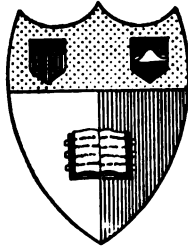


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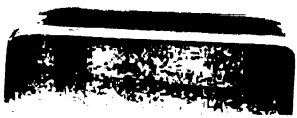
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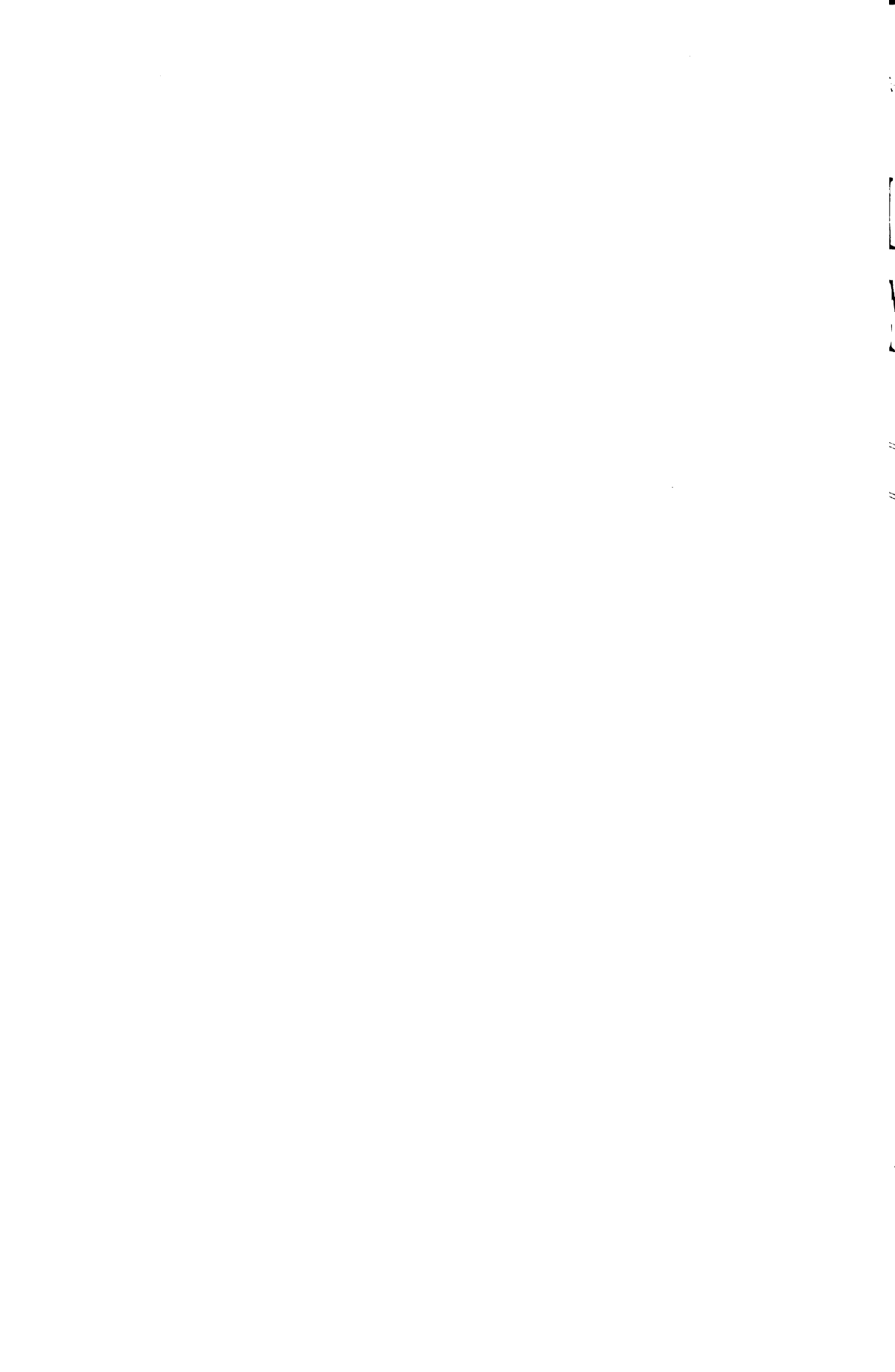
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THE
LABOUR
MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8

January, 1926

Number 1

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

CLASS JUSTICE

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:: Book Reviews

Published at
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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - - -	Page 3
	<i>CLASS JUSTICE</i>	
The Tasks of the Russian Communist Party	- ,,	18
	<i>By N. BUKHARIN</i>	
After Locarno	- - - - - ,,	32
	<i>By W. N. EWER</i>	
The Pact of Amsterdam	- - - - - ,,	44
	<i>By ALLEN HUTT</i>	
Egypt at the Cross Roads	- - - - - ,,	51
	<i>By J. CROSSLEY</i>	
The World of Labour	- - - - - ,,	58
Trade Union Unity		
Book Reviews	- - - - - ,,	62
Blinding the Slaves		O. E. B.
Revolutionary Song		G. A. H.

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NOTES of the MONTH

Historic Trials—Awakening to the Fight—The Old Drugs—The Class Issue—Challenging the Rules—A Specimen Discussion—The Maiden Aunts—The “Permanent Government” in Capitalist Democracy—Capitalism—“A Fair Trial” —With Exceptions—Class Law—An Act of Class Struggle—Suppressing Strikes—“Rioting”—Humbug of Capitalist “Free Speech”—Liberal Lamentations—Mr. MacDonald’s Rôle—Workers and Free Speech

THE British bourgeoisie is teaching the Class War to the British working class. The historic trials at the Old Bailey and in South Wales, the declaration of the Communist Party as illegal, the open organisation of strike-breaking by the Government, the ugly signs of the preparation of violence against the working class, the obvious complicity of Fascism, the police and the whole State apparatus, the incitement by repeated acquittals to extended hooliganism against the whole working class movement, all these are teaching more rapidly and universally than any agitators could do the reality of the Class State and the Class Struggle. They are opening the eyes of thousands of sincere workers, and demonstrating the truth of what the revolutionaries have always said, that once the struggle reaches a certain point and scale, once the working class achieves a measure of advance, then without hesitation the ruling class will throw off the pretence of reason and democracy, and demonstrate with cynical clearness that Force, Force, Force is their real answer to the aspirations of the working class. The rags of British Democracy are being rent in the storm of the approaching struggle, and the nakedness of Class Violence and Class Exploitation is showing more and more clearly through. When this stage has been reached even in Britain, the home of democratic hypocrisy, then it is becoming clear to all that a whole

historical epoch is finally ended—the epoch of Liberal Capitalism, and the last stage is coming close at hand.

LIKE a man who has been blindfolded and gagged by tricksters, like a man who has been drugged by sharpers and at the last instant awakens and battles to consciousness to face his assailants, so to-day at the eleventh hour the British working class is awakening to the fight in front. All the lies that have been instilled, the drugs and dreams of easy victories and Liberal progress, are slipping away : and the stark realities of class suppression and a struggle to be faced are standing out. Yesterday it was the illusion of gradual progress and improvement of conditions under Capitalism that was shattered by the blows of the capitalist offensive. To-day it is the illusion of free speech and democracy that is being shattered. The indignation at the facts of political persecution and class justice has been intense, though the blows of anger have still fallen but feebly on the personality of a Home Secretary or the antiquity of a law, and not yet on the reality of the Class State itself. The response of the whole working class movement to the Government's attack has been deep, widespread and sincere. The atmosphere of Liverpool has vanished. The working class movement has shown the will to drop the illusions of the past and face the realities of the present.

BUT the sharpers are still busy. They are still offering the same drug, offering a touch more of the same drug as a cure for the effects of the last. For the guns and the gaols of the Government, they offer—a Parliamentary debate. "To-day," declares the *Daily Herald* editorial proudly, "their trickery will be exposed, and a fresh stone set on the road of Free Speech, a stone which history will certainly not forget." The stone has been set : is anyone the better for it ? Is an atom of the situation changed ? The Twelve remain in prison. Fascism and the Government preparations go on. The sharpers declare that British Liberty, that spotless virgin, has once again been violated. No doubt : what then do they propose to do about it ? They will cast imprecations on the villain of the piece ; they will declare that an insignificant half-wit who happens to occupy the puppet position of Home Secretary is

the guilty man, who has betrayed the traditions of British liberty and justice. They will arraign the political partiality of the judge. They will attack the mustiness of the legal blunderbuss that has been put in operation. They will accuse the Government of allowing "political prejudice" to stand in the way of "real regard for the impartial administration of justice." Nay, they will even admit that their faith in capitalist justice and democracy is sadly shaken. "Sometimes" declares Mr. MacDonald, "one is almost tempted to go over the border-line because of the unequal administration of justice." "There is one law for the rich and another for the poor" affirms Mr. Clynes. "Political Democracy is a farce" alleges the I.L.P., "unless the rights of freedom of speech, meeting and association are maintained." And what then? These protests do not ring clear, because they do not carry with them any facing of the issue, any facing of the alternative, any recognition that what has taken place is not an accident of personalities, but the necessary working of capitalist justice and capitalist democracy, and that the only answer and defence lies, not in appeals to the hoary hypocrisies of "British Liberty" but in the strength and action of the working class.

IT is necessary to take a little more seriously the issue raised by the Government's attack. In every collapse of capitalist democracy, as the sharpening of the class struggle inevitably leads to open class dictatorship, the democrats always find excuse and refuge, in some accident, in some person, in some incident to explain the collapse of their theories and the disappearance of democratic "liberty." But a more serious political view will recognise that all these incidents are of very secondary importance, and that the real issue is the class issue itself. It is not a question of an ancient law, a partial judge or a peculiar Home Secretary. If there had been no Act of 1797, the trial would still have taken place (as the Attorney-General was able to point out, the charge of "incitement to mutiny" does, in fact, fall under the Common Law). If there had been no Mr. Justice Swift, another judge would have done the job. If there were no Joynson-Hicks, or even no Tory Government—then eventually another Government—if necessary, a Labour Government—would have carried out the prosecution. Capitalist Class

Justice consists, not in the maladministration of the law, but in the Law itself. The real basis of Capitalist Democracy consists in capitalist class rule and coercion. If that coercion is accepted, then "freedom to discuss," provided that coercion is not challenged, is permitted. The crime of the Communist Party consists in having challenged the basis.

IN a game of chess two men are playing. One has all the pieces in full. The other has only a pawn to defend his king. In all other respects the conditions are strictly equal. Elaborate regulations are framed to safeguard the equal rights of each. Expensive time-pieces are set to secure that each shall have his exact three minutes a move. Attendants are present to see that there shall be no foul play. It is a contest of pure reason, of brain power. If the man with the pawn can play skilfully enough to win, he is informed, the full prize of victory will be awarded him ; his opponent assures him of this on his word of honour as a gentleman. Some few malignants suggest that the prize will not be awarded him if he should win ; but the man with the pawn rightly discounts these crudely suspicious notions. Patiently and wearily the man with the pawn plays on and on ; he is defeated again and again. At length he starts up in indignation : " I challenge the rules," he declares, " let us first make our pieces equal, and then we can talk about an equal game and the combat of reason." For answer, his gentleman opponent smiles contemptuously and—produces a revolver.

LET us continue the parallel. The man turns round in surprise : the attendants have also covered him with revolvers. " So ? " says he, " I thought this was a contest of pure reason ? " " Certainly," says his opponent, " but the rules of the game must be maintained. I draw this revolver, not in my own cause, but for the defence and honour of the game." " Why, then, supposing I draw a revolver for the defence and honour of my new game, seeing you have drawn yours for your old one ? " " I will have you arrested at once for a dangerous criminal. You will be performing a selfish, violent and anti-social act : first, because you will be acting lawlessly in your own selfish interest to get more pieces, and not as I do, lawfully in defence of the game ; and second,

because you will be abandoning the basis of reason of our game and appealing to violence, which is beastly, inhuman, futile, condemned by all right-thinking men, whatever our opinions, and a reversion to the morality of the Stone age. Besides, I have seen to it that you have no revolver." "Then, you common fraud," shouts the man, rising up in rage (for he has now lost all faith in the gentlemanliness of his opponent), "I shall appeal to the attendants to be men and turn against you, and stand by me and honesty." "In that case, you dog," whips out his opponent, showing the first sign of rage and fear, "I shall shoot you at sight for endeavouring to corrupt the attendants from their duty." "But," pleads the man, in one last desperate attempt at argument before the fight begins, "supposing I want to change the rules of the game peacefully, what can I do?" "Certainly you can," returns the other with a smile of relief at the reversion to reason; "but you must do it in an orderly manner; you have only to win one game, and then you can establish what rules you like." "But if I cannot win under the present rules, and wish to change the rules, what then? What is the rational answer to that?" "The answer?" returns the other quietly, "the answer is a revolver."

And this is the precise point in the dialectic of democracy that the Labour Movement is reaching. The Labour Movement is discovering the revolver in the background.

ONE last touch remains to add to the picture. The man has a number of maiden aunts, who have always fussed round him a good deal and urged him on to this game of chess as the sure path to fame and fortune. These are thrown into great perturbation by the production of the revolver and the ugly scenes which are beginning to threaten. With a great flapping and fluttering they declare that all the decency and nobility of the grand old game of chess is being ruined. They plead with their nephew not to be so provocative, but to abide by the rules like a gentleman; if he fails to do so, and continues on his present path, they will have to disown him. Then on behalf of their nephew, while making clear that they do not in any way agree with him, they deliver a heavy broadside of words against his opponent as the

really guilty person for having precipitated the crisis. They do not protest against the revolver ; they make that quite clear ; they recognise that a revolver is the necessary basis of a game of chess. But it should not be shown so openly—that is the point—not at least until the situation is really grave ; not until the nephew has made some effort at action, such as will have to be quelled by the revolver ; so far their poor nephew has only talked, they point out, and the revolver should not yet be prematurely brandished, as that only destroys his faith in the game. Finally, they urge their nephew to meet the revolver in the only dignified, humane and effective way—namely, with his pawn.

“**T**HE Government of this country,” declared the Judge in his summing up, “is not Conservative or Labour ; it is not Mr. Ramsay MacDonald or Mr. Baldwin of whom we are thinking when we speak of the Government of this country. We speak of government by ‘the King in Parliament,’ *that permanent Government which is going on the whole time.* Governments fall frequently, but when we talk of the overthrow of the Government, what is meant is a complete change of the Constitution, the abolition of the King and of the House of Commons, and the substitution of some form of government by a committee of the workers. The jury must bear that in mind when studying the documents, and when making up their minds whether or not they do in fact tend to the overthrow of the Government.” The Judge could not have put the point more precisely. The real Government in Capitalist Democracy is not Mr. Baldwin or Mr. MacDonald—that is a matter of complete indifference, and none would turn a hair at their overthrow : the real Government is “that permanent Government which is going on the whole time” ; and the crime of sedition, at which all the boasted “free speech,” reasonable argument, discussion and the rest of it comes to an end and is suddenly replaced by the gaoler’s turnkey and the end of a gun, is the crime of daring to question that “permanent government,” of daring to look past the puppet Prime Ministers on whose alternative virtues all orthodox, dutiful, permitted “free” political agitation should be centred, and instead fixing on and challenging that “perma-

ment Government ” which is the real government in Capitalist Democracy, which maintains itself by force of arms and no more allows its right to be questioned than any other autocracy. And what is that mysterious “ permanent Government ” ? The judge in tones of high mystery endeavoured to explain it in the impressive and adoring phrase “ what we speak of as Government by ‘ the King in Parliament, ’ ” much as if he was saying, “ Government by the Blessed Virgin ” or “ Government by the Holy Trinity. ” But the reality is not so mysterious or ineffable, if we choose to examine it. The real “ permanent government ” in Capitalist Democracy is not difficult to discover, if its actual plain working in the whole social and political system, in every corner of the land, in every act of the whole executive, judicial, bureaucratic and military machine, is examined. The “ permanent government which is going on all the time ” in Capitalist Democracy is—Capitalism.

CAPITALISM is the framework of Capitalist Democracy, and the offence against Capitalist Democracy is the offence against Capitalism. Everything will be permitted, except to attack that framework. Every dream of the most impossible and beautiful future society is permitted, so long as for the present in fact the actual State, *i.e.*, Capitalism, is accepted. To accept Capitalist Democracy means, in the legends upon which aspiring workers are brought up, to accept the reign of peace and freedom and equality and the people’s rule, to put all trust in the golden voice of reason and to build upon the solid rock of conviction. But to accept Capitalist Democracy means in fact, as every Labour Minister has soon discovered, to accept and become the instrument of Capitalism and all its daily violence and tyranny ; to be ruled, not by any imaginary “ voice of the people, ” but by a very precise and explicit system of laws, rules, codes, practice and routine, all of which are nothing but the voice of Capitalism writ large in a mist of fine language and archaic ritual. The fight against Capitalism inevitably becomes a fight against Capitalist Democracy. The working class struggle against Capitalism invariably comes again and again into conflict with the legality of Capitalist Democracy, because the whole legal system of Capitalist Democracy is the expression of Capitalist Class rule. The Communists are in prison,

not because of any "theories of violence," but because they have proclaimed Socialism against Capitalism, and have dared to challenge the system of Capitalist Class coercion and dictatorship which is the reality of Capitalist Democracy.

"IT was a fair trial." At least so says the capitalist press, which is a good judge of fairness. And so it was a fair trial—according to capitalist notions. For since the Law is Capitalism and Capitalism is the Law, then it is possible to exercise the most scrupulous and tedious process of fairness to the working class victims caught in it, and still amazingly find them in the wrong every time: it is possible to evict workers, to drive their families into the street, to ruin them and rob them, to club them when they meet in the open, to imprison them when they plead their cause, to order them to shoot one another, and if there is the slightest opposition to any one of these acts and orders, then it is crime, felony, treason, illegality, insurrection and lawless violence on the part of the workers. It is not surprising, therefore, that the capitalist press should comment with pride on the conspicuous fairness and impartiality of capitalist justice, as compared with the vulgar bias and partisanship of the Soviet rule; where the workers are the judges and the exploiting minority get the bad time, where actually rich men are frequently sent to prison for the crime of robbing the workers, instead of poor men for the crime of stealing a loaf for their families, and where the workers have a right to shelter and livelihood instead of being sentenced for the crime of lacking them. It is not surprising that the capitalist press should call attention to the enjoyable position of the English workers, who, instead of being tried by their fellow workers of the factory or mine, in plain language on plain issues of comradeship, have the privilege of being tried by members of the governing class in archaic language and incomprehensible ritual on the principles of loyalty to Private Property. It is not surprising, finally, that the capitalist press should call attention to the remarkable and notorious leniency of capitalist rule (so frequently exemplified in India, Irak and Ireland under the Black and Tans), which has actually so far refrained from sentencing these audacious young men to death, despite the years of civil war that have been raging in this country.

“IT was a fair trial.” It is true the judge happened to be an ex-Tory Member of Parliament, who had been unseated by a Labour representative ; but this was an accident, and made no difference to his complete freedom from class outlook. It is true the Conservative Party openly dictated the prosecution, and the Home Secretary predicted the sentence beforehand : but these were, as *The Times* correctly pointed out, “ indiscretions,” and should not be allowed to create a wrong impression. It is true the jury did not apparently contain a single Labour representative, despite Labour now constituting a third of the electorate ; but this was mere chance of the ballot and should only be treated as such. “ The jury,” declared *The Times* with regard to them, “ may be taken to represent the normal citizens of this country.” It is true that a statistically correct representation of the “ normal citizens of this country ” should, as a mere matter of arithmetic, contain at least nine or ten labourers and operatives out of the twelve : but this is a sordid and scientific view, which actually treats common people as existing, and forgets that for *The Times* and all right thinking people the “ normal citizens of this country ” consist of one-tenth of the population. Finally, the defendants were actually allowed to speak for a number of hours before their sentence without being clubbed on the head for it. It is true that every time they wished to make a single reference to any really important facts, such as the politics of the case, the rôle of the Conservative Party, the secret police, the Fascist outrages, and the illegal arming and utterances of their prosecutors, they were rapidly stopped by the judge with the comment that such matters were “ irrelevant ” ; but this was not any exhibition of class bias, but purely fidelity to the Law.

IT is the Law itself that is the expression of Class Justice under Capitalist Democracy. All the class-bias of the agents is incidental, though inevitable. The upper class training of the judges and lawyers, the power of gold and the powerlessness of poverty, the private bourgeois influences on trials and sentences, the commercialisation of the whole procedure, the recurrent scandals which arouse opinion from time to time at some ugly case of leniency to the rich and severity to the poor, and actual stretching of the law, all these are but inevitable outgrowths and symptoms

of the whole system. Were the agents as pure as angels and as free from bias as new-born babes, the essential results would be the same. For they are not free agents ; they are agents of the Law, and the Law in a Class State is the expression of the ruling class. The Law in capitalist society is the codification of capitalist rights of property and of the necessary suppression of the working class. This is the reality of Capitalist Justice behind all the smug assumptions of fairness and equality. Capitalist Justice differs from Proletarian Justice in the transition Proletarian State above all in its hypocrisy, that it denies its class character and professes to be in the interests of "all," and further that the class whose interests it represents is the small minority, whereas Proletarian Justice openly acts in the interests of the majority. It is this reality of the class character of the Law, which is the basis of Capitalist Justice, that enables its agents to assume pontifical expressions of neutrality and freedom from class bias and of fidelity to the Law, because they know that under that form of fidelity to the Law they can give expression to all the class bias and hatred in their hearts, and exercise a machine of class terror no less than if they called it a dictatorship. And for this reason the trial at the Old Bailey was as pure an incident of class struggle, of confrontation of classes, of capitalist versus working class, as any other incident in the whole regime of capitalist class oppression and working class struggle.

HOW completely the issue of the trial was purely and simply the issue of the Class Struggle, of Capitalism versus Socialism, of the bourgeois ruling class and the subject workers, was let slip again and again in one utterance after another of the Prosecutor, the Attorney-General, the Home Secretary and the Judge. Before the case had been completely dressed up in more suitable garb, the Crown Prosecutor said quite bluntly that the crime of sedition consisted in the propaganda of the class war, or "creating antagonism between different classes of His Majesty's subjects." This is the most open expression of the whole purpose of Class Justice. This clumsy expression of the capitalist motive of the whole trial was discreetly dropped by the Attorney-General, who himself, however, fell into equal slips when he declared that the

function of the military was to "suppress strikes," and had subsequently to correct this as an "error" in the shorthand report. The blazing indiscretions of the Home Secretary, when he menaced his working class opponents at a political meeting during the progress of the trial with the club that was preparing for them in the shape of the sentence that was coming, no less clearly indicated the class fight behind the trial than his announcement of discipleship to Mussolini, and praise of Mussolini's violence as having "made them work" revealed clearly the slave-master's aim behind the whole array of Capitalist Justice. Finally, lest there be any doubt that the whole Labour Movement was being attacked, Mr. Churchill announced, immediately after the verdict, that no distinction could be drawn between the Socialists and the Communists, and the same press which had instigated the first trial took up at once the campaign for the next. The prospects of the next trial, and the extension of the legal campaign to a wider sphere, depends, as the Home Secretary's evasive replies to questions have made clear, solely on the question of power and the reaction of the working class.

EVEN more significant for bringing out the whole Class Struggle purpose of the new Capitalist judicial offensive is the relation of the Old Bailey trial to the South Wales trial. When the Attorney-General declared that the function of the military was to "suppress strikes," he endeavoured to defend himself later by saying that he had intended to say "suppress riots." The Judge endeavoured to support this by the following statement :—

No one would suggest that the military would be used to suppress struggles *merely because they were refusing to work*, but it was the duty of the Crown to stop rioting, to prevent disturbances and disorder.

Here a most reassuring distinction is drawn. Strikers will not be suppressed as strikers ; they will only be suppressed as "rioters." In the innocent workers' mind is raised a picture of violent carnage and bloodshed—"disturbances and disorder"—which alone will lead to the kindly intervention of the forces of the Crown to restore "order." How unjustified is this Communist propaganda, thinks he, which declares that the soldiers and police will be used as instruments of Capitalist violence against strikers whenever the

situation is serious. But then comes a shock. For there follows immediately the Ammanford trial.

WHAT was the essence of this trial? The police attacked a crowd of strikers. Numbers of strikers—"quiet, hardworking, respectable men," according to the police evidence—are sent to gaol in batches for "rioting." What then? Had they been guilty of violence? Not at all. Against this crowd of starving men, under every provocation from the authorities, not one act of violence could be proved. Where then was the "rioting"? Where was the justification for the intervention of the forces of the Crown? Lord Halsbury, the Crown lawyer sent down for the purpose of the trial, was not discomposed. He declared:

"It was idle to say it was not rioting because nobody was hurt." So here the circle is complete.

(1) Strikers will not be suppressed by the forces of the Crown unless they are guilty of "rioting" (Mr. Justice Swift).

(2) But strikers can be guilty of "rioting" although there is admittedly no violence on their part (Lord Halsbury).

(3) Therefore strikers can be suppressed by the forces of the Crown although there is no violence on their part.

The worker will conclude that the Communist argument was not so wrong after all. The forces of the Crown are the instruments of Capitalism against the working class, for whose intervention the working class must be prepared. And if that is correct, then how completely justified is the Communist plea for working class propaganda to the military forces—which was made the principal count in the indictment against them, and which is in fact no more than a proclamation of the most necessary task of the whole working class movement to meet Capitalist violence.

IT is therefore essential that the whole working class movement should meet the capitalist attack revealed in the Communist trial as an act of the class struggle and in the spirit of the class struggle. Appeals to the bourgeoisie on behalf of free speech will not at the present stage carry far, for the bourgeoisie is moving in a different direction. The bourgeois tradition of "Free Speech" is only a tradition of deceiving and doping the workers: "Free Speech" is allowed in plenty, so long as the bourgeoisie calls the tune, and the workers are sufficiently befogged to accept and respect

the cant that is poured into them, as in the halcyon days of Gladstone and Bright. But so soon as the conditions change, so soon as the workers advance to consciousness and their own expression, so soon as Socialist and Communist propaganda begins to gain a real hold, so soon as the class struggle grows more serious, then the tune changes, the bourgeoisie throws "Free Speech" aside as an outworn tool, and turns to direct repression; and a small dwindling band of Liberals is left lamenting the progress of the Class Struggle which they have spent their lives trying to conceal. But these Liberals are only lamenting the decay of the appearances which used to bring comfort to their souls in the midst of the horrors of actual class oppression, and the vulgar openness of the Class struggle that has now succeeded; in practice they show their solidarity in all essentials with the bourgeoisie.

IN this way the *Manchester Guardian* laments the rôle of the Home Secretary as nowadays the "Secretary for Class War," not because he conducts the class war (his actual preparations, etc., they recognise as necessary), but because he ceases to make any pretence about it and openly proclaims his rôle in the class war.

By acting in this spirit he has already gone far to compromise in a really terrible way the character and efficiency of the arrangements which every British Government will now have to make for the maintenance of vital services during any industrial struggle on a great scale with which the perversity of employers or workmen may plague the country. Obviously the one thing supremely needful was to keep any such provisions from having a party or class colour, or being mistaken for some sort of army either of strike breakers or anti-capitalists. Sir William Joynson Hicks made the fatal mistake of launching his scheme as a response to the appeal of a private committee of persons whom every Trade Union official would inevitably regard as an upper class and anti-Labour Committee of Public Safety. In fact, he treated Class War (just as the Marxists do) not as a possible evil to be averted but as a struggle already existing and chiefly needing to be waged aggressively.

Here speaks the authentic voice of Liberalism. It is not the Class Struggle that is the evil, but the recognition of the Class Struggle. It is not even the class preparations of Joynson-Hicks that are ("arrangements which every British Government will now have to make"), but his failure to conceal their class character ("obviously the one thing needful was to keep any such provisions from

having a party or a class colour ") and the consequent danger of arousing the suspicions of the workers. It is not the suppression of Communist propaganda that is the crime, but the danger of giving it an advertisement. In fact, the aim is the same as that of the Conservatives, to keep the workers in subjection ; but the means suggested are different. "Freedom" is believed in only as an instrument of working class subjection ; in fact, "freedom" so-called is believed in, only because the conditions of capitalism make it false. And therefore in the end there is practical unity with the Conservatives.

