour Party a petty bourgeois party in practice, that is, a party organising the workers (and to that extent serving a working-class purpose), but drawing them in the wake of capitalism. It is this which makes easy the control by the directly petty bourgeois elements and the trade union bureaucracy which is the representative of the sectional reformist interests and therefore equally divorced from the working class as a class.

IT is essential to understand this rôle of the petty bourgeoisie in the Labour Party, because it is too often imagined that the question is a question of individuals. There is no crime in a workers' party entering into alliance with petty bourgeois elements; on the contrary, a serious workers' party will endeavour to win over as much as possible the petty bourgeoisie to a common front against Big Capital. But the question to be sure of in such an alliance is that the working class is winning over the petty bourgeoisie to a common fight against Capitalism and not that the petty bourgeoisie is making use of the working class for its own purposes in the service of Capitalism. This is the question of questions in the Labour Party, the real issue alike behind the policy of the Labour Government and the policy of expulsion. It is in this sense that the leadership and policy of the Labour Party is a petty bourgeois leadership and policy, although the party is based upon the workers. The workers only exist passively in the party as an electoral machine for the petty bourgeoisie, without any power to control it actively as a class force (and every feature of the complicated Labour Party Constitution, as well as the expulsion of elements known to contain some of the most tried and honest working-class elements, reveals the constant manipulation for this purpose); while the leaders are able to present themselves as divorced from any class basis, repre-

representatives of the community at large, and free to enter the service of capitalism and imperialism without question—that is to say, as petty bourgeois representatives, separate from the conflict of bourgeoisie and proletariat and endeavouring to ally themselves with both. Thus we are able to reach the definition of the character of the Labour Government as a government of petty bourgeois elements in coalition with representatives of the big bourgeoisie, basing themselves on the support of the workers and owing their position to the value to Capitalism of their claim to be able to control the working class, but placed in office by the decision of the bourgeoisie and only acting in all big issues in subservience to the bourgeoisie.

NOW from this analysis it is possible to draw certain conclusions. The rôle of the petty bourgeoisie in government is historically well established from 1848 up to the present day, and through all the changes in the particular situation presents certain well marked characteristics. In the first place the petty bourgeoisie normally comes to office during a period of revolutionary struggle in a moment of temporary deadlock and indecision. In the second place the petty bourgeoisie bases itself upon the workers and even the "threat" of revolution, but is in practice only able to act in accordance with the wishes of the bourgeoisie, because the alternative means to face the revolutionary class struggle from which it shrinks. Therefore in the third place the petty bourgeoisie is unable to accomplish anything or to tackle any of the big problems with which the Government is faced, because it has no strong class basis or policy to give it the power to act. Therefore in the fourth place the petty bourgeoisie increasingly loses the support of the workers (whom it is only able to gather in during the early stages of their awakening while it is still possible to satisfy them with an illusory "people's" movement) as they by experience discover that the petty bourgeoisie can only give them phrases and not acts, and increasingly become conscious of their own class rôle. And finally, in the fifth place, as soon as the class struggle develops new force, the moment of the petty bourgeoisie, if it cannot "compose" the conflict, is over; and, after being more and more harassed and ground between the upper millstone of the bourgeoisie and the

lower millstone of the proletariat, it finally surrenders the contest in despair and vanishes from the scene.

WITH this analysis in mind let us turn to the record of the MacDonald Labour Government. The MacDonald Labour Government was set in office by the bourgeoisie at a time of very great difficulty at home and abroad, when successive bourgeois ministries had been discredited, and the rising tide of working-class resentment was revealed in the fresh outburst of strikes during the previous twelve months and the growing Labour vote. At the outset the hopes of the workers were fixed on the MacDonald Government as inaugurating a new era, while a section of the bourgeoisie went into a panic. But it very soon became clear that the MacDonald Government was powerless to do anything save in accordance with the wishes of the bourgeoisie, and that it was in fact humbly wooing "national" approval as a faithful servitor of Finance Capital. Certain difficult and disagreeable tasks which it was the intention of Finance Capital to accomplish through the Labour Government were faithfully performed: namely, to carry through the Dawes Slave Plan and get the French out of the Ruhr; to carry through a new armaments programme involving a new type of cruiser and the expansion of air armaments; and to suppress without mercy the threatening revolts against the Empire in India, Irak and the Sudan. These tasks were accomplished to the accompaniment of pacifist phraseology. To ease the passage certain concessions of the traditional Liberal type without significance in principle were permitted, such as a small increase in unemployment pay and the partial remission of tea and sugar taxes (the gains of which were speedily swallowed up by the profiteers, as the Labour propagandists themselves were soon complaining). But apart from this there was no sign of any policy. On Unemployment there was nothing: "the cure for unemployment is not yet" was Mr. MacDonald's message to the Labour Party Conference, and in the King's speech which summed up the record of the Government it was declared that the encouragement of "trade and industry" was "the only means of dealing fundamentally with unemployment." On Housing there was nothing but a characteristic scheme for "the union of capital and labour" which showed diminishing prospect in

the actual class situation of being able to produce the necessary workers' houses. Of the schemes of "National Development" there was nothing. Even in administration the Ministers were clay in the hands of their permanent officials, and the sacred principle of "continuity of policy" from their Right Wing predecessors, was carried to lengths undreamt of before. The bourgeois propagandists actually began to make fun of the "do-nothing" and "mark-time" policy of the Government.

CRITICISM and protests began to grow in volume in working-class ranks. The workers showed themselves little disposed to listen to the Labour Ministers' exhortations to keep quiet and leave everything to them. Strikes, unofficial and official, broke out and developed in the face of Ministers' protests; and even though the whole propaganda machine of the Independent Labour Party was turned against them, it proved of no avail, and the I.L.P. organ had the pleasure of hearing itself officially condemned on the floor of the Trades Union Congress. A Trade Union "Left Wing" tendency developed, which revealed the rising spirit of the workers and showed itself of doubtful friendliness to the Labour Cabinet. Rank and file Labour M.P.s' demands for control of the Labour Cabinet became more insistent, and working-class pressure began to show signs of deflecting policy. Even the I.L.P. began to show signs of pressing advanced programmes on the Government, and through their chairman to criticise the Prime Minister for inaction. The prospects of the Labour Party Conference, which was postponed to October, looked as if there would be strong debates. MacDonald's attacks on the Left became more and more unreserved and bitter, culminating in the famous "Socialism" Preface, which launched out wholesale at the policy of "public doles, Poplarism, strikes for increased pay, limitation of output" as nothing to do with Socialism, complained that workmen are tempted to forget that they are all members of "a social unity" and declared that the "Socialist looks with some misgivings upon some recent developments in the conflicts between capital and labour. They are contrary to his spirit; he believes they are both immoral and uneconomic and will lead to disaster."

AT the same time as the division between MacDonald and the working class was thus growing wider, and the workers were pressing forward to struggle without further regard to the helpless protesting figure of MacDonald, the bourgeoisie was also preparing to do battle and expressing increasing dissatisfaction with the MacDonald Ministry as no longer serving their purpose. The main objectives of carrying through the Dawes Report and the increased armaments programme had been accomplished. At home the MacDonald Government was increasingly proving unable to deliver the goods: it could not control the working class as the bourgeoisie had hoped. The bourgeoisie had hoped for an Industrial Truce as the price of a Labour Government; but in spite of the diligent propaganda of certain leaders no progress was made with this, and the Minister of Labour had apologetically to announce that, although good progress was being made with arbitration, "it seems absolutely impossible at the moment even to dream of any compulsion." This failure was very serious in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, as, if there were to be strikes and the Labour Government should prove unable to check them, a stronger Government would be needed to deal with them and one less amenable to working-class pressure. At the same time the international situation, with the question of Soviet Russia to the forefront, was strongly needing a government more directly under bourgeois control. And now the Labour Government was actually showing signs of weakening before working-class pressure. When such pressure actually succeeded in deflecting the policy of the Labour Government on the two issues of the Soviet Treaty and the Communist prosecution, the indignation of the bourgeoisie knew no bounds. The battle axes were sharpened; and preparations were made to take the strongest measures to bring the Government to heel or else remove it. This was the situation when Parliament reassembled. The MacDonald Ministry was being ground between the upper millstone of the bourgeoisie and the lower millstone of the proletariat.

IN this situation the two issues of the Soviet Treaty and the Communist prosecution took on something more than their own immediate importance. They became symbols of the struggle of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat for the control of the govern-

ment. The two Communist issues became the symbols of the working-class claim (a fact deeply significant for the whole future of the struggle in Britain) and infuriated the bourgeoisie. Where the whole record of the Labour Government had only aroused the contempt, the indifference and even the praise of the bourgeoisie, the Communist issues aroused their fury. They prepared for battle to reassert their control. At the same time the spirit of the workers, sick at the continued dallying and surrenders of the Government, cheered and rose at the prospect of a struggle. In this position what was MacDonald to do? He could not satisfy both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. If he looked ahead, he could see no improvement in the position. Unemployment was rising again at an alarming pace and threatened soon to exceed the figure at the outset of the Labour Government. Abroad, there was an ugly situation in India, and a prospect of war in Irak. There was no line of policy to which he could look for an improvement—for he had no policy. He was losing ground in the working-class movement, and before long his tide with the electorate might begin to ebb. In this situation the two issues gave MacDonald the opportunity that he needed. It was in any case too late for him to retreat on them without a fatal rupture of his own followers. Let him take up the challenge on them, Communist though they were (while trying as much as possible to conceal their true character), and end his difficulties by a dissolution.

IT was in fact a desperate step, which at first alarmed several of his closest associates and colleagues. It meant to give prominence to just those Communist issues which it was most their desire to minimise and conceal. In its ultimate significance, however much he might seek to conceal the fact from himself, that decision to dissolve was a capitulation to Communism and the class struggle. But for the moment it spelled salvation. He could rally the whole movement behind him in the unity of the fight, shatter the doubts of his supporters and sweep the Labour Party Conference in a wave of enthusiasm. At the same time he could use the very situation to carry the war into the enemy's camp, turn on the Communists as the authors of all his misfortunes and induce the Conference in the ardour of electoral propaganda and the wooing

of the petty bourgeoisie to carry the most rigorous sounding measures against the Communist working-class fighters. If he were returned to power as a result of the election, he would be in a new and stronger position to face his attackers on either side. To his bourgeois attackers he could say: "I have stood up to you before, and called an election, and returned the stronger for it. Have a care, or I can do so again." And to his working-class attackers he could say: "Look, how your foolishness came near to wrecking our whole Labour Government. We have just got through this time, but—Never Again!" And if he were returned in Opposition, he would be in a still stronger situation. He could then hide the barrenness and sterility of his government under the glorious tale of what they "would have" done. He could become again the leader against Capitalism, and restore his tarnished working-class reputation by the heroics of Opposition. And at the same time (while secretly thankful for the relief from a situation he was unable to face) he could turn the deadly finger of responsibility upon his Communist enemies for the wreck of the first Labour Government.

DOES this mean that MacDonald has saved himself by his dissolution, and restored himself as the leader of the working class? Nothing of the kind. The petty bourgeoisie does not so easily escape. The battle opened by the dissolution means that the class struggle has triumphed over MacDonald. It is not a battle of MacDonald and the bourgeoisie; it is a battle of the working class and the bourgeoisie. The electoral fight has more and more clearly taken on the character of class struggle. The coalition of the bourgeois forces reveals this; for not until and so far as driven by sheer necessity will the old bourgeois parties (however sham their differences) unite, because they know that that is the last stage to open class struggle. The movement of the masses is sweeping past MacDonald. The very fact that MacDonald has had to fight on two issues so alien to him, which he vainly endeavours to hide, shows that he is a prisoner of the class struggle. If he returns to power, he returns to all his old difficulties a hundred times intensified, and with a body of Labour representatives more numerous, and therefore more insistent, more exacting and less controllable than before. The final exposure of bourgeois democracy and parliamen-

tarism will begin. The struggle between democracy and dictatorship, between MacDonald and Communism, will go forward. Even if he goes into Opposition, the respite will not be for long. His triumph at the Labour Party Conference was an unreal triumph: it is even doubtful whether the expulsion of the Communists can be carried out. Whether it can be carried out or not (and there is no doubt that ultimately the petty bourgeois machine will endeavour to save itself by these methods, even to the length of splitting the trade unions), not by these means will it be possible to chain the working-class forces. The spectacle of the endeavour to stem the tide of Communism in the working class by a machinery resolution is like Canute trying to stop the waves with a twelve inch rule.

THE followers of MacDonald declare that the working-class movement of this country was built up on the basis of parliamentary democracy. They lie. When a worker is asked to join a trade union (the basis of the Labour Party) is he asked whether he is a faithful and devout believer in parliamentary democracy, Calvinism and the apostolic succession, or is he asked whether he is prepared to do his duty as a worker and join in with the other workers and stop scabbing (*i.e.*, stand by his class)? For this is the basis (*i.e.*, the basis of trade union membership), on which 99 per cent. of the present members of the Labour Party have joined and to-day do belong to the Labour Party. Only one per cent. (35,000 against 3,155,000, according to this year's returns) join on the basis of their belief in parliamentary democracy, evolutionary socialism, Jesus Christ and the higher ethics. One per cent. on the basis of parliamentary democracy, 99 per cent. on the basis of working-class solidarity. This is the fact which blows sky-high the attempt to treat the Labour Party as a kind of bourgeois party on a theoretical basis, which can exclude Communists "in the same way as" Liberals and Conservatives. The only actual present basis of the Labour Party, whatever the eloquent words of Mr. MacDonald, is a union of trade unions in politics, that is, a union of working-class organisations of *all* workers on no other condition save the performance of their duty of working-class solidarity as so far understood. Therefore, the only basis of exclusion is the class basis, which automatically excludes Liberal and Conservative politics, but

cannot exclude Communist politics, the only crime of which is to maintain working-class interests more unreservedly, consistently and completely than any sectional working-class organisation yet can or wishes to do. When, therefore, the ex-trade union parliamentary adventurers and honest middle-class muddleheads in the wake of Mr. MacDonald endeavour to fasten a non-working-class formula, such as parliamentary democracy, on the Labour Party, they are only showing their own narrowness and complete unconsciousness of the character of a working-class movement. Whoever tries to impose a bourgeois formula on a working-class movement is splitting that movement. If the basis of the Labour Party is parliamentary democracy, then the basis can no longer be the Trade Unions. The petty bourgeois democrats can only succeed in transforming the Labour Party after their own image by divorcing it from the working class. And whether they succeed or not in form, the working-class struggle will press forward beyond them to the battles of the future and the inevitable revolutionary issue, which larger and larger numbers of workers are beginning to see before them ever more clearly.

R. P. D.

AFTER THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

By P. BRAUN

THE electoral campaign has pushed aside all the other questions and problems of the Labour Movement to-day. All the political parties competing for office—Conservative, Liberal and Labour—are engrossed in catching votes. The collective voter is the aim of all their platforms, manifestoes, speeches and appeals. Remembering that "Truth is great, and will prevail," I allow myself to say, at the risk of hurting some and angering others, that the elections, as a general rule, are only a crooked mirror wherein public opinion is reflected. Wealth, the Press, the Church and vote-catching stunts make themselves felt more sharply around the ballot box than the real interests of the masses. The present electoral campaign, of course, is little different from others. Its fundamental difference is only in its suddenness and briefness. There is all the more foundation to anticipate that it will give a distorted reflection of the real relation of social forces.

The ballot box cannot settle the burning questions of to-day. The noise of the campaign will pass. One government or another will be formed, but the country as a whole will remain in the same condition as before the dissolution of Parliament. Perhaps one may be permitted, therefore, to try and find one's way amongst the lessons of the last Labour Party Conference, touching on election questions only in such measure as they throw light on the work of "Labour's Parliament."

The Executive Committee of the Labour Party prepared its Report to the Twenty-fourth Congress in tones of victory. The Liberals were then peacefully supporting MacDonald's Government, and many thought that the patient oxen would go on sleeping quietly for a long time yet. On the Right there were still no clouds to be seen. The leaders were only worried by criticism from the Left. And the Report turned the full force of its "eloquence" against the Left Wing. There is none of that nervousness in the Report which characterised the famous "Preface." It is written

in tones of solemn deliberation. And it is worth while dwelling on it in detail.

The whole philosophy of the Labour Party leaders is gathered up in one brief but expressive passage. "A Labour Ministry," proudly write the authors of the Report, "has shown that it can undertake the task of Government as seriously, as sincerely, and as successfully as any of its predecessors." I invite the reader to consider this sentence. Our leaders *boast* that they are just as serious, just as sincere and just as successful as the Governments of Tories and Liberals. Hitherto, we have always been under the impression that the Capitalist Parties were *insincere, not serious in their promises*, and that they were leading the country from disaster to disaster. The question arises naturally, was the game worth the candle? Was it worth while acquiring a Government, put forward by the workers, but inheriting the same vices as capitalist governments?

It must be admitted, moreover, that the leaders told all the naked, unvarnished truth about the first Labour Government. The only thing that they omitted to say was that they were thereby passing sentence of death upon it.

But the authors of the Report, who pretend to the title of leaders of the working class, were not content with this passage. In their defence of the present system they not only left far behind all the other parties of the Second International, including the hopelessly disgraced party of Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske, but they even went further back than some Radicals. In a special clause devoted to the "Communist peril," the apology of the system of oppression and exploitation is made in the following terms:—

"*This country* possesses *almost* a wholly enfranchised adult population, and a Parliament and system of Government that will respond to the direction of the working people so soon as they express intelligent desire for change through the ballot box."

This passage is less clear than the previous one. I have underlined two ambiguous words. It is not quite clear what the authors mean when they refer to "this country." Does this country include also the peoples of the East? It is not clear also how we are to understand the word "almost." Before we read the gospel according to MacDonald, we had become accustomed to the thought,

which was considered almost a truism, that political freedom without economic rights is a deceptive phantom. It now turns out that the adult population of *this country* is almost free. All it lacks is intelligence.

But the authors of the Report can scarcely be as naïve and as ignorant as they make out. They know as well as we that the present Empire is organised with fire and sword. But, throwing responsibility for all the expressions of the present system on to the will of the working people, they thereby are sanctifying with the will of the oppressed their own passing over into the service of capitalism.

Some will say that my conclusions are too violent. I am concerned least of all with violence of form. But I am convinced that *any other interpretation of this passage is unthinkable*. To check the truth of this, I ask the reader carefully to study pages 38-40 of the Report. All these three pages pursue a single aim, namely, to distort the *idea* of proletarian dictatorship, which is a fundamental part of Socialism, and to disguise in as attractive a form as possible the *fact* of bourgeois dictatorship.

Only in the light of this "doctrine" can we understand that part of the Report which is devoted to "the first Labour Government." It occupies only eight pages. To illustrate the tone of this part of the Report, I quote in full the section on foreign affairs, which incidentally settles the question both of the Dawes Report and of the League of Nations.

This section says: "Universal and anxious interest was centred upon the proceedings of the Inter-Allied Conference held in London in the latter part of July and beginning of August.

"It is well known and recognised that the Labour Government have made tremendous efforts to bring about reconciliation and agreement on the very thorny problems arising out of the Peace Treaty and the payment of Reparations.

"These efforts were successful at the London Conference, when Inter-Allied Agreement on the basis of the Dawes Report was reached, and when the representatives of Germany, acting freely on equal terms, entered into the Agreement. The general question underlying the payment of Reparations will, doubtless, have to come up later; but the London Agreement is undeniably the first substantial step taken since the war to promote an atmosphere of

conciliation and to open the way to a restoration of peace and international amity in Europe.

“The pronouncements of the Labour Government at the recent Assembly of the League of Nations on the question of security and disarmament have also helped to lay what is hoped to be the foundation of a real and lasting scheme of international disarmament.”

It was painfully difficult to copy out this sickly-sweet and hypocritical report of the international policy of the first Labour Government.

MacDonald was summoned as a midwife at the birth of the most repulsive progeny of capitalist greed. He was further asked to cover the nakedness and the impotence of the notorious League of Nations by bouquets of social-pacifist phrases. He did this *dirty* work. And the Executive of the Labour Party, assuming the rôle of an election agent, hastens to declare the Dawes Report a work of peace and international friendship, and even brazenly announces that Germany, “acting freely on equal terms,” gladly assumed the chains of slavery and disgrace.

Of course I cannot quote the whole Report here. It is sufficient to say that it is drawn up throughout in these tones of cheap advertisement, in which the advertising agents have identical praise both on the Labour Government and on the system which that Government served. But the Report represents only one side—true, at the present moment the decisive side. It reflects the views of the Liberals. But what is the attitude of the rank and file? Their views are expressed in another document, called the Agenda. This bulky booklet is not distinguished by the same singleness of purpose that runs through the Report. It even bears traces of confusion and disharmony. But it is a living denial of official optimism and opportunism.