IN the same way Mr. MacDonald, even when on behalf of the working class movement he has to appear in the rôle of advocate for the Communists against the Government prosecution, makes clear in his speech his practical unity with the bourgeoisie. Does he declare in his speech the right of Communist, as of all working class, propaganda, despite bourgeois suppression ? Not at all. How could he, after Liverpool ? He declares, not only his "active opposition to Communism," but that the real issue is:—

Whether the prosecution of leading members of the Communist Party as it is in the country *at the present time* is a service or dis-service to the State.

This is a very significant sentence. The point of view from which Mr. MacDonald approaches the question of the prosecution of the Communists is not the point of view of the working class, but the point of view of "the State," *i.e.*, the Capitalist State. Further he recognises that the question is not whether the Communists should be prosecuted, but *when* ("whether . . . at the present time"), implying that at a later stage the fight of Capitalist Justice and the Capitalist State against Communism and the working class will have to take place, but that as a wise strategist he should like to postpone that date to a more favourable point when it is absolutely necessary. This is the speech of one bourgeois statesman to another on the best method of combatting Communism. It is not a speech in defence of the rights of working class propaganda. And indeed Mr. MacDonald's speech shows him uneasily conscious of his future rôle when he will himself be suppressing working class agitation on behalf of the Capitalist State. The situation of the

Campbell case or the Transport Strike is bound to recur, and cannot repeatedly be evaded.

WORKING class agitation for freedom of speech will follow a very different line. The workers know very well that they have only won in the past and can only hold to-day so much right of freedom of speech for themselves as they have been able to extort by their own strength from the capitalist class. Freedom of speech is itself an issue of the Class Struggle. There can never be real freedom of speech for the workers in capitalist society, as long as the capitalist class or 1 per cent. maintains a 99 per cent. monopoly of the press, and the production and distribution of news and views, leaving the feeble poverty-stricken workers' press to struggle along, and the Capitalist State maintains through its laws and courts an effective control of what may and what may not be printed. The workers will then only begin to win real freedom of speech when they have smashed the capitalist monopoly of the press by the working class dictatorship and won the press for the working class or immense majority. The limited right of freedom of speech which the workers have so far won for themselves within Capitalism they can only hold against repeated attacks of the capitalist class by the strongest assertion of their combined strength. To-day the bourgeoisie has delivered a direct assault on the fundamental rights of working class agitation and propaganda, that is, on the basis of the working class movement. It is for the whole working class movement to defeat this assault. The future of open revolutionary working class propaganda (and all working class propaganda in the future will inevitably have to be more and more clearly revolutionary) is at stake. There can be no rest in agitation and yet stronger agitation, in assertion and repeated re-assertion all over the country of the right of revolutionary working class propaganda in the face of every menace until this fundamental right of all working class propaganda is won anew and held by the power and will of the working class.

R. P. D.

THE TASKS OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY

By N. BUKHARIN

[The subject discussed here by Comrade Bukharin in the course of a recent speech to the Moscow Communist Party Conference is the main subject being dealt with by the present Congress of the Russian Communist Party. His statement gives a clear picture, in contradistinction to the garbled reports in the Press in this country, of the problems of Socialist construction with which the Party is now faced, but it should be remembered that as far as the subject dealt with is still a matter for controversy his view is that of the Moscow organisation alone.]

I WISH to deal here with the present position, with the question of those dangers and difficulties which threaten us both within the Party and outside.

Everything considered, during the past year the Party under the guidance of the Central Committee, the proletariat under the guidance of the Party, and the whole country under the guidance of the proletariat, can congratulate themselves on tremendous successes. Two years ago none of us would have dared to predict that we would so quickly restore industry to the pre-war level, do almost the same for agriculture, receive so many recognitions from capitalist States and so considerably extend our foreign trade operations. Nevertheless, in dealing with the present position we must dwell on our failures as well as on our successes.

First of all, I consider it my bounden duty to dwell upon our failure in the sphere of grain collection operations, for it is a failure which has immediately reacted on our export and import operations, which, in its turn, has affected our general production programme, and already evoked a great reaction in our industry.

You know, comrades, what has been recently happening. Our economic organisations of the State Planning Commission were counting on a very considerable harvest ; we were expecting the peasantry to have big surplus stocks to put on the market. It was

on the basis of these calculations that we formulated our export programme, and on the basis of the latter we estimated the amount we could allot to imports of machinery, general commodities, raw material for our industries, and so on.

Proceeding from these estimates we then framed our programme of production, which aimed at developing the whole organisation of our industry as widely as possible. And from this programme again we estimated various items of our budget, such as the amounts to be allotted for the various needs of socialist construction, from the Red Army to the schools, to housing schemes and economic organisation in the true sense of the word.

We all believed that we were faced with vast possibilities for the development of industry ; and our estimates were all based on definite figures and calculations with regard to imports and exports and stocks of grain.

To a large extent these estimates have not been realised. As you know, there are various reasons for this: errors in calculation ; a wet autumn which spoilt part of the harvest and delayed threshing operations ; the lack of a common programme of action among our different grain collecting centres, which led to their all starting together to get in their grain within a very short period, the terrific demand thus created suddenly driving up prices and awakening hopes among the peasants of higher prices still. As a result of all these causes our stock of grain has not come up to our expectations in quality or in quantity, nor has it been collected with the speed upon which we had relied.

But before we could actually tell the total surplus available for export, we had already committed ourselves to various arrangements for imports. As a result, our imports were greater than our exports ; a whole series of purchases abroad were made prematurely, creating unfavourable conditions for the preservation of our trade balance. We had to pay too much while our debtors had to pay only very little, and hence arose the new danger of a depreciation of our currency. This danger still threatens us, though we believe that we shall overcome it.

The same miscalculations have also forced us to limit our programme of imports. In other words, we must bring in fewer machines, less raw cotton from abroad, although our factories had

calculated on getting all that we had originally estimated for and had based their own immediate estimates on these calculations, making all their other arrangements accordingly. In a large number of our industries the means that should have been employed as working capital has been expended on other important tasks. Some of this working capital has been spent on making foundations for our houses, on improvements in our factory buildings, &c. And after all this had been interrupted, after we had been obliged to cut down our programme of importation in order to keep within limits which would insure the stability of our rouble, and with it a more or less normal development for the whole economic life of the country, there still arose a further question—how was the programme of production to be cut down? In various places we have had to limit the development of industry. In several places there have already been, it is said, irregularities in the payment of wages—delays of two or three days. We believe that we shall be able in the main to overcome this disorganisation, but obviously our position is by no means of the kind which conduces to loud patriotic cheering; it is not the position of which before we were fondly dreaming. We are, in fact, hardly in a position to cheer at all.

Economic Reconstruction and Private Capital

This, comrades, is in my opinion the chief danger for our whole country. It is characteristic that many of our comrades who are fond of talking about dangers never mention this, the fundamental danger, at all. They are making a mistake! Even the danger of the peasant profiteer, or the dangers arising from private capitalism, should not be approached by a general chatter about profiteers, they should be regarded in the light of the mutual reactions which are at this very moment developing, they should be considered in their relation to the actual conditions, to the position as a whole.

But how do these particular conditions arise? They are arising owing to the stagnation in our grain collecting operations, and further, because our industries have not provided a large enough stock of commodities. It is in virtue of these circumstances that the peasant profiteer (kulak) and the private capitalist trader have been enabled to set to work with exceptional impetus. The kulak takes advantage of our grain operations to appear in the market as

a purchaser who is aiming at an alliance with the private trader, and who, on the basis of the present comparatively bad economic position, is still "earning his bread," though in this particular case not "by the sweat of his brow." That is how things stand.

On no account, therefore, must we carelessly ignore these dangers of the peasant-profiteer and the private capitalist. We must admit that although on the whole our State industries, our co-operative system and our co-operative trade are making progress, although they are systematically crowding out the private trader and encircling the peasant profiteer, nevertheless it is also true that, at the present time, in some places, especially where grain stocks and raw materials are concerned, the peasant profiteer and the private capitalist have broken through our front. This does not mean that they have driven us back along the whole length of our front (taking it altogether it is we who are driving them back). But in some places they have driven us back. This has been due in the first place to those miscalculations about which I have already spoken.

Internal Industry and the World Market

If we are to discuss the dangers threatening our country—and we have already discussed them ten thousand times—we may say that they are of two kinds, international and internal. The internal dangers are bound up with the international dangers.

The international dangers are the most important. At the present time we are engaging in an increasing number of operations in the world market, and consequently we are to a certain extent playing a part in the world economic system. To a certain extent our programme of production depends on how much we import from other countries and how much we export to other countries. Now suppose that a financial and economic blockade is started, that any three States resolve to export nothing to Russia. We should then have to reorganise our whole economic plan. Does not our greatest difficulty lie here? Our growth depends upon our connections with the outer world, but those very connections make us in some respects more vulnerable. How are we to avoid this danger? We must avoid it by making sure that, whatever happens, our economic system and our country do not become too dependent

economically on foreign markets, so long as these markets are controlled by bourgeoisie and capitalism.

Our most important internal difficulty arises from the fact that alongside of the growth of socialist elements in our industry, co-operatives, &c., there is also a growth of private capital and of rich peasants, that is to say, of elements who wage a desperate struggle for the control of the middle peasantry.

People talk of the "kulak" danger as if it only meant that the peasant profiteer wanted to succeed in profiteering, and nothing more. But that is not the problem at all. The kulaks are dangerous because they are fighting us for the middle peasantry, and above all because, if conditions are unfavourable to us, they can detach some of the middle peasantry from us. If our first object is to link up the middle peasantry with ourselves, then we have got to consider the kulak from this point of view. And if the kulak forms an alliance into the bargain with the private capitalist, who sells goloshes when our co-operatives and our government shops have no goloshes to sell, then he strengthens his position very greatly. Arm-in-arm with the kulak the private trader will be able to frighten away from us a considerable section of the middle peasantry. Once this has been achieved, the workers' and peasants' *bloc* is also undermined. That is the essence of the danger. If, in addition, the kulak and the private capitalist get a helping hand from various "bureaucratic" elements in the towns (owing to the fact that elements of this sort, by no means communistically inclined, are growing up), then their common front is strengthened still further.

We have got to realise all this ; no new principle is involved, but the danger is there and it must be discussed ; the whole problem must be analysed intelligently and not treated in general phrases, it must be analysed in its relation to those economic difficulties with which we are at present contending.

The question must not be formulated as if it were possible that there could grow up one socialism of the town and another of the country. It is absolutely clear that there can be no independent separate socialism of the countryside, and that the peasants cannot build up any independent socialism. What must be emphasised is that the peasants, whether they will or no, can take part in the building up of socialism through the co-operatives, for this whole

machinery is guided by the socialist industry of the towns and by the working class. If the town working class are linked in this way with the co-operatives, through their banks, transport and other enterprises, trusts, syndicates and so on, and thus carry the co-operatives with them, then there is possible an economic development of the middle peasantry along non-capitalist lines.

This does not mean that the capitalist path will at once be discarded. Nothing of the kind! There will be a struggle. There will be peasant profiteers, there will be agricultural labourers, and there will be a furious struggle between the profiteers on the one hand and the middle peasants and the poor peasants on the other. But alongside of this, and in spite of it, if we pursue a correct policy, if we are skilful in waging a socialist struggle against the hostile strata, there will be an ever-growing proportion of the middle peasantry who will follow the path that we are striving for.

There are many comrades who do not understand these anticipations. They believe that a development of the village on non-capitalist lines is utterly impossible, they believe that the building up of socialism through the co-operatives under the guidance of industry is practically impossible. On the basis of the above analysis, however, it is necessary to affirm that if we separate socialism from State industry, if we separate the co-operatives and their socialist development from State industry, then there is absolutely nothing left of the plan which Lenin bequeathed to us for our guidance.

The Problem of Classes

I wish now to go on to an analysis of the dangers which arise from what has been said before me. When we come to state the problem of the classes and class leadership, we find that it can be quite naturally formulated as follows:—At the present moment all sections of society and all social groups are stirring into life—the kulaks, the middle and the poor peasants, the proletariat and the “Nepmen.” We have to deal with an awakening of this whole diversified mass which makes up the population of our country. And what does this mean? Does it mean that they were all dead, and have now been brought to life by sprinkling with holy water? Certainly not. They were not dead—but in general one may say

that the growth of economic life has played the part of the holy water, causing an increase in the activity of all social groups.

How does our Party react to this process? It replies with the watchword of "more awakening." As the means of stimulating our party organisation it gave out the slogan of "awakening" in the trade unions, village soviets, Communist League of Youth, in the internal democracy of the Party. It is true that sundry elements are also awakening, whose activity is not particularly desirable in our country. What must be done in these circumstances? If we believe it necessary to awaken the village soviets, to uplift the peasantry and increase its activity, &c.—what are we to do next? Can we then simply say that we are here to increase general activity, and nothing more? That would be saying that we were agreeing to the loss of the proletarian leadership. If the village soviets become more active, then it is necessary for the town soviets to become still more active.

The problem of leadership consists beyond doubt in the closing up of the ranks of the working class, as the leading force in our society—to stimulate it and endow it with new energy. That is as clear as daylight. And our Party, which is the leader of the whole working class, must now declare that the task of welding together the working class is one of the fundamental tasks of our time, a task which arises out of the present situation. Whoever does not understand this task, understands absolutely nothing.

Changes within the Working Class

We must undertake this task in the light of concrete realities. What is there *new* about the working class? We are always talking about the working class, but is it always the same and unchanging? There is a new thing about the working class, and that consists in the fact that we are now in a period in which there is an important regrouping in the composition of the working class. The working class is growing, our social basis is growing, because town industries are growing. And what does the growth of the working class mean? Every Communist young pioneer now knows that we are suffering from a lack of qualified labour; that, since we have brought industry up to the pre-war standard, a notable proportion of the old workers have come into industry. The growth of the working class means

also that new sections are entering that class. That raises all sorts of new thoughts, and our Party must perceive the difficulties, which arise from this. To those who say that we do not see difficulties, and take altogether too rosy a view, we answer, "That is not true." We see the kulak as well as any other, but do you see those difficulties which confront us in our very citadel, the working class? No, you do not see them. These difficulties consist in the fact that new sections of the population, the proletarianised peasants, are coming into our ranks, becoming, for the first time, members of the working class. (I speak only in general terms. There are other elements which are coming into the working class, but the peasantry is the chief source of our working class, and its members bring with them a peasant ideology.)

The new workers in industry constitute a notable percentage. I said that we shall apparently, in the near future, experience a slight economic disturbance, but on the whole I am convinced that we shall, in the next few years, grow very rapidly and develop our industry. That means that enormous untrained masses of the working class will become factory workers. Thus the task before the Party resolves itself into that of educating these new sections of the working class. What does education mean? It means a correct attitude of mind on the part of the working class.

Hitherto we have had to deal with workers who have had years of civil war behind them, who overthrew Tsarism and the Kerensky regime, who fought at the front, suffered hunger—and knew why they suffered. We were concerned with a working class with a tremendous experience, such as no other proletariat in the world has had. But now new sections are coming to us, and they have not had this experience. Therein is the kernel of the question of welding the ranks of the working class. I declare that our Party cannot educate these sections, if the influence that is foremost among them is not that of the Party, but of the peasantry and petty bourgeoisie. That, more than all, would endanger the union of the workers and peasants, and the whole work of socialist construction. This danger, along with all the other dangers, must be seen and declared. I therefore ask, dare we be such optimists as to say, "We have finished with the Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. They will never rise again"? I do not share this rosy view. I

believe that if we follow a wrong policy, the Mensheviks will again obtain a certain basis in the working class. I do not know where these new Mensheviks will come from. Perhaps they will be the old Mensheviks, perhaps they will come from that portion of our Party which has separated from us (those who have been expelled), or from somewhere else—naturally not from heaven, but from our sinful earth, and from various social strata.

Is there a basis for them? Naturally there is. It exists in our poverty, comparatively low wages (low, not in comparison with before the war, but in comparison with newly developed necessities), in our disorganisation, wretchedness, over-population on the land, and in our terrible backwardness. We must ask the question: If we had to carry on a great war, to defend our achievements against an enemy, would these new sections march immediately, weapons in hand, full of enthusiasm for the defence of what we have won? I say that remains a big question, for these have not that experience on which our working class relies. Our old worker can starve, and endure unheard-of martyrdom for the socialist cause, because he has been through all stages of the fight. He knew what he set out to do, with whom and for what he has fought, and who was his enemy. These new sections know nothing, or very little. A clear and firm attitude of mind is needed here, but what do we see? We see already a number of very bad signs, particularly among the Communist youth. What means this growing rowdyism, this falling away from discipline? It all means the penetration of petty bourgeois ideas among the young workers. That is the influence of the new sections. All this must be cleared away. To that end complete clearness of ideas is needed and a correct attitude of mind on the part of the workers as a whole, including the new sections. What does this question of the attitude of mind mean? It is the question of getting our socialist development into perspective. The old workers know that we are engaged in building up socialism. They do not share the scepticism of many comrades who think that we cannot build up socialism in one country alone. They know that formerly the masters, the factory-owners, spat upon them, treated them on the public tramcars like cattle, but that now they are masters of the situation. They feel that in their own being. But these new sections do not feel it, and there a change is needed.

What is, after all, this perspective, which is now clearly set forth as the path of socialist construction in our country. Lenin has told us. It is the welding, the forging of the link between state industry and the co-operatives, and that between the co-operatives and the mass of the peasantry. Regarded from the social aspect, this is a linking of the working class with the mass of the peasantry, that is, in the main, with the middle peasantry.

What is the path which Lenin has shown us? How do we conceive our socialist development? I think we should put it to ourselves thus: We know that the middle peasantry is the fundamental mass, the principal stratum of the population on the land. The industry of the middle peasant constitutes the chief part of the peasant industry. He is therefore the central figure, he constitutes the majority of the land population. The fact that he is the central figure is not an "act of God." It is conditioned by our Revolution. When many comrades produce passages from Lenin, written 30 years ago, and say, there were so many poor peasants, so many middle peasants, and so on, and then say that this still applies, they are forgetting that small detail, the Revolution. Our Revolution was, in its first half, by its very nature, a land revolution. It meant the smashing of the landowners and kulaks, and the giving over of their lands to the peasants, and a great uproar over the question of the enjoyment of the profits of the land. That is the meaning of the first phase of our Revolution, the building up of the great part played by the middle peasant. Those who fix their eyes on what was 30 years ago, are overlooking the Revolution. Of such people Lenin said that they were not "old Bolsheviks," but "old fatheads."

The middle peasant has undoubtedly become the central figure of our land system. Lenin well understood that it was an absolute travesty of reality to omit from an analysis of social relations that great agrarian revolution the like of which, in its scope, in the number of estates broken up, in the amount of land which was given over to the peasants, the world had never before seen. To leave this "detail" out of account is to understand nothing at all.

Lenin gave us the most complete statement of the way to Socialism. He said it consisted in uniting our socialist State industry with the industry of the middle peasants. The organisation which

carries out this process, the bridge which joins State industry with the middle peasants' industry is the co-operatives. Formerly, we tried to drive the peasants into Communism, with the iron broom of forced requisitions and the system of war Communism. The new economic policy is, however, according to Lenin's definition, a policy which unites the social interests of Socialist construction with private economic interests. The meaning of the new economic policy is that, instead of driving the peasant forcibly into Communism, he is led by his own private capitalistic interests, gradually, and unnoticed by himself, to Communism.

What part is the co-operative system to play? A very simple one. The co-operatives help the peasant to organise to greater advantage the marketing of his products and to buy more advantageously the materials for his industry, and also to get credit—that is, according to our plan. From this it follows (given a correct co-operative policy) that it becomes more advantageous for the peasant to organise in the co-operatives than to remain outside. He will also put his savings in a suitable bank, if a correct policy is pursued. All these institutions (the co-operatives, credit societies, import and export co-operatives, &c.) are bound up with our economic organisations, and our economic organisations are supported by our banking system, which in turn rests upon our State industries, and thus upon the power of our proletarian State. Thus it follows that our proletarian ship of State, that is, our State industries, will tow behind it the co-operatives, as a barge which is heavier than itself, and this barge will draw along behind it, by a million tow-lines, the mighty burden of the whole peasantry. For, with the development of productive power, our State industries will grow and grow, will assume more and more the leading place in our whole economic life, and so we shall gradually absorb and remodel the whole peasant economy.

All that, however, does not mean that this process will unfold itself smoothly and peacefully. Many think, when one speaks as I have spoken, that everything will go smoothly and peacefully, without any struggle. A big mistake! This process will cause a mighty struggle in almost every cell and nucleus. What does following a correct co-operative policy mean? It means, for instance, to take a correct line at co-operative elections. In the leadership of these organisations themselves the class struggle between the kulaks

and the middle peasants will be fought out. There will naturally be class struggle. In the leadership of the co-operatives themselves kulak elements can be found. It may happen that a whole series of co-operatives may fall into the hands of kulaks. Here and there this struggle will perhaps quite unreasonably be brought to a head. The course will be pursued by a painful process of struggle. Without struggle it cannot be fulfilled. But we rely upon holding such commanding positions as will put certain trump cards into our hands, and from that comes our absolute certainty that by this way we shall conquer.

State Industry

This is the fundamental thing in the plan of future development to Socialism: State industry and co-operative organisation. Every one of us makes mistakes, and we shall certainly make them in the future. We do not hope that each one of our leaders will make no mistakes. Without Lenin, mistakes are inevitable in each one of us. That is an immutable law of our development. But, comrades, that which is now held to be true by many comrades, is more than a single mistake, for, if we take up a wrong attitude on the question of State industry and the co-operatives, what remains of the Leninist plan? Next to nothing remains. We may make mistakes in individual questions, but when we falsely represent the questions of State industry, the cooperatives, the proletariat and the middle peasants, what is left of the Leninist plan? Indeed, almost nothing. Therefore I say that, regardless of our mistakes, we must affirm that the point of view which I have criticised is a wrong one. Its error consists in this: according to our opinion, State industry is socialist industry. From the point of view of many comrades (many are very heated) it is state-capitalistic industry. For this they produce a variety of decisive reasons. I would like to ask anyone in the world to produce the passage in which Lenin has spoken of our State industry as capitalistic. It is true that Lenin spoke of State capitalism. Lenin argued against the left wing Communists, and against me, when the left wing Communists were inclined to deny the possibility of using the term "State capitalism." But that is quite another question, which is not now under discussion. We are now considering the question, how Lenin conceived State indus-

try. I declare that there is no passage in which Lenin would have said that our State industry might have been State capitalistic. In comparatively old works, as in his pamphlet on "Taxes in Kind," he indicates five different types of our economy: patriarchal economy, petty-bourgeois economy, simple trading economy, private-capitalistic economy, such as exists here, State capitalistic elements in economy, which also exist here, and socialistic elements, which we also have.

What did Lenin understand by socialistic elements? In his pamphlet he speaks also of State capitalism. Where are the socialistic elements which he mentions? Perhaps in the books of certain honoured comrades? The books of these honoured comrades may be the embodiment of 100 per cent. Leninism, but they do not deal with the types of our economy. They present a product of economic development, and, in part, of the ideological zeal of these comrades, but they by no means represent the economic structure of our country. As I have said, if they will take Lenin's pamphlet and ask what Lenin understood by the socialistic elements in our economy, the answer is clear, viz., that among these at least one may understand our State industry. Or was our old leader bragging? He did not like bragging. And who, then, is setting out to revise Leninism? Is it not those who deny the socialistic character of State industry? I believe it is just these.

Here I must raise another question. If the working class does not regard industry as its own, but as State capitalism, if it regards the factory management as a hostile force, and the building up of industry as a matter outside its concerns, and feels itself to be exploited, what is to happen? Shall we then be in a position, let us say, to carry on a campaign for higher production? "What the devil!" the workers would say, "are we to drudge for the capitalists? Only fools would do that." How could we draw workers into the process of building up industry? "What!" they would say, "shall we help the capitalist and build up the system? Only opportunists would do that." If we say our industry is State capitalism, we shall completely disarm the working class. We dare not then speak of raising productive capacity, because that is the affair of the exploiters and not of the workers. To what end then shall we get larger and larger numbers to take part in our production

conferences, if the workers are exploited, and when all that has nothing to do with them? Let the exploiter look after that! If we put the matter in this light, not only shall we be threatened with the danger of estrangement from the masses, but we shall not be in a position to build up our industries. That is as clear as daylight.

Not a Retreat, but an Advance!

With this question is bound up another, which is taken by many theoreticians as an occasion for differences of opinion. Many comrades think that, in past years, we have always been in retreat—that our Party is “red,” certainly, but that it is like a lobster, red when cooked, and always going backwards. They think that we prize even that “redness.” Although our class emerged, as we used to say, from the cauldron of the workshops, and in consequence was proud of its “redness”—of which now only bullocks are afraid—they would have the whole working class admit that we never did anything but retreat. But I tell you the new economic policy is by no means a continuous retreat, and that its development, and the development of the working class, is in no sense a retreat.

On the contrary, we can declare that we are going forward on the basis of the new economic policy, for when our State industry grows while private industry is forced back, is not that the advance of the proletariat? When private capitalist trade is forced back by large-scale State trade, is not that also an advance of the proletariat? Is it not true that among us the *form* of the class struggle finds its expression in the struggle of different economic forms, and that it is therefore a class victory for the working class when the State industry advances at the expense of private industry? If, however, one doubts that our State industry is an element of Socialism, then there can be no talk of advance, and the success of our State industry would not signify progress in socialist construction. And since, also, commodity exchange is developing and the kulak is not being suppressed by force, it would mean indeed a general retreat. The one thing goes with the other. In reality, however, we are developing exchange but at the same time strengthening the socialist elements in our economy, *i.e.*, as a whole we are going forward.

AFTER LOCARNO

By W. N. EWER

THE key to the post-Locarno diplomacy, as to the Locarno diplomacy, as indeed to all British diplomacy, lies not in Europe but in the East. For—less by the conscious desire of statesmen than by the logic of economic forces—there is in that diplomacy a necessary principle of continuity. It must inevitably follow the same lines, until Britain changes its economic system and ceases to be a predatory capitalist Power.

For three centuries the ruling classes of this country have, in increasing measure, drawn their wealth and their power from the exploitation of overseas colonial possessions. And during the whole of that period the prime object of their foreign policy has been the conquest, the expansion and the retention of those possessions.

There is a curious, but almost universally believed, myth which has it that British statesmanship has concerned itself chiefly with the preservation of the balance of power in Europe. It has been attacked, it has been defended, on that ground. Yet the whole thing is pure illusion. Our diplomacy has never been based on so absurd a metaphysical conception. The balance—"just equilibrium" was Castlereagh's prettier phrase—has served its turn with other catch-words. But it has never informed our policy. Whenever Great Britain has gone into a European war she has done so in order to attack a colonial rival. And on almost every occasion she has emerged from it with an adequate parcel of colonial loot. When (as in the Thirty Years' War or in the Italian and German wars of last century) there has been no colonial inducement, she has shown an Olympian indifference to changes in the European "balance of power."

In the seventeenth and earlier eighteenth century, the Western rather than the Eastern hemisphere was the first consideration. The West Indies were the richest prize of the classic naval battlefield. Villeneuve's westward dash in 1805 with Nelson in pursuit was an outbreak of atavism. For by the end of the eighteenth century the balance had tilted. The American colonies had been lost. And the penetration of India had opened up a rich field of

exploitation, in comparison with which the once-prized Antilles became insignificant. It was the age of the "Nabobs." The "shaking of the pagoda tree" was the most profitable occupation of British capitalism. A little later the cruder forms of spoliation yielded place to the scientific commercial exploitation of India. Later still came forcible entry into China.

And so, inevitably, during this period the "Eastern question"—which was the question of control of the highway to the new plunder-ground—entirely dominated British diplomacy. Towards the end of the century the opening up of Africa complicated the situation and produced its due crop of wars, beginning, as it were alphabetically, in Abyssinia and Ashanti, and working up to the great twin climax of the Sudan conquest and the Boer War: while side by side with the wars ran a chain of diplomatic negotiations and crises—the partition agreement of 1890, the Zanzibar deal, the Fashoda affair, the settlement with France, the abortive negotiations with Germany over the Portuguese colonies. Africa and the Far East are the important questions of the last years of the nineteenth century. Then, after the Entente settlement and the Russo-Japanese war, the centre of interest shifts back to the Near East. Persia and the Bagdad railway are Sir Edward Grey's chief problems. In Morocco, for all its importance in the diplomatics of the period, we are only indirectly interested.

The war did nothing to shift the centroid of our foreign policy. Our entry into Europe was an incident, almost an accident, of our colonial and commercial struggle with Germany. The armies of the Western front were not defending European liberties against Prussian hegemony: they were conquering for the ruling classes of Great Britain an enormous new area of colonial exploitation both in Africa and in Asia. That conquest has increased and accentuated the importance of the Empire in British economics and politics to-day. (It is surely unnecessary to add that by "the Empire" I do not mean the Dominions, which are, for all practical purposes, allied but independent States, but the "coloured" empire—India, the Mandated Territories and the Crown Colonies, which are subjected to political domination and economic exploitation from London.)

In its importance to the ruling class this Empire outweighs in importance the mother country itself. London is far less the capital of Great Britain than the capital of this Empire. An astonishing proportion of its vast wealth is drawn from the exploitation of the natural wealth and the cheap labour of these tropical and sub-tropical areas. And London has become again the dominating influence in British politics. It was so in the mercantile days (after it had broken by armed revolt the power of the kingship). Then for a time after the industrial revolution the great manufacturers of the north took the lead and proudly boasted that "what Lancashire thinks to-day England thinks to-morrow." But as the Empire became less a market, more a field for investment and direct exploitation, their brief supremacy passed. Its momentary revival during the war only emphasised its decline. To-day the "big industrialists" are a group of dwindling influence. It is the financiers, the bankers, the investors of London who rule the roost.

All of which you may summarise briefly in Marxian language as the transference of power from mercantile capital (London) first to industrial capital (the North) and then to finance capital (London again).

The Empire, then, is to-day the chief source of wealth (with future possibilities far transcending even present advantages) of the dominant political group. It is also—and this is frequently overlooked—a great field of employment for the same class. The total number of jobs—administrative, military, legal, technical, commercial, professional—held in the Imperial lands from Guinea to Hongkong by members of the British "public school and university" class must be enormous. It would be hard to find a family which has no son or brother or cousin so employed. Loss of the Imperial domains would mean an intense unemployment crisis in the West End and the wealthier suburbs. There is a powerful vested interest here.

Because of all these things, the maintenance, development and extension of this Afro-Asiatic Empire is the most imperative task of British politics, to which—while the balance of power at home remains unchanged—all else must be subordinated. And as that is true of politics in general, so it is true of diplomacy in particular.

Africa at the moment (apart from Egypt and the north, which link with Asia rather than with the Equatorial lands) presents few urgent political problems which can seriously affect diplomacy. The partition is completed. Abyssinia is the only independent state on the continent. The rest is British, French, Italian, Belgian, Portuguese. Nor is there any national movement, any reaction to domination and exploitation. That will come in due course: but the time is not yet. The black races are passive under the harrow. The way of the exploiter is easy. Only in Kenya and Tanganyika he is worried by Indian immigrants. Some day the Portuguese colonies will be a troublesome legacy. But they, too, are a problem of to-morrow. For the present the Foreign Office need not concern itself greatly with African affairs. There is no immediate opportunity for expansion: there is no immediate threat to domination.

But Asia (and linked with it the Arabo-Berber countries of the North African coast) is as troublesome as Africa is tranquil.

In the old pre-war days the Asiatic problem was complicated enough, but very different. Europe was still on the offensive, encroaching steadily, though with varying speed, on the remaining independent Asiatic countries. The diplomatic task was a treble one. The areas marked out for inclusion in the Empire had to be penetrated and brought under British influence until the time was ripe for a quarrel, for war, and for annexation. Arrangements had to be made with the rival Powers for such an "equitable" division of the spoil as would give us an adequate share without having to fight another Great Power for it. And the maritime lines of communication must be kept under British control.

The first and third of these were successfully, even brilliantly, carried out during the nineteenth century. India was swallowed piecemeal. Burma and Baluchistan and the Straits Settlements, Egypt and the Sudan followed. Nearly every strategic point on the double sea route to the East (Malta, Suez, Perim, Aden, Singapore, Hongkong, Wei-hai-wei, St. Helena, the Cape, Mauritius) was brought under British control.

The second problem—that of adjustments between the Imperialist Powers—only became acute at the end of the century. It was the failure of diplomacy to solve it which precipitated the

Great War. With France and with Russia—the rivals whose competition was dangerous in the nineties—a satisfactory solution was reached. Egypt and Siam, Persia and Thibet, ceased to be danger-points. But in the settlement with France and Russia a fatal mistake was made. Germany was ignored. The Kaiser went to Casablanca and announced dramatically to the world that he (and the Deutsche Bank) did not propose to be left out in the cold. Germany, as he put it later, wanted a place in the sun. A less rhetorical statesman might have put it more bluntly. She wanted a share in the loot. It was refused her. Nine years afterwards Sir Edward Grey made a desperate effort to double-cross France and Russia and make a deal with Germany over Anatolia and the Portuguese colonies. It was too late. Before he could pull the deal off, he was dragged into war.

And at the end of the war our diplomacy found itself saddled with responsibility for a vastly extended Asiatic Empire and confronted by an entirely new problem. There was no longer, it is true, a frustrated and dissatisfied European rival to be compensated or fought. But in its place was an even greater danger—a danger from within. The peoples of Asia had already been stirring uneasily. The shock of the war, followed by the shock of the Russian revolution, aroused them with an astonishing suddenness. They seemed to have become nationally conscious overnight. In Egypt, in the Arab countries, in Persia, in India, in China—from the Atlas Mountains to the Yellow Sea, Asia showed itself in revolt against European domination.

To hold that revolt in check, to defend British political and economic overlordship against the pressure of the new national movements, was the business of the various Indian and Colonial Governments. Very ably, on the whole, they have done their work. The firm hand here, a wise concession of unessentials there, the careful fostering of jealousies and disunions, the setting of Jew against Arab, of Hindu against Musulman—all the arts of a highly developed technique of domination have been employed. So far the Empire has successfully withstood the assault from within. But none know better than those who have conducted the defence that the attack is only now developing, and that the pressure must increase to straining, if not to breaking-point. To hold the Eastern

Empire will tax Great Britain's strength. It may not break it until a rebellious Africa comes to the aid of rebellious Asia.

But that is speculation. We are concerned here only with the problems which this new situation presents for British diplomacy—whether of the Foreign Office, the Indian Political Department or the Middle Eastern Department of the Colonial Office. In the main they amount to this—that the national movements within the Empire must be isolated, must be cut off from any possibility of “aid or comfort,” support or encouragement from abroad. It is the problem which the Italian *risorgimento* presented to the diplomats of Vienna, and which they hopelessly failed to solve. Warned, perhaps, by that example, the British diplomat must make it his first care to see that Southern Asia finds no Napoleon III and no Bismarck, that there is, if possible, no sheltering and sympathetic London for its Mazzinis and Garibaldis.

China I have left aside for the moment. It is, as being only a half-dominated country, in which the various capitalist Powers still compete with each other, different from the lands under entire British control. Yet the unexpected vigour of the Chinese national movement has already created a situation in which the internecine jealousies of the Powers are of little significance in comparison with the struggle to maintain the *status quo* against the attacks of the Chinese themselves.

Isolation of the national movements is, then, the central object, the “war-aim” of British diplomacy. Its strategy follows logically from its war aims.

The States whose activities, actual or probable, have to be taken into consideration may be roughly grouped thus:—

- (i) The European Powers.
- (ii) The minor Asiatic States.
- (iii) China.
- (iv) Japan.
- (v) Turkey.
- (vi) The Soviet Union.

The first group—the European Powers—breaks obviously into two sub-groups, which have demanded slightly different handling. Germany is marked off from France and Italy both by the fact that

she is an ex-enemy and by the fact that they are, whereas she is not, themselves Colonial Powers with Asiatic or quasi-Asiatic possessions.

The European problem was dual. Germany had to be coerced or coaxed into such relations with the victorious Powers that she would abandon all idea of seeking revenge either by a close alliance with Soviet Russia, by a renewed alliance with Turkey, or by using her nascent commercial strength for Asiatic intrigues against the Colonial Powers. France and Italy had to be persuaded that they and England must cease entirely from working against each other in Asia and in Northern Africa, and must form with her a European united front against Asiatic revolt. There must be no more Syro-Palestinian intrigues and counter-intrigues, no more Franklin-Bouillon Turcophil policies, no more Chanaks. The Colonial Powers, menaced by a common danger, must sink their own rivalries and close the ranks.

Those two objectives have been secured simultaneously at Locarno. Germany has been drawn back definitely into the western grouping. The Treaty of Rapallo will have no sequel. Turkey, and insurgent Syrians and Riffs, will dream in vain of German help. And France—scared by Syrian and Moroccan developments, and anxiously contemplating the necessity of financial support from Lombard Street—will obediently do Great Britain's behest in the East. Italy, it is true, is less reliable. She is, by long tradition inherited equally from the House of Savoy and from her own republics, a treacherous ally, cynically glorying in her *sacro egoismo*. But Italy is the least important of all. She may trouble France in Tunis, but she can scarcely worry England except in Southern Arabia. And there is—since she is covetous of Turkish territory—no danger of flirtation between Rome and Angora.

For the moment at any rate, the Locarno *bloc* is solid. Europe has been consolidated. There remains the complementary problem, the division of Asia—the Soviet Union being, for the purposes of this analysis, counted as the greatest and most dangerous of Asiatic powers.

We take first the smaller independent Asiatic States—Afghanistan, Persia and Arabia—Siam being of no importance and Nepal virtually a British Protectorate. Now these three are all border States of the British Empire ; two of them are buffer States between

that Empire and the Soviet Union ; all three—and especially desirable Persia—are marked down for eventual absorption.

At the end of the war an over-ambitious policy aimed at immediate domination. Persia was occupied, Afghanistan was attacked, a puppet and subsidised king was established in the Hedjaz and acclaimed as an ally. But the effort proved too great and too costly. Persia had to be evacuated. The Afghan campaign was a fiasco. King Hussein's subsidy and the counter subsidies paid to his rival to let him alone had to be stopped. An anxious period followed. Persia and Afghanistan, irritated and alarmed, leaned towards a dangerous friendship with Moscow. In Arabia Ibn Saud showed himself able as well as willing to drive our clients into the sea whenever he chose.

British diplomacy, realising the danger in time, performed an admirable manœuvre. In all three countries its policy has been completely reversed. Successful—and probably expensive—efforts have been made to persuade their rulers that their most profitable policy is one of co-operation with Great Britain.

The Amir's suspicions have been dispelled, and he looks to Delhi rather than to Moscow with a lively expectation of favours to come. An old and faithful ally—the Sheikh of Muhammarah—was the first sacrifice for the propitiation of Riza Khan of Persia. But it was only after a visit to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's headquarters at Abadan that Riza appeared as a firm friend of Great Britain. His assumption of the crown is the outward and visible sign that he has thrown in his lot with the Kaiser-i-Hind and broken away from the republics across his northern and eastern frontiers. Ibn Saud of the Nejd has been bought at even higher price. Another ally—but a King, not a Sheikh—has been sacrificed to him. And he is assured of our support for his ambition to be Khalif and Commander of the Faithful.

So one by one the lesser rulers have been lured into the fold. In return for consideration received or anticipated they will give us no further trouble, either by alliance with potential enemies or by intrigues with potential rebels. Ibn Saud will not vex us in Iraq or in Transjordan. The Amir will have no relations with Indian nationalism. Riza Khan will aid us against Turkey and break, if we so advise, with Russia. And each of these countries, having thus

isolated itself, will be, when the time comes, brought under our protection and exposed to our exploitation. Persia, the most tempting, will probably be the first victim. It is a pretty piece of work.

The lesser Asiatic States are present clients and prospective victims. Of the four larger, China is in a category by herself—for our purposes of the moment it is sufficient to regard her as also a prospective victim, though not of Great Britain alone. The other three (Japan, Russia, Turkey) are potential enemies—rivals in, or obstacles to, efficient exploitation.

Now the oldest strategic maxim in the world is that if you have three opponents you should try to deal with them one at a time. It is the theme of the story of the Horatii and the Curiatii. You will find it, dressed in suitable jargon, in every book on the science of war. And it is, of course, equally applicable to imperialist diplomacy, which is merely another phase of war.

Japan, Russia, Turkey then must be dealt with one by one. Of the three Japan is the least urgent. It is a question for the future. Since, at the bidding of America, we broke the Japanese alliance, it has been counted axiomatic in Whitehall that sooner or later there must be a struggle with Japan for control of the Pacific, and the Chinese plunder-fields. Hence, of course, Singapore. But for the moment—remembering the Horatii—it would be folly to offend Japan and so to drive her towards a dangerous *entente* with Russia. She must, even at some cost, be kept friendly. She must be kept in the European camp. It is not safe to quarrel with her. And so—though with one eye on Singapore and the future—we are complaisant towards Japan and make no protest even when—as in the Shanghai affair—she lets us down and astutely profits by our troubles. We need Japan. She knows it. And she will drive a hard bargain. In due time that will bring trouble. But for the moment we shall quietly pay the price, glad to keep her on our side at any cost.

America must be mentioned. But it must be only to remark that she does not for the time being seriously affect the problems. She is a commercial rival, but she does not in any way threaten our Imperial hegemony in Southern Asia. In China she is a restrictive influence on our activities. That is annoying, but must be

accepted with a good grace. We dare not so much as think of quarrelling with America. When—as at Washington in 1922—she chooses to issue an order we must obey it. But for the most part there is little trouble. Oil groups may have their differences. But on the whole Wall Street and Lombard Street work well in partnership.

Let us return to Asia, where we have Turkey and Russia to deal with. Here are the two real enemies. Soviet Russia by her very existence is a protest against Imperialism. There is between the Soviet Union and the British Empire an irresoluble clash of ideologies. Conflict is certain in all the border lands where their two influences meet. However correct the attitude of the Soviet Government itself, Russian Communist influence and teaching must inevitably percolate into our dependencies. Russian Communism must give sympathy and moral support to the Asiatic movements, as naturally as British Liberalism gave sympathy and moral support to the Greek Revolution or the Italian Risorgimento. Unless Russia ceases to be Communist, and indeed coerces Communism into inaction, the revolutionary and national movements of Asia will look northwards for sympathy and in hope of support. Between the great Communist Power in the north and the great Imperialist Power in the south there must be lasting hostility, either open or latent.

The case of Turkey is different. The Angora Government owes its very existence to a resurgence of nationalism, and is in passionate opposition to the European penetration of Asia. It has therefore deep sympathy with other Oriental nationalist movements, and a deep antipathy to Occidental Imperialism. But a bargain might have been struck with Turkey (as M. Franklin-Bouillon showed) had it not been for Mosul.

The Turks are as determined to win back that province as were the French to win back Alsace. The British are equally determined to hold it. Not so much—as I have shown in an earlier number of the *LABOUR MONTHLY*—because of its oil as because of its strategic importance. It is the key to Iraq, and Iraq (to mix the metaphors) is the linch pin of the whole Middle Eastern system, which is one day to be completed by the acquisition of Southern Persia.

Nor, since Great Britain has flatly refused any compromise, has

compromise been possible. The alternative was coercion, and it has been applied without delay or hesitation. Until the European *bloc* had been formed and Turkey isolated, decision was postponed upon one or other pretext. But within three weeks of the signing of the Locarno treaties, Turkey has been confronted by the massed forces of the League of Nations. She must yield, admit the whole of the British claim, and finally abandon Mosul, or she will be dealt with as a criminal State under the provisions of Article 16. Simultaneously an ingenious move has contrived that hints should be dropped to the Russians both in Paris and in London that there is possibility of an Anglo-Soviet settlement: the calculation presumably being that this would suffice to deter the Moscow Government from giving any support to Angora.

Now whether Turkey will yield before the show of force or whether armed coercion will have to be employed remains to be seen. But in either case the diplomatic strategy is clear enough. The case is parallel with that of Germany. First the recalcitrant State must be shown that resistance is hopeless. When, convinced of this, it decides on submission, the hand of friendship will be extended and assurance given that if it will become a faithfully and servitor of the Imperialist powers, it will be suitably rewarded. Already Sir Austen Chamberlain is talking of a deal with Turkey. There are hints of a war and of territorial concessions on the Syrian frontier. Bribery, it seems, is to follow bullying: just as Locarno followed the peremptory refusal at the beginning of the year to evacuate Cologne.

Turkey, if all goes according to plan, will—as a result of the Mosul crisis—be pulled into the Western group and completely detached from Russia. Some of the Paris papers have been cynically frank on the subject.

And then—there you are. The Horatian strategy is completed. The Soviet Union is finally isolated, and the united West (“the solidarity of Christian civilisation” was the charmingly indiscreet phrase of the Colonial Under-Secretary, was it not?) is ready to “stem the most sinister force in history,” to dictate terms to the Soviet Government, and to make Southern Asia safe for Imperialism.

Now it is one thing to plan a strategy on paper, and another thing to work it out in practice. Things are apt to go wrong.

Tactical blunders and unforeseen chances upset the best strategical calculations. Extraneous factors disconcertingly obtrude themselves. Nor do opponents sit idly watching the quiet development of plans. Diplomacy is a combination of Kriegspiel, chess and poker, all games at which the shrewdest calculation may be devastatingly upset.

How far then it will be possible to pursue this plan of campaign—in which Locarno is a single, though important, move—it would be fruitless to speculate. It may have to be modified, or even abandoned as the game opens out and develops. But that should not affect our estimation of its technical merits. And technically it is admirable. Given the objective—the “war-aim”—it keeps that objective steadily in view, sacrifices inessentials to essentials, and clear-headedly applies common-sense principles to the existing conditions. It is simple and straightforward in design, though calling for high qualities of technique in execution. One notes a strange contrast with the muddle-headedness, the confused purposes, the febrile vacillations of the years immediately following the war.

It would seem as if the disturbing influences of the politicians (seen at their height during the Lloyd George régime) had been eliminated, and a cool-headed professional were now in charge. We are back to the era of a diplomacy seeking the traditional ends of British Imperialism by the use of its traditional methods. The romantic school has been displaced by the classical.

THE PACT OF AMSTERDAM

By ALLEN HUTT

BRITISH imperialism won a most signal victory when the Pact was initialled at Locarno, a victory that assumed its formal shape with the ceremonial signing of the Locarno Treaties at the Foreign Office on December 1. Four days later, in Amsterdam, the victory on the diplomatic front was followed by its counterpart on the Labour front.

Locarno solidified the governing classes of Europe—against Soviet Russia. Amsterdam solidified the governing class of the European trade union movements—against the organised workers of Soviet Russia. Objectively, the decision of the General Council of the International Federation of Trade Unions to maintain its previous attitude of *non possumus* to the demand for an unconditional conference with the Russian unions assumes its place, and a very important place, in the scheme of British imperialist policy.*

If this were not so, how can the approving comments of responsible British newspapers upon the Amsterdam decision be explained? It is noteworthy, by the way, that the two most prominent of these, *The Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, considered the news of sufficient importance to warrant the chief place on their pages and the heaviest splash treatment. When Printing House Square devotes two full columns (with a black headline) on its centre page and a leader to any subject, men say with justice that here is something which our rulers take seriously. Let us see what *The Times* said—

It is impossible at the same time to be loyal to Moscow and to Amsterdam. . . . Amsterdam repudiates the doctrine of social salvation by the rifle and the sword, and trusts to sound sense and democracy. . . . For the third time the Continental unions have saved themselves from a fatal error into which the British unions would have led them. . . . The price of friendship with Moscow will be alienation from Amsterdam ; and in the completion of that movement the policy of progress by reform will suffer a grave injury.—*The Times*, December 7, 1925.

Whereupon the *Vorwärts* approvingly chimes in that the view expressed by *The Times* as to the impossibility of loyalty to both Moscow and Amsterdam “ may be *bourgeois* but it is certainly apt.”

One does not easily forget that, throughout the whole of the past year, the bourgeois Press has stood solid with the Amsterdam majority in their fight against the unity campaign of the British and Russian trade union movements. One does not forget the pontifical words of praise uttered by *The Times*—"Amsterdam, at any rate, is constitutional and law-abiding." Or, again, its paternal reference to "the Trade Unionism of the Continent which is maintaining a bulwark against the westward spread of Communism among the workers." Nor does one forget the wise old saw—when your enemies praise you, take heed. From which the perhaps uncharitable, but certainly true, conclusion follows that Amsterdam does not consider the bourgeoisie and its Press as enemies at all.

Whatever explanation Amsterdam makes, and whatever obscure constitutional quibbles they raise, the plain fact remains that Locarno was a step in the isolation of Russia as a State, and that they have followed the Locarno path by isolating the Russian unions from the international trade union movement. The Amsterdam decision was a defeat for the policy of the British Trades Union Congress—that is to say, of four and a-half million British workers—and therefore, *ipso facto*, a victory for the policy of the British capitalists.

Incidentally, it may be worth while noticing the eulogy of Locarno pronounced by Mr. Oudegeest in the official I.F.T.U. *Press Reports*. The worthy gentleman simply flung up his hat and whooped. Here are a few only of the things he said—

The adoption of the Pact at Locarno lays the first stone of the building of a new world. . . . The work of Locarno is one of the most important steps towards the creation of a United States of Europe. . . . Locarno means the beginning of a new era, the era for which the Labour movement has always striven.

In face of statements like this there is no cause for surprise that Mr. Oudegeest should help his friend Sir Austen Chamberlain in carrying out the good work.

However, it is evident that the Locarno policy could not be assisted simply by a few German Social-Democrats, disguised as Dutchmen, sitting in the offices on the Tesselschadestraat. Amsterdam must have a social basis : and now that the British movement can no longer be counted on, there remain only the German trade unions. Against the Anglo-Russian Alliance Germany is not a

sufficient bulwark. So the Amsterdam majority, like an earlier historical character, are calling in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. They are striving with all their might to secure the affiliation of the American Federation of Labour as a counterpoise to the supporters of unity.

It seems odd now to think that some of us regarded as of good augury the resolution inviting the American and Mexican centres to send delegations to Amsterdam to study the methods of the I.F.T.U. and to confer with regard to affiliation. We thought, innocently, that this might be taken as a precedent for the case of other unaffiliated bodies, such as Russia. Of course, we were completely mistaken. The resolution was anti-Russian, and was intended so to be.

There is no need here to characterise the A.F. of L. Its ultra-reactionary characteristics, its faithful following in the footsteps of American imperialism, are sufficiently notorious. The significant point for our purpose is to notice Mr. Oudegeest's admission that the chief importance of the Amsterdam meeting was the approach to the American and Mexican Unions. Following this we may ponder on Mr. Oudegeest's reply to an interviewer who asked whether constitutional difficulties were not likely to arise over the A.F. of L.'s well-known objection to the "revolutionary" character of the I.F.T.U., as instanced by the latter taking the class-struggle as its basis and putting nationalisation among its objects. "Our difference with America," he said emphatically, "is one of tactics and not of rules."

In passing, we may notice the extreme anti-Russian prejudice manifested by the A.F. of L. Thus the Atlantic City Convention passed a resolution in which—

The American Federation of Labour declares its hostility [to Russia] not merely in a defensive manner, but in a vital and aggressive manner.

And the Executive Council of the A.F. of L. has just formally denounced and repudiated the movement now begun for the sending of an American trade union delegation to Russia. This it pronounces a "nefarious scheme" comparable to that of the "Committee of Communists who visited Russia from Britain and tried to persuade the world that the Soviet Government was representa-

tive of the people." Truly an elegant, if not strikingly truthful, reference to the Trades Union Congress Delegation !

Amsterdam's angling for America dates back to the first beginnings of the unity campaign when, in December, 1924, the tentative proposals for an Anglo-Russian Committee were made. That there has been much activity on the backstairs since then is an open secret. Now the work is being done in the light of day. Mr. Oudegeest's violent attack last November on Purcell—in which he declared that the latter's speech as British fraternal delegate to the Atlantic City Convention was "sufficient ground for him to repudiate any relation between Purcell and the I.F.T.U."—was obviously intended for American consumption. The official *Press Reports* have solemnly declared that Amsterdam will respect to the full the complete national autonomy of the A.F. of L. Mr. Oudegeest says that Amsterdam must not "frighten off" any other countries (*i.e.*, America) by showing too much consideration to the Russians.

Yet will the American fish rise to the Amsterdam bait? That is the burning question for Mr. Oudegeest and his friends. One may guess that they will go to considerable lengths in order to make the bait sufficiently tempting. In which connection the present move in certain German trade union circles to substitute for "nationalisation" and "socialisation" the innocuous and Liberal phrase "democratisation of industry" is not without its significance. The phrase is true Gompers. -

This uneasy eagerness shown by the Amsterdam majority in their efforts to attract the A.F. of L. is a sign of the essential weakness of their position. For in one sense the decision of December 5 was a pyrrhic victory. The British delegation stood as solid as a rock on the declared policy of the General Council and the Trades Union Congress. From that policy they did not swerve: all the abjurations of the bourgeois Press (faithful mouthpiece of Amsterdam), first to the General Council to disown their Delegation to Russia, and then to the Congress to disown the General Council, have proved fruitless; and the British are now seen to be unshakable in their determination to secure unity.

Even at this time of day Amsterdam seems to find this simple fact hard to realise. In face of Scarborough they promptly stick

their heads in the sand and talk, like Mr. Oudegeest, of "fresh currents suddenly arising in one country"—obviously hoping against hope that if the current veers suddenly to the left to-day it may veer as suddenly to the right to-morrow. The reasons for this ostrich policy may appear obscure: though if half the stories are true that are told of the discredited ultra-right wing quarters here from which certain Amsterdam circles draw their information about the British movement, the obscurity lightens a good deal.

This delusion was at the bottom of the conciliatory attitude displayed by the Amsterdam Bureau when they came to London on December 1 for their conference with the General Council. They expected to find the supporters of unity a small, and perhaps isolated, group on the General Council. They hoped with honeyed words and lip-service to unity, to trick the General Council into some sort of compromise which would have meant the complete defeat of the British policy. Their chagrin can be imagined when it became evident that the General Council was completely united and quite adamant on the question of unity.

The guileless General Council, rejoiced to find the Amsterdam leaders in so reasonable and friendly a frame of mind, punctiliously reiterated their loyalty to the I.F.T.U. in the formal resolution passed by the Conference. This resolution, by the way, was understood to be confidential, and was kept so in England: two days later at Amsterdam it appeared *verbatim* on the front page of *Het Volk*.

London had opened the eyes of Amsterdam. When the I.F.T.U. General Council meeting opened all pretence of conciliation was dropped. No report at all of the London Conference was made, although the presentation of a formal written report had been agreed upon. To say that the British were surprised is the mildest way of putting it. Purcell has told us that "the conciliatory atmosphere of London was entirely lacking at Amsterdam and no attempt whatever was made to convey it." One after another the Continental leaders rose to repeat *ad nauseam* the time-worn and shameless accusations against the Russians—their "bad faith," their "disruptive tactics," their "political domination," &c. In the vote the February decision was reaffirmed by two to one.

Yet the majority is in fact not so "damned compact" as might appear. There were waverers: there was hesitation. Even the

intransigent M. Jouhaux went so far as to say "Conversations with the Russians—yes," though he added "A conference—never!" It must not be forgotten that the debate was heavily weighted on the side of the opponents of unity: they spoke first and the early closure of the debate—to enable the Dutchmen to celebrate St. Nicholas' day in peace!—told in their favour. Nevertheless, the issue appeared, to outside observers at any rate, to be pretty much touch and go. Speculation favoured some sort of a conference with the Russians, however hedged about with repudiations in advance of the R.I.L.U. The result of the vote came quite as a shock; and it was not surprising to learn that the debate had been preceded by a lengthy canvass of all the opponents of unity.

In these circumstances the fact deserves emphasis that the majority were opposed, not by the British in isolation as one tends to believe, but by the President, one of the Secretaries, the delegates of two National centres (Britain and Scandinavia) and all three delegates of the Trade Secretariats. The minority is now seven, as against February's five. Having said which it is necessary to point out the sinister rôle played by Mr. Frank Hodges. Mr. Hodges supported a weak compromise resolution in a speech that was "Amsterdam" to its marrow; he ascribed the "greatest historical importance" to the affiliation of America, which in view of American "influence hereafter in the economic affairs of the world," "would be a much more important event than even Russia's acceptance of the constitution." He also went out of his way, if Mr. Oudegeest is to be believed, to "recognise the insurmountable difficulties of the Continental Unions if the Russians were admitted (*sic*) without accepting our rules." But the attitude of Mr. Hodges throws all the more into relief the solid front shown by the British as a whole.