“Serious” politicians superciliously smiled at the resolutions about Court functions. There were a large number of these resolutions and they really displayed a certain amount of simplicity. But they bear witness to the sincere indignation of honest workers at the servility of their leaders. Court dress made a profound impression on their imagination, because it displayed the Labour Ministers vividly before them in the rôle of lackeys, and forced

the workers to think a little on the subject. On page 20 we find a resolution against participation in mediæval Court ceremonies, while page 21 goes on to condemn the Government's policy in trade disputes. The disillusioned local organisations went further. They tried to find some remedy against the "regrettable" policy of the Labour Government. Their class instinct prompted them to demand the strengthening and regularising of Party control over the Government, and an extension of the powers of the Party in the appointment of Ministers. In full agreement with this policy, dozens of organisations naturally went on to demand that the Communist Party should be accepted as a full member of that federation of workers' organisations known as the Labour Party.

There were even Labour organisations who dared to turn their simple minds on to questions of "high policy." These organisations, without skill or cunning, simply declared "that the danger of war is to-day greater in Europe than elsewhere" (see page 29 of the Agenda, and compare it with the sweet words of the Executive Report concerning an "atmosphere" of friendship). On the Dawes Report six organisations, including the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, declared "that it would tend to stabilise the present coolie standard of living of the German workers, and would be reflected in the increasing attempts of the employing classes in this country to depress the standard of the British worker to the German level." And the voice of these six organisations found a sympathetic echo in a number of resolutions from other organisations, who had not yet learned to speak as cunningly. There was even an organisation which was prevented by its thick-wittedness from grasping how the building of cruisers could be combined with talk of disarmament (page 31).

Some organisations displayed genuine Communist dementia. Instead of following in the footsteps of MacDonald and Thomas with praise of "the swift shuttles of the Empire's loom," they began talking about "the crimes committed by the British Government against subject races, in the interests of the extension of the Empire, and for imperialistic and capitalistic ambitions."

I shall not quote any more individual resolutions to be found on the pages of the Agenda. I will only say that there is a deep gulf between the Agenda, filled with sometimes contradictory resolutions

which always reflect the real life of the rank and file, and the Report which strives to be "as sincere as it is serious," and in this follows the line adopted by the reports of capitalist parties.

The facts of these two documents promised a serious battle on the floor of the Conference. But the electoral fever turned everything upside down. Some simple people might think that the election campaign came unexpectedly, and nobody should be blamed for the fact that the Party Conference was changed into a glorified election meeting.

Is this the case? One is inclined to think that the intelligent strategy of the leaders played a fairly large part in the real liquidation of the Congress. None of the three parties dares to assume responsibility for the new elections. All are very much afraid of the shopkeeper, who would like to go on doing business on Wednesday. We can, however, calmly and objectively survey the whole situation which produced the crisis.

For the space of eight months, the Labour Government worked like its predecessors, following their lead and the precedents they had created. The idyll was almost complete. The first apple of discord was the Anglo-Soviet Treaty. The British bourgeoisie quite correctly considers the existence of the Soviets as its own defeat. Reviewing its "glorious" past, it recalls that once upon a time it managed to conquer the Great French Revolution and restore the Bourbons. It has already spent considerable sums of money in attempting the restoration of the Romanoffs: and it is natural that the British bourgeoisie should have an attack of nerves when the question of the Soviets is raised. MacDonald acted extremely carefully, listening most attentively to the voice of High Finance. He was ready to interrupt negotiations on a question of principle—the right of the Revolution to nationalise private property. But the mysterious stranger who appears in the Agenda intervened, suspecting that MacDonald was giving up his right to a better future. MacDonald yielded to pressure from below. He hoped to atone for his sin in recognising the Revolution—a recognition which took place independently of his will—by a stab in the back of the European proletariat with the Dawes stiletto. The bourgeoisie praised him for the Dawes plan, but would not recognise the Anglo-Soviet Treaty. Thus arose the first and fundamental conflict. The

bourgeoisie, in its hypocritically polite language, tried to knock into the heads of MacDonald and his colleagues that they were taken into its employment as office boys. MacDonald was aspiring to those small rights and powers which are usually entrusted by every reputable firm to its manager.

The conflict became more complicated with the Campbell case. At the end of July the Tories suggested to the Attorney-General that Campbell should be prosecuted for calling on the workers in uniform not to fire on their brothers. The obedient Attorney-General immediately began the prosecution. But here, too, the mysterious stranger appeared on the scene, and asked how a Labour Government could prosecute an honest revolutionary on the foundation of some archaic law invented in the struggle against the French Revolution. MacDonald had to give way. Once again he thought that in order successfully to balance between the Scylla of capital and Charybdis of Labour he must have a certain freedom of manœuvre. To set off his case to greater advantage, he displayed, it as an act of compassion towards "a crippled soldier," assuring the capitalists that the trial would have played into the hands of the Communists. But both parties raised the question clearly once again: "Office boy or manager?"

The union of both parties against the Labour Government rendered elections inevitable. But MacDonald still had a certain freedom to manœuvre. He might, on the question of the Campbell case, have assumed the offensive, and raised the question of the Sedition Laws, and also of the practice of the old political parties in respect of that spotless virgin called Justice. Such a postponement might have been utilised for mobilising the forces of Labour. But MacDonald was in a hurry. *And one of the reasons of his haste was the desire to avoid all quarrels at the Labour Party Conference.*

This strategic manœuvre proved quite successful. MacDonald appeared at the Conference as the victim of the dishonesty of the Capitalist Parties and demanded the unity of all forces to repel the enemy. The Left Wing either remained silent or supported MacDonald. The Agenda was pitilessly mutilated. The results of the work of the first Labour Government were drowned in a torrent of election cries. At Hull there was silence on the work of the Labour Government, in order not to interfere in the work of the

Labour Party. And at Queen's Hall there was silence in order not to interfere with the elections !

Two important questions were nevertheless discussed, and it is necessary to consider them. I have in mind the relations with the Communists and the question of the nationalisation of banks.

On the question of the Communists the discussion took place on Tuesday, October 7, *i.e.*, a day before the defeat of the Government in the House of Commons. MacDonald was in charge. The Executive defended only two propositions: (1) "That the application for affiliation from the Communist Party be refused"; (2) "That no member of the Communist Party shall be eligible for endorsement as a Labour candidate for Parliament or any local authority." Defending these two propositions, the Executive paid a few compliments to the members of the Communist Party, remarking that "their energy and enthusiasm are undoubted." At the same time, the Executive insisted that "Communists cannot honestly hold membership in the Labour Party." But the discussion went on only around the two definite propositions of the Executive Committee.

The results are well-known. The Executive "conquered." And conquering, it literally under cover of the smoke of battle carried through a *third* resolution, "that no member of the Communist Party be eligible for membership of the Labour Party." As the voting went on, the Government majority dwindled. But on Wednesday MacDonald was able to come to the Liberals and Tories with the proud announcement that the Communists had been expelled, and that "His Majesty's Government is determined that, so far as it can help it, the propaganda of Communism is to have no chance in this country." The thirsty gods accepted the sacrifice, but would not be appeased.

MacDonald still had sufficient sense to rule that the expulsion would enter into force only after the Conference. One can imagine what the Conference would have been like if the Communists had been expelled on the very first day !

But were there not at the Conference, besides the Communists, Left Wingers of various sorts and calibre ? Yes, there were. And they served as a support for those who held in their hands the reins of the Conference. If the Agenda found some reflection at the

Conference itself—not in the decisions, of course, but only in the speeches—this was only thanks to the energy of the expelled. In their concessions to the leaders, the Left Wing went so far that they permitted the latter to vote down the Industrial Workers' Charter and the Unemployed Charter. The leaders humbly looked into the eyes of the shopkeepers, and decided that they would not be pleased with the Charters. And the Left Wing did not wish to interfere at this "solemn" moment.

However, the Left Wing too entered the fray. They carried a resolution in favour of the nationalisation of banks. How hotly they spoke about it! They were applauded even more hotly! Our Left Wing friends have now only to take the moon as their lantern and search for this decision in "Labour's Appeal to the People"—a document about which we shall only say that it is just as serious and just as sincere as the manifestos of the Capitalist Parties. In return, however, the Labour Party officials hastened to rid themselves of the Communists to please the Liberals and the shopkeepers, even without awaiting the ruling of the Executive Committee.

The manifesto of the Labour Party contains only one line which deserves serious thought: "The path to our goal is long and narrow." And we shall add on our part that the last Labour Party Conference has made that thorny path even longer and more narrow.

The election fever will soon pass. Labour will again find itself at a broken altar. And we now, amidst the noise and clamour of the campaign, sound the alarm, and say to these who wrote the Agenda:—

"In the history of British Labour there have been times which were more difficult, but none which were so shameful."

* * * * *

The first days of the Election Campaign have shown that the Liberals and Tories are joining their forces for a political offensive against the working class. This political offensive to-day means an economic offensive to-morrow. There is the more reason for sounding the alarm,

THE CAMPBELL CASE

By J. R. CAMPBELL

IT would be foolish to pretend that the Campbell Case was the real cause of the downfall of the first Labour Government. Nevertheless it is a case of some political significance, and it is as well that the facts connected with it should be stated fully once and for all.

In the first place it should be clearly understood that the articles appearing in the *Workers' Weekly* were not inserted in order to embarrass the Labour Government, nor because of the fact that such a Government was in office. On the contrary, they were inserted as a part of the Communist Party's anti-militarist campaign, on the tenth anniversary of the World War. These direct appeals to the fighting forces were natural and necessary parts of our effort to waken the working class—in and out of uniform—to a realisation of how war can in fact and practice be ended. The Russian workers in 1917 and the German workers in 1918 proved in practice that the way in which a working class can smash their war-makers is the way of revolt.

The I.L.P. official organ, the *New Leader*, has stated that the articles, constituting as they did incitement to mutiny were merely part of a vulgar political stunt. The *New Leader* asserted that it would have been brave to have inserted such articles during a World War, when the editor would most certainly have been shot, but that to insert them in times of peace was absolutely meaningless. This criticism is petty and stupid. If the struggle against war is to be taken seriously then anti-war propaganda must be carried on amongst the workers in the fighting forces as well as in industry, during peace as well as in war time.

To leave the soldiers entirely under the influence of their officers during periods of peace, and then issue appeals to them not to obey their officers when war has actually broken out, would be silly. The people who issued such appeals should be shot for stupidity if not for treason.

A Communist believes that it is necessary to start the campaign amongst the soldiers now. We did not believe that they would act in the manner indicated in the "Open Letter" immediately.

It was merely the start of a serious campaign, using a moment when the minds of people were turned to the horrors of the last Great War.

That campaign we are continuing and shall continue by all the means at our disposal. Those of the Socialist movement who preferred, for no known reason, to hold their anti-war demonstrations some weeks *after* the anniversary of the great war seem to have no good reason for condemning us for the time we chose to launch our campaign.

The article in question was printed in our issue of July 25, and the Communist Party took the necessary step to insure that its appeal reached the fighting forces. As a consequence of this the *Morning Post* called for the arrest of the people responsible for the article. Questions were asked in the House of Commons concerning the *Workers' Weekly* articles on the same day that questions were asked concerning a pro-war speech made by a general when opening a war memorial. The Labour Minister's replies were to the effect that they did not intend to proceed with a case against the general, but were investigating the case of the editor of the *Workers' Weekly*.

A few days later Inspector Parker of Scotland Yard called at the Communist Party office and asked to see the Secretary about the articles in question. When he found that the Secretary was not in the office, he asked to see the editor. Questions were asked concerning the authorship of the article, and I had to say that I would not tell him who the author was. I was further asked whether I was responsible for the conduct of the paper and I accepted responsibility for everything that it contained.

Inspector Parker intimated on leaving that he would call round and see the Secretary, Comrade Inkpin, the following day. That night a special meeting of the Political Bureau decided to accept full responsibility for the article. On the following morning, when Inspector Parker called, he met not only Inkpin, but all the Political Bureau members who were in London at that time, and on being told that they accepted full responsibility he took their names. During this meeting Inspector Parker put a number of pointed questions to Comrade Inkpin attempting to fasten personal responsibility on to him.

There is no doubt in my mind that Comrade Inkpin is the "dangerous person under police suspicion" mentioned by Sir Patrick Hastings in his speech.

The day following the Political Bureau sent a statement to its local organisations calling upon them to raise an agitation against the impending prosecution. It also drew up a statement for the Labour Members who were meeting in Parliament the following week.

On the Tuesday following the interview Inspector Parker again called and asked if I accepted responsibility for six articles of an anti-militarist character in the *Workers' Weekly* of July 25 and August 1.

On my accepting responsibility he then produced a warrant in connection with the article which appeared in the *Workers' Weekly* for July 25, and I was arrested. The night of my arrest Comrade Pollitt interviewed a number of Labour M.P.'s in the House of Commons, and they promised to raise the matter the following day, which they did. In the meantime the news of the arrest had created consternation in the Labour Movement throughout the country. There was a general impression amongst those who had not read the *Workers' Weekly* that the articles in question were merely an appeal not to shoot strikers, an opinion that was shared by most of the M.P.'s who asked questions in the House of Commons.

A full Executive of the Party was meeting two days after my release on bail, and my case was discussed at this meeting. It was decided that we could pick out no legal defence for the articles in question, and that my plea was, therefore, to be one of justification. It was also decided that I defend myself, relying merely on technical assistance from a solicitor.

It was agreed that leading members of his Majesty's Government should be brought into the witness box and examined as to their previous anti-war pronouncements. Comrades were instructed to find the necessary materials from the speeches and writings of Cabinet Ministers and did so. Material was found in the speeches of almost every prominent Minister except Mr. MacDonald. Mr. MacDonald's speeches in the past, like those of the present, are masterpieces of ambiguity. We have no informa-

tion that our decision to call on members of the Government was known to the Government.

The day previous to coming up for trial I heard that Mr. Travers Humphreys, K.C., was going to conduct the case for the prosecution. We anticipated a big case. One does not usually utilise a steam hammer to crack a nut. To our surprise Mr. Travers Humphreys announced the withdrawal of the case, and we were left in a state of astonishment.

When we read over the statement of Mr. Travers Humphreys in the papers that evening, we realised immediately that his statement that "representations had been made" might lead to the conclusion that the Communist Party had made those representations. This we had to deny, and in our denial we asserted what appeared to us to be the only possible explanation for the withdrawal, namely, the pressure which had been brought to bear on the Government by the Labour Movement.

When the Tory Press started to make use of the case in order to bring about the downfall of the Labour Government we had to point out to the worker that Governments have repeatedly interfered in political prosecutions, citing the case of the persecution of our members in 1921.

When Parliament reassembled Sir Patrick Hastings gave a statement which was in some respects inaccurate. Amongst the inaccuracies was the statement that the article was a cutting from another publication. The reason for this statement does not reflect credit on the intelligence of Scotland Yard. After articles for the *Workers' Weekly* are set up in type "galley-proofs" are taken of them. These proofs are then cut and pasted on to a sheet of the *Workers' Weekly* in order to give the compositors an idea of the arrangement of the page.

The detectives while raiding the premises of our printers found a galley-proof of the "seditious article" pasted on to a page of "make-up," with corrections in my handwriting, from which they deduced the fact that it was a cutting from another paper.

As to the significance of the case. It is quite obvious that the case created disquiet amongst the Liberals and Tories. They realised that if such propaganda were permitted, the basis of the capitalist army could be gradually undermined. The *Manchester*

Guardian published a ponderous article in which it talked about the army being a "neutral body" which must be safeguarded from political propaganda. What the *Manchester Guardian* really meant was that it must be safeguarded from working-class propaganda. There is no restriction on capitalist propaganda in the army. The whole atmosphere of military training is impregnated with that propaganda.

The capitalist class realised that the dropping of the case was useful to them in so far as it enabled them to identify the Labour Party with Communism. The Labour Government countered this move by inducing the Labour Conference to exclude the Communists.

Apart from illustrating the fact that the capitalists are not prepared to allow a minority Labour Government to exist except on the understanding that it carries through a policy approved by them, the Campbell Case has another value. It has called working-class attention to the fact that there still exists in the Statute Book laws which restrict working-class propaganda, and still more ugly laws, like the E.P.A., which give the Government the right to suppress any large-scale industrial movement on the part of the workers.

If the "Campbell Case" calls attention to these laws, and impresses the Labour Movement with the necessity for taking them off the Statute Book, it will not have been useless. Meanwhile is there any soldier, sailor or airman who reads a newspaper to whom the message of the Communist Party has not been carried, in some form or another, during the newspaper discussions and the political debates of the last few weeks?

ON THE ROAD TO INSURRECTION¹—I

By V. I. LENIN

(There appears below the first instalment of Lenin's work *On the Road to Insurrection*, whose forthcoming serial publication in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* was announced last month.)

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

This book includes nearly everything written by Lenin between the Kornilov rising, in the late summer of 1917, and the revolution of November (October, old Russian calendar), except *The State and Revolution*,² the series of articles entitled *For the Revision of the Party Programme*, and a few other brief articles. All his writings dealing with the question of the insurrection are contained in *On the Road to Insurrection*, but one section, *Will the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?*, having already been published separately in English,³ is omitted from the present translation.

Comrade Lenin wrote everything that is inserted in this collection after the "July days" when he was forced to flee from Kerensky's spies. First of all hidden in the suburbs of Petrograd, he lived for a time in a log cabin with a workman named Emelianov, then in a hut of branches in the depths of a forest; later, disguised as a locomotive fireman, he passed into Finland, where he found shelter at the home of a Finnish comrade, Rokis, formerly a workman in Petrograd. It was not until the end of September that Lenin succeeded in again re-entering Petrograd, where he stayed with a Bolshevik workman. And it was only on the eve of the insurrection that he could re-appear at Smolny.

These, then, were the circumstances in which Lenin never tired of explaining the coming armed clash of social forces, of exposing the Mensheviks' and Social-Revolutionaries' cowardly treachery, of pitilessly castigating any hesitation in the ranks of the Bolsheviks themselves, and of proving the inevitable necessity of the seizure of power. He himself was reduced to clandestine action and deprived of all immediate contact with the Party and the working masses, but that did not prevent him from appreciating, better than anyone else, the exact action called for by the political situation from day to day, and so making without any deviation towards the insurrection which concluded in the brilliant victory that autumn.

The problems that the Russian working class met with and, under the guidance of Lenin, solved during those months, are akin to the problems that the working class in every other country has also to prepare to face. Therein

¹ Translation copyright in all English-speaking countries. Arrangements are being made for its eventual publication in book form in Great Britain and America.

² English translation published in 1919 by Allen & Unwin, and by the British Socialist Party (London) and the Socialist Labour Press (Glasgow); now obtainable in the American Edition from the Communist Bookshop, 16 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C. 2. Price 1s.

³ The Labour Publishing Company, 1921. Price 1s. 6d.

—and not in any mere academic interest such as history can never have for a class in bondage or struggling for power—lies the historical significance to the workers of all Lenin's writings, and this applies in a very special way to *On the Road to Insurrection*, for there exists no other complete or comparable work of day-to-day studies of the practical strategical problems of an immediately imminent proletarian revolution; and without such understanding as is here found of the actual struggle for power no Marxism or Socialism is genuine.

Letter to the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour (Bolshevik) Party

END OF AUGUST, 1917.⁴

MAYBE these lines will arrive too late, for events are developing at a really giddy speed. However, I am taking the risk of writing them, for I consider it to be a duty.

The Kornilov rising⁵ is (at such a moment and in such a form) a formidable and, one might say, a really unbelievable dramatic stroke.

Like every sudden and complete change in the political outlook it demands a revision of our tactics. And, as in every revision, we must be more than careful not to fail our principles.

To admit the point of view of those who advocate national defence or even (like certain Bolsheviks) would go *to the extent of coalition* with the Social-Revolutionaries, in support of the Provisional Government, would be, I am deeply convinced, to fall into the grossest error and at the same time to prove an absolute lack of principle. We will not become partisans of national defence *until after* the seizure of power by the proletariat, *until after* the offer of peace, until after the secret treaties have been cancelled and relations with the banks broken. Neither the capture of Riga,⁶ nor the capture of Petrograd will make us partisans of national defence. Until the moment of the seizure of power by the proletariat, we are for the proletarian revolution, we are against the war, we are against the "defencists."

Even now, we must not support the revolution of Kerensky.

⁴ Old Russian calendar throughout.

⁵ Terminated, September 1, 1917, by the arrest of the principal participants at G.H.Q.

⁶ By the Germans, on August 21. The entire bourgeoisie drew therefrom arguments as to the need for a strong government, for the re-establishment of discipline in the army, &c., &c.

It would be a failure of principle. How then?, it will be said, Must Kornilov not be fought?—Certainly, yes. But between fighting Kornilov and supporting Kerensky there is a difference; there is a limit to all things, and that limit is passed by a few Bolsheviks when they fall for conciliation, and let themselves be *carried away* by the torrent of events.

We wage and shall continue to wage war on Kornilov, but we do not support Kerensky; we unveil his feebleness. There there is a difference. That difference is subtle enough, but most essential, and it must not be forgotten.

In what, then, does our change of tactics following on the Kornilov rising consist?

In this: that we modify the form of our struggle against Kerensky. Without diminishing, the least bit in the world, our hostility, without withdrawing a single one of the words we have pronounced against him, without renouncing our intention to beat him, we declare that consideration must be given to the circumstances of the moment, that we will not concern ourselves at the present with overthrowing Kerensky, that we will now conduct the struggle against him in another way by emphasising to the people (and it is the people who are engaged in fighting Kornilov) the *weakness* and *vacillations* of Kerensky. That we were already doing previously. But now it is this which comes to *the forefront of our plan of campaign*, and therein lies the change.

Another change: at this moment we place equally *in the forefront of our plan of campaign* the reinforcing of our agitation for what might be called "partial demands": Arrest Miliukoff, we say to Kerensky; arm the Petrograd workers; bring the troops from Cronstadt, from Vyborg and from Helsingfors to Petrograd; dissolve the Duma⁷; arrest Rodzianko; legalise the handing over of the big estates to the peasants; establish working-class control of cereals and manufactured products, &c. And it is not only to Kerensky that we should put these claims; it is not so much to Kerensky as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been *carried away* by the struggle against Kornilov. They must be carried further, they must be encouraged to demand the arrest

⁷ This demand was satisfied on October 6, but the others not until the October revolution.

of the generals and officers who side with Kornilov; we must insist that they immediately claim the land for the peasants, and we must suggest to them the necessity of arresting Rodzianko and Miliukoff, of dissolving the Imperial Duma, of closing down the *Rietch* and other bourgeois newspapers and bringing them before the courts. It is particularly the Left Social-Revolutionaries⁸ who must be pushed in this direction.

It would be erroneous to believe that we are turning away from our principal objective: the conquest of power by the proletariat. We have, on the contrary, got considerably nearer to it, but *indirectly*, by a flanking movement. And *we must at the very same moment* agitate against Kerensky—but let the agitation be *indirect* rather than direct—by insisting on an active war against Kornilov. Only the active development of that war can lead us to power, but of that we must *speak* as little as possible in our agitation (we keep it well in mind that even to-morrow events may compel us to take power, and that then we will not let it go). In my opinion, these points should be communicated in a letter (a private one) to our agitators, to our propagandists' training groups and schools, and to the members of the Party in general. As to the phrases about the defence of the country, about the single revolutionary battle line of revolutionary democracy, about support of the Provisional Government, &c., they must be mercilessly combated because they are nothing but *phrases*. Now is the time for *action*: these phrases, gentlemen of the Social-Revolutionary and the Menshevik parties, have already been too much depreciated by your use of them. Now is the time for action, we must wage the war against Kornilov as revolutionaries, carrying the masses with us, awakening them, inflaming them (and Kerensky *is afraid* of the masses, he is afraid of the people). It is precisely in the war against the Germans that action is now necessary: it is necessary *immediately and unreservedly to propose peace to them on definite terms*. If that is done, there will either be an early peace or else a revolutionary war;⁹ if not all the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries will remain the lackeys of imperialism.

⁸ Not then in existence as a separate Party, but as a tendency inside the Social-Revolutionary Party.

⁹ The Bolsheviks always opposed peace at any price. Lenin's thesis was exactly upheld by Kerensky's last Minister for War, Verkhovsky, whose resignation was demanded by the Allies.

Concerning Compromise

SEPTEMBER 3, 1917.

THE word compromise indicates in politics the renunciation, by virtue of an agreement with another party, of certain of one's claims. The idea that the crowd has of the Bolsheviks, and the idea promoted by the gutter-press, is that the Bolsheviks consent never and with no one to any compromise.

This idea flatters us, as well as a part of the revolutionary proletariat, for it proves that even our enemies are compelled to recognise our fidelity to the fundamental principles of Socialism and of the revolution. But, truth to say, this idea does not correspond to reality. Engels was right when in his criticism of the *Manifesto of the Blanquist Communists* (1873) he mocked the latter's declaration: "No Compromise!" That is but a phrase, said he, for it often happens that circumstances impose a compromise on a party in battle, and it is stupid to condemn oneself never "to accept payment of a debt by instalments." But the duty of a truly revolutionary party is not to proclaim an impossible renunciation of every sort of compromise, but to know throughout all compromises, in so far as such are inevitable, how to remain faithful to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary goal; to its duty of preparing for the revolution and of educating the mass whom it must lead to victory.

For instance, the fact of participating in the Third and Fourth Dumas was a compromise, a temporary abdication of revolutionary claims.¹⁰ But it was a compromise that had to be, for at that time the correlation of forces provisionally excluded the possibility of carrying on a mass struggle. To prepare for that struggle one had to know how to work inside that farmyard that was the Duma. History has shown that the Bolsheviks well understood the issue in this case.

We are at present concerned not with a compromise forced upon us, but with a voluntary compromise.

Our party, like every other party, aspires to political power. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat. Six months of revolution have confirmed with extraordinary exactitude, in the most forceful and startling manner, the justice and inevitability

¹⁰ Formerly opposed by a fraction of the Bolsheviks.

of that contention, precisely in the interests of the revolution. For without the dictatorship of the proletariat the people will be unable to obtain either a democratic peace, or the return of the land to the peasants, or complete liberty (that is to say, an entirely democratic republic). The march of events during these six months of revolution, the struggle of classes and of parties, the development of the crises of April 20-21,¹¹ of June 9-10,¹² of June 18-19¹³ and July 3-5,¹⁴ and of August 27-31,¹⁵ have shown and proved it.

We are now faced with such a sudden, such a surprising upheaval of the Russian revolution, that we are in a position as a Party to propose a voluntary compromise, not to the bourgeoisie, our direct and principal enemy, but to those adversaries who are nearer to us, to the petit bourgeois democratic parties in office, to the S.-R.'s and to the Mensheviks.

It is only by way of exception, it is only in virtue of a special situation which apparently will last a very short time, that we can propose a compromise to those parties, and that we ought, it seems to me, to do so.

What is a compromise to us is the return to our demand of before July: All power to the Soviets ! Formation of a Government of Social Revolutionaries and of Mensheviks responsible before the Soviets.

Now, and only now, during a few days, or perhaps one or two weeks, could such a Government be created and peacefully consolidated. It very much looks as if it could assure the peaceful *progression* of the revolution and would contribute to the progression of the world movement towards peace, towards the victory of Socialism. It is only for the sake of this peaceful develop-

¹¹ A crisis caused by a note in which Miliukoff, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, promised to the Allies to continue the war until guarantees (Constantinople, &c.) were obtained. It led to the retirement of Miliukoff, and the formation of the first Coalition Government of May 6.

¹² A demonstration, arranged for the tenth of June by the Central Bureau of Factory Committees and the Bolshevik Party, to protest against "industrial anarchy and lock-outs by the employers," had to be cancelled on the 10th, on account of the opposition of the Congress of Soviets then assembled.

¹³ On the 18th, the demonstration prepared by the opportunists changes into a triumph for the Bolshevik slogans : All Power to the Soviets ! Down with the Ten Capitalist Ministers ! Down with the political offensive ! On the 19th a bourgeois counter-demonstration took place.

¹⁴ A crisis caused by the resignation of the bourgeois ministers, leading to a spontaneous demonstration of the workers and soldiers that came under the direction of the Bolshevik Party, but was crushed by the Government which thenceforward gave itself over to reaction.

¹⁵ A stroke by Kornilov's Commander-in-Chief to get, with or without Kerensky, the military dictatorship.

ment of the revolution, it is only in order to profit from this precious possibility, such as is extremely rare in history, that the Bolsheviks, partisans of the world revolution and of revolutionary methods, could and should, in my opinion, agree to such a compromise. The substance of this compromise would be that without pretensions to participation in the Government (a participation impossible for an internationalist without the effective realisation of the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants) the Bolsheviks would renounce their demands for the immediate handing over of all power to the proletariat and the poor peasants, and their employment of revolutionary methods to achieve the triumph of the demand. On the other hand, the compromise would involve two conditions which require nothing new of the S.-R.'s and the Mensheviks, namely, absolute liberty of agitation and the calling of the Constituent Assembly at the fixed date, or even within a shorter period.

The Mensheviks and the S.-R.'s in their capacity as the Government bloc would consent (supposing the compromise to be accepted) to form a Government entirely and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, to whom would be handed over all the machinery of power.

Therein would lie the "new condition." The Bolsheviks, it seems to me, should impose no other condition, for they could count on the fact that the entire liberty of agitation and the immediate realisation of a new democratisation in the composition of the Soviets (which would be re-elected) and in their functioning would by themselves assure the peaceful progression of the revolution, the *peaceful cessation* of the conflict of parties within the Soviets.

Perhaps this is no longer possible? Perhaps. But even if there remains one chance in a hundred that chance makes an attempt worth while.

What would the two contracting parties, the Bolsheviks on one hand, and the Social-Revolutionary and Menshevik bloc on the other, gain by this "compromise"? If they gain nothing thereby the compromise is evidently impossible and accordingly useless to talk about. Whatever difficulty its realisation may now present (after July and August, two months equivalent to a score

of years of peaceable torpor), it seems to me that it is not yet quite impossible, and what makes me think this is the decision taken by the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks not to participate in the Government with the Cadets.¹⁶

The Bolsheviks will gain from this compromise in that they will secure the ability freely to propagate their point of view and the possibility of exercising their influence in the Soviets, thanks to the effective realisation of integral democracy. Nominally everyone already grants this freedom to the Bolsheviks. In fact, it is *impossible* under a bourgeois Government or under a Government in which the bourgeoisie joins, to wit, under any Government other than that of the Soviets. Under the Government of the Soviets this freedom would be *possible* (we do not say absolutely assured, but possible). Therefore, it is in order to try and realise this possibility that it would be convenient, at such a painful time, to make a compromise with the present majority in the Soviets. We have nothing to fear under a regime of genuine democracy, for life is on our side, and even the tendencies that are developing within the womb of the parties of an adversaries, the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks, will in time confirm the justice of our position.

The Mensheviks and the S.R.'s would gain by this compromise in the sense that they would obtain at one stroke the complete possibility of realising the programme of *their* bloc, by resting on the immense majority of the people and in assuring themselves of the ability to use "peacefully" their majority in the Soviets.

In this bloc, necessarily heterogeneous both as a coalition and because the petty bourgeois democracy is *always* less homogeneous than the bourgeoisie or the proletariat, two voices would, apparently, make themselves heard.

One would say: "Our path is neither with the Bolsheviks nor with the revolutionary proletariat. The latter's demands will be extravagant, and it will, by means of demagogue orations, drag the poor peasants in its wake. It will demand peace and a rupture with the Allies. And that is impossible. We are nearer to the bourgeoisie, with whom we have had a mild *quarrel*—a quarrel is

¹⁶ In fact on August 31 the Petrograd Soviet had voted by 279 to 115 with 51 abstentions against the participation of the Cadets (Liberals) in the Government: "The sole issue is the constitution of a Government formed of representatives of the proletariat and the peasant class."

not a rupture—over the Kornilov incident. We have quarrelled—well, we can make it up. Moreover, the Bolsheviks ‘concede’ us absolutely nothing, for all the insurrections that they’ll try will be totally crushed as was the Commune of 1871.”

The other voice will say: “To base one’s arguments on the Commune is to reason superficially and even sillily. For, first of all, the Bolsheviks have learned a little from the experience of their precursors of 1871: they will not fail to put their hand on the State Bank, nor will they hesitate to march on Versailles; and the Commune, had it done that, might have won through. Furthermore, the Commune could not immediately offer the people what the Bolsheviks can if they take power, that is to say: land to the peasants, the immediate proposal of peace, effective control of production, an honourable peace with the Ukrainians, the Finns, &c. The Bolsheviks, in common parlance, have ten times as many trumps in their hand as had the Commune. The Commune implies a painful period of civil war, a prolonged stoppage to civilisation’s peaceful development; it will facilitate the machinations of all sorts of MacMahons and Kornilovs, a grave danger to our bourgeois society. Is it reasonable to run the risk of the Commune?”

“But the Commune is inevitable in Russia, if our bloc does not take power, if the situation remains as it has done from May 6 to August 31. The spirit of every workman, of every revolutionary soldier will without fail turn towards the Commune, he will believe in it, he will attempt to achieve it. The people, he will say to himself, is perishing; war, famine, ruin are decimating its ranks more and more seriously as each day goes by. Only the Commune can save us. Let us sacrifice ourselves, let us all die if need be, but long live the Commune! These are the thoughts which will fatally come into the minds of all the workers, and the Commune to-day will not be so easy to defeat as in 1871. The Russian Commune will have throughout the whole world allies a hundred times more mighty than the Commune of Paris. Is it sensible to take the chance of the Commune? Moreover one could not say that the Bolsheviks are granting us nothing by their compromise. In all advanced countries intelligent ministers highly appreciate every accord, small as it may be, with the people during war. And, as these ministers are business men, genuine ministers, their

example is not to be disdained. Again, the Bolsheviks are rapidly becoming stronger, in spite of the repressions to which they are subjected and the feebleness of their Press. . . . Is it in these conditions reasonable to run the risk of the Commune ?

" We have our majority assured, the most impoverished sections of the peasant class will not stir for a long time yet; we have a good period of tranquillity before us; after that we shall see.

" It is improbable that in an essentially agricultural country the majority will follow the extreme elements. Therefore, in a truly democratic republic, insurrection against the recognised majority is an impossibility."

So will speak the second voice.

Perhaps, among the partisans of Martov or of Spiridonova¹⁷ there will be a third voice saying: " Comrades, I am genuinely indignant that, reasoning about the Commune and the possibilities of its realisation, you both of you range yourselves without hesitation on the side of its foes. In one form or another you are both on the side of those who crushed the Commune. I am not going to agitate for the Commune, I cannot promise in advance to fight in its ranks as every Bolshevik will do; nevertheless I must say that *if, in spite of* my efforts the Commune survives, I shall rather help its defenders than its foes. . . ."

The divergences in the bosom of the " bloc " are considerable and inevitable, for the democratic petty bourgeoisie includes a mass of *nuances*, from the bourgeois who would become a Minister to the flea-bitten bourgeois almost disposed to adopt the platform of the proletariat. And what, at one moment or another, will be the outcome of this clash of contrary views ? No one can tell.

* * * * *

The above lines were written on Friday last, September 1, but as a result of unforeseen circumstances (history will tell that under Kerensky not all Bolsheviks were free to choose their domicile where best it suited them), they did not reach the editorial offices on the same day. So, after reading Saturday's and Sunday's papers, I said to myself: I think it is already too late

¹⁷ Martov, Internationalist Social-Democrat, occupied with his group a place apart ; so did the Left Social-Revolutionaries, such as Marie Spiridonova.

to propose a compromise. The few days during which the peaceful development of events was still possible have already passed. Yes, everything points to this. By one way or another, Kerensky will leave the Social-Revolutionary Party and consolidate his position with the help of the bourgeois *without* the S.R.'s, thanks to their inaction¹⁸ . . . Yes, everything clearly shows that the days during which the possibility of setting forth on the path of peaceful development became by chance available have gone by beyond recall. There remains nothing to do but to send these notes to the editorial department accompanied by a request that they may be entitled "Belated Reflections"; even belated reflections are not, at times, without their uses.

(*To be continued.*)

¹⁸ On September 1, Kerensky actually formed his "Directory" with Tereschtchenko, and laid an interdict on the internationalist newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*; the Central Executive Committee convoked a packed "Democratic Conference" as a counter to the Congress of Soviets arranged for the end of September. The Social-Revolutionary and Social-Democratic ministers Zarondny, Avxentiev and Skobelev resigned.

The World of Labour

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INTERNATIONAL

Transport Workers' Congress¹

THE Fourth Congress of the International Transport Workers' Federation opened at Hamburg on August 7. There were 114 delegates, representing forty organisations from twenty-six countries, with a membership of 2,010,807. The total membership of the I.T.F. is returned at 2,078,223.

The Russian Transport Unions were not invited to the Congress, in spite of the famous united front agreement between them and the I.T.F. which was reached at the Berlin Conference in May, 1923.²

In his presidential address, Robert Williams strongly criticised the Dawes Report, and he was followed by Edo Fimmen, the Secretary, who read a long report on the international situation. Fimmen also declared decisively against the Experts' Report, the Versailles Treaty and the whole reparations policy, and stressed the importance of the Trade Union and working-class movement taking its stand rigidly on the basis of the class struggle.

Fimmen's report gave rise to a prolonged discussion, as a result of which a compromise resolution was passed by 1,780,384 votes against 52,200 with 263,014 abstentions.

In this resolution the Congress, while—

realising fully the claims of France and Belgium for the restoration of their devastated areas, desires to point out the inevitable results of forcing upon Germany such reparation demands as will compel a further worsening of the conditions of the German proletariat and will threaten a departure from the eight-hour day.

On the Experts' Report the Congress made the following declarations :—

Standing as we do for the socialisation of the Means of Transport, we emphatically protest against the sinister proposals to denationalise the well-

¹ This note is based on the official *Press Report* of the I.T.F.

² THE LABOUR MONTHLY, August, 1923, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 118-122.

organised German State Railways and to place them under the control of alien capitalists.

We realised that payments of the sums suggested by the Dawes Report will provide reasons for German capitalists, closely allied and in co-operation with Allied capitalists, to demand the cancellation of the eight-hour day in Germany, as the first step, afterwards to be extended to Allied and neutral countries.

We are of the opinion that in all countries the burden of paying for the cost of the war should be placed on those responsible for the war, namely, the capitalist, financier and landlord class.

The opposition to this resolution was headed by the French delegates, who objected particularly to a clause declaring against the view that Germany alone was responsible for the imperialist war. M. Bidegaray (French railwaymen—reformist C.G.T.) is credited with the remark that the war guilt was Germany's alone, and Germany must pay everything, "*even at the cost of a lengthened working day for the German worker.*" It is reported that these remarks roused the ire of the British delegation, one of whom properly stigmatised them as in the true Poincaré vein.

In view of M. Bidegaray's support of the denationalisation of the German railways under the Dawes Report, it is worthy of note that he was the proposer of the resolution on the Socialisation of the Means of Transport, which was carried unanimously: this resolution expressly stated that the I.T.F.

requires its affiliated organisations to oppose in every way the transfer to private enterprise of transport systems at present run by the State.

The French Seamen's Union presented a resolution on the United States of Europe and the German Traffic Union a resolution on the eight-hour day (demanding the ratification of the Washington Convention), both of which were passed unanimously.

M. Jouhaux, fraternal delegate of the International Federation of Trade Unions, delivered himself of the oracular remark that :—

The working class, if it would follow up its work for peace which is alone of any significance and which alone subserves the general interest—forgotten by capitalism—it must rally to its international organisations all those who wish to be free men in a free world.

On the fourth day the Congress divided into separate meetings of Seamen, Railwaymen, Dockers, Road Transport Workers, &c., which considered their own particular problems and reported back to the Congress.

As was to be expected, the left-wing attitude of Fimmen was called in question by the French and German delegations. They declared themselves in favour of his re-election as Secretary on condition that he always acted in accordance with the instructions of the Executive Committee.

In reply Fimmen admitted that recently he had not always followed the path desired by the Executive Committee, but that he was prepared to make every effort to avoid a repetition of such incidents. Nevertheless, he demanded the right to express his personal opinion, which he defined as follows :—

From an organic point of view I consider our International to be a really unique organisation. I have much to criticise. I believe that we must move

to the Left and that the reproaches which certain non-affiliated organisations have made concerning us are well founded. I am and shall always be of opinion that, in the interests of the working class, we must unite if we wish to accomplish our task. This is what I am fighting for, and it is for this reason that I require my freedom of movement.

The Congress accepted this explanation.

It is very noticeable, however, that despite Fimmen's personal desire for the unity of the international Trade Union movement, the Congress took no steps whatever for the realisation of that unity, as the non-invitation of the Russian Unions shows. This is the more strange in that Melnichansky, one of the leaders of the Russian Transport Union, has stated that his Union was recently informed by the I.T.F. that the question of inviting them would be one of the items on the Congress Agenda.

Building Workers' Congress

THE Sixth Ordinary Congress of the International Union of Building Workers was held at Stockholm on June 24-25. The total membership is returned as 946,073.

The chief controversial question was the proposed admission of the Russian Building Workers. This was supported by Great Britain, Switzerland and Czecho-Slovakia, and opposed notably by Belgium and Holland.

Eventually admission was refused, by 10 votes to 3, on the grounds that the Russian Union had not fulfilled the promises they made to the previous congress.

Metal Workers' Congress

The principal discussion at this congress, which took place at Vienna in July, arose on the question of the eight-hour day. A number of reports were presented showing that metal workers in many countries were being forced to work longer hours: a German delegate stated that over 50 per cent. of the German metal workers were working more than forty-eight hours a week.

A resolution was passed calling for the defence of the eight-hour day, and urging all affiliated unions to bring pressure on their Governments to secure the ratification of the Washington Convention.

After hearing a representative of the Russian Metal Workers' Union, who declared that the Russian Union was prepared to abide by all the rules of the International, the congress decided that a special conference should be called to settle this question.

Miners' Congress

The 27th Ordinary Congress of the International Miners' Federation was held at Prague from August 4-9.