In this detailed analysis of the actions and opinions of the leaders of European trade unionism on the unity question we must not forget that there is one other factor to be considered—the trade union masses themselves. And among the masses the idea of unity is making steady progress.

Leave Britain on one side for the moment. Take only Germany, as the principal present pillar of Amsterdam. A remarkable growth among the workers of sympathy for and interest in Soviet Russia has been experienced during the year. The delegation of fifty-eight

Trade Unionists, Social Democrats for the most part, who visited Russia last summer, have now issued their Report. This Report wholeheartedly endorses international unity: and of a first edition of 100,000 copies no less than 70,000 have already been ordered.

The German leaders are beginning to feel the draught. Was it mere chance that Herr Grassmann, Secretary of the A.D.G.B. and German representative on the I.F.T.U. General Council, took occasion to call at the Anglo-Russian Council's meeting in Berlin and converse for some time with the Russian and British leaders? Was it only negligence that caused *Vorwärts*, previously full of gibes and sneers, to hold its tongue completely in its first two editions after the results of the Anglo-Russian meeting were made known?

Amsterdam, with a flourish of trumpets, shut the door on the Russian workers as trade unionists—thereby completing the work of Locarno, which had shut the door on their workers' State. But on closer examination we see that the lock is not of the strongest and the hinges none too secure. Berlin has shown the determination of the two strongest trade union movements in the world to break down all barriers that keep the workers divided and helpless against the capitalist attack. That this task should be successfully completed remains our most urgent historical duty.

Latterly, our General Council, if one reads the signs aright, has decided not to hurry events. It has put on record its regret at the intransigence of Amsterdam, and has asked what are the real reasons for that intransigence. Meantime, with traditional caution, it is feeling its way before venturing on the next step. But a next step there must be, and that soon, if we are not simply to acquiesce in the crowning and completion of British imperialism's master-stroke of the Locarno Pact by its subsidiary, the Pact of Amsterdam.

BOUND VOLUMES

for 1925

See particulars on
page 2.

EGYPT AT THE CROSS ROADS

By J. CROSSLEY

AN extraordinary situation prevails at the moment in Egypt, and there is every evidence that the country is faced with a political crisis of such a magnitude as will have far-reaching consequences throughout Egypt and the whole of the Near East. The position is one which is also causing a great deal of embarrassment to the British Residency and will raise many knotty problems for the newly-appointed British Resident Governor, Sir George Lloyd. In his efforts to steer a middle course between the reactionary unconstitutional policy of the British bayonet-supported Cabinet of Ziwar Pasha, and the rising tide of Nationalism, which is once again throwing into high relief the strange dominant personality of Saad Zagloul Pasha, Sir George Lloyd will find himself in a more difficult position than that which at any time confronted his predecessor, Lord Allenby, during his term of office. The anomaly with which he is faced is that the Residency has undoubtedly connived behind the scenes at the wrecking of the Constitution which was wrung from the British Government in 1922, and has openly identified itself with the Ziwar Ministry which was appointed by King Fuad after the events of last year arising out of the assassination of Sir Lee Stack, the Sirdar of Egypt and Governor of the Sudan.

In order better to understand what is taking place in Egypt to-day it is necessary to review briefly the circumstances which have led up to the present political crisis.

It was in 1922 that, after a long series of negotiations and much haggling, following on the report of the Milner Commission of Enquiry, which was sent out by the British Government to Egypt for the purpose of preparing the ground for the granting of the long promised independence and constitution, and after the famous visit of Zagloul Pasha to Britain and France at the head of the delegation of the Wafd, that the then Coalition Government decided there was no other way out of their difficulties save by the

restoration of the independence of Egypt and the granting of a constitution to the country.

Accordingly this was nominally done, but the promise of sovereignty was belied by the provision for the maintenance of British armed forces in Egypt, while several other important questions were left in abeyance for future settlement. The main questions so left were—

(1) The future control of the Suez Canal.

(2) The question of the future control of the Sudan, which at that time was under a joint Anglo-Egyptian control (Egypt finding most of the money for development and maintaining an army in the Sudan, and Britain doing most of the "controlling," mainly in the interests of the Cotton Syndicates).

(3) The question of the future status of British officials and functionaries resident in Egypt and the Sudan, who monopolised practically the whole of the important posts in the various departments.

These questions were left to be settled in future negotiations, but it can safely be said that Britain never entertained the slightest idea of relinquishing her right to her hold on the Suez Canal, the extension of her influence in the Sudan, or the exaction of the maximum amount of compensation for displaced British officials.

In the elections which took place immediately following the granting of the Constitution, Zagloul Pasha was returned at the head of the Government with an overwhelming majority of votes, and was appointed Premier. His term of office was characterised by a vacillating policy on the question of negotiations with Britain on the outstanding questions to be settled. Also he pursued a policy, evidently with an eye to currying favour with Britain, of persecution of the workers' movement. His savage repression of the Alexandria strikes and his prosecution and imprisonment of the leaders, including many members of the Communist Party of Egypt, a number of whom are still lying in Egyptian gaols; his forcible breaking up of the splendid Confederation of Labour, the confiscation of its funds and closing of its premises followed by the creation of an "official" Confederation of Labour as a wing of the Wafd with a criminal embezzler of State funds at its head, as Secretary, who was brought out of prison for this purpose; these acts mark Zagloul as a retrograde of the worst type and aroused deep resentment amongst the town workers.

At the height of his popularity, disintegration began to take place in the Wafd amongst the followers of Zagloul. Under the leadership of Hafiz Bey Ramadan a section of the extreme Nationalists who were disgusted with Zagloul's temporising policy with Britain, and who maintained an attitude of no compromise, split away and formed the Hisb-el-Watani Party. In the opposite direction those sections of the rising bourgeoisie who found that their interests were more bound up with the progress and development of British and foreign capital, and who were terrified at the thought of the Nationalist movement swinging more and more to the left, broke away and formed the Liberal Constitutionalist and Unionist parties.

Round the outstanding questions a storm of controversy arose, and Cairo, Alexandria and the other main towns of Egypt were a seething mass of political excitement. The immense student population at the secondary schools and colleges of Cairo were in a constant state of excitement, and school strikes and demonstrations were of almost daily recurrence.

During this time Britain was demonstrating her intention not to allow the control of the Suez Canal to go out of her grasp, and it was during the period of Zagloul's Ministry that the great Air Base was constructed at Ismalia on the Suez. Great excitement prevailed also in the Sudan and culminated in a rebellion of the Egyptian forces, which was suppressed with the utmost rigour by the British army, augmented by hastily summoned troops from India.

The climax was reached by the assassination of Sir Lee Stack in the streets of Cairo in November, 1924. Seizing with avidity on this unfortunate incident, Lord Allenby immediately presented the Egyptian Government with an infamous ultimatum which demanded an official apology from the Government, an indemnity of £500,000, prohibition of all political demonstrations, speedy arrest and punishment of the criminals, increase to the Sudanese Government of powers of irrigation beyond the area of 300,000 feddans previously agreed upon, withdrawal of all Egyptian troops from the Sudan, and unconditional withdrawal of opposition to the claims of British officials, residents and functionaries.

To the first four points, namely—the Apology, Indemnity, Prohibition of Political Demonstrations, Arrest and Punishment of the Criminals, Zagloul and his Government agreed under protest. On the remaining points of the Ultimatum, namely—the extension of the area of irrigation in the Sudan, the withdrawal of Egyptian troops, and the withdrawal of opposition to the claims of British residents, Zagloul refused to accept the terms of the Ultimatum, and gave a blank refusal.

On this intimation being conveyed to Lord Allenby, he immediately ordered the seizure of the Customs at Alexandria and Port Said, forcibly disbanded the Egyptian army in the Sudan, and placed the whole of Egypt under martial law. Thus, at one stroke, Britain, through the agency of its devoted henchman, was able to annex the coveted prize of the Sudan in the interests of the cotton-growing associations which have been steadily building up their prestige, and feverishly commenced the scheme of gigantic barrages on the upper reaches of the Nile in the Sudan, which when ultimately completed will give the control of this mighty river, the life blood of Egypt's teeming population, into the hands of the Sudanese Government and place the whole of Egypt at the mercy and caprice of Great Britain as the dominating power.

Zagloul and his Ministry immediately resigned, and under pressure on the Court by the Residency, King Fuad selected a reactionary Ministry with Ziwar Pasha, leader of the Ittahadists, or Unionist Party, at its head.

Under this most reactionary Ministry, with its slavish subservience to the Court and to the British occupation, every vestige of liberty and every remaining scrap of the constitution was ruthlessly destroyed. Workers' organisations were terrorised into impotence, and by an extensive and elaborate system of spying all known workers of radical tendencies were persecuted. On June 5 of this year the Government suppressed the only workers' paper, *Al-Hisab*, and its editor, Mr. Jaboux, along with twelve others was arrested on the charge of being engaged in Communist activities. Amongst those arrested was Miss Charlotte Rosenthal, daughter of Mr. Rosenthal, the jeweller, of Alexandria, who was deported during Zagloul's administration, but was afterwards repatriated, mainly thanks to the efforts of prominent members of the British

Labour movement and of the *Daily Herald*. *All these comrades are still in prison without trial.*

During this period the power and popularity of Zaghloul grew tremendously, and at last so great became the demand for a restoration of Parliament that the Ministry was obliged to yield. In the elections to the Parliament which ultimately took place in April of this year, every artifice of coercion was used by the Ministry in its efforts to secure the defeat of Zaghloul. All but *official* or Ministerial supporters were refused the right of meetings, and elector-delegates known to belong to the Wafd were, in scores of cases, confined to their houses for weeks under penalty of imprisonment. In spite of everything, however, the Wafd secured a majority of votes over all the other combined parties. The Hisb-el-Watani (Extreme Nationalists), in their hatred of Zaghloul, sided with the Ministerialists, and in the process were hopelessly snowed under, and succeeded in returning only six members. When the Parliament assembled the Chamber voted Zaghloul as President and another member of the Wafd as Vice-President. Ziwar Pasha, the Premier, immediately left the chamber, sought an audience with King Fuad, who only four hours earlier had officially opened the Parliament, laid his resignation before him, which the king refused to accept, and returned to the chamber with the king's authority to dissolve it. Thus, after only 12 hours' duration, Egypt was once more without a parliament, and once more unbridled reaction was placed in the saddle. It seems pretty clear what the rôle of the Court was during this period. Under the guidance of his clever adviser, Nashaat Pasha, King Fuad has evidently been playing to bring the Constitution into ridicule and impotence so that the excuse may be afforded ultimately for the destruction of the Constitution and the establishment of an absolute monarchy on the old Eastern pattern. Having temporarily triumphed over the Nationalist forces of the Wafd by the dissolution of the Parliament, Ziwar and his Ministry found that all was not smooth sailing, for a struggle developed between the Ministry and the Court. This came to a head during Ziwar's visit to London in September and October, when, during his absence, a ministerial crisis was caused by the resignation of Sidky Pasha and others of the Ministry. A hasty reshuffling of the Ministry took place, and

Ziwar cabled instructions to the effect that the portfolio for the Ministry of the Interior be left open for himself.

The news of the split was the signal for wild jubilation amongst the Nationalist and other enemies of Ziwar, and all the old elements of popular political enthusiasm were revived, street demonstrations, by students and others, school strikes, and great agitation in the Press. One significant feature of this revival is the re-union which has taken place between the forces of the Wafd and of the Hisb-el-Watani.

It is here very important to note that the great revival of Nationalism is assuming a very much deeper and wider significance than has characterised the Nationalist movement in the past. Throughout the Arabic Press of Cairo and Alexandria there has been for the last nine months or so a tremendous interest taken in the Nationalist struggles of Abdel Krim in Morocco, and much of the money needed by Abdel Krim to conduct his heroic campaign against predatory French imperialism has undoubtedly been raised by appeals throughout Egypt and the other Near Eastern countries. The Arab demonstrations against the Balfour declaration establishing Palestine as a Jewish National Home, the struggles of the Arabs in Hedjaz, Iraq, and now the revolt against French imperialism in Syria by the Druses and other sections of the Arab communities, all these things are having their repercussion in Egypt, and are symptomatic of the revival of a great Pan-Islamic movement which, however vague at the present moment, will undoubtedly take shape and direction during the coming months.

It is with such a background therefore that the aged Zaghloul Pasha once more steps on the stage. After being refused the demand for the reassembly of the old Parliament in the House of Representatives, a meeting of Members of Parliament was called to take place at the Continental Savoy Hotel, Cairo. In spite of the fact that the Ministry of the Interior prohibited the meeting, and deployed forces of soldiers round the building, the assembly was held and attended by upwards of 130 deputies. A resolution was formulated for presentation to the king demanding the restoration of the Constitution, and this was carried with wild enthusiasm.

The newspaper, *El-Ahram*, in the course of an article entitled " Let us all Unite for Independence," states :

We must not forget that we have always been working for independence and that the Constitution will never be well safeguarded as long as England rules in Egypt. Egypt has been deprived of enjoying the Constitutional regime by the English ; the first Egyptian Parliament of 1881 could not live under pressure, and the new Parliament was dissolved twice under the effect of British policy. . . . Let the new agreement of parties be the first step towards a better understanding. Let us all make efforts, with good faith, for the attainment of a genuine independence which should have no relation whatever with the Milner independence or the independence of 1922. We must know how to call things by their right names.

Zagloul Pasha is also reported to have stated that the present situation will lead to revolution unless the Ministry permits the restoration of the Constitution. In any fresh election it is almost a certainty that Zagloul would be returned at the head of a government by an overwhelming majority. Now, therefore, Egypt stands once again at the cross-roads, and the path she takes will have an enormous influence on the whole of the Near Eastern situation. The question is being asked by all thoughtful working-class students of Eastern problems : will Zagloul in his coming hour of triumph use the golden opportunity thus placed in his hands to atone for his unenviable reputation as an autocrat by restoring to the workers the right of full liberty of speech and press and the right of Trade Union and working-class political combination ? Will he lift Nationalist politics out of the morass of personal intrigue and egotism and, together with the best elements of the radical nationalist movements, adopt a policy of abolition of all the terrible crying evils of poverty and sweating under which the whole of the great masses of Egyptian workmen and fellaheen are staggering ? Or, on the other hand, will he once more resume his previous policy of repression of all those elements which dare to overstep the extremely narrow bounds of the limited nationalism which has previously characterised the Wafd ?

Egypt is entering upon troubled seas. A great Nationalist Party with a great Nationalist leader is her need at the moment. The slogan of this party should be " All power to the federated free Arab republics of the Near East." Will Saad Zagloul Pasha fill this rôle ? We hope but doubt.

The World of Labour

	PAGE
TRADE UNION UNITY: The London Conference	58
The Amsterdam Meeting	59
Amsterdam and America	60
The Berlin Meeting	61

TRADE UNION UNITY

The London Conference

THE meeting of the General Council of the I.F.T.U., which was postponed to December 4, was preceded on December 1 by an informal meeting in London between the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. and the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress. The following statement was issued at the close of the discussion, which was held in private:—

At the request of the International Federation of Trade Unions a conference was held to-day between representatives of the Executive Committee of the I.F.T.U. and the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. The purpose of the conference was to consider the proposals of the British Trades Union Congress and the request of the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions that an unconditional conference should be convened between the International Federation of Trade Unions and the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions.

A very full discussion took place, marked by the most cordial and unreserved spirit, and, as a consequence, misunderstandings were removed and the position was made more clear. It is felt that the conference has had the effect of enabling both parties to appreciate more fully the complexities of the international situation.

A meeting of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. is to be held at Amsterdam on Friday, when a report of the London conference will be presented, and, it is expected, a decision will be reached with respect to the request of the British Trades Union Congress.

The conference also drew up the following declaration, which was not to be published. It appeared, however, in *Het Volk*, the organ of the Dutch Social-Democratic Party, on December 3.

This conference welcomes the frank exchange of opinion which has taken place, and gives expression to the hope that as a result, all false conceptions have been dispersed with regard to the motives and intentions of the General Council in the matter of the convening of a conference without preliminary conditions.

The General Council of the British Trades Union Congress rejects every attempt which might represent its action as a hostile action against the I.F.T.U. and assures the I.F.T.U. that it was guided only by the wish to strengthen the International Trade Union Movement.

The General Council of the British Trades Union Congress recognises the difficulties of the present situation, but is nevertheless of the opinion that these can best be put out of the way by the convening of a conference, without any of the parties concerned imposing conditions thereto. It is expressly decided

that such a conference shall remain strictly limited to representatives of the I.F.T.U. and the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions.

Mr. Brown, one of the secretaries of the I.F.T.U., expressed the opinion after the meeting that it had helped the cause of unity considerably. Mr. Oudegeest, on the other hand, declared that he was now satisfied that the British were in favour, not of a united Trade Union International, but merely of the entry of the Russian unions into the I.F.T.U.

It was made clear at the meeting that, just as the Trades Union Congress is not associated with the Minority Movement in Britain, the same principle is to apply internationally.

He also stated that he was convinced that the Trades Union Congress was not in favour of calling a meeting over the head of the I.F.T.U. The *Daily Herald* reported that the Continental representatives had previously understood that the British proposed a conference with the Red International of Labour Unions, and that this error was now rectified. It was thus assumed that the Bureau of the I.F.T.U. had agreed to the British point of view, and that the General Council meeting would decide on a conference with the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions.

The Amsterdam Meeting

The General Council met on December 4 and 5 at Amsterdam. On the first day it was decided to invite delegations from the American Federation of Labour and the Mexican Trades Union Congress to study the work of the I.F.T.U. and to discuss affiliation.

The question of unity came upon the second day. In spite of the decision of December 1, that "a report of the London Conference will be given," no report was made, and the results of that conference were ignored except in Mr. Hicks' speech.

Three resolutions were put forward. The first, by Mr. Stenhuis (Holland) read:—

The General Council of the I.F.T.U., having taken note of the correspondence which has been exchanged with the Russians since its meeting in February last, and having taken note of the discussions which have taken place at the present meeting, reaffirms its decision of February, 1925, and considers any new decision unnecessary.

Mr. Hicks moved and Mr. Fimmen seconded the resolution following:—

The General Council of the I.F.T.U. declares itself prepared to meet representatives of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions in order to discuss the possibilities of affiliation with the Russian Trade Union Movement.

Finally Mr. Brown moved, and Mr. Hodges seconded, a compromise resolution:—

This General Council declares the willingness of the I.F.T.U. to meet the Russian Trade Union Centre for the purpose of exploring the possibility of securing the affiliation of the Russian Trade Union Centre to the I.F.T.U. in accordance with the terms of the resolution passed at the Vienna Congress.

After discussion, which lasted some five hours, the first resolution was put to the vote and carried by 14 votes to 7. No votes were taken on the other resolutions.

No new arguments of importance were brought up, except by Mr. Hicks, who was able to point out that the alleged connection between the Russian

unions and the Russian Government, which was cited as an objection to the Russian affiliation, had a parallel in the case of Mexico, whose Trade Union Centre was invited at this same Executive meeting to take steps in the direction of affiliation. Mr. Hodges, in advocating the substitution of the compromise resolution for that of Mr. Hicks, declared that the latter, if passed, would lend colour to the view, which was already widespread, that the British had yielded to Russian pressure. Further, he remarked:—

The joining up of America to the I.F.T.U. would be an event of the greatest historical importance because of her huge industrial population, her highly industrialised State, and her future influence on the economic affairs of the world. In this sense America's affiliation would be much more important than even Russia's acceptance of the Amsterdam constitution. The Americans were regarded as being reactionary in comparison with Europe. He could understand that after the American Federation had come in, it might try to use its influence to modify the present constitution to fit American ideals. If the Russians came in, the same might be expected from them. Both would be welcomed if they would accept the constitution.

Mr. Oudegeest in an interview after the meeting also welcomed the American Federation of Labour. He further expressed the hope that the discussion would now close.

We hope and expect that the British Trade Union Movement, which has always been a true friend and supporter of our International, will accept the present situation and wait till the next congress at Paris in 1927, if they wish to propose any modification of the policy hitherto pursued.

Of the possibility of a conference called by the British independently of the I.F.T.U., he remarked:—

I wonder whether those responsible for the Anglo-Russian agreement were aware of the consequences such a step would entail. I fear that if such a conference were called, the only countries represented would be Russia and perhaps some few minority movements on the Continent.

Mr. Purcell, in reply, stated:—

The representatives of the Continental unions have failed to understand the vastness of the whole question of the reorganisation of international trade unionism. The British are not concerned with the R.I.L.U., but we are firm in our belief that here was an opportunity to settle the problem as it affects Russia directly. That would have been a signal for us to go forward and encourage the inclusion of the present mass of dissidency and by that means remove the ill-effects of so-called "disruption," whether caused by alleged Communist effort or by the political effects of the Versailles Treaty. . . .

The majority failed to realise that there are other internationals gradually forming in Europe; it would not be difficult for the Fascists to form one; there are the clerical internationals, one of which, the Christian, has more than a million members. The whole effort to reorganise trade unionism in Europe has been stultified by to-day's decision. . . .

Our obligations now are in the direction of proceeding as swiftly as possible to create the necessary atmosphere for the early accomplishment of all-inclusive trade union unity. The stages and speed of this will entirely rest with the British General Council.

Amsterdam and America

It is instructive, in connection with the approach of the I.F.T.U. to the American Trade Union Movement, to recall the Convention of the American

Federation of Labour, on October 5-12, at which Mr. Purcell, as a fraternal delegate, advocated the cause of international trade union unity. The motion on the subject, which was passed, read as follows:—

The British workers have sent to us a message urging our sympathetic consideration of what is contained in this resolution. We convey to the world the most solemn warning of which we are capable, that we will not willingly tolerate in the Western hemisphere any old-world movement which seeks to impose itself upon American peoples over the will of those peoples. What the United States Government, through President Monroe, expressed to Europe as a warning against armed territorial aggression, we convey in equally emphatic terms regarding aggression by propaganda. The Americas stand for democracy. The Pan-American Federation of Labour is the recognised international Labour Movement of the Americas. . . . Neither the Red International of autocratic Moscow, nor any other international may in complacency ignore this definition of American Labour policy.

The Berlin Meeting

The Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council met in Berlin on December 8 and 9, and unanimously agreed to the following resolution:—

(1) That this Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council regrets the action taken by the majority of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. in rejecting the proposal for a preliminary and unconditional conference with the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions.

(2) This Council asserts that the decision arrived at is a reflection of official bias rather than of the opinion and desires of the rank and file of the international trade union movement. As evidence of this, the Council contrasts the prejudice displayed against the Russian movement with the marked difference in attitude adopted towards other trade union centres not at present affiliated to the I.F.T.U.

(3) This Council is of the opinion that one of the first practical steps to be taken is the convening by the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress of the conference provided for in clause 3 (b) of the declaration made by the British Trade Union Delegation at the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Conference in London on April 8, 1925, which was accepted by the Russian Trade Union Delegation and which was subsequently ratified by the supreme authoritative bodies of the trade union movement in both countries.

(4) This Council resents the continual and unprovoked attacks upon the Russian trade union movement and the gross misrepresentations published with regard to the work of the Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council and the policy and purpose of its trade union centres in furthering international trade union unity, and resolves upon the necessity of measures being taken to counteract such misrepresentation and obstruction.

(5) This Council considers, however, that the representatives of the trade union movement of both countries must continue to maintain their attitude of complete moderation and dignity in the face of all irresponsible attacks directed against them and the trade union movement which they represent. They will continue firmly to carry on the task which they have begun for the achievement of world trade union unity.

It was decided to hold the next meeting in the early part of the new year.

ARTHUR PUGH, chairman, British Trades Union Congress
General Council.

M. TOMSKY, chairman, Trade Union Central Council of U.S.S.R.

BOOK REVIEWS

BLINDING THE SLAVES

Welfare Work in Industry. Edited by Eleanor T. Kelly. (Pitman, cloth 5s.)

THIS book is written in the superior manner of a prison governor who tries to elevate the moral tone of the prisoners, and to make them co-operate with him in keeping the prison regulations, and perhaps in framing them. For to the worker, the workshop is a prison, and he a slave bound to the bench through economic necessity.

The authors put forward *Welfare Work* as the panacea for all the ills of industry. It is agreed, even by them, that there are ills in industry. They think that by bringing the "personal touch" back into industry, by the provision of ambulance rooms, lavatories and canteens, by arrangements for games, sports, libraries, the workers can be induced to lie down quietly with the management, and everything will be lovely in the garden.

The book covers all the spheres of *Welfare Work*, it gives (in the Appendices) details of how to run canteens, ambulance rooms, agenda for works committees, and what not.

At the beginning it reviews the high functions of the *Welfare Worker*, how important it is for him or her

to be in general sympathy with the directorate, and especially the managing director, with whom co-operation must be as complete as possible.

There is a description of how the *Welfare Worker* should lead all new employees by the hand and see that their introduction into the factory is made pleasant for them, particularly if they are young workers (in case the shock should make them rebels). Great stress is laid on the importance of keeping full records of conduct, work and timekeeping. The reasons for bad timekeeping must be closely investigated; it may be home conditions (the *Welfare Worker* must nose this out), it may be bad transport.

A worker's "bad conduct" may be dislike of his job, or it may consist in cheeking the foreman. It is all to be written down and indexed. Then, when it becomes necessary to reduce the staff, only the best workers, *i.e.*, the most hard-working, docile and obedient, will be kept on.

It must be emphasised that the "benevolent" side of *Welfare Work* is strictly limited. Miss Kelly says:—

the *Welfare Worker* is responsible for seeing that the working conditions and general environment are *as good as the firm can afford to make them*.

In a case within the reviewer's personal experience there was a question when the slump began of stopping certain payments during the hot weather (this was in a chocolate factory). One of the directors of the firm said to the *Welfare Worker*:—

We regret very much that we can no longer pay for the hot weather, but, you know, *we must think of our dividends*.

In the boom period this firm had been paying 75 per cent.

The *Welfare Worker* has no say in questions of profits, and would not be able to alter anything if he had. As soon as it seems good to the directors to

dismiss workers, or put them on short time, or get rid of the ambulance nurse, the Welfare Worker is helpless, and moreover, as he has to be "in general sympathy with the directorate," it is probable that he will "understand" the "difficulties" of the management and put up no fight at all.

The fact is that Welfare Work is nothing but a top dressing. Under capitalism it cannot be anything else. It does not challenge the basic facts of capitalist organisation—industry is carried on for profit, and profit is made by exploiting the workers. Canteens, "harmony," lavatories and sports do not affect exploitation one jot.

Welfare Work is only carried on when the profits made from the exploitation of the workers are sufficiently large to allow for extra expenditure on frills. The advantages (provided the firm can afford it) are obvious. The workers are kept quiet, they are made to think that good comes from the management and not from the workers' own organisations. Trade unions are usually weak in factories where there is Welfare Work. It is simply another way by which the boss can blind the workers and prevent them from understanding the real issues of the class struggle.

O. E. B.

REVOLUTIONARY SONG

Sixteen Songs for Sixpence. (Lansbury's Labour Weekly. 6d.)

IT is a sign of the times that the British Labour Movement is beginning to sing; or, at any rate, that it is looking around for songs to sing. Hitherto we have notoriously had but one song, *The Red Flag*, and the *International* has not yet become the song of our movement as a whole.

This casting about for new songs is therefore on the face of it a matter of interest. The more so when one realises that it is, as it were, a musical reflex of present tendencies in the movement. The miserable collapse of Mr. MacDonald's quest for a new and respectable Labour song to supersede *The Red Flag* is significant. Wide sections of the workers are being gradually weaned, by the logic of events, from reformism; and it appears that reformism cannot even provide them with a few lines of doggerel and a tune in its honour.

Like every other means of expressing ideas and emotions, song has played its part—and an extremely important part—in the class struggles that make up human history. Class-consciousness is noticeably accompanied by a keen realisation of the value of song as an ideological weapon. Consider for instance, on the one hand, the use made by our bourgeoisie of *God Save the King*, and on the other the use made by the Russian workers of the *International*: remember the great songs of the French Revolution—the *Marseillaise*, *Carmagnole*, *Çaira*.

With these thoughts in mind one greeted with particular satisfaction the initiative of the *Sunday Worker*, carried on by *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, in making Labour songs, with music, a feature of their journal. It is a reprint of sixteen songs from the *Labour Weekly*, attractively produced, that lies before us. The effort is a laudable one: yet a hasty perusal shows how far we have to go before we get a really satisfactory collection in this country of revolutionary working-class songs.

Sixteen Songs contains, in addition to the *International*, *The Red Flag*

and *The Red Army March*, James Connolly's fine *Rebel Song* and the glorious *Warschawianka*, described as the "March-Song of the Red Army": it was, of course, as its name shows, originally a Polish revolutionary song. Beyond these we have William Morris, Edward Carpenter, *God Save the People*, and so on. For the most part the sentiments of these latter songs are those of republican idealism and Utopianism, not of the class struggle.

One answer to this criticism may be dealt with in advance. Stress is laid—quite truly—on the great difficulty of getting hold of revolutionary working-class songs: or, even if the words and melody are known, of getting good translations and harmonisation. This, surely, is a difficulty that can be overcome. Russia alone provides a vast field of material, while there are such songs as the Italian *Bandiera Rossa*, the Polish *Red Flag*, and a score of others that deserve to be made known to our movement.

G. A. H.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- Educational Frontiers*. By Scott Nearing. (Thomas Seltzer, New York, \$1.50.)
- The Trade Union Movement in Belgium*. By C. Mertens, General Secretary of the Belgian Trade Union Commission. (I.F.T.U., Amsterdam, 1s.)
- National Isolation an Illusion*. By Perry Belmont. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York 18s.)
- Getting Together*. By M. Tomsky. With an Introduction by R. Page Arnot. (L.R.D., 1s.)
- The Philosophy of Labour*. By Delisle Burns. (Allen & Unwin, 3s. 6d.)
- Thrasymachus, The Future of Morals*. By C. E. M. Joad. (Kegan Paul, 2s. 6d.)
- The Interest Standard of Currency*. Ernest Dick, Ph.D. (Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.)
- Revolution by Reason*. By Oswald Mosley. (Labour Literature Depot, 2d.)
- Murder: An Indictment of British Imperialism in China*. (C.P.G.B., 1d.)
- The World's Trade Union Movement*. By A. Losovsky, General Secretary, R.I.L.U. (National Minority Movement, London, 1s. 6d.)
- The Underworld of State*. By Stan Harding. (Allen & Unwin, cloth 6s. net.)
- William Stapleton Royce: A Memoir*. By Charles Woodrooffe Ould. With an Introduction by the Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas. (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.)
- Proportional Representation: Its Dangers and Defects*. By George Horwill, B.Sc. (Allen & Unwin, 6s.)
- The Supreme Art of Bringing Up Children*. By M. R. Hopkinson. (Allen & Unwin, 2s. 6d.)

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THE
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MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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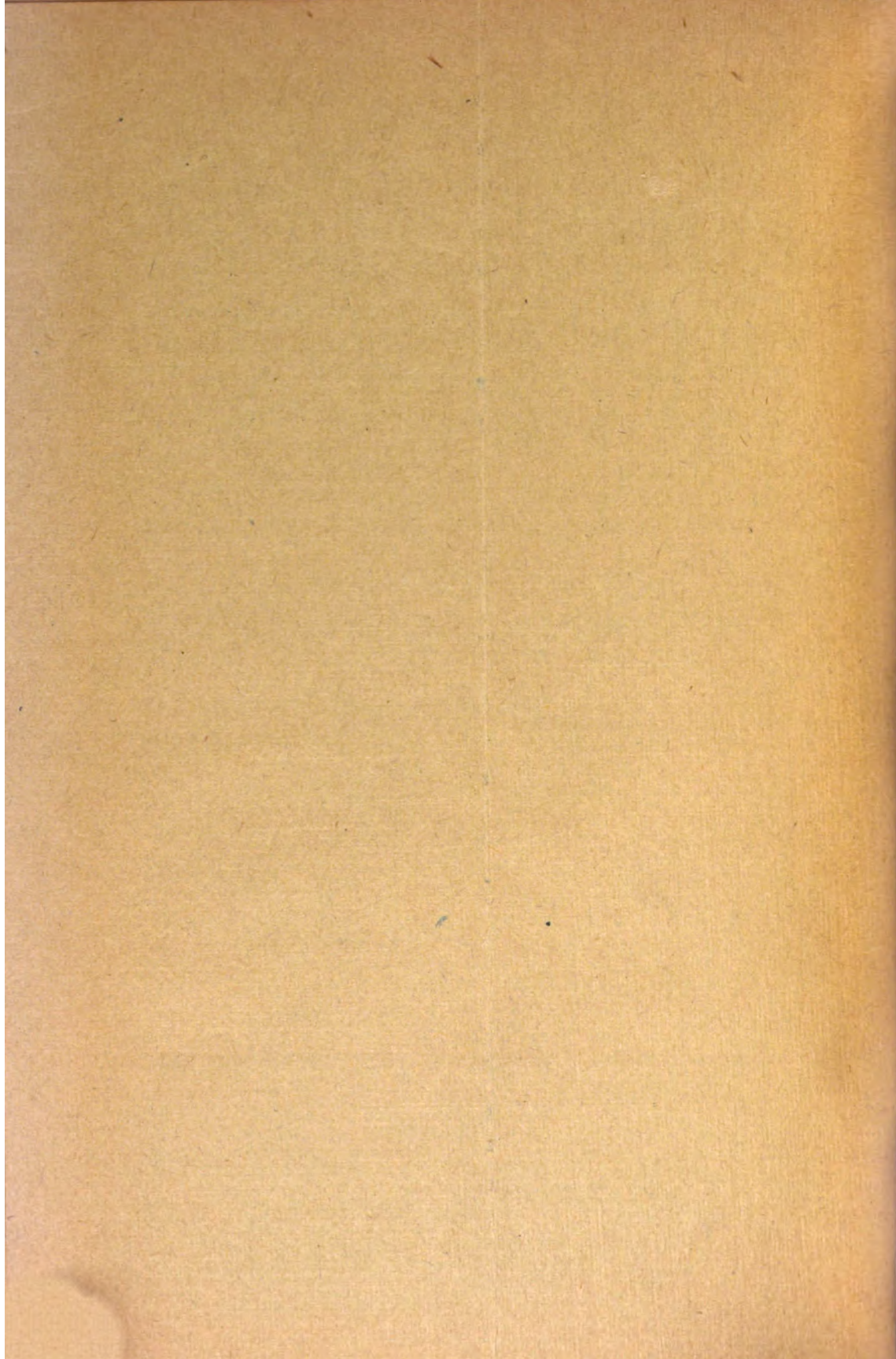
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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - - -	Page 67
<i>LOCARNO AND THE CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE</i>		
Karl Marx on China	- - - -	„ 86
	By D. RIAZANOV	
Capital and Labour in the U.S.A.	- -	„ 93
	By A. A. PURCELL	
The I.L.P. Programme	- - - -	„ 99
	By EMIL BURNS	
The Left Wing	- - - -	„ 108
	By WM. PAUL	
The Murder of Gustav Landauer	- -	„ 112
	By ERNST TOLLER	
The World of Labour	- - - -	„ 115
Russian Communist Conference—Indian Textile Strike —Labour Conditions in Japan		
Book Reviews	- - - -	„ 124
Two Sides of a Medal		C. P. D.
A Poor Story of Coal		B. W.

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NOTES of the MONTH

A World Campaign—Peace?—The “Twilight of Empire”—Imperialism in Decay—Imperialist Antagonisms—Unstable Stabilisation—Fighting the Revolution—The First Stage—Reconstruction—From Dawes to Locarno—British Aims—Working Class Revival—Asiatic Nationalism—The Background of the Pact—French Opposition—German Opposition—France Weakening—German Bourgeois Bargain—No German Settlement—German Workers’ Rôle—Conclusions—American Rôle—Counter Revolution—An Instrument of War—Indiscretions—“The Fourth International”—Attacks Ahead.

THE British Government’s campaign of reaction is a world campaign. This fact, although recognised in principle, is not yet fully recognised in fact in the working class movement. That a direct attack on the working class at home is being organised is clear to all. But that the international policy of the British Government is an attempt to organise a similar combination and campaign on a world scale is not yet universally admitted, nor the consequences drawn. The same Government which is attacked for its policy at home is praised and applauded for its foreign policy. The same Labour representatives who have denounced the preparations against the working class have acclaimed the Pact as a step towards peace. Yet the two are part of the same policy, and that policy can only be fought on a single world front. It is not entirely accident that in the same week as the Locarno Treaty was signed the arrests of the Communists took place. The national and international policy of the Government are closely intertwined. Failure to recognise this completely weakens and breaks up the working class front against the capitalist attack. The impending conflict needs to be viewed, not only in the light of, but as part of, the international situation.

WHEN Mr. Baldwin last spring made his famous appeal for Industrial Peace, which was the preparation of the capitalist offensive that followed, the Labour representatives in the House acclaimed it as a "wonderful appeal," and declared the readiness of the Labour Party "in the interests of the nation" to follow Mr. Baldwin's lead. To-day exactly the same thing is happening over the Pact. Once again the unprepossessing offspring of Conservative Imperialism is held up as the joyful pledge of Peace, Humanity and Good Will. And once again the unwearied Labour Party representatives, endeavouring to bury their unworthy suspicions and respond like gentlemen, have acclaimed the new hope as a pacific triumph and have even endeavoured to claim it as a Labour triumph. And once again no doubt, when the time comes and its real character becomes clear, there will be the same indignation and denunciation of Mr. Baldwin for having "deceived" them. But the difference that is already arising is shown in the fact that a section of the Labour Party did from the first, in spite of party discipline and "national unity" of foreign policy, vote against the Pact, although their reasons covered a wide field of variation. It is all the more necessary now, before it is too late, to awaken the working class movement to the character of the policy which is embodied in the Pact, which is closely related to the policy of the capitalist offensive at home, and to the reactionary alignment and eventual war to which it is the inevitable prelude.

THE British Government, which is by common consent the author and inspirer of the Pact, is to-day fulfilling the rôle of the leader and organiser of reaction throughout the world. This fact can be demonstrated in Asia, in Europe, in relation to the Soviet Union and in relation to the working class at home. This rôle is the inevitable outcome of the post-war situation of the British Empire. The British Empire alone remains of the old Empires of Russia, Germany and Austria : and it survives as the reactionary "holding" power in world politics. It is threatened by the weakening industrial and trade position at home (the inevitable outcome of prolonged capitalist development and accumulation), by the rise of new capitalist powers, by the advance

of the working class, and by the emergence of nationalities within it. The British Empire is struggling for existence against the inescapable flood of new forces. The gathering consciousness of this is seen when the Government head of the Empire can speak of the "twilight" gathering upon it. The progressive advancing forces of world politics lie, on the side of capitalism, with America and the New World, and beyond capitalism with the advancing working class and the Soviet Union. The British Empire survives as the extreme reactionary force in world politics, allied with the conservative, reactionary and decaying forces all over the world. It is a significant fact, typical of the reversal of conventional notions, that to-day practically the whole of Asia (save for the kingdoms of Afghanistan, Siam and Japan) is Republican, and only in those territories subjected under the British Raj are monarchical forms artificially maintained by "progressive" British Capitalism. The Chinese history of the past year has shown how the "liberal" and "democratic" rôle of capitalism has passed to the United States, and Great Britain has been compelled to take up the position of the militant power, relying on "frightfulness" in Shanghai and Hong Kong. The same significance attaches to the passing away of "Free Speech" in Britain itself. The flag of the British Empire is to-day the Black Flag : and it is not surprising that Chamberlain at Locarno, according to report, should have acclaimed the Fascist deputation from Genoa as his "comrades."

THE situation of the British Empire is simply the picture of Imperialism in Decay. Imperialism in Decay becomes increasingly pre-occupied with the problem of its own internal weakness, and therefore with the problem of the Revolution. In consequence its most far-seeing statesmen endeavour to raise the banner of the Imperialist United Front, to overcome and diminish existing antagonisms and discords between the ruling powers in order to present a common front to the enemy. Previously the European system had been founded upon a triple division—Victor States, Defeated States and the Revolution. Even this triple division contained yet further discords : for the Victor States were in continual rivalry and antagonism over the spoils, both in relation to the Defeated States and in the colonies. Now, however, with the growing consolidation of the Soviet Union,

with the advance of the working class, and with the move to independence of the Asiatic nations, it became necessary to draw the front closer. Versailles has in effect to be liquidated before the advance of the Revolution. The triple division has to give place to a dual division. The antagonisms between the Victor States have to be composed, and the Victor States and the Defeated States have to be drawn together in a common front against the Revolution—Western and Central Europe against the Soviet Union, the colonies and the working class. This in its simplest form is the task of the Pact. It is the United Front of Imperialism in Decay.

BUT even this United Front is of necessity incomplete. The Pact cannot even claim to be a solution, or partial solution, of capitalist antagonisms (as the short-sighted Labour representatives have acclaimed it, welcoming the drawing together of Britain, France and Germany). For not only are the inter-relations of Britain, France and Germany extremely unstable. The real line of capitalist division goes beyond these. From the nature of the case the Pact can only be a combination of the decaying capitalist States, which are conscious of their weakness and of the necessity of drawing together. The advancing capitalist States, which are still confident in their strength, have no wish to enter into close alliance with the decaying capitalism which they are overcoming. The Pact is not adopted by the United States and the "Dominions"; and in the case of the Dominions the refusal to adopt it is a further straining of the bonds of the dividing Empire, and following of the leadership of the United States rather than of Britain. Thus the Pact becomes the starting point of a further intensified antagonism within capitalism. The Pact is not only the combination of the Old Capitalism of Europe against the Revolution and against Asiatic nationalism. It is also, in germ, the combination of the Old Capitalism of Europe under British leadership against the New Capitalism of America. The Pact has a double front; but each front is ultimately a front of war.

IT is necessary first, however, to examine more closely the rôle of the Pact in relation to the Revolution and the whole situation of post-war Europe. For the Pact completes, as the statesmen responsible for it have declared, the post-war period,

and opens up a new period. The seven years up to the Pact were engaged in the struggle to stabilise capitalism. The Pact is the attempt to fix stable capitalism in legal form. But this culmination is only reached after a succession of stages, during which the whole nature of European Capitalism has been transformed, and the so-called stabilised capitalism that has been reached is a very different thing from pre-war capitalism in Europe. To realise this difference it is necessary to review the stages that have taken place. It is possible to distinguish three stages in this process. The first, from 1919-1921, is the period of Versailles, of armed struggle with the Revolution and of the setting up and subsidising of the new counter-revolutionary States. During this period France, the military power, takes the lead, and America keeps in the background. The second, from 1921-1924, is the process of Reconstruction, the reduction of the new States on to a productive capitalist basis as tributaries of the leading capitalist Powers, and the consequent gradual liquidation of the military system of Versailles. This period is marked by intense conflict between Britain and France, the gradual weakening of France and the eventual accomplishment of reconstruction only under American economic hegemony. Finally, with 1925 comes the endeavour to fix the newly stabilised system by the political instrument of the Pact, and thus finally isolate the Soviet Union. It is in the perspective of these stages that the significance of the Pact as a landmark in the issue of Capitalism and the Revolution stands out clear.

FROM 1919 to 1921 the struggle between Capitalism and Revolution in Europe was open and elementary. All Central Europe, after the shock of war and famine, was entering on the social revolution. It is not generally realised how completely artificial was the means by which the old order was buttressed and maintained in Central Europe only by the external action of the Allies, by arms, subsidies and food. The Versailles Treaty, by the Balkanisation of Europe, established the new subsidised vassal military States to be the outposts of counter-revolution. The answer of Capitalism to the Revolution took two main forms : Arms and Food. While armed intervention and blockade was maintained for Soviet Russia, Soviet Hungary and the first few months of Workers'

Germany, at the same time for the new States, and for Germany and Hungary as soon as political control was established, money, food and coal were poured in in colossal quantities. Between 1918 and 1921 no less than one hundred and thirty-seven million pounds was spent in Relief by the Allied Governments, who could certainly not be accused of humanitarian considerations.

HOW far was the counter-revolutionary purpose of this Relief conscious? The answer is supplied by the British Director of Relief, Sir William Goode, writing in 1925, in defence of the expenditure, at a time when the original conditions had been almost forgotten and the expenditure was being attacked as a chaotic extravagance :—

Food was practically the only basis on which the Governments of the hastily erected States could be maintained in power. . . . Half of Europe had hovered on the brink of Bolshevism. If it had not been for the hundred and thirty-seven million pounds in relief credits granted to Central and Eastern Europe between 1919 and 1921, it would have been impossible to provide food and coal and the sea and land transport for them. Without food and coal and transport Austria and probably several other countries would have gone the way of Russia. . . . Two and a-half years after the Armistice, after the back of Bolshevism in Central Europe had been broken largely by relief credits, the League of Nations began to tackle Austria. . . . The expenditure of a hundred and thirty-seven millions was probably one of the best international investments, from a financial and political point of view ever recorded in history.

There is no lack of consciousness here of the issue of Capitalism and the Revolution as the real issue behind all the pacifist and humanitarian propaganda.

FROM 1921 to 1924 the main task for Capitalism was to develop from the hasty patchwork system of Versailles, under which Central Europe has been reclaimed from the Revolution, to a more stable basis of capitalist exploitation. Armed intervention ended, and at the same time the flow of Relief Credits dried up. Just as Russia passed from War Communism to the task of building up a socialist economy, so Capitalism passed from the arms and relief period of Counter-Revolution to the task of re-building profitable exploitation. Reconstruction Loans at a

high rate of interest were now the watchword, and the League of Nations became a useful instrument for carrying through the task of economic subjection of one country after another. But in this transition, violent antagonism developed between the Capitalist Powers, each of which sought to carry through the capitalist reorganisation on the terms most profitable to itself. France, which profited from the military system of Versailles, sought to establish its economic control of Europe by that means. British Capitalism was in complete opposition to this, but was not strong enough alone to counter French control in Europe. British-French antagonism was strong. The British attempt at reconstruction in 1922 at Genoa failed through French opposition. Thereafter the French military method was carried to an extreme degree in 1923 by the Ruhr occupation, with the result of bringing Germany to economic collapse and the verge of revolution. By the end of 1923, Britain, France and Germany were at a deadlock, utterly unable to extricate themselves from the tangle of their conflicting interests. It was at this point that the United States, which had been biding its time, intervened, and carried through the task of European reconstruction under its own direct leadership by the Dawes Report. The rôle of persuading the European peoples to place their neck under the American enslavement plan of the Dawes Report was entrusted to the "democratic" Left bloc in Europe which had its brief hour of puppet rule in 1924—only to be replaced by stronger hands when the task of enforcement began. Stable Capitalism had been re-established for the moment in Europe—but under the overlordship of the United States, thus giving rise to new problems and antagonisms in the coming period.

WITH the Dawes Report the foundations of the new economic system were laid for Europe. After the Dawes loan, American credits and American-British credits followed wholesale to most of the countries of Europe. America used the weapon of the War Debts to develop a hold on one country after another, and even the slogan of a Dawes Scheme for France began to be heard. But it was now necessary to stabilise the new system politically. It was necessary to prevent France using the Versailles Treaty to extend her hold by military means.

Above all it was necessary to bring the rulers of Germany, the principal object of exploitation, into the circle of agreements, to prevent the danger of the German nation revolting against their bondage and uniting with the Russian people who had already thrown off the rule of international financiers. All this made necessary the Pact. The Pact was the political complement of the Dawes Scheme. But in the reaching of the Pact new considerations came into play.

IN the negotiations leading to the Pact, Britain and France each endeavoured to realise their special aims. American pressure on Europe was exerted simply in favour of some kind of political settlement, which would enable peaceful penetration and economic organisation to proceed safely, draw the claws of France, secure Germany and diminish the wasteful load of armaments, thus enabling Europe to develop as a profitable colony. France endeavoured to utilise such a settlement to fix its old position of military hegemony under Versailles by the rigid framework of the Protocol, which would have made every settlement of Versailles guaranteed permanently and enforceable by arms. British opposition to this (after the misadventure of MacDonal, who here misread his Master's voice and supported the Protocol, but has subsequently changed over to the Pact with lightning rapidity in accordance with the demands of British Foreign policy) defeated the Protocol. But British aims were concerned primarily not with the problems of Europe, but with the Soviet Union and Asia. For Britain the Pact was the means to the realisation of the long-cherished scheme of the United Front against the Soviet Union, against Turkey and the colonial menace, towards the United Front of European Imperialism under British leadership, for the sake of which Britain was even ready to risk the increasing separation from the white Dominions. And the circumstances of 1925 favoured the British line.

FOR by 1925 big new factors came into view which are already revealing themselves as the real factors of the future and have rapidly begun to transform the world situation. These factors may be characterised in two events which marked the

beginning of 1925: the Russo-Japanese Treaty and Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity. During all the previous six years of imperialist intrigue and confusion in Europe, the Soviet Union, starting from the bottom level of war, blockade and famine, had steadily fought down these conditions and begun to build up and consolidate the new social order—the social order of workers' and peasants' rule entering on the transition to Socialism. This consolidation had now reached such a point that alone in Europe the conditions of the Russian workers were improving, while the conditions of all the other workers were going down. This inevitably had its effect. The workers of Western and Central Europe were rapidly losing any illusions as to the real nature of the capitalist stabilisation to which the Second International had led them as the true path. A revival of the working class movement began. This revival inevitably looked to the Russian workers as leaders and as allies. The outstanding expression of this revival was the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Alliance. The same process was visible in the numerous Social Democratic workers' delegations to Russia during 1925. The campaign of International Trade Union Unity, the Workers' Alliance and "Red Friday" in England, the fight against the Moroccan War in France, the considerable Communist election gains in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia, all these witnessed a revival of working-class struggle which was no longer in isolation from the Russian workers.

AT the same time the success of the Soviet Union in maintaining itself against all the efforts of Imperialism gave encouragement to every other section exploited by Imperialism to throw off the yoke, and in particular to the Asiatic nations. What Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity meant in Europe, that the Chinese national struggle meant in Asia. Both revealed powerful rising forces which were threatening the whole rule of Imperialism. The changing of the balance of forces was most startlingly revealed at the outset of the year when even Japan, which had been cold-shouldered by Anglo-American Imperialism, made a show of breaking the Imperialist front and entered into a treaty with the Soviet Union. This event raised immediate alarm. It was feared at once that Germany would equally enter into

alliance and seek thus to escape from the toils of Versailles. Panic-stricken visions were conjured up of a great bloc extending over Japan, China, Russia and Germany, which would overbalance the whole precarious domination of West European Imperialism. Therefore at all costs Germany had to be detached. Germany had to be won over, to be re-established as an equal, to be promised even to be re-established as an Imperialist Power. The battle for the Pact became above all a battle over the body of Germany, a battle to win Germany for the "West" against the "East," that is, in the last resort, for Imperialism against the Revolution.

IT is only necessary to see the sequence of events as they follow on one another in 1925, to see the background of the Pact. The most typical and outstanding events of the series run :—

- January.* Russo-Japanese Treaty.
- April.* Anglo-Russian Trade Union Alliance.
- May.* Moroccan War of Independence against France.
- June.* Chinese national struggle.
- July.* "Red Friday."
- August.* Syrian Revolt.
- September.* Scarborough Trades Union Congress.

And then follows :—

- October.* Locarno Pact of British, French and German capitalism.
Prosecution of British Communist Party.
- November.* British-French united front in the Middle East.

The sequence is so clear that it needs no comment.

AT first the Pact met with opposition both from France and from Germany. This fact is important, because it reflects the situation that the Pact did not primarily arise from a solution of European antagonisms, but only from the compelling force of larger antagonisms on the world side. The Pact reflected British aims, which were not primarily concerned with European questions, which indeed were strongly hostile to becoming involved in the French military system of Versailles ("It is not in the interests of Great Britain to be identified with the French system of military and political alliances."—*The Times*, March 11, 1925), but which sought to establish some kind of working agreement with France in order to present a common front to the Soviet Union and the Asiatic nations, and above all to bring Germany into the circle of

Western European Imperialism ("Germany must be brought into the comity of West European nations."—*The Times*, March 2, 1925). On the other hand, France was at first openly hostile to the Pact as the instrument of German rehabilitation, freely declared for the Protocol and in the beginning made no secret of its opposition to what the French diplomatic journalist Pertinax denounced as "the absurd tripartite Pact which enjoys the secret preference of the British Foreign Office." Nevertheless French efforts either to maintain the Protocol, or to establish a Seven Power Pact including France's Eastern allies, failed; the Five Power Pact which was actually reached is a Pact of Western European Imperialism in accordance with the British aim and not of French hegemony in Europe. The Pact was in this respect a British victory and a diplomatic defeat for France ("The restoration of British prestige in Europe is not the least of the benefits to have come out of Locarno."—*The Times*, October 21, 1925).

AT the same time Germany was also in profound opposition to the Pact, although the original proposal was sponsored by the German Foreign Office under British tutelage. The strength of the opposition is shown, not only in the prolonged internal conflict which preceded the acceptance of the Pact, but in the heavy vote against even on the day of ratification. This vote comprised both the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party. The actual numerical voting strength of these two parties, on the basis of the Presidential Election just preceding, comprises the majority of the German nation. Thus the representatives of the majority voted against the Pact. What does this mean? The actual opposition of the Nationalist Party leaders is, as events have again and again shown, a sham opposition, since the leaders of the German bourgeoisie, whom the Nationalist Party to-day represents, are in practice sold to allied capital. But the fact that this Nationalist opposition had to be carried to the length of the resignation of Ministers and a direct negative vote in the Reichstag indicates the strength of the national feeling against the Pact in the country. This national feeling is based on the recognition that the Pact means for Germany the voluntary acceptance of the burdens of Versailles, the turning away from the natural path of economic and

political development in the direction of Russia and the entering into union with the Western Imperialism which holds Germany subject. Such a union could only be based on a bargain of interests of the ruling group in the face of wide opposition of all sections in Germany. The Pact is, in the fullest sense, no union of peoples, but a typical capitalist marriage of convenience.

WHY was both French and German opposition to the Pact overcome? In the case of France the governing forces are extremely clear. During 1925, France was increasingly unable to bargain effectively, and therefore glad to accept the best arrangement that could be secured, for two main reasons. The first was the financial position, which became more and more critical and brought down Ministry after Ministry. It was in this field that Anglo-American influence could effectively be exerted on France. *The Times* in the early part of the year quotes with approval the American view that :—

the financial situation of France must slowly but inevitably exert a modifying influence on her political action.—*The Times*, April 3, 1925.

And Herriot himself in the last week before his fall admitted that :
a country with such a foreign debt, without making any arrangement with its creditors, has not entire liberty in its foreign policy.
—*Manchester Guardian*, April 6, 1925.

The second, which became no less overshadowing in the latter part of the year, was the colonial crisis. The reverses in Morocco, which led to the recall of Lyautey, and in Syria, which led to the recall of Sarrail, brought France face to face with the same problem of collapsing Imperialism which confronted Britain and forced the necessity of a common front. The old policy of British-French antagonism and intrigue in Colonial questions, of French alliance with Turkey or British material support to Morocco or the Druses, had to give way to combination against the common danger. The Chamberlain policy of the Pact triumphed : but in either case the governing causes lay only in the external force of wider issues and antagonisms, and not in the elimination of existing antagonisms.

IN the case of Germany, the calculations of the leaders of the German bourgeoisie, who have taken the responsibility of accepting the Pact, are openly based on the immediate gains to be won in return. The German bourgeoisie, in voluntarily accepting

Versailles, in entering into the League of Nations, which is weighted in favour of the Allied victors, has done so in lively expectation of favours to come. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* writes :—

Germany's position in the world will change. . . . America's confidence in the economic position of Europe will be strengthened.

What does this mean ? The German bourgeoisie hopes, first and foremost, for more credits from America. Second, the German bourgeoisie hopes to be restored to the ranks of capitalist Powers, that is, to receive colonies. (It is significant of the real rôle of the League of Nations as the slave-market of the Powers that the question of German entry into the League should be closely bound up with the question of receiving "mandates.") That is to say, the German bourgeoisie is ready, as with the Dawes Scheme, to continue and extend the enslavement of the German nation to foreign capital in order to maintain their position as commission agents. The driving force to German acceptance of the Pact is not the "reconciliation" of Britain, France and Germany, but the irresistible draining power of the American dollar.

BUT this settlement is completely unstable. The German bourgeoisie only accepts the existing situation for the moment, in order at the first opportunity to strike free and resume an independent policy. The existing imperative demand is for credits ; but on the basis of these credits the attempt will be made, by the super-exploitation of the German workers, to rebuild independent German capitalism. Thus the very dependence on America carries with it future antagonism to America. The same applies to German relations to France and Britain. The declarations even to-day of leading German statesmen, as well as the comments of the Press, have made clear that the fundamental demand of the German bourgeoisie for the revision of Versailles and the fundamental orientation of German foreign policy in the present period towards the East remain consciously maintained and are only incompletely obscured by the veneer of the Pact.