The *Press Service* of the International Federation of Trade Unions gives

the following approximate figures, comparing the present membership of several constituent unions with that of two years ago:—

	1922	1924
Austria	30,000	20,000
Belgium	98,000	80,000
Czecho-Slovakia	116,000	70,000
France	100,000	80,000
Germany	460,000	249,000
Great Britain	800,000	800,000
Holland	2,500	2,000
Hungary	17,000	18,500
Luxemburg	2,000	—
Poland	—	45,000
Roumania	—	11,500
Spain	—	15,000
United States	500,000	600,000
Jugo-Slavia	300	1,000

The congress agreed unanimously to a demand for a legal minimum wage for miners of all countries. The British delegation appealed to those countries which had longer hours to shorten the working day. With regard to anti-war activity the French delegation proposed a twenty-four-hours' protest strike against war, should it break out: this was dropped, and it was finally decided that, if war was threatened, the Miners' International Committee should at once be summoned to take "practical steps."

The Russian Miners' Union, which made its fifth application in three years, was refused admission.

Textile Workers' Congress

This Congress met at Vienna on August 18. Thirteen countries were represented by ninety-one delegates.

The usual eight-hour day Washington Convention resolution was passed, after the Continental delegates had drawn a grim picture of the longer hours that were being worked, *e.g.*, in Germany, Hungary, Italy, Holland. The congress expressed itself in favour of Free Trade.

Without discussion the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

The Russian textile workers cannot be admitted to the International Association of Textile Workers until unity has been established between the I.F.T.U. and the Red International of Labour Unions and the latter body has affiliated to the I.F.T.U.

BOOK REVIEWS

DOES INTERNATIONAL CAPITALISM EXIST?

Labour's Alternative: The United States of Europe or Europe Limited. By Edo Fimmen. (Labour Publishing Company. Paper, 1s. 6d.)

THIS little book revolves round a simple thesis: the author is seeking to point the moral of international working-class solidarity (*organised* solidarity) by demonstrating the growing unity of the forces of "international capitalism." Now the urgency of the moral no one will question; and Fimmen himself has shown, in his Herculean struggle within the Amsterdam International for international trade union unity, that he is striving with all his power to translate the word into deed.

What calls for very serious question, however, is the truthfulness of this concept of "international capitalism," the "international bourgeoisie," &c.

Now it must be stated quite clearly that in the loose sense in which the terms are commonly employed there is no such thing as *international* capitalism, the *international* bourgeoisie, *international* finance.

We live in the period of imperialism, the final stage of capitalism: and the salient fact of post-war capitalist development has been, not, as Fimmen suggests, the wiping out of imperialist conflict, but its intensification. This intensification of the conflict between the great imperialist groups (England, France, America, Japan) is none the less real for the thrusting of new forms on it by historical circumstances.

In his articles in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, H. P. Rathbone exposed very clearly the fundamental conflict between British and American imperialism in the Argentine and in Canada. The titanic struggle between the oil trusts—Royal Dutch-Shell (British imperialism) against Standard Oil (American imperialism)—is common knowledge.

Take the most spectacular example of all—the Reparations question. Can it be seriously supposed that if capitalism were really "international" all the years since the Armistice and since Versailles would have been spent in that endless series of conferences, alarms and excursions? No, the story of Reparations is the story of imperialist conflict.

It is a conflict that, with the adoption of the Dawes Report, has resulted in the victory of Anglo-American imperialism—with American imperialism the dominant factor—over French imperialism. There is as much "international agreement" about the present Reparations "settlement" as there is in the dictation of terms by a victorious State to its vanquished enemy after a long and bitter war.

Yet Fimmen can say that the capitalists of all lands—

have renounced the idea of expansion at the cost of rival capitalist groups. They have renounced the old imperialist aim, in pursuit of which one section of the bourgeoisie hoped to raise itself to the detriment of other sections.

The facts already quoted are sufficient to show that this statement is manifestly untrue.

Again, Fimmen quotes the formation of the "International Bank in Amsterdam" in February of this year as an example of the "internationalisation" of capital. It was, of course, nothing of the sort: it was founded under the dominant influence of British imperialist finance-capital (Kleinworts and the Westminster Bank) for the purpose of exporting capital to Germany, *i.e.*, the imperialist exploitation, the colonisation of Germany.

Further, Fimmen declares that "the colonies are favourite sites for the concentration of international capital." Now it may be the case that capital of various "nationalities" participates, say, in the exploitation of oil-deposits in the East Indies, or rubber in the Malay States, or cotton in the Sudan, or the construction of a railway to open up a Chinese province. But in every such instance we find that there is a dominant factor—the imperialist finance-capital of one of the great imperialist groups.

The pre-war international cartels may be likened to the diplomatic relations that subsist between States in time of peace: they in no way affected fundamental antagonisms, they represented the "Balance of Power" at the particular moment. That is all. The war transformed the struggle between the imperialist trusts from the "diplomatic" stage of the international cartel to the open armed struggle.

To sum up: all this vague talk about "international capitalism" loses sight of the outstanding fact of contemporary capitalist development—the struggle between the great imperialist groups, a struggle which is now clearly leading to a new imperialist war, a struggle which, viewed dialectically, equally clearly bears within itself the germs of the world revolution. In this struggle are involved the satellites of the great imperialist groups (Belgium, Holland, Spain, the Scandinavian countries, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, the Balkan States, &c)—which may in fact be considered as semi-colonial countries—as well as the colonial countries proper.

Fimmen's thesis is, therefore, incorrect. And from this theoretical error the gravest practical mistakes may ensue.

A great part of Lenin's writings was devoted to the exposition of the fact that the distortion and falsification of the theories of Marx by Kautsky and the Social-Democrats generally led fatally to opportunism, to a united front with the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary working class. The same danger may be discerned with Fimmen, as with all those would-be Marxists, notably in England, who have been wont to write so glibly about "international capitalism," "international finance," &c.

The cloven hoof can be clearly seen when Fimmen writes:—

Merely through class instinct, the bourgeois in every land are inclined to come to the help of their classmates all over the world whenever bourgeois privileges are threatened. But now, thanks to the international mingling of capital, an additional motive has come into play. Even apart from class instinct and the general working of class interest, the immediate interest of a proprietary caste makes it impossible for the bourgeoisie to tolerate an economic revolution even within the boundaries of a single land. A successful proletarian revolution leads to the expropriation by the revolutionary proletariat, not only of the bourgeoisie in the land where the revolution has occurred, but also of the international bourgeoisie. . . . Every economic revolution, therefore, will

summon into the arena the capitalists and the governments of all bourgeois States throughout the world.

This statement, for all Fimmen's attempt to use it as a cogent argument for a better international organisation of the working class, is instinct with defeatism. It is analogous to Kautsky's theory (advanced in 1915) of the development of a "supra-imperialism" or "ultra-imperialism"—which was simply an attempt to screen his own bankruptcy as a "revolutionary Marxist," and which was thoroughly shattered by Lenin in *The Collapse of the Second International*. It bears a most remarkable resemblance to the theory advanced by Bertrand Russell in 1922—at the height of his anti-Bolshevik campaign—that a great "international financial consortium" was in process of formation which would effectively destroy all chances of the proletarian revolution for many, many years to come.

It is the argument that the fainthearts and the doubting Thomases might have been heard muttering during the German crisis last year—that the proletarian revolution could not succeed in Germany because of "inevitable" Allied intervention. It is an argument that, carried to its logical conclusion, would postpone the revolution to the coming of the coquecigrues. That is to say, it is a fundamentally counter-revolutionary argument.

As for Fimmen's proposals for a re-organisation of the international Trade Union movement on the basis of powerful industrial Internationals rederated into some new all-inclusive Trade Union International—they are naturally vitiated by this fatal flaw in his theoretical analysis. In any case the Trade Unions, however re-organised, nationally or internationally, cannot alone lead the working class to the seizure of power. And Fimmen has no word to say of the revolutionary working-class party, the International Party, of which this is the historical task.

G. A. H.

A SENSE OF PROPORTION

History of Political Thought. By Raymond G. Gettel, Professor of Political Science in the University of California. (Allen & Unwin. 18s.)

This is a work of 511 pages. The section entitled "Bolshevism" is one and a half pages.

A. E. E. R.

HISTORY FOR THE WORKERS

The Industrial Revolution in South Wales. By Ness Edwards. (The Labour Publishing Company. 4s. 6d. cloth, 2s. 6d. paper.)

MARX set the fashion in social history, and after he had plundered the stores of official documents, economic writings and statistics to build up a true conception of how and why society existed, the old rignarole of political, military, constitutional and ecclesiastical history was exposed as the jaded surface work that it was.

The ground he opened up was soon trodden by bourgeois intellectuals, glad to get new material to write up or eager to prove some present-day policy or to satisfy some soul attitude. A steady stream of economic or social history studies poured forth. And when the workers began to ask for knowledge of their lives and of the lives of their ancestors this tap was turned on, till a smattering of manorial organisation, or the cotton wheel, or the new model A.S.E. became the *sine qua non* of a modern trade union official. This was an important fact in determining working-class policy, for history, especially "social history," however it is written, teaches political strategy for to-day; it supplied the ideological background for imperialism (Knowles) or Fabianism (Webb) or social democracy (Hammond) or Tory democracy (Fay), for any and everything except for the creation of a working-class outlook.

Yet it was for this that Marx had used history and, as the working-class revolt gathered, it was for this that workers again turned to history. Then a new danger was presented. Marxism began and ended as a syllogism, to be found in the Appendix and Introduction. But the old bourgeois material, grouped in much the same way, even emphasised in much the same way would be trotted out to fill the book. What should have been a living, elastic interpretation became a theory sandwiching the product of bourgeois intellectualism. To re-write history with Marxism as the guiding thread, putting every incident and movement in its proper place, is the job of working-class historians, which, fortunately, they are beginning to carry out.

Ness Edwards has made a not unsuccessful effort to do it for one part of the country and for a certain limited period. He deals with the South Wales industrial area, at the time of the coming of the "big industry," say between 1760 and 1830. He is open to some criticism for not making clearer, by bringing out the differences between industrial conditions then and now, the big changes in industrial technique since that date. But the period serves as an admirable species exhibit of the development of class struggle in relation to economic change.

Edwards describes the composition of the new classes; he shows that the capitalists were largely a section of the old merchant capitalists or industrialists from elsewhere in search of cheap labour or material. He might have expanded this part and also given some more details of the lives of these men. An estimate of the profits made in the period would also be valuable. The workers were flung into the new mines and factories from all places. For the most part they were migrants, especially Irish; in fact, one rather gets the impression that a Welshman from South Wales is a mythical personage. The conditions in which they lived and worked were ghastly; Edwards describes them at some length, using the blue books written by the first of the bourgeoisie to notice that, as a class, they could not afford to slaughter all the workers.

The class struggles of the period were double-edged, of the capitalists and the workers against the landed classes with their semi-feudal order and of the workers against the capitalists. Thus the owners who are out to advocate "every species of reform" and are grieved because Merthyr as "the centre of important speculations and of great trade" has not got as much political power as a few huts (p. 78) tolerate the building of houses with one w.c. for 50 or 100 persons, make hay of the anti-truck laws and meet applications for increases

of wages with troops. And the workers who at one moment threaten "every one who was an enemy to Reform should be hung on the gallows" (p. 77) are then next driven to rush the soldiers under the leadership of "Lewis the Huntsman" exclaiming:—

We are met, boys, to have our wages raised, instead of which the masters have brought the soldiers against us. Now, boys, if you are of the same mind as I am, let us fall upon them and take their arms away. (P. 80.)

The story of the class struggle should, it might be suggested, be carried on up till the end of the Chartist period, instead of to 1833; Chartism ended, and at the same time summed up and clarified, the epoch of working-class revolt dealt with here. It was a period of experiment and report, but there is no reason for Ness Edwards' attitude of depreciation and apology for the workers. In heroism and effort they set a tradition which should still be an inspiration to the Welsh workers.

These faults apart, which indicate, especially the question of date, that Edwards has not yet quite escaped the bourgeois habit, the book is an effort to be recommended.

H.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- The Co-operative Movement.* By John Hamilton, Chairman of Executive, National Council of Labour Colleges. (The Plebs League. 6d.)
- The Comitadji Question in Southern Serbia.* By R. A. Reiss, D.Sc. (The Author.)
- The Fascisti Exposed; A Year of Fascist Domination.* By the late Giacomo Matteotti. Translated by E. W. Dickes. (I.L.P. 2s. 6d.)
- Social Legislation.* By J. Oudegeest (Secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions). With a Memorandum on the Position of Social Legislation since the War. (I.F.T.U., Amsterdam.)
- A Searchlight on the European War.* By C. H. Norman. (Labour Publishing Company. 6s.)
- The Operative Builder.* Vol. III, No. 4, September, 1924. (National Federation of Building Trade Operatives. 6d.)
- Fascism.* By L. W. (The Plebs League. 6d.)
- Family Limitation.* Handbook for Working Mothers. By Margaret Sanger. With a Foreword by Leonora Eyles. (Rose Witcop, 6d.)
- Die Arbeit.* A Monthly Journal of Trade Unionism and Economics, edited by Th. Leipart. Vol. I, No. 1, July 15, 1924. (Publishing Company of the General Federation of German Trade Unions, Berlin.)
- Labor 1924 Annual.* Vol. V, No. 1, September 1, 1924. (*Alberta Labor News*, Edmonton, Alta. \$1.00.)
- Irish Transport & General Workers' Union Annual Report for 1923.* (Dublin. 1d.)
- The Fife Miners' Union Split.* (Mineworkers' Reform Union.)
- Legal and Economic Conditions of Industrial and Commercial Activity in Soviet Russia.* By P. Apostol, Count W. N. Kokovtsoff, Charles Miller, Prof. A. Michelson, Prof. P. Gronsky, Prof. M. Bernatzky, A. Miller, and Prof. P. Pilenko. (J. Povolozky & Compagnie, Paris; London: P. S. King & Son. 3s. 6d.)
- Education.* A Medley in Four Acts. By Frank J. Adkins. (Allen & Unwin. 2s. 6d.)
- Die Front, 1918-1919.* By Larissa Reissner. (Verlag für Literatur und Politik, Vienna.)
- Civil Service Confederation Third Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, 1923-1924.*
- Six Months of Labour Government. A Reply to the Unionist Publication entitled "Five Months of Socialist Government."* (I.L.P. Information Committee. 2d.)

- The Workers and the Anglo-Russian Treaty: Why the Treaty must be Ratified.* By A. A. Purcell, M.P. (Chairman of the Trades Union Congress) and E. D. Morel, M.P. (Editor of *Foreign Affairs*). (Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee. 1d.)
- A Practical Policy for Unemployment.* Weekly Notes for Speakers, No. 261. (I.L.P. Information Committee. 2d.)
- Russia in 1924.* By William Z. Foster. (Trade Union Educational League, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A. 10 cents.)
- The Law or the Spirit.* By Gilbert T. Sadler, M.A., LL.B. (The St. Catherine Press. 1s.)
- Sat Sri Akal. The Struggle for Freedom of Religious Worship in Jaito.* By Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsat. (Swarajya Press, Madras.)

*A memoir of Anatole France
by Henri Barbusse has been
written for "The Labour
Monthly" and will appear in
our next issue (December).*



Subscription form on last page of this issue.



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NOTES of the MONTH

*Class Politics—Exit the Tiger Tamer—The Ass's Kick—Religious
Consolations—A Tell-tale Minister—Prolonging Capitalism—
Burying the Past—Labour in "Opposition" ?—Counter-
Revolutionaries Still—Where is the Left ?—Gentle-
men All—"Liberalising Labour"—What is
"Independent Working-class Politics" ?
—Communism*

Had that Labour Government been allowed to proceed, it would have produced a greater amount of content among the toiling multitude and it would have established capitalism longer than it is likely to exist now.—JOHN WHEATLEY at Glasgow "Victory Rally." *The Times*, November 3, 1924 (omitted in *Daily Herald* report).

CLASS politics are now established in Britain in the most open form. A compact bourgeois Government of counter-revolution, established on the single formula of uniting all bourgeois forces against the working class, faces a working class angry and indignant at the sense of being "tricked" by the mockeries of a democratic system which allows the bourgeois machine to sweep an election by its unchecked control and produce an overwhelming Conservative majority on a minority vote. Both sides know they are enemies ; both sides know that the struggle is not ended by the artificial parliamentary majority. A heavy capitalist offensive threatens the workers ; big conflicts loom ahead, at home, in the colonies and in Europe. The class issue has overpowered every other issue, and reduced the official Labour Party leaders, who lived on its denial, to stammering incoherence. Never before have the "two nations" been so clearly marked out. The fig-leaf of "national unity" has been torn to shreds. The Union Jack and the Red Flag confront one another as the symbols of opposing armies.

THE golden palace of dreams, which MacDonald held before the workers, of "conciliation" and a "new spirit," has vanished into thin air with a turn of the wand. The bourgeois tiger has not forgotten its claws under the eloquence of a MacDonald. So long as that eloquence served the

purpose of charming the prey into quiet submission, MacDonald was allowed to play his little rôle amidst contemptuous tolerance, and strut with pride as the invincible tiger-tamer—"all done by kindness." But so soon as the workers began to stir, out came the claws, and—exit MacDonald. He was revealed as not quite such a hero, when it came to a fight with the tiger; and the election experience displayed a picture which the working-class movement will not remember with pleasure. A flood of light on the meaning of it all began to break in. It became clear that all his "ideals" had only smoothed the way for the bourgeoisie—here to put the noose on the necks of the German workers and prepare the capitalist offensive in England, there to sanctify repression and terror in India, there to divide the Russian and British workers, there to split the working-class movement at home. When he had served his purpose he was thrown aside like a used-up rag, just as Henderson was thrown aside, just as every instrument of capitalism is thrown aside when its immediate utility is passed—until next time. The workers may now count their gains from the "civilised" methods of advance advocated for them by MacDonald without any of the unpleasantness of the class struggle. The MacDonald Labour Government, which was hailed by all the supporters of the Second International as a "bloodless revolution" and the opening of a new period for the working class, has ended in—and actually smoothed the way for—the strongest and most open Government of bourgeois class dictatorship in modern British history.

"**T**HE living ass will kick the dying lion." After MacDonald is down, all those who had nothing but praise and servility while he was up, and suppressed all criticism while criticism would have needed courage and been of value, hasten to impart their little kick. "The chief fault of the Ministry," declared the *Daily Herald* within a few days of its decease, "was a tendency to be more official than the politicians of the old parties, and an anxiety on the part of a good many to prove that a Labour Government was no different from any other. That was certainly a mistake." True, O sage. But why not have pointed it out when it would have been of some use and when the

Communist Party was alone in holding up the working-class banner? The *New Leader* is even more downright. "Our period of office," it declares, "ends with moral breakdown in two directions. Our Government has prepared the way for Tory coercion in India and for a Tory quarrel with Russia." And after a passing reference to the Secret Service, "for whose existence there is no excuse in time of peace" (the *Daily Herald* also ostentatiously denounces the Secret Service *after* the Labour Government, which protected it against the Communist attack, is gone: "I doubt if Ministers have been allowed to know one-tenth of the truth about its organisation and its activities"—no doubt; but in that case why not have had the kindness to enlighten them while they were still Ministers?), the I.L.P. organ goes on to declare:—

It was no part of our strategy for winning power to court the confidence of the middle class by seeming to be as sound Imperialists as Liberals and Tories are. The sudden revelation of an ugly and costly blunder has lit up the road for us and shown us our peril. *With or without leaders*, untrammelled by a record which we disavow, let us renounce tactics and struggle to be ourselves.

Brave words—if they had been spoken six months ago. But now, when the milk is spilt, the writer must excuse us if we inquire a little more closely into what he has to offer for the present period, before we let him lead us astray again.

EVEN the Chairman of the I.L.P. contributes his share, although thickly clothed with apologetic considerateness for "the leaders whom I love." "I cannot believe the leaders whom I love will misunderstand me" (they will not); but he does feel that "we wriggled a little over unemployment," that the electoral tactics have produced "a slight setback morally," that it was a mistake to talk "electoral nonsense about ex-soldiers with no feet," that "we" revealed "a capitalist attitude to power and freedom" and an "orthodox attitude to power in India and the East," and that "if Labour should ever fail as a Government, it will be in accordance with the degree to which it succumbs to the love of power." In fact, let the dog return to his vomit; the soulful idealists cannot safely return to their spiritual spotlessness, leaving behind their little bout of imperialist realpolitik ("as

sound imperialists as Liberals and Tories are"), with its unpleasant memories of air-bombing, gunboats to China, &c., concealed under a veil of pained disapproval ("Succumbed to the love of power," my dear), and wallow once again in the purity of their souls—until the next bout, when the longed-for moment comes of receiving once again the rudder of the British Empire, spiritual idealism goes back into cold storage, and action at the head of the capitalist State inevitably follows precisely the same lines as before. Truly, of all the poisons which capitalism employs to enslave the working class, the most besotting (especially for the English working class, long soaked in the traditions of bourgeois religion in its most hypocritical and canting form) is the cheap, spurious "idealism" which canalises off all the healthy natural disgust with capitalist imperialism into pious "ideal" channels, and refuses to make any actual break with capitalist imperialism. Compared with this, the brute jingoism of the sensation Press is a foe easy to overcome.