BUT if the instability of the Pact applies to the German bourgeoisie, which has consciously entered into alliance with Anglo-American capital, it applies a hundredfold more to the German nation which is subjected to the enslavement of

intensified foreign capitalist exploitation by the working of the Dawes Scheme and the Pact. A recent example of this affords striking evidence of the situation. By the Dawes Scheme the German State Railways were handed over to a private company (with the blessings of MacDonal and Thomas) with instructions to effect "economies" in order to extract a portion of the necessary tribute. It is now announced that of the 1,009,000 railway staff, 279,000 had been dismissed by the end of last year and 40,000 more were to be dismissed—a total of 329,000 or 33 per cent. of the staff (*Daily Mail*, December 1, 1925). It is inevitable that the German working class will enter into more and more intense struggle with these conditions of servitude. The prospect is indeed calculated upon by bourgeois observers :—

The Dawes system means lower wages and longer hours, and the certainty of fierce social conflicts sooner or later.—J. L. GARVIN, in the *Observer*, August 23, 1925.

A great effect will be produced on the wages and hours of workmen in Germany, and the time will come when there will be a revolt against this state of things, and they will stand it no longer.—D. LLOYD GEORGE in the House of Commons, March 25, 1925.

Thus the Pact is built upon a volcano ; and represents in fact an alliance of bourgeois governments against the future working-class struggle.

FROM all these considerations the following conclusion necessarily results. The Pact is not a reconciliation or unification of England, France and Germany or a solution of their antagonisms. All the basic antagonisms of these capitalist states remain unaffected. Thus the Pact is not, even in a limited or superficial sense, a "partial peace" or a "stage to peace," in the words of the Labour apologists and Second International. Even if the Pact were to mean the beginning of a real combination and amalgamation of English, French and German capitalism (of which there is no sign) it would not be in any sense a partial peace or a stage to peace, any more than in the economic war of capitalism the formation of a trust represents a partial peace or a stage to peace. On the contrary, the formation of the trust opens out the development of a wider antagonism. In exactly the same way the Pact opens out the development of a wider antagonism, but in this case without overcoming those already existing. The Pact is simply a drawing

together of the capitalist governments of Britain, France and Germany in the face of certain larger issues and compelling forces, which throw into the background for the moment, without solving, the existing antagonisms. The meaning of the Pact can only be understood in the light of these larger compelling forces and antagonisms, and not in the light of any supposed harmonious reconciliation of British, French and German capitalist interests.

WHAT are the larger compelling forces? They are twofold. The first is American Finance. American Finance imperiously demanded some form of settlement and policing of Europe to secure to it successful and uninterrupted exploitation. When the new American Ambassador to London arrived in the spring of 1925, and delivered his first speech at the Pilgrims' Dinner, his reference to the American view of European problems was simple and straightforward. He said :—

We are not as a people interested in making speculative advances.
—*The Times*, May 5, 1925.

When in August, 1925, the British and French representatives were negotiating the reply to the German note over the Pact, the French Press complained that the proceedings were dominated by the American Ambassador. Direct financial pressure on France, the hope of credits for Germany, worked political wonders in easing the passage of the Pact. Finally, when the Pact was successfully achieved in October, the expression of American satisfaction was clear and unmistakable :—

The New York Stock Market vaulted to a new high point on the Conference news.—*Manchester Guardian*, October 19, 1925.

But this common subjection to America, which thus helped to produce the Pact, does not mean that Europe henceforth enters on the path of harmonious development under American overlordship. On the contrary, this very subjection to America contains within itself the greatest antagonism of world capitalism ; and the Pact which to-day reflects the subjection can to-morrow become the instrument of this antagonism.

THE second compelling force is the menace of working-class and colonial revolt and the growing power of the Soviet Union. This menace from the point of view of Imperialism in Decay reflects itself in a hundred forms. There is

the issue of German working-class revolt against the whole enslavement of Versailles and Dawes. There is the issue of German-Russian Unity. There is the issue of the growth of Communism and the Third International in Western Europe. There is the issue of Asiatic Nationalism. And above all there is the issue of the growing strength and consolidation of the Soviet Union, whose existence is a challenge to Imperialism. Against these the action of Imperialism takes a hundred forms, but all necessitating closer combination. There is the common financial blockade of the Soviet Union conducted under the leadership of the City. There is the simultaneous prosecutions of the Communists in the different countries and support of the Fascists. There is the British-French United Front in the Middle East. And above all there is the Pact. The Pact is hailed as the Saviour of Western "civilisation" against the menace of Bolshevism. Why? Because the Pact, by bringing Germany into the League, combines Britain, France and Germany in an armed alliance to make war in common on every "outlaw" nation which dares to disobey the orders of this Imperialist League. The long discussion with Germany as to the extent to which Germany may be called on to join in common military action against an outside State showed clearly enough the issue which was dominating attention. The German statesmen were appeased with a polite and meaningless letter to read to their people, to the effect that in any action Germany's special position would always be taken into consideration; but Chamberlain in speaking to the House of Commons declared plainly enough that Germany would in fact be under the "same obligations" as any other member.

THUS the Pact is an instrument of war and not of peace. The first sequel of the Pact has been the combined front against Turkey over Mosul and the open threat of war preparations (including the invocation of the machinery of the League) if Turkey does not yield to the imperialist plunderers. This is the first expression of the "Locarno spirit." To call the Pact, as the second International resolution does, "a partial success in the fight of the working class against methods of violence" is brazen hypocrisy. The Pact contains the most explicit regulations

and obligations of imperialist violence, which are now imposed on all the signatory States. The second clause not only lays down a host of causes of "legitimate" war, but definitely includes in these any action in pursuance of a decision of the Assembly or Council of the League of Nations. As if to make doubly sure, a special seventh clause is added to establish that there shall be no restriction on the right of the League of Nations "to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world." When these repeated war clauses are taken in conjunction with the known aims, declarations and policy of the Governments composing the League Council, the purpose of the whole is too clear to be ignored. Those who support the Pact, like those who support the League, as a stage to peace are in fact putting weapons in the armoury of Imperialism for the next war, when they will find themselves called on to fight in the name of their Pacts and their Leagues for Imperialist and counter-revolutionary aims.

IN their asides men often speak the truth. When the Government Minister, Mr. Ormsby-Gore, sought to defend his famous "explanation" of Locarno to the effect that "the solidarity of Christian civilisation is necessary to stem the most sinister growth that has arisen in European history"; that "the struggle at Locarno, as I see it, was this: Is Germany to regard her future as bound up with the fate of the great Western Powers, or is she going to work with Russia for the destruction of Western civilisation?"; and that "Locarno means that so far as the present government of Germany is concerned, it is detached from Russia, and is throwing in its lot with the Western Party"—Mr. Ormsby-Gore sought to defend these striking statements on the ground that they were "not part of a prepared speech," but were made "on the spur of the moment." Exactly. He could not have made his declaration more convincing. For in capitalist diplomacy and politics it is precisely the prepared and solemn sentence which is wholly unconvincing; it is the uncalculated indiscretion which may sometimes throw an unwished-for light on the genuine mind of the speaker. Mr. Ormsby-Gore's analysis of the Pact may have been

more romantic than profound ; but it throws a vivid light on the mind of the Conservative Ministry.

IN the same way an enlightening incident is recorded of Mr. Chamberlain at Locarno. The *Matin* relates that after the Pact had been signed, and the majority of the dignitaries had departed, Mr. Chamberlain and M. Briand remained with one or two journalists. M. Briand had jokingly remarked (with reference to the difficulty of the German delegates to reconcile their party to Locarno) that it would be necessary to form a new party, "a Locarnist Party." Mr. Chamberlain declared that he would belong at once.

Thereupon the two Ministers drank to the health of "the Fourth International of Locarno" amid the applause of the journalists.

"The Fourth International of Locarno." It would be impossible to describe more aptly the character of the Pact. For it is to be observed that no one would speak of a "Fourth International" who is not already thinking of, and even pre-occupied with, the Third International, and above all with the problem of countering the Third International ; still less would a respectable member of the bourgeoisie make a joke to a colleague about the Fourth International if both were not already very clearly pre-occupied with the Third International. If, then, Messrs. Chamberlain and Briand consider that they can describe the Pact among themselves as essentially an instrument for combating the Third International, that is for combating the revolutionary working-class movement, it is not entirely unreasonable suspicion on the part of the working class to take a similar view.

THE Locarno Pact is a part of the capitalist offensive. Locarno has not brought either peace or any basic stabilisation. The events immediately following Locarno have shown government crises in France and Germany, financial and economic crisis in France, impending industrial conflict in England and heavy government reaction, smashing up the Trade Unions in Italy, military dictatorship in Greece, war in China, Morocco and Syria and the threat of war with Turkey, and the worsening of economic conditions and production throughout

Western and Central Europe. But what Locarno has achieved is purely and simply the strengthening of the front of reaction, the formation of a military imperialist alliance and the endeavour to confuse the Western European workers in front by the use of pacific phrases. The same Government which produced the Communist prosecution and the strike-breaking preparations has produced the Locarno Pact. This combined attack demands ever closer unity of the international working class to meet it. The line of the British workers must be : solidarity with the German workers against Dawes and the Pact ; solidarity with the Russian workers against any attack by the world reaction outside ; and solidarity with the Eastern nations in the struggle against Imperialism. Those " pacifists " who urge on the workers support of the Pact in the name of peace are in fact urging a policy of war. The path to peace lies only through the working-class struggle. The moral of the Pact for the working class, as of the Government's home preparations, is : Be Prepared ; a new wave of reaction is developing which will test the whole strength, unity, consciousness and solidarity of the working-class movement at home and abroad.

R. P. D.

KARL MARX ON CHINA

By D. RIAZANOV

[By the courtesy of Professor Riazanov, Director of the Marx and Engels Institute in Moscow, we have received the original English text of an important article on China written by Karl Marx in 1853. Owing to considerations of space we are not able to present this article this month. But we reproduce here the able introductory article of Professor Riazanov translated from the journal "Under the Banner of Marxism." Now that China is again awakening, and a new stage in the development of the Chinese revolution is taking place, it is especially opportune to take note of Marx's accurate analysis of the fundamental basis of these changes.]

ALREADY in the *Communist Manifesto* the significance of the East Indian and Chinese market is pointed out as a factor in the development of European capitalism. It was, indeed, from East India that British capitalism began its offensive against China. The East India Company used its trade monopoly with China to make the latter a market for the sale of Indian opium. Since, however, all English traders were equally interested in the intoxication of the Chinese people, the monopoly was removed in 1833. The attempt of the Chinese Government in 1839 to forbid the import of opium produced the so-called opium war against China, which Marx characterises in *Capital* as one of the chief links in the long chain of trade wars in which since the sixteenth century, even in the East, the European nations were engaged. After the English had cruelly destroyed a whole series of Chinese towns and had slaughtered thousands of Chinese for the honour of Christianity and European civilisation, they forced on China in 1842 the treaty of Nanking, which provided for the opening of the five Treaty Ports—Kanton, Amoy, Ningpo, Shanghai and Foochow, the payment of what was at that time an enormous indemnity, and the surrender of the island of Hong Kong, which forms the chief base for British Imperialism in the Far East. Following the treaty of Nanking came treaties with the United States and with France.

The defeat in battle with the Europeans was a hard blow for the prestige of the Manchu dynasty which had been supreme in China since the seventeenth century. Among the peasant masses, groaning under the burden of taxation and the pressure of the bureaucracy, and who reacted at times to their subjection by sporadic revolts, there now began to ripen a ferment of dissatisfaction which was especially strong in the South East where the destructive influence of foreign capital most made itself felt. To this was added the fermentation among the Chinese "intelligentsia" of that time, the teachers and the lower officials, as well as among the craftsmen ruined by foreign competition.

Just at the time when in West Europe the waves of the 1848 revolution reached their height, the activity of the secret societies in China also became stronger and propaganda for new religious sects developed among the peasants. The European missionaries against their will played the part of hens with a brood of ducklings. They remarked with terror that the drawing-room Christianity preached by them had taken root among the rebellious peasantry in the only militant form of Christianity, which demands equality in this world. Europe learnt of this for the first time through the well-known German missionary and sinologist, Gutzlaff, who also was the first to make a Chinese translation of the Bible.

In the same international review (January, 1850) in which Marx investigated the influence of the discovery of the Californian gold mines on the development of the world market, and in which he prophesied for the Pacific Ocean the same rôle that the Mediterranean had once played in the ancient world, and which had then passed to the Atlantic Ocean, Marx also refers to the interesting communications of Gutzlaff. He wrote :—

The slow but regularly increasing over-population of the country long ago made the social relations there very oppressive for the great majority of the nation. Then came the English and enforced free trade for themselves in the five ports. Thousands of British and American vessels sailed towards China, and in a short time the country was filled to excess with cheap British and American factory wares. The Chinese industry based on hand labour was subjected to the competition of the machines. The hitherto unshakable Central Empire experienced a social crisis. Taxes ceased to come in, the State fell to the edge of bankruptcy, the population sank in masses into pauperism, broke out in revolts, maltreated and killed the Emperor's mandarins and the

priests of the Fohis. The country came to the verge of ruin, and is already threatened with a mighty revolution. And there is even worse. Among the masses and in the insurrection there appeared people who pointed to the poverty on the one side and the riches on the other, and who demanded, and are still demanding, a different division of property and even the entire abolition of private property. When Mr. Gutzlaff, after twenty years' absence, returned once more to civilised people and Europeans, he heard talk of Socialism, and asked what that was. When it was explained to him he exclaimed in consternation, "Shall I then never escape this pernicious doctrine? The very same thing has been preached for some time by many people among the mobs in China."

"Chinese Socialism," continues Marx, "bears much the same relation to European Socialism as Chinese philosophy does to Hegelian philosophy. It is, in any case, an intriguing fact that the oldest and the most unshakable empire in the world has in eight years by the cannon-balls of the English bourgeoisie been brought to the eve of a social revolution which will certainly have the most important results for civilisation. When our European reactionaries in their immediately coming flight across Asia finally come up against the Great Wall of China, who knows whether they will not find on the gates which lead to the home of ancient reaction and ancient conservatism the inscription, 'Chinese Republic—liberty, equality, fraternity.'" (*Literary Remains*, vol. 3, pages 444-5.)

The movement on which the good missionary Gutzlaff, the apostle of China, as the Germans called him, gave information to the Europeans was the forerunner of the great Taiping rebellion. The leader of this movement, Hung, had become acquainted with Christianity through the Gutzlaff translations of the old and new Testaments. As early as 1851 he became the leader of the revolting peasants. The Taipings took one town after another. Finally, in March, 1853, even Nanking was taken, which for a long time remained the capital of the celestial empire founded by Hung. At that time it appeared as if the Taipings within a few months would also take possession of Peking. The entry into Nanking, however, remained the highest point in the rebellion.

It was at this period that there was written the article of Marx which appeared in the *New York Tribune* on June 14, 1853. At that time reaction was triumphant in Europe. The Communist League was in dissolution, the Mailand revolt (February 1853) which was organised by Mazzini and his followers ended in defeat. Marx had greeted it as the symptom of an approaching revolutionary crisis. With even greater fervour, therefore, he

greeted the beginning of the revolutionary movement in the Far East. The contrast between petrified Europe and the movement in China, where movement had so long been absent, forcibly impressed itself. Civilised Europe, where thrones and altars had been stormed, was now diligently occupied with table turning, a fashion of American origin. "One is reminded of the fact," wrote Marx later in *Capital*, referring to these events, "that China and the tables began to dance when all the remaining world appeared to be standing still—*pour encourager les autres.*"

The State founded by Hung or Tjan-Wang was of a purely theocratic character. After the Taipings and their leaders had renounced all hope of the conquest of Northern China, they sought to assure themselves of the South-East, utilising for this purpose the antagonism between the Manchus and the English. When in 1856 a new Chinese war broke out with England, and later also with France, the Taipings allowed themselves to be taken in tow by the British Imperialists. While they owed their first victories precisely to the circumstance that they had risen against the yoke of the strangers, against the Manchus, they now—in order to save their theocratic state—made common cause with the much more revengeful and treacherous foreigners. Thus the Taiping movement which in the beginning had borne a revolutionary character, became a reactionary movement which lost the sympathy of the peasant masses. After the English, in union with the Taipings, had subdued Northern China, they helped Peking to drown in blood the Taiping insurrection.

Marx followed attentively the further development of these events in China and not only stigmatised, in a series of articles in the *New York Tribune* during 1857-1859, all the crimes of the "civilised seafarers," but also subjected to a new analysis the statistics of Anglo-Chinese trade.

Although Marx in the article mentioned begins with the fact of the rapid destruction of the "Asiatic mode of production" under the influence of the penetration of English capitalism, and although he still hoped that the imminent European revolution would find the requisite support in the awakened East, nevertheless he comes to the conclusion that he had at first over-estimated the extent and tempo of the destructive influences of English capitalism.

The Labour Monthly

“The real task of bourgeois society,” wrote Marx in 1858 in a letter to Engels, “is the creation, at least in outline, of a world market, and of a type of production resting on this basis. Since the world is round, this task seems to have been brought to a conclusion with the colonisation of California and Australia and the inclusion of China and Japan. The difficult question for us is as follows. Revolution is imminent on the Continent and will at once assume a Socialist character. But will it not necessarily be crushed in this little corner, since over a much greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendant? As far as China is especially concerned, I have assured myself by a close analysis of the movement of trade since 1836, firstly that the soaring of English and American exports in 1844-1846 revealed itself in 1847 as a sheer delusion, and that also in the ten years following the average has remained practically stationary while Chinese exports to England and America increased enormously, and secondly that the opening of the five ports and the occupation of Hongkong only resulted in the trade of Canton passing to Shanghai. The other ‘emporiums’ do not count. The chief cause of the failure of this market seems to be the opium trade, to which in fact all increase in the export trade to China is continually limited; and, after that, the internal organisation of the country, its minute agriculture, &c., which will cost an enormous time to break down.” (*Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, vol. 2, pages 292-3.)

When Marx in 1862 renewed his writing on the Taiping movement (*Press*, July 7, 1862) he was already much more condemnatory. As already mentioned, this movement was in a stage of complete dissolution. Marx says :—

“A little while before the tables began to turn, China, this living fossil, began to become revolutionary. In itself there was nothing extraordinary in this phenomenon, for Oriental empires continually exhibit an immutability in social sub-structure with restless permutations of the persons and races who have possessed themselves of the political super-structure. China is ruled by a foreign dynasty. After three hundred years why should not a movement develop for the overthrow of this dynasty? The movement had from the beginning a religious complexion, but that was a feature it had in common with all Oriental movements. The immediate motives for the appearance of the movement were obvious—European interference, opium wars, and consequent disruption of the existing Government, the flow of silver out of the country, disturbance of the economic equilibrium through the introduction of foreign manufactures, &c. What seemed to me a paradox was that the opium animated instead of stupefying. As a matter of fact the only original part of this revolution was its leaders. They are conscious of their task, quite apart from the change of dynasty. They have no slogans. They represent a still greater torment for the masses of the people than for the old rulers. Their

motive seems to be nothing else than to bring into play against the conservative marasmus grotesquely repulsive forms of destruction, destruction without any germ of regeneration."

In many respects, indeed, the Taiping insurrection was reminiscent of the European peasant wars, if only in as much as the participation in it of the town proletariat was equally non-existent.

In regard to India, also, as in regard to China, Marx was compelled to come to the conclusion that the tempo of development, measured in terms of world history, took place at a much slower rate from the point of view of the individual than might have been anticipated. In the third volume of *Capital* he wrote :—

"The obstacle presented by the internal solidity and articulation of pre-capitalistic national modes of production to the corrosive influence of commerce is strikingly shown in the intercourse of the English with India and China. The broad basis of the mode of production is here formed by the unity of small agriculture and domestic industry, to which is added in India the form of communes resting upon common ownerships of the land, which, by the way, was likewise the original form in China. In India, the English created simultaneously their direct political and economic power as rulers and landlords, for the purpose of disrupting these small economic organisations. The English commerce exerts a revolutionary influence on these organisations and tears them apart only to the extent that it destroys by the low prices of its goods the spinning and weaving industries, which are an archaic and integral part of this unity. And even so this work of dissolution is proceeding very slowly. It proceeds still more slowly in China where it is not backed up by any direct political power on the part of the English." (*Capital*, vol. iii, English translation, C. H. Kerr & Co., pages 392-3.)

The power of resistance of the "Asiatic mode of production" proved itself so great that several decades passed before European capitalism succeeded in shattering this "Great Wall of China." To the assistance of the economic factor, the low prices of industrial goods, came the political factor, a new series of wars, in which the youthful Japanese imperialism played no small part. The indivisible union of agriculture and industry, the main secret of the immobility of the "Asiatic mode of production," was burst asunder. The Chinese peasantry separated from itself great masses of "coolies," and fell ever deeper into dissolution. Emigration, which for a period had acted as a safety valve, soon proved itself powerless in the struggle with the "plague spot of the proletariat."

Attracted by cheap labour power in China, Japanese and British capitalists began to bring into existence a "national" big industry. In effect they produced an organised and disciplined industrial proletariat, which is now preparing to assume the leadership of all the exploited poor, rural as well as urban.

The question which Marx formulated sixty years ago has been given a positive answer by history. No danger threatens the European revolution from the East. There, also, capitalism is finding its grave-diggers. And even if ancient Europe still has the appearance of stability, "immobile" China on the other hand, following the example of Soviet Russia, is already dancing the revolutionary Carmagnole—*Ca ira, Ca ira!*

BOUND VOLUMES

for 1925

See particulars on

page 66.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR IN U.S.A.

By A. A. PURCELL, M.P.

THE first superficial impression I got from the United States was one of the extraordinary obsession with *bigness* that runs through the whole of social and industrial life there. Everything is "million dollar"—everything is on the grand scale. This after all is natural enough: for in the United States we have capitalism in its most gigantic, most advanced, most powerful form.

That America is the home of trusts and combines, of the most highly developed stage of capitalist monopoly, is a commonplace. But I doubt if all the implications of this fact, and more particularly its meaning for the workers, are fully realised by those who have never set foot in the land of the free. There has been a good deal of loose talk going on for some time about the high wages current in America, about the superior conditions of life of the workpeople, the number of workmen who own their own motor-cars, and so on. We have even heard this talk inside our own movement, using the example of America to demonstrate the advantages, to the employers as well as to the workers, of high wages.

What struck me, as a workman, most about the various works and factories I visited? I was not concerned with their perfection of industrial technique, remarkable in itself though that is. No, what impressed itself unforgettably on my mind was the spirit of vigorous regimentation, the extreme division of labour which makes a man a mere automaton, performing one monotonous mechanical operation year in year out. The American industrial *régime*, in spite of its boasted high wages, is even more than its British counterpart a monotonous tyranny, in which the worker is regulated and ordered and disciplined and controlled to the last possible degree.

American industrialism is nothing more nor less than a slave system: its so-called "benevolence" towards its workers being merely incidental to the great task of extracting profits—and fabulous profits, too—for plutocracy. An ironical fact worth

noting is that its keenest advocates are employers, servile writers and the like—not workmen. It is easy enough to talk glibly about the “advantages” of America when you don’t have to benefit from those “advantages” yourself.

A point into which I inquired with some care was the question of high wages. Here it was particularly helpful to get the evidence of English workers who had emigrated in the course of the last few years. They all told me the same story. Though their nominal wages were higher than they would be getting in England, the cost of living was so high that their real wages were about the same: in some cases even less. Special stress was also laid by all my informants on the terrific pace and intensive character of the work. So severe is the strain that men are, on the average, worn out at forty years of age—whereupon they promptly get the sack: another sidelight on “benevolence”!

It must be remembered, of course, that there are exceptional trades where the wages are extremely high. The chief of these is the building trade, where skilled workers such as painters, plasterers and bricklayers command at the present moment in America a high “scarcity value”; their wages may be as high as £16 or more a week. But this is exceptional.

My previous remarks about the extreme regimentation to which the workers are subjected need to be supplemented by some observations on the most all-pervading and one of the most significant features of American industrial life. I refer to the Spy System. It is no exaggeration to say that in America the Spy System is as widespread, as usual, as powerful and as integral a feature of industry as insurance is in this country. Which is not surprising, since spying is of its nature a form of insurance—against strikes, against Trade Unionism, against any militancy whatever on the part of the workers.

Spy companies, such as Pinkerton, Baldwin-Felts, W. J. Burns and a score of others are themselves vastly wealthy and powerful corporations, living like parasites on the general body of capitalism. Even if employers find, as a number of them are finding, that to employ spies is playing with fire, they cannot escape. The spy company has them in its clutches, and it blackmails them into continuing their “patronage.” In addition to sending spies to

work, as ordinary workmen, in the factory, Burns or Pinkerton or the others will have their "men" who worm their way into the Trade Unions, and have been known to achieve prominent positions in the movement, which they were able to employ with deadly effect. I have met men who have been spies and they made no bones about it—any more than they did about the gun in their pocket.

An American writer in this magazine,¹ Mr. Heber Blankenhorn, described the Labour spy system as "begotten by unrestricted capital out of restricted Labour organisation." He continued:—

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

It is no use blinking the fact that in comparison with, say, our own Trade Union movement, the American movement—by which I mean the American Federation of Labour—is extremely backward. It is organised on the most rigid, narrow, exclusive craft basis which makes even the unfortunate craft distinctions that still exist in our own movement pale into insignificance. Its attitude towards the sixteen or twenty millions of unorganised immigrant workers is a more aloof, more hostile re-edition of the attitude of our "new model" craft unions towards the unskilled workers sixty and more years ago. Its attitude towards the masses of negro workers, with which I deal in detail below, is even more hostile.

The American Federation of Labour does not pretend to be other than an organisation of the skilled white "aristocracy of labour": it is in the literal sense of the words a "minority movement," organising only a small minority of the industrial workers of the United States. I do not need to dwell at length on its various characteristics which seem so reactionary from our point of view—such as its opposition to nationalisation and to independent Labour political action. These points are sufficiently well enough known here; it is essential that they should always

¹ THE LABOUR MONTHLY, August, 1922, vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 94-102.

be borne in mind. To a British worker it comes with something of a shock to observe that many prominent officials of the American Federation of Labour and its affiliated Unions are Republican or Democratic Members of Congress. Imagine our feelings if, nowadays, British Trade Union leaders sat as Liberal or Tory M.P.'s !

It was to the Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labour that, speaking as fraternal delegate from the Trades Union Congress, I made a plea for American support of International Trade Union unity. That plea was rejected by President Green in his declaration that the American Federation of Labour would only unite with Labour movements:—

that rest on sound, fundamental principles of democracy and justice and righteousness and human liberty.

The same point was stressed in the Convention resolution, which formulated a Labour "Monroe Doctrine," saying, among other things:—

The Americans stand for democracy. . . . Neither the Red International of autocratic Moscow nor any other International may in complacency ignore this definition of American Labour policy. American Labour is friendly to all the world, in so far as the world is bent upon achievement of the aims of democracy. It will contest to the last every inch of ground whatever and wherever autocracy seeks to invade the hallowed soil of this hemisphere. And we shall accept no pretence of "world Labour unity" as a mask for invading disrupters and destroyers. The New World is dedicated to human freedom.

Now I want to say, with the same frankness and sincerity that my American friends showed to me, that all this talk about American "democracy" is, in my humble opinion, complete humbug. "Democracy"—in the land of the frame-up, the gunman and the spy? "Democracy"—in the land of Rockefeller and Morgan, of Pinkerton and Baldwin-Felts? "Democracy"—in the land where negro lynchings and the bludgeoning and murder of workmen striking for their rights have been a part of every-day life these many years? "Democracy"—in the land where all the forces of the law, the State and the police—the whole machinery of government, legal and illegal—are openly and shamelessly at the beck and call of triumphant plutocracy in order to perpetuate the capitalist system and the exploitation of the working people?

I submit that we must not be deluded by the mere *forms* of government; and that if we pierce through to the *facts* behind those forms we see that America is ruled by a capitalist *dictatorship*. America is the supreme example of the new Tsarism—the Tsarism of monopoly capitalism, the Tsarism of the finance oligarchy.