BUT indeed even the ex-Ministers themselves begin to come out with more or less open repudiations of the Labour Ministry. Mr. Wheatley draws as a moral from the election that "a timid 'statesmanlike' attitude makes no appeal to a people struggling to emancipate itself from poverty." This admission is certainly in very striking contrast to the official Labour propaganda that identification with Communism had frightened off the naturally conservative masses. Perhaps it is even in contrast to Mr. Wheatley's own Election Address that "Labour's nine months of office must rank among the greatest events in Britain. For the first time men drawn from the ranks of the common people have been entrusted with the administration of great Departments of State and the destinies of the Empire, and it is generally admitted they have been a complete success." But on another occasion Mr. Wheatley made an even more definite statement, of which it is doubtful whether he himself realised the full force, or it would have led him to a very different conclusion. He said:—

Capitalism in its very nature is too selfish to make sacrifices of even an infinitesimal character in order to preserve its existence. Had

that Labour Government been allowed to proceed, it would have produced a greater amount of content among the toiling multitude, and it would have established capitalism longer than it is likely to exist now.

That sentence deserves to stand as the epitaph of the Labour Government. It is to be hoped that every reader of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* will study it carefully and think out all that it implies and the conclusions to which it leads.

WHAT does it mean? For nine months the Labour Government was proclaimed to the workers by the whole official Labour propaganda as the leader of the advance against capitalism towards Socialism. The Communists were absolutely alone (not a single representative leader dared associate himself in public with their position) in denying this and warning the working class of the danger of this illusion. And now, when it is all over, a leading Labour Cabinet Minister comes forward and declares that the Communist criticism was correct. For in what did the Communist criticism consist? Was there anything worse said of the Labour Government by the Communists than what is here said by one of its own members? The Communist criticism consisted in this, that they declared the Labour Government of MacDonalld to be in fact an instrument of capitalism; not an instrument of the working class against capitalism for lessening its power and shortening its life, but an instrument of capitalism against the working class, for strengthening the power of capitalism and prolonging its life. And what does Mr. Wheatley say? He says that "had the Labour Government been allowed to proceed . . . it would have established capitalism longer." But for what purpose does he say it? Does he say it in criticism of the Labour Government? Does he draw the conclusion that the policy of the Labour Government was a mistake, since it is presumably not the object of the working class to prolong the life of capitalism, and that it is therefore necessary to revise the whole policy? Does he find it necessary to revise his own position, or withdraw any of his own expressions ("greatest events in Britain . . . destinies of the Empire . . . complete success")? Nothing of the kind. He is simply making one of the usual Labour Ministry's appeals

to the bourgeoisie, to show what faithful servants they really were and how short-sighted and ungrateful it was to turn them out. And this from the principal representative of the "Left" in the Labour Ministry. Could there be a clearer revelation of how tremendous a change is needed if there is to be a real new leadership of the working class in Britain ?

I.L.P. readers will remember an experience that was familiar to them after the war. During the war the I.L.P. spent its main energies in combating the orthodox view of the diplomatic origins of the war, and in face of its recital of very plain facts, found itself met with boycott and disapproval in all "respectable" quarters of the bourgeoisie and the Labour Party. After the war these same facts suddenly began to be admitted on all sides in the most casual and careless manner. Not only Henderson, Clynes, &c., suddenly became "converted" about the war, when it was necessary to be in Opposition—so that to-day the official Labour organ can declare that the masses were "humbugged" into the war (by whom?). But also Austen Chamberlain, Foreign Secretary, can declare that, had the Foreign Office declared its secret commitments to France and Russia, there would have been no war; and Lloyd George, the fervid denouncer of the "cold and calculated conspiracy," could declare that the nations "stumbled" into war. But somehow these "admissions" were empty of any value or significance. The same old imperialist policy was carried on by Lloyd George and Chamberlain (and, for that matter, by Henderson and Clynes). The "admissions" could easily be made, because the issue was a past one. And what matters is the present policy: the correct understanding of the past is only important as a means to correct action in the present. As the facts of the past become clearer, it is necessary to weave a picture round them in order to conceal the fact that the present policy is the same. "We were not correctly informed at the time of all the facts." Such is the stale old plea, the refuge of Henderson, Clynes and the official Labour Party, if pressed on their policy in the war; concealing the fact that they were simply pursuing the same policy as now, of running after the heels of bourgeois foreign policy, and did not want to know the facts. The same process is

now taking place with regard to the Labour Government. A picture is being woven. Some Ministers "succumbed to temptation" (and which of us, as Mr. Hamilton Fyfe would hasten to say, can be sure that we might not also succumb in their place?) Even a little dirt is to be allowed to stick to MacDonald. And so the whole tremendous significance of the Labour Government for the working class is covered up, and the fact is concealed that the Labour Party is pursuing precisely the same policy to-day in a yet more dangerous form as a "loyal Opposition," and leading the working class to precisely the same conclusion.

FOR what is the policy of the Labour Party to-day? The policy of the Labour Party to-day is to await as a loyal constitutional Opposition in Parliament the turn of the parliamentary wheel in five years' time to bring office and an independent majority. What does this mean in practice? The Baldwin Government is based on an absolute parliamentary majority. This means that for four years the bourgeoisie can "constitutionally" do what it likes to the working class, at home and abroad, against the Soviet Union, against the masses in India, against the German workers, against the Communist Party and the trade unions, and the Labour Party must loyally accept every measure, once passed, and actually help to *impose* it on the working class by counselling the workers to accept quietly, and by actively opposing and combating any attempt at working-class resistance. Thus the rôle of the Labour Party in the present period becomes to act as the agent and adjutant of the Baldwin-Curzon-Churchill Government. Fascism in practice has only to take on the robes of the magic "constitution" in name to become the accepted of the Labour Party. Had the British bourgeoisie chosen to spend their money like the Italian on an inflammatory national campaign, hired bands and a march on Rome, the resulting Government would have been "undemocratic." But because the British bourgeoisie spent their money instead on the safer and relatively cheaper devices of an inflammatory national campaign through their already existing poison Press, and a few electoral stunts and fireworks (very inexpensively produced through the State-paid bureaucratic apparatus), the resulting Government

of exactly the same colour is "democratic." As always, whenever the automatic bourgeois result comes out of the bourgeois democratic voting machine, and the poor hopeful Social Democrat has lost another penny, there is always some "special circumstance" to explain it to him and to maintain his hopes. It is always an "accident," or "foul play," or the "power of the Press," or "money and motor cars," or "the wickedness of Mr. Lloyd George," or "war fever," or "the inequalities of the electoral system," or "plots and conspiracies" and all the rest of it: but never what it is—the normal working of the machine of bourgeois dictatorship through the hypocritical forms of bourgeois democracy.

JUST as the Labour Government was forced, whatever the personal feelings of its members—pacifists, idealists, Quakers, Catholics, Baptists, Freemasons and Higher Ethicists—because they were not ready to base themselves on the working class, that is, to be a revolutionary Government, therefore they were forced to base themselves on the bourgeoisie, there being no between-policy, and carry out the dirtiest imperialist, militarist and secret police functions for the bourgeoisie; just as the Labour leaders in the election were driven by the skilful bourgeois campaign ("either for us or against us," "either Bolsheviks or Counter-Revolutionaries") to divorce themselves from the workers and proclaim only their devotion to the bourgeoisie, drive out the revolutionary workers, proclaim themselves as the strongest bulwark against a Socialist revolution, provide by their own corruption the dirtiest arguments to the bourgeoisie against the working class, link up openly with the Counter-Revolution, and in every way disorganise and confuse the working-class front in the electoral fight far more effectively than the bourgeoisie could have done directly—a situation only receiving its final and symbolic illustration in the episode of the Zinoviev forgery, revealing the Counter-Revolutionary United Front of MacDonald and the White Guards in the very crisis of the electoral struggle and reducing even his own colleagues and Ministers to contradiction and confusion—just in precisely the same way, and for the same reasons, namely, that they refuse to recognise the class struggle of the workers and are therefore compelled to line up with the

bourgeoisie, the rôle of the Labour Party lead in the present period becomes to act as go-betweens for the Tory Baldwin Government with the working class, and to sabotage the struggle of the working class against the new capitalist offensive. So the hue and cry after the election is raised, not against the Tory Government, but against the Communist Party. So MacDonald hastens to declare in his first public utterance that "they would serve the nation in Opposition as they served it as a Government." So Thomas goes back to the Secretaryship of the Railwaymen, openly proclaiming his purpose to "render most service to my country" in that capacity in the troublesome times ahead—*i.e.*, to sabotage the struggle of the working class.

NOR is the voice of opposition allowed to be heard. In all the utterances of leading Labour representatives after the election there is not yet to be found a trace of a constructive working-class lead for the period of terrible struggle in front. There may be criticism of the Labour Government for its weaknesses: but it is not yet criticism that leads to any result for the present. The hypnotic attraction of "next time" in four years engrosses the minds of all, following the well-worn parliamentary groove laid down for them by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois parliamentary poison has done its work well. The trade union leaders are silent, or repeat the phrases of the parliamentary leaders. The Left Wing proclaims the need of "more propaganda" (for whom? For Thomas and MacDonald?). Mr. Wheatley for the Left Wing declares that "Britain wants a new Blatchford" (forgive us for our sins), and that the Labour Party should cultivate a constructive imperial policy so as to take advantage of the strong existing imperial sentiment. Throughout there is not a trace of a suggestion of what four years of a Tory Government in the present international and economic position is going to mean for the working class in actual struggle (not just as "propaganda" for next time), and how the workers are going to meet it. The nearest approach to a militant spirit—let alone a militant policy—is to be found in such a characteristic utterance as that of Mr. Neil Maclean at the Glasgow "Victory Rally" of the I.L.P. Mr. Neil Maclean, after announcing his solemn conviction that there must

have been a "traitor" high up in the Foreign Office (certainly—at the top), went on to pronounce the following terrible sentence as his verdict after the experience of the election:—

They had hitherto treated their opponents as gentlemen. Now in the House they would treat them with contempt.

Alas for the British bourgeoisie, who must now indeed be beginning to tremble. But even this was too much for the tender feelings of Mr. MacDonald, who hastily took the next opportunity to announce that

As an Opposition they would give the State, the people and the Commonwealth their fullest service. They would serve the nation in Opposition as they served it as a Government. . . . It will still be a fight of gentlemen.

"IT will still be a fight of gentlemen." Baldwin may drive to war with the Workers' Soviet Republic, equip and bribe and arm the satellite States against them, send guns and spies and assassins and saboteurs, as Churchill and Curzon have done before and are ready to do again. Never mind. *In Parliament it will still be a fight of gentlemen.* Baldwin may turn all the forces of terrorism against the helpless unarmed masses in India, suspending all law, shooting, imprisoning and bombing, repeating the horrors of Amritsar and the Black and Tans to crush the revolt of the people. *In Parliament it will still be a fight of gentlemen.* Baldwin may drive the whips of world finance upon the bare backs of the German workers, extracting tribute from starvation and hounding on the German Whites to their work of extermination and repression. *In Parliament it will still be a fight of gentlemen.* Baldwin may turn the offensive upon the British workers, using the engine of the law to suppress all militant agitation, backing and urging on the concerted employers' attack on hours and wages, goading on the workers to revolt and sporadic outbreaks in order to crush them, and bringing in the troops to shed the blood of starving workers. *In Parliament it will still be a fight of gentlemen.*

THIS is the meaning of the policy of "Liberalising the Labour Party" which is now the approved watchword of the bourgeoisie, proclaimed equally by Rothermere and MacDonald. This is the meaning of the "Independent majority"

which is held out to the workers as the hypothetical carrot to induce them to submit quietly to be crushed by the Baldwin Government. MacDonald has perfectly clearly proclaimed his policy in all his speeches. Open coalition with the Liberal Party has been defeated by the pressure of the working-class rank and file, who, if they have been able to learn nothing else from the stupefying propaganda of the Labour Party, have at any rate learnt to regard the Liberal and Conservative Parties as poison. This defeat of a policy which MacDonald was himself in practice carrying out up to 1914, and for which influential forces in the Labour Party were working up to the last, was an undoubted victory for the working class; witness the open apprehension expressed in such Right Wing organs as the *New Statesman* and *Vorwärts*, who publicly warn MacDonald of the danger of eliminating the Liberal Party and the "disastrous" possibilities of class politics thus opened up. But MacDonald's calculation is different. MacDonald calculates to be able to appear to adapt himself in form to the working-class demand for separation from Liberalism, while carrying out the coalition with Liberalism in fact. The Labour Party definitely sets before itself the object to eliminate the Liberal Party. But its purpose in doing this is not to clear the stage for a direct confrontation of the working class and the bourgeoisie in politics: this is expressly denied. The purpose is to eliminate the Liberal Party in order to *replace* it by the Labour Party, which shall "inherit" (in MacDonald's own language) and carry on "the Liberal spirit" as a "united progressive party" with no class basis. "The Labour Party appeals to the Liberal spirit" (MacDonald at the dinner to himself). So here we are. We are to have again the old imperialist conglomeration "on no class basis" which swept to power in 1906 and deservedly went to wreck in 1914. The working class is painfully to demolish the Liberal Party in order to set it up again. This is to be the "independent majority" which is to be the dubious reward of the workers for quietly allowing the Baldwin Government to fasten down every rivet of capitalist preparation against future working-class attack, and suffering the complete disorganising and disruption of their own ranks in the name of the sacred "classless" democratic principle.

A PLAIN question may be asked. What are "independent working-class politics"? It will be remembered that Keir Hardie and those with him founded the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Party on the basis of "independent working-class politics" in opposition to the "capitalist" parties. What did they mean by this? What is a "capitalist" party? What does "Workers, Unite" mean? Why did they found the Labour Party on the basis of the trade unions? Is all this class politics (however confused in expression) or is it not? Did they mean a certain ultimate theoretical difference about an abstraction called "Socialism" as the only difference from the Liberal Party (while completely accepting the "Liberal spirit"—Imperialism, &c.)? Or did they mean, what in every speech they proclaimed, and none more than Keir Hardie, that the workers had no place in the parties of the money-bags, and that the workers must found a party of their own. For if that is once admitted (and it is impossible to deny it, for every speech proclaims it), then the whole case of the Liberal democrats who try to repudiate any class basis for the Labour Party and make it a "united progressive party" is destroyed. It is they who are revealed as the intruders, offshoots from Liberalism endeavouring to destroy a whole generation of working-class effort, and to transform the Labour Party into a Liberal democratic, *i.e.*, a bourgeois party, thus defeating it in the hour of its success. The movement from a "class" basis to a "democratic" basis is a movement *back* to just that point from which the Labour Party started, and from which the early pioneers had painfully hewed out a way. That is why the transformation can only be accomplished by violent means—by disruption, by expulsions and ultimately by the break-up of the Labour Party—in the interests of Liberalism. MacDonald and his associates stand out as the would-be saviours of Liberalism in the face of the overwhelming working-class advance.

BUT Liberalism cannot be saved. That is the real meaning of the collapse of the MacDonald Labour Government. MacDonald can deny the class struggle in name; he cannot escape it in fact. Every strike shook the fragile fabric of the Labour Government, and raised questions which it could not

answer, and which no loyal constitutional "Labour Government" can answer. Campbell and the Soviet Treaties were only the symbols of the class struggle which finally overwhelmed the Labour Government. The issues took a Communist form inevitably, not because of the malicious ingenuity of the Communists, but because Communism is the expression of the class struggle. The victory of Communism over the Labour Party is as inevitable as was the victory of the Labour Party over the Liberal Party—and for the same reason, that the class struggle cannot be escaped, and those who seek to deny it are doomed. Liberalism, or the denial, *i.e.*, the concealment, of the class struggle, can only flourish in the period of rising and prosperous capitalism, when there is still a surplus to distribute as "progress" and the working class are not yet awakened. That ended once and for all in 1914. In a period of world war and revolution, of economic decay and growing imperialist antagonism, of poverty and lowered standards, of sharpening class struggle and the use of every weapon against the workers, there is no room for Liberalism. The Liberalism that is attempting to revive itself in the Labour Party is only able to survive at all by taking on the mask of a class character; and the consequent contradiction is so increasingly patent at every turn of events as to reveal already the picture of its approaching breakdown. The choice before the workers is visibly no longer a choice between "progress" and "reaction." The choice before the workers is a choice between struggle and servitude. And the battle between those two alternatives is the battle between Communism and Liberalism in the working-class movement.

R. P. D.

ANATOLE FRANCE AND THE REVOLU- TIONARY IDEA¹

By HENRI BARBUSSE

NOW that the great man has passed to the apotheosis of his glory and is for ever silent it is not enough just to speak of him; we must make him speak, quoting his characteristics and his views, until little by little the still shining reflection of his genius plays its part in current polemics. I did not want to take my part in these invocations where each one is too inclined to stress his own point of view on the authority of the magic voice that can no longer answer. I do it all the same, out of respect for the memory of the most illustrious of contemporary writers to whom I was personally attached by bonds of deep affection and great gratitude. On account of certain allegations and certain comments it seems to me at least desirable to bring things back to their right proportions by publicly giving my own individual testimony.

I refer above all to the exaggerated and immoral way in which our political opponents attempt to patronise, monopolise and interpret his personality in what concerns his attitude to Soviet Russia and the proletarian revolution.

Recently a well-known journalist, M. Jean-Bernard, in an article which was reproduced in several great French and foreign newspapers, said that it was thanks to my influence that France became one of the Clarté group and joined the Communist Movement. These are the points I would like to make clear.

I did not see France in '14, '15 and '16, for the reason that I passed that lapse of time in camp, in the trenches and in hospital. I even recollect, not without melancholy, that the man who first spoke about him and brought me his kind opinion of *Le Feu* was our admirable Raymond Lefèvre,² one day when he came to see me with Vaillant-Couturier at the military hospital of Chartres, in the beginning of 1917. At the end of that year, when my health

¹ Copyright.

² The French Communist who was drowned when returning from Russia in 1921.

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compelled me to stay in the south, I paid a visit to France at Antibes. I subsequently saw him at Paris, at St. Cloud and at Tours, and we had some important conversations. Moreover, I often communicated with him, between our interviews, through the medium of mutual friends.

I tried to convince him that the moment had come when the intellectuals had to choose between bourgeois ideology, whose bankruptcy was being revealed in every corner of the earth, between that and the cause of the labouring masses—a straight and narrow cause that allows of no compromise. I endeavoured to show him the great part which the exquisite critical insight of his works was driving him on to play in the conflict of social theories. I spent my time in making him see how fine it would be and how valuable to the cause of the emancipation of the masses if a man of his importance would resolutely stick to realist tactics—positive and practical—overcoming trepidations and rising above metaphysical abstractions, above the pretences and betrayals of the “democratic” creed—and even above the concessions to reformist sophistry which he had thought it his duty himself to make in the past. There was but one means to put right our poor upside-down civilisation’s affairs, so cruelly involved and so incurably compromised: to begin everything over again on a proletarian basis, in accordance with the material laws of international economy and of “the common good,” laws which had been broken or falsified hitherto by the successive apologists of the regime of privilege.

Let it be understood that I never pretended to deliver a course of lectures on history or social theory to the penetrating author of *L’Ile des Pingouins* and *Sur la Pierre Blanche*, nor to expound to him the evidence that the present world crisis finds us in a kind of supreme travail. My aim above all was to make him admit *that it is no longer enough to agree on principles*, that conviction must take on a positive, active, organic character and become part of that which is essential in the modern social struggle: the antagonism of the workers and the capitalists.

At that moment of his life of which I am speaking, Anatole France, I bear witness, understood the high logical—and moral—need for breaking the division which violently separates mere acceptance of a doctrine and its dialectical advancement from the

methods of effective struggle having for object the substitution of one social and political situation for another.

He adhered to that revolutionary ideal, of which it might be said according to one's point of view that it constitutes either the loyal end, the highest form, or else the counterpart of the democratic ideal's lifeless algebraical dissertations around the terms justice, equality and international solidarity. He showed himself a convinced partisan of the Bolshevik revolution. He said to us, to Lefèbre and me, " I am more bolshevik than you " (and this often in the midst of a circle of listeners). For the rest he several times publicly bore witness to his approval of the proletarian cause ; in his expressions of support and his appeals, his unreserved sympathy not only for the rebellious ex-Service men of our International and for the International Workers' Relief, exclusively proletarian organs of struggle (I recently reminded him with feeling of the pit workers I found in Scotland and England), but also towards Soviet Russia and the Communist Party.

And yet, near as he then was to us, one felt that he was the prey of two tendencies, two urges : the one, entirely intellectual, the consequence of his superior clear-sightedness, led him naturally across the chaos of facts and the gross deviations of contemporary thought to extreme causes and results. The other came from a too long-standing literary habit of scepticism, of gentleness and of laughter and from a temperament which delighted in serene calm. His spirit was ahead of his character ; his spirit was bold and free ; but *he*, he was not. There was something tragic in seeing this eminent veteran, overwhelmed with talents and with glory, and endowed with such seductive charm, finding his sincerity and then struggling against it ; raising himself towards the light and then being afraid of it, like Dido of old. Alas, the character is heavier than the spirit.

I think, all the same, that Anatole France would have persisted, in spite of all, along the noble way on which he had at last embarked, if age had not definitely laid its seal on his taste for repose and unoffending criticism. The revelation of a new world and of the virtues leading thereto came too late for him. He was not capable

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except in a few lightning strokes of enthusiasm of turning against all his luxury and his humanist's abundant spiritual part. The wisdom of nations says that the cost is only in the first step, while, in truth, it is the last step which costs too dear.

Here is the burning truth : it is because he was too old that France insensibly fell back into the gilded bonds of capitalist democracy, whose comedies he had so plainly pierced to the light of day, just as he returned to the Academy which he mistrusted, like the free-thinker who, divorced from his will-power (a spectre which haunted Renan), clasps his hands in prayer on his death bed.

We experienced the bitterness of seeing him succumb to the influence of certain ones who lay in wait around him, of seeing him figure in the official sequel as Supreme Grand Functionary of Literature. The lamentable eclecticism of those who celebrated in panegyrics his benevolent and sociable self-assurance ought not all the same to have induced in him the change. And he made an appeal in favour of the *Bloc des Gauches*. If he had not then been approaching the term of his long career he would not have allowed himself thus to belie, even in a few circumstantial words, so many right things he had written.

He confessed it to me one day. He said to me, one of the last times that I saw him : " Yes, I well understand what you say to me . . . *Yes, he who wills the end, wills the means.* But I cannot follow you. I am old. But I do feel that in the end you are right." He gave me a blank sheet of paper at the foot of which he wrote his signature, and said to me, " You can write what you like on this sheet. I endorse it in advance, and never will I rise up against it."

I have not thought it my duty to use this blank signature. But I preserve it preciously as a moving proof of the effort attempted in the decline of his life by this perfect observer to enter into the field of the action and the salvation of the poor. Had he then been capable of using his mind to the full, his memory would have become greater and more splendid among the men of the future. The illuminating and delicious artist would have transfigured himself into a forerunner and architect of a sacred reality. He could have done it, he who could do everything, surrounded as he was by a universal respect that amounted to a cult. But destiny

forcibly withdrew him from his duty at the moment when he was preparing to live up to it, and he was enshrouded, even before he had closed his eyes, beneath the tributes of the powers that be and the enthusiastic clamours of the charlatans and court jesters of the established order, who have, 'tis pity, claimed him as one of themselves, their greatest man.

THE STABILITY OF CAPITALISM, OR THE UNSTABLE COMMUNISTS

(Concerning the Plan of General Dawes, the Plan of my Friend Philips Price and some other Questions)

By KARL RADEK

SOME Communists who have been frightened to death by the Dawes Plan began recently, in the midst of the noise aroused by this plan, to overhaul their stock of ideas and to adapt themselves to the supposed end of the era of social revolution. Two of them, Newbold and Philips Price, have drawn the political conclusions from their deliberations and left the Communist Party of Great Britain. But the MacDonald Government, in whose wake they had decided to be towed, no longer exists.

Does the Overthrow of MacDonald mean the End of the Era of Democracy and of Pacifism ?

Many will answer this question with an unconditional yes. Why? What sort of a democrat is Mr. Baldwin, what kind of pacifists are Curzon and Churchill, who have once again taken over political power in England? But have we not pointed out during the whole of the past year that the Government of MacDonald was not capable of conducting any other policy than an imperialist policy, and that they were strangling democracy in China, Egypt and India? Why, then, should the overthrow of this Government mean the end of the era of democracy and of pacifism, which, as it was neither democratic nor pacifist, must obviously have been something else?

But this is not the only thing. As is known, at the beginning of this era the return of American finance-capital to Europe played a very active rôle. At the christening of the democratic-pacifist era there stood as godfathers, not only MacDonald and Herriot,

but the well-known "democrat" and "pacifist" Morgan. This shows that it was by no means necessary to be a member of the Labour Party or a left petty-bourgeois Radical in order to have the right to act as godfather to the democratic and pacifist era.

The nature of the pacifist-democratic "era" consists in the fact that we have before us the collaboration of Anglo-American finance-capital to enslave those countries which stand in need of foreign capital. The capitalism of the United States and of England promise to be mutually threatening rivals in the future. But at the present moment they have not yet decided to quarrel with each other, but, on the contrary, to form a robbers' syndicate in order to avoid these quarrels. Democracy and pacifism served them as a useful means for carrying on their business. If Messrs. Norman and Morgan had inserted advertisements in the newspapers: "The Banking House of Morgan, the Bank of England, Lloyds Bank, &c., wish to inform their esteemed customers that they have united for the purpose of carrying on a sheep-shearing business in Germany, France, Austria, Hungary, China and other countries," it would not have tended to promote their business much. The signboard: "Era of Democracy and Pacifism" not only facilitates the floating of loans, but also reduces the working expenses of the whole undertaking.

In addition to this there was hidden in these pacifist democratic slogans the conviction of the Anglo-American Stock Exchange sharks that, as they had now united, no one would venture to attack them. Germany would be compelled to grovel on all fours, as apart from England and America she would not receive any private credits for her industry. In China it would be possible to establish order by supporting one military clique against the other to a certain point, and finally presenting a bill to both of them, whilst it would be possible to crush Russia by means of a financial blockade.

What change is there made in this policy as a result of the overthrow of the MacDonald Government? The signboard of democratic pacifism will become still more battered and dented. The mask of democratic pacifism will fall from the good-natured countenance of Mr. Baldwin. The nature of the so-called democratic-pacifist era, which consists in the efforts of Anglo-American

finance-capital to thrust aside French and Japanese imperialism and to take over the exploitation of Western and Central Europe and China, will become plainly apparent. Petty-bourgeois democracy was a bridge and a shield for Anglo-American finance-capital. It has crossed this bridge and has no more need for it. The shield was flung aside quicker than one expected. The real work has begun. The era of democracy and pacifism is not at an end, but the Anglo-American collaboration has only just begun. This collaboration will also have an end; it will be torn asunder by the contradictions of capitalism in England and America, but the beginning of this end is not yet in sight.

The Stabilisation of Capitalism and the Experts' Plan

When the Experts' Plan was published on April 9 last, the whole international bourgeois Press cried out: "These are the new Ten Commandments, and from this day there begins a new era in the development of humanity." And when we Communists, after reading through this Experts' Plan, declared that it would not solve a single one of the questions connected with the impossibility of the payment of reparations, that it only delayed every question, and that the only real thing in this plan was the enslavement of Germany by Anglo-American capital, then the Social-Democratic Press began to reproach us with being revolutionary illusionists who are afraid to look facts in the face, for the Experts' Plan destroys the prospects of revolution. In the last two months, however, the voices in the camp of the bourgeois scientists and publicists who say the same as we have said have begun to be heard more frequently.

The Dawes Plan has not disclosed any miraculous means for stabilising capitalism. It is a means for enslaving Germany by Anglo-American capital, but it can also end with the collapse of Anglo-American collaboration, with an attempt at an Anglo-French business agreement—a pre-requisite for which is the fact that France, as the neighbour of Germany on the Continent and as the chief creditor of Germany, possesses enormous means of exerting pressure upon the latter in her own interests and, when necessary, in the interests of the Americans.

The Unstable Communists and the Dawes Plan

The Dawes Plan, which constitutes a stage in the struggle of world imperialism, has terribly frightened the unstable Communists. They have accepted it as that which world policy proclaimed it to be—the end of world revolution. We will not speak of Newbold, whose resignation from the Party leaves a nasty taste in the mouth. In the article in which Newbold declared why, after being for three years in the ranks of the Communist Party, he now resigns, one recognises the undertones of the usual intellectual careerist. Mr. Newbold admits that at a certain age it is very agreeable for a man to sit in Parliament, and that there are worse things in the world than the British Empire. We regret that the English electors have not arrived at the conviction that the age of Mr. Newbold warrants his being sent to Parliament, but we do not give up hope that his longing will yet be fulfilled, and that he will be able to cover one of the green benches in Parliament with that portion of his anatomy which, it appears, is the most valuable part of him.

The case is somewhat different with Philips Price. The latter, a young, honest, English intellectual, became a Communist in Russia when, as correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, he passed through the revolution. His articles, in which he defended the Russian revolution, played a great rôle during the period of intervention. As correspondent of the *Daily Herald* in Berlin he helped in the most disinterested manner the fighting German workers, and created a good name for himself in the English Labour Movement. Philips Price has actually come to the conviction that the paper on which the Dawes Plan is inscribed puts an end to world revolution. Even our English Communists, in their answer to his articles, praised Philips Price as one possessing a great knowledge of Marxism.

As a matter of fact we have to do here with a philistine and not with a Marxist, for how could the Dawes Plan mean the end of world revolution? There exist two possibilities: either the Dawes Plan is the expression, throughout the world, of an era of the liquidation of the acute international and social conflicts, or it is merely an attempt to arrest the advancing decay of capitalism. In the first case the Dawes Plan would mean that the special

elements of revolution which were left behind by the war are already exhausted, that the revolution must be nourished by new conflicts, which will be created by a new era of imperialism. Even when one accepts such an estimate of the international situation as a premise for reasoning, even then it does not admit any liquidatory tendencies. Have not we radical Marxists pointed out before the war that the era of imperialism produces the era of social revolution?

Is Philips Price perchance in agreement with the reformist estimate of the Dawes Plan, which repeats the asseverations of the English and American bankers that it will bring peace and universal prosperity to humanity? No, God forbid! Philips Price published an article in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* in which he pointed out that if the Dawes Plan is carried out there will result an enormous sharpening of the social crisis, not only in Germany, but also in England, that the Dawes Plan means an era of new imperialist conflicts.

If that be the case, what, in this situation, is the task of the defender of the interests of the working class? To organise the working class for the coming revolutionary struggles. This task appears the more important as the assertion that the war crisis is already passed is in contradiction to all the facts. Neither the political consequences of the war nor its economic consequences are liquidated. The burden of the Peace of Versailles still exists, the inter-allied debts remain, the awakening of the East is proceeding. Not one of the results of the war has been liquidated. The old social and international conflicts are combining with the new and are creating a situation in which the working class must hasten with all its preparations, in order that the new wave of revolution shall not be met with such ideological confusion and organisatory division as that with which the revolutionary wave of the year 1919 was met. The tragedy of the German October consists in the fact that the ideological and organisatory preparation of the proletariat was not commensurate with the revolutionary conflict.

Price can say, however: What is Europe to us English? Firstly this means the repudiation of the international outlook, the return to insular cretinism, which Price up to now has

endeavoured to combat: whereby he aroused the hate of his three Conservative aunts who, at the time of the election, held him up at the one and same time as an agent of Kaiser Wilhelm and of Lenin. But even from the English standpoint Philips Price is entirely in the wrong. If the stabilisation of European capitalism is not brought about in the next few years, then in England also the strengthening of the class antagonisms will proceed at a most rapid rate. What then? Will Price in these coming struggles accompany the English workers under the leadership of MacDonald and Thomas, who form the loyal Opposition of his Majesty the King of England?

Price points to various faults in tone and in other musical things which have been committed by our English comrades. Perhaps our English comrades are more capable of conducting a cats' chorus than a symphony concert. From this it would only follow that one must fight in their ranks and not desert them. But it is also incorrect. The English Communists are carrying out a difficult task, which has greater historical importance than all the sophistries of well-educated English Socialist gentlemen. They are steeling that group of English workers, which is still small, who are learning to hate English capitalism and to fight against it. In order to destroy the enormous machine of English imperialism, an iron phalanx is necessary, people are necessary who are as hard as steel. Perhaps our English Communists are not as flexible as steel, but steel is made from iron ore, which also is not flexible.

Even the plan of General Dawes to rescue capitalism is in fact, in spite of all its illusionism, stronger than the plan of Philips Price, which consists of revolutionising the English Labour Movement by liquidating the Communist Party of Great Britain. If we speak of this philistine plan of Philips Price, it is because it appears as the expression of certain tendencies in many circles of unstable West-European Communists who have been brought to Communism on the wave of revolution, but who do not understand how to prepare the workers for the new wave of revolution. This Dawes epidemic is, therefore, useful, as it reveals the superficiality of the education of the Communist intellectuals in Western Europe and the instability of their convictions. The Communist

is not he who, at the moment of the victory of the proletariat, speaks in favour of Soviets, but he who in the periods of stagnation, in the periods of the quiet organising process of history, works for the Soviets.

We are now passing through a period when there is a lack of immediate revolutionary struggles; but it is hard even to speak of peaceful times in this time of most profound class and imperialist antagonism. This time when it is apparent to all eyes that new gigantic battles of the awakened East and of the working class of Europe, new battles of the imperialist giants, are in course of preparation.

On the Road to Insurrection—III¹

ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF REVOLUTION

By V. I. LENIN

[TRANSLATION COPYRIGHT]

SEPTEMBER 14, 1917.

THE most important question of all revolution is undoubtedly that of political power. In the hands of which class does power lie? There is the whole question on which depends the destiny of the country. And when the principal governing party of Russia complains in its organ (*cf. Dielo Naroda*, No. 147) that the discussions about power overlook the question of the Constituent Assembly and that of the food supply, one can justly answer: Gentlemen of the Social-Revolutionary Party, speak for yourselves only. It is the hesitations, the irresolution of your party which have most contributed to the prolongation of "ministerialism" and to the endless postponement of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and have allowed the capitalists to scrap the measures elaborated and adopted for effectively enforcing the cereals' monopoly² and revictualling the country.

The question of power cannot be evaded or relegated to the background, for it is the fundamental question which determines the whole development of the revolution in both its foreign and its domestic politics. Our revolution has lost half a year in hesitations over the organisation of power; that is an incontestable fact, and this fact has its origin in the political oscillations of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. Now, the policy of these parties has been itself determined, in the last analysis, by the character of the petit-bourgeoisie, by its economic instability in the struggle between Capital and Labour.

¹ The first two sections appeared last month.

² Decree of March 25.

The whole question at present is to know whether the democratic petit-bourgeoisie has learnt anything during six months so extraordinarily rich in events. If it has learnt nothing, the revolution is lost, and only the victorious insurrection of the proletariat will be able to save it. If it has learnt anything, it will have to set about creating immediately a firm and stable power. During a popular revolution it is only a power which relies openly and without reserve on the *majority* of the population that can be a stable power, that is to say, capable of appealing to the life of the masses, the majority of the workers and peasants. At the present moment, political power in Russia still rests in the hands of the bourgeoisie, who are obliged to make merely partial concessions (to withdraw them the next day), to scatter promises (which are never kept), and to find ways of masking their domination (to deceive the people by the appearance of "a loyal coalition," &c.). In words, we have a popular, democratic, revolutionary Government; in reality, we are in the presence of a Government anti-popular, anti-democratic, counter-revolutionary, bourgeois. There lies the fundamental contradiction existing hitherto, which has caused this instability, these oscillations of power, and which has provoked this succession of ministries to which Messieurs the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have lent themselves with a zeal so disastrous (to the people).

Either the dissolution of the Soviets and their inglorious death, or all power to the Soviets; that is what I said before the All-Russia Congress of Soviets at the beginning of the month of June, 1917, and the history of the months of July and August have fully confirmed the truth of those words. Only Soviet power can be stable and actually depend on the majority of the people, whatever may say the flunkeys of the bourgeoisie, Potresov,³ Plekhanov and others, whose explanations of an "enlargement of the basis of power" result in effect in a transmission of power to an infinitesimal minority of the population, to the bourgeoisie, to the exploiters.

Soviet power alone can be stable; it alone cannot be overthrown even in the most tortured hours of the most stormy revolution, it only will be able to assure a wide and steady development of the

³ One of the founders of Social Democracy, leader of the Menshevik liquidators, partisan-like Plekhanov, of simple bourgeois democracy.

revolution, with the peaceful concurrence of all parties inside the Soviets. But if it does not exist, there will be hesitations, irresolution, instability, innumerable crises, comedies of ministerial resignations and new shufflings of portfolios, explosions to the right and to the left.

But frequently, if not invariably, the slogan "Power to the Soviets" is understood in a completely false fashion. In effect it is taken to mean a ministry recruited by the parties forming the majority of the Soviets, and it is this profoundly erroneous opinion that we wish to examine in detail.

"A ministry recruited from the parties forming the majority of the Soviets," that is to say, a change in the personal composition of the Cabinet, that is to say, the integral conservation of all the former machinery of State power, machinery essentially bureaucratic, essentially undemocratic, incapable of realising a single serious reform, even those that figure in the programmes of the Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks.

The slogan "Power to the Soviets" signifies a radical transformation of all the former machinery of State, of this apparatus of officialdom which fetters all democratic initiative; it implies the suppression of this machinery and its substitution by a new popular, truly democratic machinery, that is to say, by the machinery of the Soviets, which represent the organised and armed majority of the people—workers, soldiers and peasants. "Power to the Soviets," it is this that gives free scope to the initiative of the majority of the people, not only in the election of deputies, but in the administration of the State, in the realisation of reforms and social transformation.

To make this difference still more clear and more perceptible we will recall a fact avowed a short time ago, by the newspaper of the leading party, the *Dielo Naroda*, organ of the Social Revolutionaries. "Even in the ministries in which Socialists have had a share," writes this paper during the famous coalition with the Cadets, when the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries held ministerial portfolios, "even in these ministries, all the administrative machinery remained absolutely unaltered, and this machinery curbed all their work."

This indeed is comprehensible. The whole history of parliamentary bourgeois countries shows that the changes of ministry have only very little importance, for all effective work, all the administration, is in the hands of a gigantic army of bureaucrats. Now, this army is impregnated to the marrow with a spirit essentially anti-democratic, it is attached by thousands and thousands of ties to the big property-holders and to the bourgeoisie, on whom it depends in every sphere. This army swims in a bourgeois atmosphere from which it is absolutely impossible for it to escape. Bound by immobile, mummified forms it is unable to modify in anything its habits of thought, feeling and action. It is based on the hierarchical principle, on certain privileges reserved to the functions of State; by the intervention of banks, the upper-grade bureaucrats become subservient to finance-capital, of which they are, to a certain degree, the agents, whose interests they defend and whose influence they propagate.

To believe that by means of this State machinery such social transformation as the suppression without compensation of the big property-holders in the cereal monopoly, &c., can be brought about is utterly to delude oneself, and is at the same time to fool the people. A republican bourgeoisie could use this machinery to create a republic of the type of "a monarchy without a monarch," like the Third French Republic, but it is absolutely incapable of achieving radical reform; I do not say of abolishing, but simply of limiting in a more or less effective way the rights of capital and the "sacred rights" of individual property. It is for this reason that, in all the coalition ministries in which "Socialists" participated, the latter, even if they were of good faith, were only a vain ornament or a screen for the bourgeois Government, a buffer against popular indignation, an instrument for duping the masses. That had been the rôle of Louis Blanc in 1848; that had been, since then, the rôle of innumerable coalition ministries in England and France; that had been the rôle of Tchernov and of Tseretelli in 1917⁴ and so it will remain as long as the bourgeois regime lasts and the old bourgeois State apparatus based on bureaucracy exists in its integrity.

⁴Tchernov, Social Revolutionary leader, Minister of Agriculture; Tseretelli, Social Democrat, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in the Coalition Cabinet of May 6.

Now, one of the fundamental merits of the Soviets, of the workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies, is that they represent a type of State machinery infinitely superior and incomparably more democratic. The Social Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks undertook the impossible in their endeavour to transform the Soviets (particularly that of Petrograd, as also the All-Russian Soviet, that is, the Central Executive Committee) into vague talking shops, occupied solely, under cover of "control," in voting impotent resolutions on what they desire, the realisation of which the Government, with the most exquisite urbanity, postpones to the Greek Kalends.⁵ But it only needed the escapade of Kornilov, that fresh breeze, forerunner of a good storm, temporarily to purify from all its miasmas the atmosphere of the Soviets and to restore the initiative of the revolutionary masses which is revealed in all its grandeur, in all its power, in all its invincibility.⁶

May this historical example be a lesson for all men of little faith. Shame on those who say, "We have no machinery to replace the old machinery, which tends inevitably to the defence of the bourgeoisie." This machinery does exist. This machinery is the Soviets. Do not mistrust the initiative of the masses, have confidence in the revolutionary organisations and you will see the workers and peasants bring to bear in *every* sphere of public life the force, the majesty, the invincibility of which they gave proof in their union, in their enthusiasm against Kornilov.⁷

The Social Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders have not had confidence in the masses, they have doubted their initiative, they have trembled before their revolutionary energy instead of supporting it without reserve; that has been their great crime. It is there that one must seek the principal cause of their indecision, of their hesitation, of their perpetual—and perpetually vain—attempts to pour new wine into the old bottles of the former bureaucratic machine.

⁵ This is the opinion not only of Lenin, but also of the anti-Bolshevik Social Democrat Soukhanov given in his *Memoirs of the Revolution*.

⁶ The victory over Kornilov was less the work of the Government than of the Soviets and of the initiative of the workers themselves. Miliukov recognised this in his *History of the Second Revolution*, Vol. II.

⁷ See the development of these ideas on the rôle of the Soviets in *Can the Bolsheviks Maintain Power?* and in *The State and Revolution*.