Even some of the most important forms of government are undemocratic. Thus the Cabinet is personally appointed by the President, acting on his own absolute discretion. It is responsible to him and to him alone.

This undemocratic spirit holds equal sway in the American Federation of Labour and the American Trade Union movement. The movement is ruled by an oligarchy which has virtually absolute powers. I noticed, for instance, at the Atlantic City Convention how all the important committees and delegations were nominated by the President and automatically agreed to by the Convention. Thus, the President in effect determined the decisions of the Convention, for the reports of the various committees are usually adopted without much ado. This is attributable to the overwhelmingly official character of the Convention.

The “spoils system” which is such a feature of American official life applies also in the American Federation of Labour, and, I believe, in many of the Unions. Thus when President Green succeeded the late President Gompers, he gave notice of dismissal to every man-jack of the American Federation of Labour staff—organisers, &c.—irrespective of their length of service, Union experience, or anything. They were then notified that if they liked to apply for re-employment their cases would be considered.

A characteristic feature of the Convention, which would have been inconceivable in England, was the reception of a “fraternal” delegate from so well-known a patriotic and non-Labour organisation as the American Legion. This delegate was himself a prominent Trade Union leader, Major George L. Berry, of the Printing and Pressmen. Many of our best friends in this country, because of their so called “left” tendencies, might soon find themselves railroaded out of the A. F. of L. as extreme “Lefts”—as many good militant Union men that I met had been railroaded out, to the great loss of the movement. For one man, or a group of men, stand no chance against the official machine, backed up as

it actually is by the powers of the law and the police. Once outside the American Federation of Labour you are finished; your mouth is stopped, your activities checked, and if necessary suppressed.

Turn now to the negro worker. There are many millions of him. He represents a great problem that the American Labour movement cannot help but face: yet while the doors of most Unions remain closed, or very difficult of entry, to negro workers there cannot be even a beginning to facing this problem. It is true that some negro workers are organised in American Federation of Labour Unions. There were negro delegates at the Atlantic City Convention: *but they were delegates* in name only and seemed to be completely isolated.

I was very pleased to learn that my plea for the unity of all workers, black, white, brown or yellow, was much appreciated by the negro trade unionists.

The negro workers have begun to form their own Unions: but these are not tolerated north of the "Dixie" line, as a negro hotel porter, who had previously been a Trade Unionist and wished heartily to be one again, told me. He told me, further, that he had once been out on strike with some hundreds of negro fellow-workers. All their places were taken by scabs and the strike broken. Those scabs were white workers.

Yet the negro worker is one of the greatest potential sources of strength for American Trade Unionism. Since he is accustomed to a far lower standard of life he can hold out in a strike much longer, and on infinitely less, than his white brother.

I may seem, in this article, to have painted too dark a picture. It represents the facts as one British working man saw them, set down without fear or favour. And the future is hopeful; of that I am convinced, when I recall the magnificent meetings I was privileged to address in a number of the principal American cities. *There were* the rank-and-file American Trade Unionists—eager to hear the message of International unity, full of real sympathy with their comrades in Britain, in Russia and throughout the world. The spirit and the enthusiasm of those meetings make me confident that the cause of unity will finally triumph in America.

THE I.L.P. PROGRAMME

By EMIL BURNS

MEETING, we are told, on the Eve of Christmas, the Administrative Council of the Independent Labour Party drafted a scheme for a Frontal Attack on Poverty. This (the scheme—not the Frontal Attack) was launched on a flooded world on New Year's Day. According to Brailsford, it knits together the new departures in Socialist Policy which the I.L.P. has been discussing during the past three years. It is evidently conceived by its authors as a landmark in the history of the I.L.P. For this reason it deserves to be read with exceptional attention, and if the language of the manifesto is in places obscure, we have Brailsford's interpretation as a guide.

Brailsford states that the new departure consists in linking up the ultimate aim with immediate practical steps. In fact the ultimate aim is briefly described in the manifesto as the realisation of a Socialist State. As for the immediate practical steps, we are given a series of proposals followed by steps which may be immediate and practical, but which do not appear to link up with anything beyond a propaganda campaign.

In the forefront of the proposals is a National Living Wage, "representing the minimum standard of civilised existence which should be tolerated." This involves, we are told, a National Banking system and National control of currency and credit, and the nationalisation of the importation of food and raw materials. It apparently involves also reorganisation and efficiency in industry and agriculture ; and (conditionally on its acceptance by the annual conference of the I.L.P.) the payment of supplements to working class incomes, varying with the number of persons in each household. All of these are proposals, and cannot be described as immediate steps. The immediate steps which appear to be intended are :—

- (1) The Labour Movement to set up a commission to fix a living wage;
- (2) The demand for a living wage and for the " broad Socialist programme through which alone it can be realised " to be asserted;
- (3) The Labour Party to announce that it will introduce this programme when next in office;

- (4) The preparation of measures for the necessary economic reorganisation so that Labour may introduce them without delay.

It is difficult to see wherein the new character of these "definite steps" consists. The Labour Movement has from time to time drafted schemes and made demands, perhaps not on these exact subjects, but nevertheless covering many branches of economic reorganisation. The I.L.P. itself has from time to time put forward similar schemes in the resolutions adopted by its annual conferences. Immediate steps which consist in preparing plans are no doubt sometimes useful, but only if they involve definite lines of action to carry out those plans. What does the I.L.P. manifesto propose in the way of action?

In the first place, the advocacy of "this parliamentary policy"; and secondly, "the I.L.P. urges that Labour should stand behind every group of underpaid workers who struggle to attain the standard of civilisation demanded as a national minimum." Here at least we have a definite suggestion of a policy; but, if literally interpreted, a very limited policy. Does it or does it not mean a break with the MacDonal policy of opposing the development of an industrial alliance and Trade Union action generally? This question becomes important as soon as the commission to fix a living wage issues its report. Brailsford himself suggests the difficulties that will arise. He says:—

a commission set up by the Labour Movement itself shall fix a definite living wage in definite figures.

On what are these definite figures to be based? The manifesto states "the minimum standard of civilised existence which should be tolerated." Brailsford, however, suggests in his interpretation that the question of the industry's ability to pay would be the determining factor. He says:—

you might define your general living wage at once, but in the more backward industries it could only be enforced by gradual steps and stages. If you take as your standard the needs of the average family of five persons, how long would it be before agriculture could be reorganised so as to pay a civilised minimum—£4 or even £3—instead of the present 28s. or 30s.?

What is the meaning of this? Surely the meaning is that the I.L.P. proposes that wages should be raised only in accordance with the industry's ability to pay? This is a perfectly intelligible proposal, but it is hardly epoch-making for the Labour movement.

Moreover, it seems to imply that the I.L.P., when industrial troubles occur, will sit on the fence and await the report of a Royal Commission (or, if they think that is an unfair statement, of a Labour Commission) as to whether the industry can pay the wage required.

Is this an industrial policy which will rally the whole Labour movement? Has the I.L.P. not noticed that the main industrial struggles occur in the industries which are on the whole relatively better paid, and that the usual reply of the capitalist is that the industry cannot afford higher wages? Supposing, for example, that the minimum advocated by the Labour Commission were £3, would the I.L.P. support the industrial struggles of workers who were already receiving more than that minimum, or would it tell them that they must be content? According to the manifesto the I.L.P. will support only those workers striving to attain the national minimum.

This question goes to the root of the matter for the reason that, unless it is answered, there is complete uncertainty as to the principle lying behind the manifesto. There are two alternatives. Either the I.L.P. puts the reorganisation of capitalist industry first, and will support the workers' claims for higher wages only to the extent that they can be conceded by capitalist industry at the particular time; or the I.L.P. believes that the demand for better wages can be used as a lever to destroy the capitalist organisation of industry. The manifesto is completely silent on this essential point. Brailsford, however, heads his article "Socialism in Our Generation—the Living Wage as Lever." In the body of his article he writes—

The living wage, as we conceive it, is a demand so large, so sweeping in the effect which it must have on industry that any courageous and logical effort to win it must carry us promptly into the first stages of Socialist construction. The movement which unitedly struggles for it, the Government which boldly attempts to enforce it, will find itself compelled to lay the foundations of a Socialist society.

Other indications of his attitude are contained in sentences such as :—

Our programme is a challenge to a decisive struggle. . . . It is not an easy programme that we are proposing. It can be won only after the sharpest and most determined struggle in our history. The

industrial weapon and political power must both be used to the full before victory comes in sight.

In these sentences we have, on the surface, a recognition that the programme cannot be carried out unless the workers have secured power. A phrase like "the sharpest and most determined struggle in our history," if it means anything precise, means nothing short of revolution. Yet Brailsford does not admit this. All of his detailed arguments are based on a gradual reorganisation through which the living wage would be made possible. In other words he explains the manifesto as a manifesto of what a Labour Government should do when the workers had already taken power. The transition to power is ignored, unless Brailsford means to assert that the aims of the manifesto can be carried out by parliamentary means. It is true that he refers to industrial action, but, as was pointed out above, this action is to be strictly limited to securing wages which the industry can afford to pay.

In her criticism of the manifesto, Ellen Wilkinson rightly brings to the forefront the question of power. Brailsford in reply repeats the formula of the previous article, but leaves the question unanswered. He says :—

the keys to power seem to us to be the control of credit, raw materials, transport, the generation of mechanical energy, and the ownership of land. With those in the hands of a resolute Labour Government, power would have been won.

This, of course, is a true statement. With power in its hands, power would have been won. But the whole question is how the power is to be won.

The attitude in regard to industrial disputes is in fact the real key to any definite policy. If in any struggle for wages, whether it be for advances demanded by the men or for wage cuts demanded by the employers, the I.L.P. is going to determine its attitude on the basis of what the industry can afford, the I.L.P. will be directly helping to maintain the capitalist system. But in that event what becomes of the foreword to the manifesto? This foreword argues that the old order is breaking down; capitalist industry has failed to reorganise itself. It is possible, of course, to draw two opposite conclusions from a recognition of this fact. It is possible to say that, because capitalist industry has failed to reorganise itself, therefore the I.L.P. will step in to help them to put things straight. Or

it is possible to say that, because capitalist industry cannot be reorganised, therefore the I.L.P. will take every opportunity of hampering the temporary expedients of capitalism, of urging forward the workers to demand wages and conditions which will involve the collapse of capitalism, and of urging in fact the policy of a resolute war on capitalism, beginning in industrial demands which capitalism cannot give and leading on to the seizure of power and the expropriation of capitalism. In such a policy the question of a minimum wage undoubtedly has its place as a rallying cry, but it is not a minimum wage based on industry's capacity to pay. In such a policy every industrial struggle is supported, whether it be for the minimum wage or for something considerably in excess.

Unfortunately, it is doubtful whether Brailsford has himself realised the difference between these two policies. In spite of the demand for Socialism in our generation, there is absolutely no indication, either in the manifesto or in Brailsford's statement, of what the attitude is on the question of compensation for nationalised industries. Nationalisation is mentioned, but it is clear that it is simply an empty formula unless there is an indication of whether it is to be on the basis of compensation or expropriation. Even nationalisation, apparently, is rather distant—say towards the latter end of our generation. Thus Brailsford, explaining how industries would be dealt with by a Labour Government, writes :—

if the industry declared its inability to pay the minimum wage, it (the Labour Government) would then impose reorganisation, dealing, for example, with watered capital, amalgamating small inefficient concerns, and introducing the economy usual within a trust. During this stage it is true that the Union would not need to struggle over wages. It would be busy assisting the Labour Government in the far more vital task of reorganising the industry.

Here we have an almost indefinite perspective of gradualness. For all we know, it may be that the recent Vickers reconstruction was itself the first step of the underground work which the I.L.P. has been carrying on. If the workers in the industry are not content with this reorganisation under a capitalist government, would they be content with it under a Labour Government? Or would they be content to learn from the Labour Government exactly what saving had been effected by the reduction of capital, and to accept an equivalent sum in wages? Would they not be more likely to say to

the I.L.P.: " You promised us Socialism in our generation ; you promised us support on the industrial field ; but having put you in power, we find you are not a resolute Labour Government, but merely a Government which is preserving the frame-work of capitalism, and by improving the organisation of capitalist industry, thereby lengthening the period before we shall get Socialism."

The fact is that for all the phrases of the class struggle which have crept into the manifesto, and more particularly into Brailsford's explanation, the authors of the manifesto have had no theoretical basis on which they could build up a concrete policy. The foreword of the manifesto refers to " the intensified struggle between the possessing classes and the workers." This is taken as proof that " the old order is breaking down." Throughout the whole of the manifesto this is the only reference to the capitalist class as an organisation that fights the workers. The I.L.P. theory of the class struggle evidently contains no place for a capitalist class at least as resolute as the most resolute Labour Government. The class struggle without the capitalist class is of course a more pleasant form of the doctrine ; on this basis it is possible to picture an easy transition from disorganisation to organisation, from poverty to " the minimum standard of civilised existence," from the rejection of the socialist measures by " Labour's opponents " to a speedy triumphant victory at the polls, from a victory at the polls to the nationalisation of banking, and from that to Utopia.

In such a scheme of things it is possible to advocate the endowment of mothers and children—an essential measure of Socialist construction—without realising that the introduction of this scheme *under capitalism* would lead to the enforcement of wage reductions in every industry. In such a scheme of things it is possible to think of taxing the rich into poverty and of endowing the poor with riches. In such a scheme of things, in short, it is possible to imagine anything and everything. Unfortunately, the capitalist class exists, and experience all the world over shows that it is " resolute."

There are probably few members of the I.L.P. who do not realise this. And, realising this, they must also realise that any " immediate steps " which are contemplated must have some relation to the fact that a strong capitalist class is now in power,

wielding not only the arms of democratic constitutionalism, but also the arms of the armed forces. Is it conceivable that a strongly entrenched capitalist class will listen to the claims of justice, will lay down its arms and give all it has to the poor? Does the membership of the I.L.P., does the Administrative Council of the I.L.P., really hold that view? And if it does not, what is the missing step between asserting the demands of justice and getting power to satisfy these demands? Surely the missing step is just "the sharpest and most determined struggle in our history."

Brailsford justifies the demand for a living wage on the ground that :—

One does not win power as one solves a problem in engineering or economics. One must appeal to simple human motives. Even the Russians did not attain it simply by demanding "all power to the Soviets." They promised peace to the army, bread to the towns and the land to the peasants.

This is quite true, but it is incomplete. One must appeal to simple human motives—in other words, a political party which really sets out to lead the workers to victory must express the fundamental needs of the workers. But if Brailsford cites the Russian experience at all, let him cite the whole of it. The Bolsheviks did not attempt to mislead the workers as to what they were up against. "All power to the Soviets" was as essential a part of their programme as peace, bread and land. They told the workers that they could secure peace, bread and land only by taking power, breaking up the capitalist organisation of industry and building up a new Socialist organisation under the protection of the workers armed against the counter-revolution.

If this is the meaning of a "resolute Labour Government," then why the gradualness of the reorganisation of industries if and when they declared themselves unable to pay a living wage? And a living wage which, as Brailsford indicates, is only to be enforced by gradual steps and stages.

No, the authors of the manifesto have tried to reconcile two irreconcilable policies—one evolutionary, the other revolutionary. Using some of the revolutionary phrases, they have wrapped them about an evolutionary skeleton; and when Ellen Wilkinson calls attention to the protruding bones, Brailsford claps on more revolutionary phrases, and leaves it at that. No doubt the figure

will serve as a scarecrow for the Duke of Northumberland, but it will not do to lead the workers to victory. It can't walk.

Yet the very fact that the programme has been issued is significant. It means that the I.L.P. is stirring from its long sleep and is once again faced with the issues it faced in 1921. At that time also a programme had been demanded by the rank and file and was drawn up with much toil. But the evolutionary elements in the I.L.P. knew that the programme was demanded by the "Left," and that the real issue was the question of affiliation to the Third International—the question of a revolutionary policy instead of the evolutionary policy for which the I.L.P. had stood for many years. The left wing was defeated, and the programme was shelved.

But the issues facing the working class could not be shelved. The industrial collapse of 1921, the persistent depression since then, have shown, if not to "the simplest voter," at any rate to the thinking trade unionist, that the attitude of Black Friday and the attitude of the I.L.P. conference of 1921 are identical, and arise from the same lack of a clear perception of what the class struggle is and where it leads.

The I.L.P. is again faced with a decision on this very issue, and on this occasion it has the experience of "Red Friday" behind it. Its conference may be within a few weeks of a similar crisis for the working class.

Will it continue its eve-of-Christmas carol, and, like good King Wenceslas, observing the poverty of the poor man, set out to relieve his poverty with as much flesh and wine as the industry can afford at the moment? This is the actual content of the manifesto.

Or will it realise that "The rude winds' wild lament, and the bitter weather," even in the carol, involved such a long and painful journey that even the poet was unable to finish the story? There is no record that Wenceslas ever reached the poor man's hut, or of what the poor man said when he reached it, or of what happened to the poor man or Wenceslas afterwards. So far as any end is indicated, the suggestion is that men possessing wealth and rank (the capitalist class) can live in secure possession if they throw a few crumbs occasionally to the poor (the working class). To adapt the moral to I.L.P. terminology, revolution is to be avoided by giving the workers more purchasing power.

The British working class needs some clear programme of immediate demands, not as an alternative to revolution, but to serve as a rallying cry to meet the offensive of the capitalists and to transform the workers' defensive into an offensive campaign which will have immediate results for the workers. In such a programme, a commission which will take into account the ability of the industry to pay has no place. Whatever criticism of details may be raised against the various "Left Wing" programmes that have been put forward, they do at least come nearer to the immediate needs of the working class than the New Year manifesto of the I.L.P. If the I.L.P. is honestly trying to find a rallying cry, let it join wholeheartedly (as its members are doing in the local Labour organisations) in the "Left Wing" movement. There it will find not only the basis through which the whole working class can be united, but also the will to move forward and a relatively clear conception of the meaning of the class struggle. There it will find that the successful rallying cry is a definite fighting policy which recognises the implication of "the most determined struggle in our history," and that what the Left Wing is trying to get away from is the spirit of the Christmas carol expressed obscurely in the I.L.P. manifesto, but more clearly in MacDonald's appeal for industrial peace.

THE LEFT WING

By WM. PAUL

(Editor, *Sunday Worker*)

ONE of the most striking features of the history of the British working class is that it has, time after time, during periods of economic and political crises, thrown up militant groups which were always out-manœuvred by the moderate leaders who controlled the official machinery of the Movement. It is not necessary to examine the many futile attempts made, before the war, to give the British workers a Left-Wing lead. We can find an abundance of facts since 1918 to prove our point.

Everyone in the Labour Movement knows that there were revolutionary tendencies among the workers from 1918 to 1920. They flocked into the Trade Unions in great numbers. The capitalist class and its Government were aware of the ferment of revolt that was stirring up the masses. There were indications on all sides that the proletariat were prepared to follow a bold lead. This lead was not given. The great spirit of revolt was frittered away. Instead of important concessions having been won, the workers were ultimately led in such a way that they suffered defeat after defeat.

The important question we have to ask ourselves to-day, if we intend to glean any experience from our past failures, is why a Left-Wing leadership did not manifest itself and supply the guidance that was so much needed in 1918 and the two following years ?

Firstly : the Left-wing Groups on the industrial and political field were scattered up and down the country, and were impotent *because they had no organised contact with each other and no common policy.*

Secondly : this criminal weakness of the Left Wing was further paralysed by the clever tactics of the Right-Wing leaders, who were organised, and whose policy was to delay every attempt at concerted attack upon the capitalist class.

Thirdly : the propertied interests, in the absence of an organised Left Wing with a common policy, were able to use the timidity of

the Right-Wing leaders to side-track all the revolutionary tendencies of the period and to so weaken the Movement that it could not defend itself against the cruel blows that began to shower upon it in 1921 and the following years.

While the workers were being battered from defeat to defeat, the capitalist class and its press praised the wise policy of the parliamentary and industrial Right-Wing leaders and, at the same time, attacked every manifestation of militant tactics either as a "Red" plot engineered by the recently formed Communist Party, or as something that had been planned in Moscow. So cleverly was this game played that well-known Right Wingers were enabled to earn enormous sums of money by attacking the "Reds" in the capitalist Press. But the propertied interests always demand good value for their money. They knew that a Left-Wing Movement was bound to come into existence and they were determined to kill it at birth by smothering it as a "Red" menace. So successful were they in creating this psychological atmosphere that when attempts were made, last year, to build up an organised militant movement, many leaders who thought themselves Left Wingers got cold feet and ran away from it as something that had been specially concocted by the Communists.

Such childish tactics could not for long hold back the development of a Left-Wing Movement in Britain. The problems facing the workers are such that they are being driven forward, even in spite of themselves, to attack capitalism. The rising spirit of industrial discontent made itself felt in the Hull Trades Union Congress in 1924. It expressed itself in an even more determined form last year at Scarborough. One of the main factors in the consolidation and success of Left-Wing industrial expression was that it was organised, to some extent, by the Minority Movement inside the Trade Unions.

While the industrial Left Wing had many elements of organised contact, both in policy and action, no serious attempt had been made inside the Labour Party to organise the wide-spread Left-Wing feeling against the liberal policy of the Right-Wing parliamentarians. The only organised group that opposed MacDonaldism was the small band of Communists who fought very bravely to bring the Labour Party back to its Labour principles.

The determined attempt made at the Edinburgh, London and Liverpool Labour Party Conferences to expel them made a very deep impression upon those who imagined they were Left Wingers because they used Left-Wing phrases. When deeds were demanded these Left Wingers failed.

This was most clearly revealed at the London and Liverpool Conferences where the Right-Wing leaders put forth their liberal policy. None of the Left Wingers, outside of the small Communist group, dared to put forward an alternative programme. But there was something more than a mere lack of moral courage. The main reason for the collapse of the Left Wing at the big conferences was their lack of organised contact and the absence of any common line of action. And this weakness, let it be emphasised, is still preventing the rise of a real Left Wing that means business.

There are many reasons why it is difficult to organise a Left Wing upon a common policy. Up and down the country there are thousands who are in revolt against MacDonaldism. This is, of course, a spontaneous revulsion against liberalism. But it requires much more than a hatred of liberalism to produce a good Left Wing. It requires something of a positive character in the shape of a definite policy of organised action. Until such a policy and lead is produced the Left Wing must remain a tendency, a sort of sentimental yearning after something that has little relation to the immediate needs of the masses or the concrete realities of the present day. And yet the revolt against MacDonaldism is the symptom that the rank and file Left Wing do want a lead in the struggle against capitalism.

Another factor that tends to create misunderstanding, in the ranks of those opposed to the Right Wing, is the confusion of those who realise the impossibility of operating the decisions of Scarborough and Liverpool which cut across each other.

Why then, it may be asked, do not the Left-Wing parliamentary leaders give the lead? It is because of their fear of the Right Wing. The Left-Wing parliamentarians are not afraid to use bold phrases in the constituencies when they are amongst the rank and file. But they are not prepared to organise the rank and filers and give them a Socialist policy. Neither MacDonald nor Henderson are afraid of critics who do not proceed further

than phrases. Their wrath will be instantly roused, however, when any criticism inside the Party manifests itself in an organised policy.

From all this it follows that the Left-Wing element, scattered up and down the country, can expect little help from the "ginger group" in the House of Commons. Attempts must be made, and are being made with growing success, to hammer out a Left-Wing policy of united action. This will demand some simple machinery, inside the Labour Party, to keep the militant rank and file in organised contact with each other. Unless this is done the present Left-Wing ferment may be, once again, out-manceuvred by the cunning Right-Wing leaders working hand-in-hand with the capitalist Press.

Without under-estimating the influence of the Right Wing one must pay attention to the importance of the enthusiastic Left-Wing Groups which are now operating all over the country. The provincial towns are holding conferences, and one has only to notice the success of the Greater London Left Wing Provisional Committee to see that not only is a militant policy being demanded, but that one is taking root. The London Left Wing Conference, held on January 23, was represented by no less than 107 delegates, of whom 53 were sent by local Labour Parties. In addition to this, many of the important Labour Parties have decided to suspend the liberal decisions rushed through at Liverpool. These facts indicate the real spirit of the rank and file of the Movement.

There are several important factors that are present to-day that were absent in the past. *Firstly*: the capitalist class can make no concessions to the workers and are actually trying to depress their already low standard. These attacks of the employers and the chronic conditions of capitalism must keep driving all alert elements in the Labour Movement towards the Left. *Secondly*: the Left Wing has now a press that is neither afraid of the capitalist newspapers nor the threats of the Right-Wing leaders. Viewed from this angle the prospects of a powerful Left-Wing mass movement are indeed bright.

THE MURDER OF GUSTAV LANDAUER

By ERNST TOLLER

THE name of Gustav Landauer is little known in England. But Landauer was one of the most important figures in the German Revolution of 1918-19. He was a Communist agitator who had fought since his teens in the working-class movement. His books—*Call to Socialism, Reckoning, Speeches*¹—show what a fervid revolutionary this man was. On the intellectual and spiritual side his personality is outstanding. His work *Shakespeare*, in two volumes, which contains unusually fine and powerful essays on individual plays of Shakespeare's, is among the best work which has been written in German on the great playwright. Important also are Landauer's essays on Tolstoy, Walt Whitman and Kropotkin.

At the beginning of the Revolution, Kurt Eisner called Landauer to Munich. He was among the most active members of the Munich Soviet. After the murder of Kurt Eisner he became People's Commissary for Education in the Bavarian Soviet Republic.

The following account shows the ghastly way in which the German counter-revolutionaries got rid of this man. It may be of interest to English readers.

It is the report—told in his own words—of a comrade whom I met in prison, and who was Gustav Landauer's companion in the last hours before the murder.

The last words, says this comrade, which Gustav Landauer said to his torturers and murderers were, "Kill me, then—but I would that you were men!"

It was on the evening of May 1, 1919, in the court-house jail of Starnberg, near Munich, in which the members of the Starnberg Workers' Council had been imprisoned after the entry of the White Guards. A great deal of noise and fuss led us to think, said my comrade, that yet another wicked criminal was being brought in. It was, as we learned after some time, our comrade Landauer.

¹*Aufruf zum Socialismus, Rechenschaft, Reden.*

He had been arrested outside Munich and, since he could not be locked up there, because of the fighting which was going on, was brought to Starnberg. Early the next day, after we had exchanged greetings, we asked Comrade Landauer what he thought of the present situation. After we had expressed our fears, which later proved all too true, Landauer said he thought that the commotion would subside in a few days. How very much he had deceived himself was soon to be proved on his own person.

On May 2, about ten in the morning, the jailer came in and called the names : Landauer, Mayer, Burgmeier, Salzmann. When we went into the reception room, we were told that we were being taken away, but were not told whither. We four men were escorted by five White Guards with fixed bayonets to a motor lorry which was standing near. We had to get on the lorry, which was then driven off, through the Forsterrieder Park towards Stadelheim, as the White Guards told us.

The first stop was made at the Cross-Roads Inn, at Fürstenried. Here were great masses of troops, and apparently a military headquarters. The soldiers, who did not take much notice of us three Workers' Councillors, were very interested in Landauer. Now and again they tried to get on the lorry. Landauer must already have had a feeling that matters might take a bad turn, because I noticed him turn to the leader of our escort and say, "Please protect me." Thereupon the latter, so far as he was able, kept the soldiers away from the lorry.

Here Landauer, who had apparently been arrested somewhere near Fürstenried, wanted back his rucksack, which had been taken from him. He asked the leader to do something about it, which the latter did. After some time an officer came out of the inn and said, "Landauer is not to have his rucksack."

At last we drove on, to Solln, where our escort had food. When I complained that we were hungry too, and might not get any more to eat that day, the soldiers gave us some bread. I gave comrade Landauer some, which he took with thanks. I also offered him a cigarette, which he smoked, regretting again that his rucksack had not been given to him, for there were cigarettes in it.

From Solln we drove to the Sendlinger Oberfeld, until, in front of a factory, we were told that we could not drive any farther.

Fighting was still going on there. We had to walk over the open country towards Stadelheim. The troops, who were moving towards the town, took hardly any notice of us.

But the scene changed when we got to Stadelheim. Then hell was let loose. Shouts were raised, such as, "Landauer—they are bringing Landauer." "Smash them dead, the dogs!" Carried along in the midst of a rabble of soldiers, pushed and shoved onward, we arrived in front of the reception room of the jail.

Here Landauer received a violent shove or a blow, so that his glasses fell off. Then the devilry began again. The usual form of taking down particulars about us was not carried out at the reception room, and we were carried on until we were in front of the gate of the Frauenhof.