Take the history of the democratisation of the army in the Russian revolution of 1917, the history of the Minister Tchernov,⁸ the history of the "reign" of Paltchinsky, the history of the resignation of Piechekhovon,⁹ and you will see in each a striking confirmation of what I have just said. The lack of confidence towards the organisations elected by the soldiers, the incomplete realisation of the principle of election of officers by the soldiers, have had the result of leaving the Kornilovs, Kaledins and counter-revolutionary officers at the head of the army. That is a fact, and, short of deliberately shutting one's eyes, it is impossible not to see that, after the insurrection of Kornilov, the Kerensky Government allowed the former situation to continue and, in fact, restored "Kornilovism." The nomination of Alexéiev, the "peace" with Klembovsky, Gagavine, Bagration and other "Kornilovians," the indulgence to Kornilov and Kaledin themselves, all goes to show as clear as day that Kerensky in fact restored "Kornilovism."

There is no middle course, experience has demonstrated that. Either all power to the Soviets and the complete democratisation of the army—or reaction.

Take the history of the Minister Tchernov. Was it not shown that every attempt, however frivolous, to satisfy the needs of the peasants in a real fashion, that every act of confidence towards them and their mass organisations was accepted with the utmost enthusiasm by the entire peasant class? And Tchernov was forced for nearly four months "to bargain with the Left," with the Cadets and officials, who by their shufflings and perpetual adjournments compelled him at the end of the deal to give in his resignation having been able to achieve nothing. During those four months the landlords and capitalists gained their end; they saved, for the moment, the big landed properties, retarded the convocation of the Constituent Assembly and even launched a campaign of repression against the agrarian committees.

There is no middle term. All power to the Soviets at the centre and in the provinces, all land to the peasants, *immediately*, according to the decision of the Constituent Assembly, otherwise

⁸ He refused to let the peasants take the land of the big proprietors.

⁹ Minister of Supply, he retired on August 26 because Kerensky, at the demand of the big proprietors, wished to double the State purchase price of corn.

the landed nobility and the capitalists will grab everything, restore their power, exasperate the peasants so far that they will unloose the most furious *jacquerie*.

In the same way the capitalists (with the help of Paltchinsky) have made hay of all serious control over production, and the merchants have obstructed the operation of the cereal monopoly and the regulated democratic rationing of bread and food products undertaken by Piechekhonov.

It is not the time now, in Russia, to invent "new" reforms, to evolve plans for a general transformation the capitalists, the Potressovs, the Plekhanovs, who clamour against "the installation of socialism," against "the dictatorship of the proletariat," would cunningly have you believe. In reality, the insupportable burdens and scourges of the war, the formidable dangers of disorganisation and of famine have already shown where the situation is leading; they have already indicated—what am I saying!—they have already forced an urgent realisation of such indispensable reforms and readjustments as are the cereal monopoly, the control of production and rationing, the restriction of the issue of paper money, a regular exchange of corn for merchandise, &c.

These measures everybody recognises¹⁰ are an absolute necessity, and they have begun to be applied in many places. But the realisation of these policies is trammelled by the resistance of the big proprietors and of the capitalists, resistance exercised through the agency of the Kerensky Government (a government at bottom bourgeois and bonapartist), through the agency of the administrative apparatus of the former Government by means of the direct or indirect pressure of Russian and Allied finance-capital.

Deploring the resignation of Piechekhonov and the failure of the taxation and of the cereal monopoly, I. Prilejaïev wrote quite recently in the *Dielo Naroda* (No. 147): "The absence of courage and the spirit of decision, which has marked all our governments, has been due to their composition. . . . The democratic revolution ought not to hesitate, it ought itself to exhibit initiative and to interfere systematically in the economic chaos. . . . If ever the

¹⁰ Even the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries; they were a party to the programme adopted by the majority of the State Conference on August 14.

necessity of a positive and absolute power made itself felt, it is now."

That is the truth. Here are words of gold. Only, there is one thing that has not struck the author: it is that the firm line, the courage and the spirit of decision are not questions of persons, they depend on the class that is capable of showing these qualities. Now this class is uniquely the proletariat. A courageous, resolute authority which takes a firm line, what is it but the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the poorer ranks of the peasant class? Without doubt I. Prilejaïev yearns after that dictatorship.

What will this dictatorship actually signify? The definite wiping out of "Kornilovians" and the democratisation of the army. The day following its installation it will be welcomed with enthusiasm by 99 per cent. of the army. In that it gives the land to the peasants and full power to the local committees of peasants, will not the dictatorship be supported without reserve by the latter? What Piechekhonov only promises ("the capitalist resistance is destroyed" said he in his famous speech in the Soviet Congress), the dictatorship will actually realise, and to do that it will not demolish the democratic organisations which are beginning to be set up for the revictualling, control, &c.; on the contrary, it will support them and develop them in suppressing all that hampers their operation.

Only the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants is capable of conquering the resistance of the capitalists, of showing in the exercise of power the maximum of courage and decision, of obtaining the enthusiastic, complete and heroic support of the great mass of the army and also of the naval population.

Power to the Soviets, that is the only means of assuring gradual, peaceful evolution, unscathed by events; of carrying through this evolution side by side with the development of consciousness; of the power of decision and of experience in the majority of the masses of the population. Power to the Soviets, that is the entire transmission of the country and of economic control to the workers and peasants, to which none dare offer resistance and which learns rapidly, by practice, how to distribute to the best advantage the land, products and corn.

(To be continued)

RECONSTRUCTING EUROPE¹

By MANABENDRA NATH ROY

“**S**Ocial Democracy has become the third party (left wing) of the bourgeoisie.” This poignant remark of Zinovieff in his report to the Fifth World Congress of the Communist International has been amply borne out by facts. The action of Social Democracy during the year preceding the fifth congress warranted this remark; but subsequent action has corroborated it, if corroboration was still required. The despicable degeneration of Social Democracy and political schools allied to it is the most outstanding feature of the world to-day. The British Labour Party, which cannot even be called Social Democratic, stands at the head of this process of degeneration.

Great political parties, which for decades paraded as working-class organisations, and pretended to be working for the substitution of the capitalist system by a Socialist society, are to-day the outspoken advocates of “reconstruction” on a capitalist basis. They may not always say so; but in fact that is precisely what they stand for. Besides, there are the Marxian economists, led by Hilferding, who preach that capitalism has not done its job yet, and that to rally to the rescue of this “revolutionary” agency is an historic necessity. These renegades to all intents and purposes virtually represent the essential character of international Social Democracy.

Insatiable imperialist greed plunged the European bourgeoisie in the cataclysmic war which irreparably undermined capitalist economy by throwing the mode of commodity production into a chronic state of chaos and anarchy. For more than five years after the armed conflict had been brought to an apparent close, the bourgeoisie tried by all conceivable means to extricate themselves from this ruinous mess of their own creation, but with no appreciable success. In fact, things steadily went from bad to worse, some local indications of temporary betterment notwithstanding. To

¹ This article was written before the defeat of the Labour Government, but it loses none of its value thereby as an analysis of European affairs during the period of Mr. MacDonald's administration.—EDITOR, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.

escape the disastrous consequences of one war, they plunged Europe into a permanent state of war; while talking hypocritically of disarmament, they went on feverishly preparing for future wars, which would be more murderous and more destructive than the last; failing to regain economic equilibrium by normal methods of production and exchange, they adopted such violent means as the Ruhr occupation; they signally failed to arrest the industrial anarchy as expressed by chronic under-production on the one hand, and incurable unemployment on the other. Empires showed signs of tottering. Brutal oppression only incensed the rebellious colonial masses, while a policy of reconciliation ominously made for eventual disruption. In a number of European countries, even the pretence of democracy and constitutional government were discarded. Undisguised dictatorship was tried in Germany, Italy, Spain, Bulgaria and Greece, but with hardly any better result. The bourgeoisie were at their wits' end. At this juncture the Social Democrats and the allied breed came very handy. The bourgeoisie resolved to let them try their hand in saving capitalism.

This combination has inaugurated what is called the period of pacifist illusion. The programme of reconstructing Europe by peaceful means has once more entered the realm of practical politics. Ramsay MacDonald has stepped into the shoes of the late but unlamented Woodrow Wilson as the saviour of humanity. The Wilsonian Covenant has been replaced by the Dawes Plan. Where the professor failed, the financier must succeed. German "Marxists," French Radicals and English Pacifists are unanimous in this conviction. The New Era has begun. The London Conference and the Fifth Assembly of the League of Nations mark the stages of advance.

Now, how did the new era begin? Did the nonplussed bourgeoisie invite the Social Democrats and their allies to take up the reins of government in Britain, France and several minor countries? Or did the latter come to power by dint of their own strength? Neither the one course nor the other. The juxtaposition of several political factors contributed to the development of the situation. The advent of the Labour Government in Britain marked the beginning of the new era. It is a mistake to think that the Labour Party was placed in office purposely by the bourgeoisie.

Just remember the terrible scare that was felt all over the country when a Labour Government could be considered to be within the realm of practical politics. What a howl of horror was raised ! To the bourgeoisie, a Labour Government was analogous to revolution. The most powerful section of the bourgeoisie, represented by the Tory Party, did everything possible to prevent the advent of a Labour Government. Finally, the bourgeoisie became reconciled to the monstrosity of a Labour Government only by making a virtue of necessity. A sense of practical politics told them that Labour could not be kept out without dissipating the constitutional illusions which stand between the revolution and the British proletariat.

Another factor that made the advent of a Labour Government possible was the conflict of interests between the two wings of the bourgeoisie, representing two forms of capital—Finance, allied with heavy key industries (coal and iron), and Manufacturing, together with commerce. The decay of capitalist economy, and the consequent chronic industrial chaos, had sharpened this conflict between the two sections of the British bourgeoisie. This internal contradiction of capitalism reflected both on the home and foreign politics of Great Britain. It has also affected the colonial policy, although not so very acutely as yet. In home politics, the classical controversy over Protection *v.* Free Trade was revived; but since the industrial crisis in Great Britain could not be overcome independently of the world capitalist economy as a whole, this hackneyed controversy was futile. The fundamental political rivalry revolved upon the axis of foreign politics, and the *summum bonum* of capitalist world politics was the Reparation Problem—that is to help Europe recover from the ruins of the war. The great financial combines, operating politically through the Conservative Party, desired the colonisation of Europe, and were not particularly averse to using French militarism as the police force. The manufacturing and commercial interests, on the other hand, represented by the Liberal Party, were in favour of reviving the European market, which could not be done unless the twentieth-century Napoleonism of France was defeated and Germany set back on her feet—in short, the war declared to have been a momentous folly. This clash of interests did not permit the two

bourgeois parties to combine against Labour. Only such a combination could have prevented the advent of the Labour Government within the framework of the existing constitution.

The Liberals thought it advisable to fight the Tories in coalition with the Labour Party, especially since the latter subscribed in full to the Liberal Programme of the capitalist reconstruction of Europe, and could be easily induced to pigeonhole those few points on their home programme to which the Liberals took exception. Thus it is also true that the Labour Government could not be in office without the grace of the bourgeoisie, although returned to the Parliament in a considerably increased number. Being in the minority as against this Lib.-Lab. Coalition, the Conservatives, in their turn, found it necessary to mark time. So the Labour Party came into office, as it were, by default. Had there been the slightest indication that the Labour Government would try any Socialist prank, the bourgeoisie would make up their internal divergence, close up the ranks and keep Labour out. As this was not the case, and as the only anxiety of the British Labourites (one cannot call them Social Democrats) was to disprove the charges of anti-patriotism, anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism, &c., brought against them by the bourgeoisie, and to prove that they could do what the bourgeois Governments had failed to do, namely, to make Europe safe for capitalism (not even for democracy, as Wilson pretended), there was no particular objection to their becoming his Majesty's Ministers, *ad interim*. Both the bourgeois parties were conscious of their failure to drag Europe out of the ruinous mess. Of course, their faith in the eternal nature of capitalism was not seriously shaken. Not a few among them would just as soon go straight over to Fascism to maintain the domination of their class; but it could be done only by risking the possibility of a revolution, even in the safe and sane British Isles. If the Labour Government, by some miracle of democratic liberalism, could do the impossible—could stabilise the tottering capitalist system—why not let them try their hand at it? If they succeed, so much the better for the bourgeoisie. In that case, the latter would not hesitate to hail Ramsay MacDonald as the saviour of Europe, as they did the naively vain American school teacher, though their contempt for the theories of the one would not be any less than

for those of the other. If not, there would be always time to fall back upon the methods of undisguised dictatorship, of blood and iron, which would then be justified by the fact that Labour had tried its programme and failed.

The third factor that contributed to the advent of the Labour Government was of an essentially revolutionary nature. It was the first sign that the British proletariat was losing faith in the capitalist system. The electoral success of the Labour Party should be looked upon by a real proletarian party as the signal for the approaching revolution. The proletarian masses, as it were, ordered their leaders to throw down the challenge to the bourgeoisie who had failed to reconstruct European social economy. This threatening mood of the working class induced the astute sections of the bourgeoisie to be careful in their dealing with the Labour Party, if a revolution were not to be precipitated. The vision of the masses was not sufficiently clear as yet. A "Labour Government" could still satisfy them, and at the same time could enlist the willing services of the Social Democrats to the ultimate benefit of the bourgeoisie.

Thus was ushered in the new era of "reconstruction by international understanding." The very first event of this new era proved that the Social Democrats and the Labourites were sold body and soul to the bourgeoisie, that there was no such thing as a Social Democratic or Labour policy. Social Democracy had become the third party of the bourgeoisie.

The MacDonald Government took up the Dawes Plan, prepared by the Commission of International Bankers (which had been brought into existence by Baldwin's Tory Cabinet with the approval even of Poincaré), as the Magna Charta of the new era. A remarkable "socialist" beginning indeed! Europe should be reconstructed on the basis of this plan, drawn up by an agent of J. P. Morgan, and ratified by the banking and industrial concerns of the principal European countries. What happier solution could have been found? Of course, it was happy only for the bourgeoisie, who were very pleased that their trick worked so easily, but damnable on the part of Social Democracy, and tragic for those who believed and followed these traitors of the working class.

The British example was followed in France. The Radical

Socialist, Herriot, was placed at the head of the Government by the Social Democrats and reformist syndicalists on the one hand, and the liberal bourgeoisie on the other. Even before he came into office Herriot had declared that, although his party was opposed to the Ruhr adventure of Poincaré's *Bloc National*, still, once it had been occupied, the Ruhr Valley could not be evacuated unconditionally. In office he carries out the Ruhr policy of Poincaré, only using different words, but with no less disastrous consequences to the French workers and peasants.

In France, again, there operated an analogous juxtaposition of forces to bring about a Social Democratic Government. (The Herriot Cabinet is no more purely Social Democratic in composition than the MacDonald Cabinet, but the Social Democrats are practically in it.) Heavy industry drove Poincaré to the Ruhr; but this policy made surely for eventual war, the ominous vision of which alarmed the other wing of the bourgeoisie. Once the utmost possible benefit had been derived by the party concerned, namely, the French iron and steel trusts, the Ruhr deadlock had to be brought to an end. It could not be pushed forward without courting a disastrous end. It became necessary to extricate French capitalism out of the uncomfortable position, without losing the precious prestige. Poincaré had committed himself too much to retreat. His Napoleonism was rejected, not only by the workers and peasants, but by a considerable section of the bourgeoisie. He lost his majority in the Chamber; but the *Bloc National* still remained the single largest political combination. Single-handed, the liberal bourgeoisie were obviously not in a position to keep Poincaré out of the Quai d'Orsay. In fact, Poincaré himself was not keen upon shouldering the burden of office. Therefore he delegated Loucheur to swell the ranks of the *Bloc des Gauches*. It was convenient to be in the Opposition at this moment. Why not let the Socialists draw the chestnuts out of the fire? Thus the Socialists came into office to oblige both the wings of the bourgeoisie, and the new era dawned upon la belle France—Renaudel, Paul Boncour, Jouhoux and Co. cheering the saviour Herriot by waving the tricolour of the Grande Revolution. The *drapeau rouge* was tucked into the pocket, to be brandished rather furtively in workers' meetings.

The ground was ready for the next step. General Dawes, personifying simultaneously the military and financial power of the United States, was holding out his infamous plan, blessed unanimously by the world bourgeoisie. The German Social Democrats, the classical vanguard of international Social Democracy, had already accepted the plan as the charter of freedom for the German proletariat. It was only left for MacDonald and Herriot (through whom spoke Renaudel and Paul Boncour) to start out on their evangelical mission, armed with this mandate. The London Conference met, over which presided Ramsay MacDonald with all the airs of the new Messiah.

The Dawes Plan is a remarkable document. All the cleverness as well as the greed of the world bourgeoisie went into its composition. If Europe, ruined by the imperialist war, will be saved by this Plan, the credit must go, not to MacDonald and his naive vanity, but to American finance, aggrandised and but little scathed by the devastations of the war. Firstly, the plan is a serious attempt to reconcile the antagonism between the two vertical groups into which the capitalist system is rent. It devises a means how banking capital and manufacturing capital can both feast on the carcass of prostrate Europe. Secondly, it is a scheme for the colonisation of Europe by Anglo-American finance (in which combination the American element should predominate)—to reduce the working class of Germany and other east European countries to the level of the Asiatic masses. It is this monstrous plan, which he inherited from his Tory predecessor, which has lent Mr. MacDonald the wings of an angel.

Now, if governments headed, for example, by Poincaré or Baldwins, should try to put this plan into operation there would be no end to the suspicion as to its altruistic motive. Even the liberal bourgeoisie must oppose it, if only to maintain their political identity. Socialist and Labour parties, of course, should be absolutely against it. In that case, it would be almost impossible to carry out the plan. Socialist and Labour Governments coming to office by default, and remaining there by the grace of the bourgeoisie, were, therefore, a god-sent opportunity. In the hands of ex-pacifists and pseudo-Socialists this predatory plan assumes the appearance of a decree of liberation, a token of goodwill, a guarantee of peace. It is

expected that this stratagem will deceive the working class; that the latter will submit to the inhuman exploitation, because it is approved by their "leaders" for the sake of "reconstruction and peace." Well, that remains to be seen. Meanwhile what is sure is the abject prostitution of Social Democracy.

It would be erroneous to believe that the bourgeoisie entrust their third party with the actual administration of the plan of reconstruction of their own making. No, they have nothing but contempt for the intellect and ability of their servitors, whose faithfulness, however, they do not doubt, and whom they employ as propagandists. After the solid work had been accomplished by the princes of international finance in London, Mr. MacDonald went to Geneva for propaganda purposes—to raise a cloud of illusions about Disarmament, International Arbitration, Mutual Co-operation and what not. All these stage effects were meant to hide the dirty deal made under his very nose in London—to apply an anaesthetic while the painful operation is performed on the body of Europe.

It was not without considerable difficulty that the Allies—that is to say, America, Britain and France—came to an agreement over the Dawes Plan. The difficulty was concerning the division of the pound of flesh to be extracted from Germany in return for the forty million pounds loan. It involved the questions of participation in the proposed loan, and that of the guarantee for it. The security demanded from and conceded by Germany, in the last analysis, is nothing but the supposed ability of her working people to work more for less wages, in order that the reparation problem might be solved to the satisfaction of the bourgeoisie, victorious and vanquished alike. The prolongation of the working day in Germany, and the lowering of the standard of living of the German working class, would inevitably reflect in Britain, as well as in other industrial countries, to the detriment of the proletariat. But a Labour Government, which was supposed to be the moving spirit and directing genius of the London Conference, had nothing to stipulate on this score. If they did, the Dawes Plan would fall flat, and European reconstruction would remain a mirage (which it will in any case). But Mr. MacDonald would rather be the saviour of the humanity than a defender of the sordid material

interests of the British proletariat, not to mention those of the German workers.

The guarantee demanded from Germany was essentially satisfactory; there was, however, a difference of opinion as to how this guarantee would be made operative. These differences were caused by the suspicion that one capitalist group might steal a march upon another; that the German bourgeoisie might make away with more than they should get as slave-driver. The struggle for supremacy between Anglo-American finance and the French Steel Trust almost threatened to wreck the Conference. The former would not grant the credit to Germany, upon which the Plan hinged, unless the "jugular vein" of German industry, and particularly the railways, were freed from the strangle-hold of French militarism. Business is badly managed by bristling bayonets. If the German railways, customs, forests, &c., were to be solvent pledges for the loan offered, they must be managed, not by generals, but by business men. In other words, the Anglo-Saxon business sense strongly disapproved of the French bullying methods for making the German workers atone for the sins of their rulers, past and present. The French, on their part, shook their head in distrust, and obstinately stuck to their own point of view: a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. It was neither MacDonald's humanitarian formulæ, nor Snowden's "socialist" economics that steered the ship of the London Conference through these rocky shoals. In fact, the deal was done behind their backs, they having no more to say in the making of the Second Versailles than their spiritual predecessor, Wilson, had in the original. They only served as the willing tools of the bourgeoisie, which was trying to entrench itself for the last and decisive battles.

The second difficulty was to reconcile France—to make her see that the only hope of salvaging European capitalism was to accept the hegemony of Anglo-American finance. Although, financially, France stood in a rather weak position, yet by virtue of being in possession of the Ruhr, in addition to Lorraine and the Saar Basin conceded to her as the booty of war, she is not only the military dictator of Europe, but can dominate the industrial life of the Continent. An Anglo-American combination might put on the financial screw, but the French military domination of

Europe could not be challenged without risking another war, which again would dash all hopes of capitalist reconstruction. This was the rock on which Poincaré stood and defied the chagrined allies of yesterday. The Dawes Plan proposed to bribe France out of the manger.

France agreed to the forty million pounds loan to Germany, on condition that the major part of this money would go into her own pockets in the shape of reparation payment. For the Anglo-American bankers who would finance the loan, the transaction was something like buying off from France the mortgage on Germany. By this golden chain the German bourgeoisie would be (very willingly) drawn into the Anglo-American orbit, thus driving a wedge between France and her east European vassals. France could not reject this ostensibly equitable offer without morally isolating herself.

Then arose the thorny question of the Ruhr evacuation, which had been made the *sine qua non* of the Dawes Plan. France would not throw away her trump card for anything on earth. Once more the London Conference was in grave danger. So long as France remained in the Ruhr, she would have a hand on Germany's throat. Consequently, she could always secure the co-operation of the German bourgeoisie (coal kings and iron magnates) for building up the gigantic Continental metallurgical combine which would be a dangerous rival for British and even American industry. But France could not be got out of the Ruhr just by asking, not even in return for the major part of the forty million pounds nominally loaned to Germany. MacDonald, energetically aided by his "socialist" Chancellor of the Exchequer, fought valiantly to safeguard, not the interests of the British proletariat menaced by this plan of capitalist reconstruction, but the future of the Armstrongs, Vickers and Baldwins. But all in vain. A hostile Chamber, led by Poincaré, supported by sections of the Government bloc (Loucheur, Painlevé and Briand groups), stared Herriot in the face, and he refused to be persuaded by his "dear friend" and spiritual colleague, MacDonald. Once more the Dawes Plan was in danger, and Mr. MacDonald's career as a more successful Wilson was at stake. The scheme to "deliver" Europe (to the ravages of capitalism) was saved, but not by the pacifist

aphorisms of MacDonald; it was the mysterious visit to London of M. Loucheur, leader of the French Metallurgical Trust and representative of Poincaréism in essence, which smoothed the situation. The formula of "evacuation within one year" was accepted by Herriot, with the approval of Marshal Foch, for whose benediction the "victor of May 11"—the leader of the French democratic majority—had to rush to Paris in person. Even Poincaré benignly smiled upon his worthy successor, in the person of his secretary, who was present in London and amiably lunched with Herriot, just before he went to sign the "epoch-making" London Agreement. So, on the one hand, MacDonald personified the programme of the British bourgeoisie, unsuccessfully championed by Lloyd George, Bonar Law and Baldwin, while, on the other hand, Herriot carried through all the essentials of Poincaréism, freed from its clumsiness.

Thus under the cover of MacDonaldism, which typifies the worst prostitution of Social Democracy, the new era of capitalist reconstruction is begun. In a subsequent article, we will expose the impossibility of this reconstruction, even with the magic formulæ of MacDonaldism. Meanwhile, be it said that any plan of capitalist reconstruction will succeed only in case MacDonald and his kind succeed where Mussolini has failed, namely, in exterminating the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat and corrupting the rest.

Versailles marked the downfall of Wilson; but London, which is the continuation of Versailles, signalised the triumph of MacDonald, the inheritor of Wilsonism. This came about because the bourgeoisie have learnt some lessons since 1919, while the pacifist illusions of Social Democracy have degenerated into veritable treachery to the proletariat and subject nationalities. The London Agreement is a revision of the Versailles Treaty—its practical rendering. The Entente bourgeoisie forged such a suicidal instrument at Versailles because, drunk with victory, they were guided by the antiquated jingoism of Clemenceau, and cynically brushed aside Wilson, their unappreciated saviour, although they did not begrudge him the frantic acclamations outside the council chamber. Five years' experience has helped the bourgeoisie to regain their business sense. To-day they have

discovered in Wilsonism a very serviceable instrument with which to modify their suicidal policy, and thereby escape destruction. Hence the apparent success of MacDonaldism. How long will this illusion last ?

The World of Labour

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BELGIUM

Miners' Strike

THE strike of the miners in the Borinage coalfield of Belgium is of particular interest as being one of the first struggles (outside Germany) against the effects of the Dawes Plan.

For the strike arose out of the demand of the coalowners for a wage cut owing to the decline in the Belgian coal market which had resulted from the accumulation of large stocks of coal during 1923 and the heavy deliveries of reparation coal.

The opening of the capitalist offensive may be traced back to February, 1924, when, after abortive negotiations over the wages cost of living sliding scale, the coalowners demanded a wage cut of 8 per cent. The trade union leaders declared themselves ready to accept the cut in stages, beginning with 5 per cent. This compromise was not acceptable to the employers.

Accordingly, on June 24, they opened the attack—in direct contravention of the wages agreement, by confronting the 2,500 miners at the Rieu-du-Cœur collieries—the poorest in the Borinage—with a 10 per cent. wage cut or closing down of the pits. The Rieu-du-Cœur miners replied by going on strike, and were promptly refused unemployment benefit.

Encouraged by this first step, the owners—again in contravention of the agreement—gave notice for a general wage reduction of 5-10 per cent., as from August 15. Against the opposition of their leaders, the miners forced the taking of a strike ballot, which, out of 12,071 voting, showed 9,347 for and 2,386 against the strike. Already 25,000 miners were out, and within a couple of days the strike was general, the whole 36,000 miners in the Borinage having come out on strike.

From the beginning the leaders of the national Miners' Union strove to localise the movement and to prevent a national strike. To this end the Social-Democratic journals, notably *Le Peuple*, the central organ of the Belgian Labour Party, and their local paper, *L'Avenir du Borinage*, occupied themselves with daily vituperation of the Belgian Communist Party and the revolutionary industrial organisation known as the "Knights of Labour" (*Chevaliers du Travail*). These bodies were agitating, both in the Borinage and the other coalfields, for the extension of the Borinage strike. On August 29 the Borinage District Committee of the Miners' Union met and issued an appeal for a national strike.

The national Mining Joint Industrial Council (*Commission Mixte*) met at Brussels on September 9, and proposed that the wage cuts should only be from 2-3 per cent. It appeared that this proposal would be accepted, more especially as the coalowners were reported to be weakening.

By 66 votes to 25 the District Committee decided to submit the proposal to a ballot of the whole coalfield. Although the strike had already lasted five weeks, the proposal was rejected, and (on a much heavier vote) a greatly increased majority shown for continuing the strike. The figures were (of 19,643 voting) 16,962 in favour of continuing the strike, and only 2,512 against.

Meanwhile the French Left Wing (Unitary) Miners' Federation, which had all along manifested the keenest interest in the Borinage struggle, had called a conference at Douai on September 14, of delegates from the three French coalfields of the Nord, the Pas-de-Calais, and Anzin, to consider the effective organisation of measures of solidarity. It was decided, among other things, to send a delegation to the National Executive of the Belgian Miners' Union (which by formal resolution rejected the proffered aid) and to dispatch telegrams asking for assistance to Mr. A. J. Cook, for the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, and to the General Council of the Trades Union Congress.¹ These appeals remained unanswered, as did an appeal of the International Propaganda Committee of revolutionary miners, which had held a conference in Berlin, representing the miners' minority movements in a dozen European countries on September 16.

By its resolution of September 19 the miners' National Executive decided that no national ballot should be taken on the question of a national strike in support of the Borinage miners: and that solidarity should be limited to financial support. This was, of course, their attitude during the whole of the struggle.

The Borinage District Committee at first refused to accept arbitration, but, after the question had been submitted to the lodges, arbitration was accepted (September 26) by 56 votes to 25 and 4 abstentions. The Social-Democratic ex-Minister of Industry and Labour, M. Joseph Wauters, proposed as one of the arbitrators M. Cooreman, a former Clerical Prime Minister, who is known to hold a score of company directorships, including those of a number of colliery companies. Even so, the employers rejected this arbitration proposal.

The struggle, now entering on its third month, became very bitter. Blacklegs were severely treated, street lights smashed, telephone lines cut, railways torn up. The provincial governor had declared martial law and forbidden all meetings and demonstrations. Several collisions with the heavily reinforced police took place, and strikers were fired on: several were wounded, and one killed. The part played by the women is worthy of note. They were very effective in organising mass picketing and in attending to blacklegs.

The national J.I.C. had met in the meantime and had proposed a reduction of 8 per cent. instead of 10 per cent. This proposal was hastily submitted to

¹ It is understood that the M.F.G.B. at least never received this telegram. The text was published in *L'Humanité* (September 15, 1924).

a full meeting of the Borinage District Committee on October 11 and, after a long debate, accepted by the narrow majority of 38 votes to 32, with 20 abstentions.

The formal resumption of work took place on October 15: and though a number of strikers did not immediately return, their resistance was in fact broken.

It is interesting to observe that the Borinage District Committee refrained until ten days before the end of the strike from seeking the financial assistance of the *Commission Syndicate* (the Belgian T.U.C. General Council)—and the appeal of the latter body for assistance for the strikers was issued on the day of the return to work.

The Workers' International Relief sent 50,000 francs to the strikers and organised soup kitchens. The Moscow Centrosoyus also sent £1,000 sterling. *Le Peuple* sank so low as to deny that this money was ever sent, until silenced by the production of a formal receipt.

FRANCE

Socialists and the Budget

TO vote against the Budget has been one of the cardinal principles of French Socialism ever since the Unity Congress of 1905, when the following common declaration was agreed to by all the participating Socialist organisations:—

The (Socialist) members of Parliament form a single united group opposed to all the bourgeois political groups. The Socialist group in Parliament must refuse the Government all the means which assure the domination of the bourgeoisie and which maintain it in power; it must consequently refuse to vote the military credits, the credits for colonial conquest, the Secret Funds, and the Budget as a whole.

According to the rules of the Party it was incumbent on all Socialist deputies to vote against the Budget: and it will be recalled that, in order to carry out the Party's policy of support for the Herriot Government, it was decided by the special congress in June¹ that this rule should be temporarily abrogated, lest the Party should "play into the hands of reaction" by causing Herriot's fall.

At a National Council of the Party, held in Paris on November 1-3, the questions of support for Herriot and the Budget vote were again discussed.

On the general question of support for the Herriot Government a distinct uneasiness was exhibited by certain delegates: an uneasiness which found expression in the phrase of M. Bracke:—

We have found that the Party has been acting only too often as if it was simply a fraction of the Liberal Party.

However, just how far the delegates of a similar outlook to M. Bracke may be classed as "Left" can be seen from the remarks of M. Lebas, who declared that:—

A really active, reforming and audaciously democratic Government does not need to ask our assistance. They can rely on it; it is theirs every time that they wish to carry out the smallest reform.

¹ THE LABOUR MONTHLY, August, 1924, Vol. 6, No. 8, p. 508.

In any case the general resolution on support for the Government was carried unanimously.

On the question of the Budget two resolutions were before the Council. One, proposed by the Bracke-Lebas group, in effect reiterated the decision of last June, viz., that the Budget should only be voted in order to save the Herriot Government from defeat at the hands of "reaction." A second resolution, proposed by Léon Blum, the parliamentary leader of the Party, moved to add that the Budget should be voted—

In cases where the activity of the Party and of the Parliamentary group has introduced into the Budget a sufficient number of those essential reforms whose realisation is indeed the object of its support [of the Government].

The "Left" reproached the Right Wing with wanting to go too far with their support of Herriot: one of their speakers even gave expression to what must have been the inward fear of most of the delegates supporting the Bracke resolution, namely, that to vote for the Budget would be to play into the hands of the Communist Party. Yet even this speaker (M. Pressemane) took great care to explain that no one could question the Socialist Party's whole-hearted support of the Herriot Government.

After it had been pointed out that the refusal to pass the Blum resolution would place the Socialist President of the Financial Commission of the Chamber (M. Vincent Auriol) in a very difficult position, the extreme Right Wing M. Renaudel, wound up the debate by pointing out that the Party must have the courage of its convictions, and that what it did it must do thoroughly, carrying out the policy of support for Herriot "to the bitter end."

The Blum resolution was eventually carried by 1,130 votes to 780.

The sequel to this vote was seen in a few days when the Budget came before the Chamber. The Socialist deputies, bound by the injunction not to break the unity of the Parliamentary group (injunction specifically reiterated in the general resolution of the National Council referred to above), voted with the Government on every item of the Budget.

The "reforms"—"secured by the activity of the Party"—which enabled them to do this included some notable increases in armaments expenditure:—

- (1) 313 million francs more than last year for the Navy, of which 250 million are for new constructions.
- (2) 40,812,000 francs (new expenditure) on a special training scheme for reservists.
- (3) 145 million francs more than last year for military aviation.
- (4) 22 million francs more than last year for the purchase of artillery material.

Finally the Budget included all the usual credits for the Secret Police funds: the "reform" secured here was the proviso that all expenditure under this head should be "supervised" by the Financial Commission. The Socialist deputies sided with the Government against the Communist motion for the total abolition of the Secret Funds.

It is only necessary to refer back to the terms of the declaration of 1905.

GERMANY

The Workers Against the Dawes Plan

ON October 2 the important Trades Council¹ of Gotha organised a conference which was attended by 103 Factory Councils of the district. This conference, after hearing numerous reports on the effects of the Dawes Plan on the situation of the German working class, adopted the following programme of ten immediate demands:—

THE "GOTHA PROGRAMME"

(1) Fight against any wage reduction. Demand an immediate increase in wages of 40 per cent. In addition fight for the pre-war rate of wages and equal wages for men and women.

(2) Fight against any prolongation of the working day. After eight hours leave the workshop. At the same time fight for the recovery of the eight-hour day though (despite the Washington Agreement) it has been set aside by the employers and the Government.

(3) Fight against the dismissal of workers and employees, and against all Civil Service reductions. Demand the absorption of the unemployed. The reinstatement of all dismissed workers, employees, and civil servants. Abolition of compulsory labour for the unemployed, increase in relief allowances for the unemployed, disabled ex-service men, and pensioners (old age, &c.) to the necessary subsistence minimum.

(4) Determined fight against all increased taxation of the workers; at the same time for the abolition of the existing taxes imposed on them. Abolition of the 10 per cent. tax on wages. Abolition of the rent tax. Abolition of taxes on co-operative societies.

(5) Free the small peasants who work their own farms from all lease charges. Every small peasant must have at least as much land as he can work with his family. Complete freedom from taxation for the small peasants. Provision of cheap fodder and manure, seed, and long term credits under the control of the small peasants themselves. Abolition of all taxation on the small peasants' co-operative societies.

(6) Assure the food supply of the industrial population by commandeering the harvest from the big agrarians (especially grain and potatoes) with the assistance of agricultural labourers' and small peasants' delegates, as well as with the support of the co-operative societies and trade unions.

(7) Fight against any attempt to force the German workers into an imperialist war; and particularly, "Hands off Soviet Russia!"

(8) Fight for the release of the political prisoners. Fight against the terrorism of White "Justice." Down with the Supreme Court!²

(9) Fight for the repeal of all "emergency" anti-Labour legislation.

(10) The establishment of Trade Union unity to fight for these demands on a national and international scale.

This programme has given rise to the keenest discussion throughout the German working-class movement. Many factory councils and trade union organisations—especially in Central Germany—have accepted the programme and declared themselves ready to fight for the demands.

¹ The District Committee (*Bezirkkartell*) of the German Trade Union Federation (A.D.G.B.).

² The reference is to the *Staatsgerichtshof* (the Supreme Court for the Defence of the Republic), which sits at Leipzig, and whose name has become a byword for its relentless treatment of Communists and all revolutionary workers.

As was to be expected, the Executive Committee of the Federation of Trade Unions (A.D.G.B.) has published a letter of protest, declaring that the Gotha demands are in direct contradiction to the constitution of the A.D.G.B.

The Gotha programme was accepted by a conference of delegates from all the enterprises (mines and factories) controlled by the Franco-Belgian Control Commission (the "M.I.C.U.M."), which met on October 18. A few days later the trade unions and factory councils of the important industrial town of Reimscheid, in the Ruhr, did likewise.

But the most striking success yet achieved by the Gotha programme was its acceptance by the Congress of Factory Councils of the Ruhr and Rhineland (Rhenish Westphalia) which met at Essen on November 2. This Congress, which was the result of an agitation extending over some time, was attended by nearly 600 delegates, of whom 304 were members of the "free" (Social-Democratic) trade unions.

Miners, metalworkers, and railwaymen predominated among the delegates, who included even members of the Christian Trade Unions.

In addition to declaring for the Gotha programme in its entirety, the Congress demanded the summoning of an All-German Congress of Factory Councils.

An incident, typical of thousands occurring throughout Germany at the present time, illustrates the effects of the Dawes Plan, and serves to explain the determination of the Ruhr workers, as exemplified in the Essen Congress. The great Kloeckner mining concern, wishing to enforce the eight-hour day underground and the twelve-hour day on the surface, has just dismissed 6,300 workers, including especially all shop stewards.

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- Russia and the Allies in the Great War.* By Major-General V Novitzky, Professor of the State Military Academy, Moscow. With a Preface by Colonel Malone. (Kniga. 1s.)
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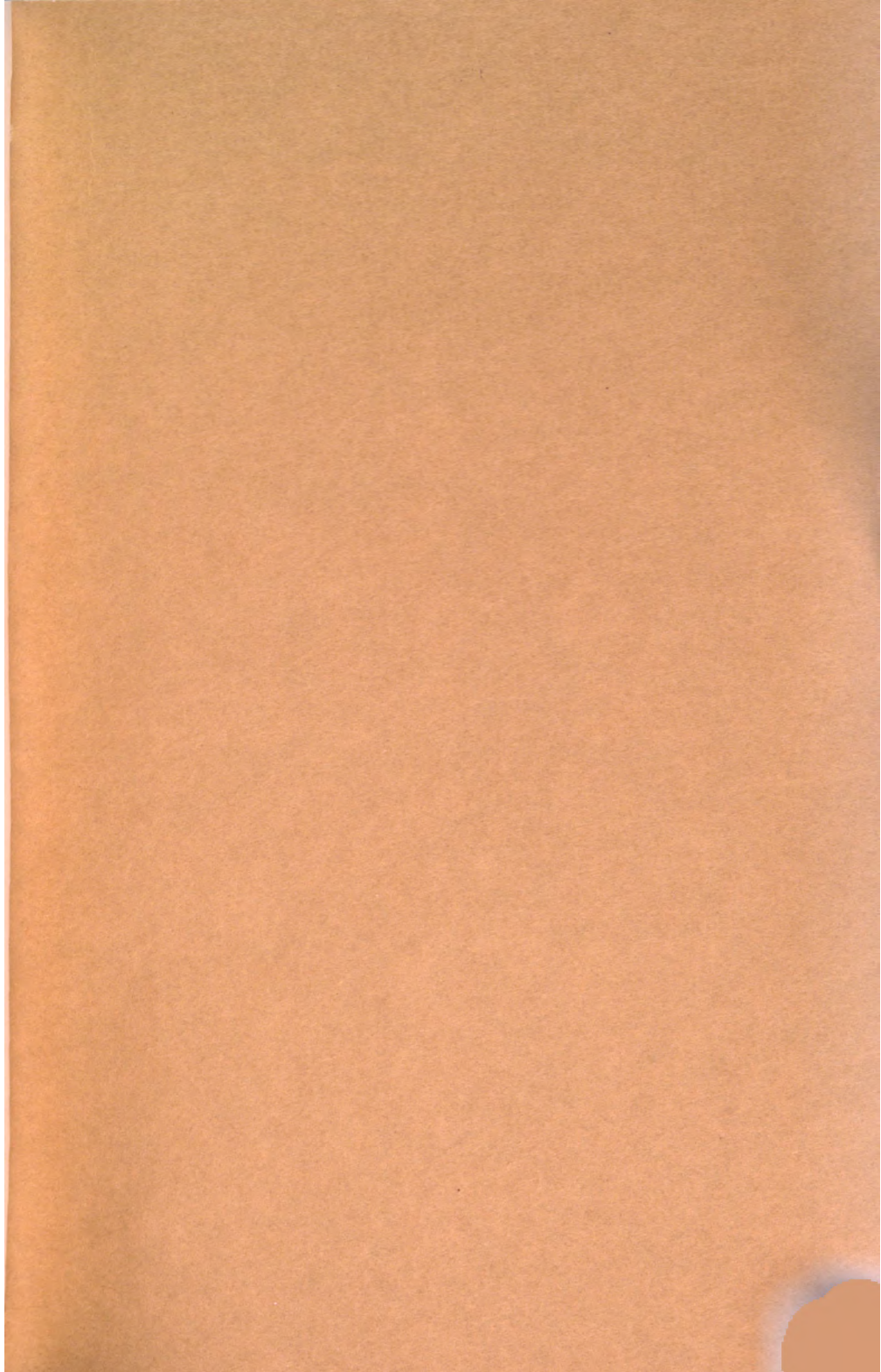
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