Here Landauer, who had said something about "damned militarism," was given another heavy blow in the face by a soldier. Thereupon Landauer explained that he meant also the militarism of the Red Army. At this point an officer is said to have shouted, "Halt! Landauer will be shot at once."

I only saw how, after we had been thrust into the middle of the courtyard, a great strong man struck our comrade Landauer in the face with the butt end of a riding-whip (or it might have been a rubber baton). Landauer fell with his hand before his face. At this moment a soldier came to us three Workers' Councillors and told us to follow him. Then a shot rang out, and, as we went through the gate from the small into the large courtyard, the shot was followed by another. I heard that the leader of our escort (who, by the way, was a decent fellow) said that until then he had carried out his task—but then he had been powerless.

We three were led by the soldier and a warder through a gate outside the walls of Stadelheim, and back again to the reception room of the jail, where particulars about us were taken down. Then on the way to the new jail building we had to go again through the small courtyard. There in the middle lay our poor comrade Landauer, dead. One of the soldiers said, "There he lies now—your pal."

The World of Labour

RUSSIA: The Fourteenth Conference of the Russian Communist Party	115
INDIA : Textile Workers' Strike	122
JAPAN: Agricultural Conditions in Japan	123

RUSSIA

The Fourteenth Conference of the Russian Communist Party

THE Fourteenth Conference of the Russian Communist Party opened in Moscow on December 19, 1925. The chief subject before the Conference was the question of the line of development of the "new economic policy," involving a correct estimation of the progress of State Socialism and its effects on the relations of the workers and peasants. A speech by N. Bucharin on this theme appeared in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, January, 1926, pp. 18-31. On December 19, 1925, after a debate lasting three days, and after hearing the speeches of Zinoviev, for the minority view, and of Molotov and Stalin, on behalf of the Central Committee, the Conference adopted by 559 votes to 65, with 41 abstentions, the following resolution approving the policy of the Central Committee:—

"The Party Conference fully approves the political and organisatory line of the Central Committee, which strengthened the party of the working class, promoted the general advance of the national economy throughout the whole country and consolidated the position of Socialism within and without the Soviet Union.

"This policy has resulted in the international sphere in a number of fresh recognitions of the Soviet Union by the capitalist countries; the Soviet Union concluded fresh commercial and concession treaties, extended its foreign trade and consolidated its international position. The same policy has resulted, in domestic affairs, in the Soviet Union being in a position to balance the State Budget and rapidly to bring about the development of industry and the further growth of agriculture, along with a general increase in wages and a greater output on the part of the workers; to raise production nearly to the pre-war level, and to secure a growing rôle for the Socialist elements in the entire Soviet economy. Thanks to the same policy the Soviet Union has consolidated the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and secured the proletarian leadership of this alliance, increased the actual rôle and importance of the co-operatives, brought together, upon the basis of Socialist construction, broad sections of technical and other intellectuals under the leadership of the proletariat and consolidated the community of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

"In recording these successes the Party Conference notes at the same time the errors which have been committed as regards the collection of corn and of foreign trade, which endangered the stability of the *valuta* and brought about an adverse foreign trade balance, whilst a favourable trade balance is a pre-condition for further economic growth. The Party Conference approves of the decisions adopted by the Central Committee in November for the rectification of these errors, and instructs the Central Committee to strengthen the leadership of the Supreme Economic Council in order to avoid such errors in the future.

"The Party is now beginning to work under new international and domestic conditions. In the sphere of foreign political relations the maintenance and prolongation of the breathing space, which has become a period of so-called peaceable relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries, is to be recorded, in spite of the fact that the antagonisms between these two camps are becoming not weaker but more acute. This breathing space furnished the possibility of inner reconstruction and, as a result of the economic relations with foreign countries, brings certain advantages tending to expedite this reconstruction. On the other hand, as a result of the strengthening of connections between the Soviet economy and world capitalism, the former's dependence upon the latter has increased, a fact which brings with it a number of fresh dangers, which must be taken into account by the Party in the struggle for Socialism and in securing the necessary economic independence of the Soviet country.

"Within the capitalist countries there must be recorded a partial stabilisation of capitalism and a relative strengthening of the political power of the European bourgeoisie. The rôle of the United States of America has increased enormously, and almost amounts to financial world hegemony. Further, there must be recorded the gradual decline of the British Empire as a world Power, the antagonisms between the victor and vanquished States, the antagonisms between Europe and America, the undermining of the whole system of imperialism on the part of the awakening colonial and semi-colonial peoples, whose movements in some places has assumed the form of a national war for freedom, and has reached unexampled dimensions, and finally, the growth of new forms of the European Labour Movement, in close connection with the proletariat of the Soviet Union (fight for trade union unity, workers' delegations to the Soviet Union, &c.).

"The relative stabilisation of Europe and its 'pacification' under the hegemony of Anglo-American capital has called into life a whole system of economic and political blocs, the last of which are the Locarno Conference and the Guarantee Treaties directed against the Soviet Union. These blocs and treaties, which are screened by the alleged pacifist League of Nations and by the false talk of disarmament of the Second International, mean in essence nothing else than a new grouping of forces for a fresh war. Against these blocs of the capitalist countries under Anglo-American hegemony, which are accompanied by an enormous increase in armaments and therefore bear within them fresh dangers of war, among them being the danger of an anti-Soviet intervention, there is growing up the *rapprochement* of the proletariat of the advanced countries to the proletariat of the Soviet Union under the slogans of the fight for peace, against all new imperialist wars and against armed attacks on the Soviet Union.

"Upon the basis of this estimation of the international situation the Party Conference instructs the Central Committee to be guided in its policy by the following principles:—

"(1) To consolidate in every possible way the alliance of the proletariat of the Soviet Union, as the basis of world revolution, with the West European proletariat and the suppressed peoples, and to keep to the line of the development and in victory of the international proletarian revolution.

"(2) To conduct a peaceful policy, which shall stand in the centre of the entire foreign policy of the Soviet Government and underlie all its international actions.

"(3) To carry on the work of economic construction from such a point of view that the Soviet Union is converted from a country which imports machines to a country which produces machines, in order that by this means the Soviet Union with its capitalist encirclement shall not become an economic appendage of the capitalist world economy, but an independent economic unit which is building up Socialism, and which, thanks to its economic construction, can become a powerful means for the revolutionising of the workers of all countries and of the suppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies.

"(4) As far as possible, to accumulate economic reserves which can secure the country against all accidents affecting the home and the foreign markets.

"(5) To adopt every measure for strengthening the defensive forces of the country and for strengthening the Red Army and the Red Navy and Air Fleet.

"In the sphere of economic construction the Party Conference adopts the Leninist standpoint, that 'the Soviet country, as the country of the proletarian dictatorship, possesses everything necessary in order to build up a complete Socialist society.' The Party Conference considers the fight for the victory of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union to be the chief task of the Party. The period since the Thirteenth Party Conference completely confirms the correctness of this principle. Already before the conquest of power by the proletariat of other countries, but with its unconditional support, without any so-called help on the part of foreign capital, and with uninterrupted struggle against private capital at home, the working class of the Soviet Union, in alliance with the main mass of the peasantry, has achieved the first important successes of Socialist construction. The past year was marked by a tremendously rapid development of the national economy in general, which is approaching the pre-war standard, as well as by the growth of its various branches: industry, agriculture, transport, foreign and home trade, credit and banking system, State finances, &c. Within the national economy of the Soviet Union, which consists of various economic forms (natural peasant economy, small production of commodities, private capitalism, State capitalism and Socialism), the importance of Socialist industry, of State and co-operative trade, of nationalised credits and other positions of power of the proletarian State is rapidly increasing. In this manner there is to be seen the economic advance of the proletariat on the basis of the new economic policy and the advance of the economic system of the Soviet Union in the direction of Socialism. The Socialist State industry is becoming more and more the advanced guard of national economy, which is drawing along with it the entire national economy.

"The Party Conference emphasises that these successes could not have been attained without the active participation of the broad working masses in the general work of construction of Socialist industry (campaigns for raising the productivity of Labour, workshop meetings, &c.).

"At the same time, however, there is developing the particular contradictions of this growth and the specific dangers and difficulties which are determined by this growth. Among these are: the absolute growth of private capital, with the relative sinking of its rôle; the special rôle of private capital, which conducts its business in the village; the growth of *kulak* economy in the village along with the growth of the differentiation of classes in the village; the growth of a new bourgeoisie in the towns, which is attempting to ally itself economically with the trading capitalists and *kulaks* for the fight for the subjugation of the main masses of the middle peasantry.

"In view of all these facts the Party Conference instructs the Central Committee to be guided by the following principles in the sphere of economic policy:—

"(1) The chief attention must be devoted to the task of securing in every way the victory of socialist economic forms over private capital, the strengthening of the monopoly of foreign trade, of the growth of socialist State industry and, under the leadership and with the help of the co-operatives, to draw the largest possible number of peasant undertakings into the work of socialist construction.

"(2) To secure the economic independence of the Soviet Union, which preserves the Soviet Union from becoming an appendage of capitalist world economy, and for this purpose to follow the course of industrialising the country and developing the production of the means of production and the creation of reserves for economic manœuvring.

"(3) On the basis of the resolutions of the Fourteenth National Party meeting efforts must be made to increase the growth of production and the exchange of goods in the country.

"(4) All sources of revenues are to make use of the strictest economy to be observed in the expenditure of State resources, and the pace of development of State industry, of commerce and the co-operatives to be speeded up for the purpose of increasing the rate of socialist accumulation.

"(5) To develop our socialist industry on the basis of a higher technical standard, but nevertheless strictly according to the absorbing capacity of the market, as well as of the financial possibilities of the State.

"(6) To support in every way the development of the Soviet industry in the provinces, by stimulating the initiative of the provincial authorities with regard to organising those industries which are devoted to satisfying the various requirements of the population in general and of the peasantry in particular.

"(7) To support and promote agriculture in the direction of increasing the knowledge of agriculture, developing technical culture, raising the agricultural technique (providing tractors) industrialisation of agriculture, regulating the holding of land, and in the direction of an all-round support of the most varied forms of collective agriculture.

"The Party Conference is of the opinion that one of the most imperative conditions for the solution of these questions, is the fight against the disbelief in the construction of Socialism in our country, as well as against the attempts to regard our undertakings—the undertakings of the consistent-socialist type (Lenin)—as State capitalist undertakings. Such ideological tendencies, which render impossible the conscious attitude of the masses to the building up of socialism in general, and to the building up of socialist industry in particular, are only calculated to hinder the growth of the socialist elements of our economy and to facilitate the struggle of private capital against them. The Party Conference, therefore, considers necessary an extended educational work for the purpose of overcoming these deviations from Leninism.

"As regards the relations of the classes to one another, the Party Conference notes the following basic phenomena, which are determined by the economic development of the Soviet Union: growth of the industrial proletariat, strengthening of the rich peasants in the village; growth of the new bourgeoisie in the town; growth of the activity of all classes and groups in our country. One of the basic forms of the class struggle is at present the struggle between the capitalist and socialist elements in our economy, the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat for the purpose of winning the main masses of the peasantry. This struggle finds its political expression mainly in the attempts of the *kulak* elements of the village to capture the middle peasants and thereby subjugate the Soviets to their influence.

"If the village poor, and before all the agricultural workers, are the support of the proletariat in the village, then the middle peasant is and must be the firm ally of the proletariat. It must not for a moment be forgotten that as a result of the expropriation of the big landowners and the handing over of the big landed estates to the peasantry, and in consequence of the policy of the committees of the village poor and the anti-*kulak* policy in the village, and finally as a result of prohibiting the land being bought and sold (nationalisation of the land), the middle peasantry have become exceedingly strong, and that those sections, in spite of the differentiation process, now form the main mass of the peasantry. Without having these masses as firm allies, or by merely keeping these sections neutral, now, after the consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship, it will be impossible to build up Socialism. For the chief means for the construction of Socialism in the village consists in the growing economic leadership on the part of the Socialist State industry, in the State credit institutions and in other dominating positions which are in the hands of the proletariat, in drawing the main masses of

the peasantry into the co-operative organisation, and in securing the socialist development of this organisation by making use of, overcoming and pushing out its capitalist elements. Every underestimation of the middle peasantry, the failure to understand its very important and special rôle, the attempt to divert the Party from the slogan of a firm alliance with it and to go over to the obsolete slogan of its neutralising, to the 'fear of middle peasantry,' leads therefore to the destruction of the dictatorship of the proletariat; for this would mean the destruction of the workers' and peasants' bloc.

"The struggle against the *kulaks* must be conducted by organising the village poor against the *kulaks*, as well as by consolidating the alliance of the proletariat and the village poor with the middle peasants, for the purpose of separating the middle peasants from the *kulaks* and isolating the *kulaks*.

"The failure to understand the great importance of the struggle in these two directions is bound up with two deviations from the correct line of the Party, which was defined by the Fourteenth National Party meeting and the October Plenum of the Central Committee. The Party Conference emphatically condemns the deviation which consists in the underestimation of the differentiation in the village, which overlooks the dangers connected with the growth of the *kulaks* and the various forms of capitalist exploitation, which does not wish to understand the urgent necessity of pushing back the *kulaks* and curbing their greed for exploitation, which does not recognise the duty of the Party of the proletariat to organise and to rally the village poor and the agricultural labourers in the fight against the *kulaks*.

"But the Party Conference at the same time likewise emphatically condemns the attempt to obscure the fundamental question of Communist policy in the village, the question of the struggle for the middle peasant as the central figure of agriculture and the question of co-operation as the fundamental organisatory form of the movement of the village to Socialism.

"The Party Conference especially emphasises the necessity of the struggle against this last-named deviation. In view of the relative greater preparation of the Party for the immediate fight against the village profiteers, and the possibility of overcoming the first deviation, the overcoming of the second deviation represents a much more difficult task; for this demands more complicated methods of fighting, by combining the methods of political isolation of the *kulaks* with the methods of drawing the masses of the peasantry into the orbit of socialist construction. This is all the more so because, with the present conditions, this second deviation threatens the return to the policy of fighting the *kulaks* by the methods of war Communism and the abandonment of the present party line in the village, which has proved its correctness by important political successes, and also the abandonment of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, that is, with the abandonment of our entire work of construction.

"The Party Conference fully approves the decisions of the Fourteenth National meeting in the peasant question (including among these that regarding the extension of the tenants law, the right to hire labour, regarding assistance for handicraft industry and the transition from the system of administrative pressure to economic competition and economic struggle, as well as regards the revival of the Soviets, &c.) which aim at a further improvement of the policy of the Party along the line of consolidating the alliance between the working class and the peasantry. The Party Conference declares that this change in the Party policy, which arises from the change in class relations, radically improved the situation in the village, raised the authority of the proletariat and its Party among the peasantry, and created a firm basis for broad organisation work for the purpose of drawing the peasantry into the work of Socialist construction.

"The Party Conference at the same time fully approves the decisions of the October Plenum of the Central Committee regarding work among the village poor. Only to the extent to which the increase of the productive forces in the village (under the

present conditions of the increased activity of all class groupings) is accompanied by the organisation of the landless peasants and the agricultural workers can the appropriate exchange of relations of the class forces and the leadership of the industrial proletariat be guaranteed.

“The Party Conference, in approving the decisions of the Central Committee regarding material assistance for the village poor and regarding the organising of groups of the village poor, emphasises that here there can be no talk either of returning to the village poor committees, or of returning to the system of pressure employed at the times of war Communism and to the practice of anti-*kulakism*, &c. It is a question of organising the village poor which, with the help of the Party and the State power in the struggle on the economic and political front (collective undertakings, artels, co-operatives, peasant committees, Soviets), will overcome the remnants of the psychology of charitable relief, will follow the path of organised class resistance against the village profiteers, and must become a firm support of the proletarian policy in the fight for uniting the middle peasantry with the proletariat.

“The Party Conference declares that agricultural co-operation, both from the standpoint of its economic work as well as regards attracting the masses and correct socialist leadership, is far from fulfilling its great rôle. The Party Conference makes it incumbent on all members to pay the closest regard to developing the agricultural co-operatives and to adopt all measures to ensure their proper growth.

“The increased activity of the masses, together with the growing activity of all class groupings on the basis of the economic advance, is a factor of the greatest political importance. The proletariat and its Party must make use of this growth as the fundamental and leading social force for the purpose of attracting still larger masses into the process of socialist construction on all fronts, and for the fight against the bureaucratism of the State apparatus.

“In the town the growth of the activity of the masses found its expression in the revival of the State Soviets, of the trade unions, the workers' co-operatives, &c. In the village the increased activity of the masses of the middle peasantry and of the village poor found its expression in the revival of the Soviets and of the co-operatives. The Party Conference once again emphasises that, under the present conditions, the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be consolidated by methods of war Communism and administrative pressure, that the co-operatives cannot be built up except on the voluntary principle or without the elected organs giving account to their electors and without these organs having the confidence of the members, that the revival of the Soviets and the increase of their connection with broad circles of the working population is a necessary prerequisite for all further work of the Party and of the Soviet power.

“The revival of the village Soviets and of the co-operatives, which provide scope for the initiative and activity of the peasantry, is a precondition, from the point of view of maintaining and consolidating the proletarian leadership, of the revival, the increased activity, and consolidation of the proletarian organisations. Only under this condition can the proletarian dictatorship be consolidated and the carrying out of a correct political line from the point of view of Socialism be guaranteed. Hence arises in the first place the slogan of the revival of the trade unions, these proletarian mass organisations which must embrace the entire proletariat. Trade union democracy must be that method which facilitates the participation of the masses in common work, extends the possibilities of selecting new comrades for higher positions, renews the leading cadres of the trade union organisations, and renders possible the class solidarity of and raises the class consciousness of the proletarian masses.

“In order, accordingly, to carry through the entire work of reviving the mass organisations of the proletariat and of the peasantry, it is necessary that the leading

force of these organisations, *i.e.*, the Russian Communist Party in all its constituent parts, follows the path of consistent inner Party democracy. The Party Conference approves the November Manifesto of the Plenum of the Central Committee regarding inner Party democracy, and proposes to the Party organisations that they consider in this respect the following tasks:—

“(a) Raising the activity of the broad Party masses in the discussion and solution of the most important questions of Party policy.

“(b) Consistent observation of eligibility of the leading Party organs by attracting new forces to the work of leadership, extending the circle of active Party workers, and training fresh Party cadres in order to help the old.

“(c) Raising the qualification of Party functionaries, especially raising their theoretical level.

“(d) Spreading of the principles of Leninist theory among the broadest Party circles.

“The consolidation of the Party and the strengthening of its leading rôle in all spheres of constructive work, which is more necessary than ever in the present complicated situation, is a prerequisite for the correct regulation of the composition of the Party. The Party Conference considers it necessary to conduct a policy in this sphere which aims at raising the qualitative composition of the Party organisations, which strives to attract ever greater numbers of workers into the Party, and constantly to raise the preponderance of its proletarian Party core. The Party Conference at the same time affirms the necessity of a strict carrying out of the measures laid down for restricting admittance into the Party to only proletarian elements, but rejects the policy which leads to an immoderate swelling of the Party membership and to its being swamped with semi-proletarian elements which have not passed through any school of trade unions and of proletarian organisations. The Party Conference condemns such attempts, which have nothing in common with Leninism, which deny the correct change of relations between the Party (advance guard of the class) and the class, and render impossible the Communist leadership.

“The leading rôle of the Party can only be secured by absolute unity of will, by solidarity of the Party cadres, with the maintenance and consolidation of Bolshevik proletarian discipline in the Party.

“The Party Conference approves the policy of the Central Committee, which aimed at not allowing an open discussion with some leaders of the Leningrad organisation and their individual supporters in the Central Committee, and to removing the differences of opinion within the Party, as well as securing the collective leadership of the Party.

“The Party Conference instructs the Central Committee to conduct a determined fight against all attempts to create a breach in the Party, no matter from whence they may come and by whom they may be conducted. The Party Conference expresses the firm conviction that the Leningrad organisation will march in the first ranks of the fighters for the solidarity and the unity of our Lenin Party—a unity which must be maintained and strengthened at all costs.

“The Party Conference welcomes the strengthening of the bonds between the proletariat of the Soviet Union and the proletariat of all countries. The Party Conference sees in this the growing influence of the Soviet Union as the point of support of the International Labour Movement. The Party Conference proposes to the Central Committee that it continues in the future to strengthen and to consolidate with all its powers the bonds of international solidarity, under whose banner was born the dictatorship of the proletariat, and under the sign of which the proletariat fought for and strengthened its rule.”

INDIA

Textile Workers' Strike

THE strike of mill hands in the Bombay cotton industry ended with the withdrawal of the notices of reduction of wages on December 1, which followed the Government's announcement of November 30 that the cotton excise would be suspended. The strike, which lasted for ten weeks, was the cause of intense suffering to the 150,000 workers engaged. Many are reported to have succumbed in the effort to travel by road back to their villages, and many more have fallen victims to the epidemics which appeared in the slum tenements which they inhabit in Bombay. It was stated that at first the mills were resuming work slowly, but the number of hands presenting themselves was insufficient. Actually only a few thousands were ready to accept the reduced wages.

The chief excuse used by the millowners for their action in cutting wages by 11½ per cent. was the burden of the excise duty of 3½ per cent. on Indian woven cotton goods, amounting to 21,000,000 rupees per year for the whole industry, of which about two-thirds is paid by the Bombay millowners. The campaign for the removal of this duty has been one of the planks in the whole Nationalist struggle for a long period, and has been especially intense since the slump set in after the post-war period of prosperity. A demand was made for its abolition by the Legislative Assembly in March of this year, and again on September 16, after the outbreak of the strike, the Government was defeated by 57-32 on a motion that the excise duty be suspended for the rest of the year. These votes, however, were ignored by the Government. Subsequently deputations from the millowners extracted from the Viceroy a promise that the duty would be removed when financial considerations permitted. Finally the Government gave way, and it was announced that the financial position was now sufficiently assured to allow of the duty being suspended from December 1, 1925. Thereupon the millowners announced the restoration of the previous wage rates, and the strike came to an end.

The leaders of Indian Labour took part in the campaign against the excise duty and, while opposing the wage-cut, proclaimed their complete solidarity with the millowners on that question. Their deputation to the Viceroy in August put forward as its chief demand that the duty be removed, on condition that the relief so obtained be used to restore the wage-cut.

No steps, however, were taken to organise resistance by the operatives to the employers' attack, and until the last moment the Bombay leaders expressed themselves against a strike, although they warned the millowners that the mood of the men was such that a strike could hardly be averted. A few days after the strike actually broke out, a meeting of the Labour leaders was held in Bombay which

resolved that as the situation had become serious and had got out of hand the leaders should do nothing for the present, but to watch things for a week or so. (*Bombay Chronicle*, September 21, 1925.)

Meanwhile they contented themselves with making unavailing representations to the Governor of Bombay.

The extraordinary solidarity and determination of the men finally

compelled the assistance of the leaders, and towards the end of October a Committee of Assistance to the Textile Workers was organised representing the chief Labour organisations in Bombay, with Mr. N. M. Joshi at the head, for the purpose of providing relief for destitute and starving workers. By its help many hundreds of strikers were enabled to leave Bombay for their village homes, and towards the end of the strike over 5,000 strikers in Bombay were being given a grain allowance daily at nineteen different centres, the total expenditure increasing to about £60 per day.

This relief work would have been impossible but for the donations that have come from the European Trade Union Movement, and it is thanks to their aid that the strikers have been helped to hold out and a great deal of suffering alleviated. The Indian trade union organisations have given such help as their meagre financial resources permitted, but the Indian Nationalists and politicians generally, in whose interest the struggle had actually been brought about, stood by without lifting a finger to give financial or other support to the strikers.

JAPAN

Agricultural Conditions in Japan

THE total area of cultivated land in Japan is approximately 15,000,000 acres, of which rather more than half supports rice. The number of houses occupied by farmers and peasants is about 5,500,000, and the usual size of plot cultivated is about 2.7 acres. About one-third of the houses are owned by their occupants. Cultivating such small plots, the peasants naturally live in conditions of the greatest poverty.

The system of land tenure is such that the farmer pays approximately 55 per cent. of the total of the produce as rent to the landlord.

In the existing conditions of agriculture, the maximum possible production of rice on a farm of 2.7 acres (most farms and holdings appear to be near this mean figure) is 25 *koku* (1 *koku* = 4.9 bushels). Of this the landlord takes about 14 *koku*, leaving 11 for the farmer, which at current prices can be sold for 440 *yen* (£44). A large proportion of this income is spent on tools, fertilisers, &c.

The landlord, on the other hand, claims that as the present price of land is about 2,200 *yen* per acre, his return is small—about 7 per cent. per annum after allowing for taxation. In reply it is pointed out that the land was originally obtained at the price of about 100 *yen* per acre in the early years of the *Meiji* era (since c. 1870).

Most of the landlords (*jinushi*) own hundreds or thousands of acres, and there is in consequence a very sharp clash of class interest between them and their tenants. Many associations (*No-kwai*) have been set up for the preservation of good relations between landlords and tenants. In December, 1923, 347 of these were officially reported, with a total membership of 47,000. On the other hand, in the last few years a purely cultivators' organisation, *Nippon-Nomin-Kumiai* (Japanese Agricultural Workers' Union), has arisen, and in 1925 claimed more than 1,000 branches and 300,000 members. It is based on the recognition of the class struggle, and aims at a complete reorganisation of the whole system of agriculture.

BOOK REVIEWS

TWO SIDES OF A MEDAL

The Other Side of the Medal. By Edward Thompson. (Hogarth Press, 1925, 5s.)

THIS little book may be considered to serve a double purpose. It is intended by the author to be an exposure of the unfairness of British treatment of the Indian Mutiny, but it is equally an exposure of the author.

Perhaps there are still people who believe that British rule in India has been fair yet kind, and that it is impossible for an Englishman to commit an atrocity. In that case it may be worth while recommending them the perusal of this book, for it contains a record of facts that should make them blench. No school book omits to mention the atrocity of the "Black Hole" of Calcutta, but they all, larger works included, draw a veil over the ghastly horrors committed by the British in the process of suppression of the rebellion. Mr. Thompson, with a high moral purpose in view, has felt that the time has come to show something of the "other side of the medal."

The book is of no value in helping towards an historical understanding of the Mutiny. It is true that the author attempts to show that the Mutiny was much more than the simple military revolt caused by the issue of the "greased cartridges" which it is represented to be in popular school books, and he quotes the statement of the *Oxford History of India* that:—

Discontent and unrest were widely prevalent among the civil population, and in several places the populace rose before the sepoy at those stations mutinied.

But he considers that the question how far it was a popular movement, a real war for independence (the view taken by many Indian nationalists), to be still "an unsolved problem." The truth is, of course, that it was neither the one nor the other, for it was a reactionary movement for the restoration of the old social conditions, led by the feudal landed class, whose lands and titles had been filched from them by the British Administration. Thus, for instance, Kaye, in his history of the Sepoy war, points out that during the process of land settlement (the revision of land ownership accompanying the survey of British territory and the fixing of rents):—

The Talukdars, an influential class of men, were dispossessed of rights and interests in the land and reduced to absolute ruin ;
and further

Under the system which we introduced, men who had been proprietors of vast tracts of country . . . shrivelled into tenants of mud huts and possessors only of a few cooking pots.

Later on he quotes a letter to Lord Canning from Oudh which says that the "Talukdars are forcibly resuming their former villages and slaying all who oppose them."

The expropriated feudal class, together with the destruction of the power and authority of the Brahmin priesthood, provided potent material for leading a rebellion. But the masses of the people were less interested in restoring

feudalism, and the progressive elements, especially the intellectuals, were firmly on the side of the British. Thus the mutiny took strongest hold in the Native States, where feudalism was strongest, and it could be quickly suppressed as it was by no means a united national uprising.

All this, however, finds no mention in the book under review. The author's intention was different. As a loyal, God-fearing English missionary, proudly conscious of the general beneficence of British rule and of the superiority of his race over the benighted heathen, he is convinced that if his fellow-Christians would admit that we have not been fair in our treatment of the mutiny, then there could be reconciliation between Britain and India, and the two nations could be friends.

This sounds like a caricature, but it is a literal statement of his theme. Far be it for him to even hint at such gross material things as the economic exploitation of India! All evils, and especially the evils of Indian behaviour towards their British beneficiaries, are the working of the poison of our treatment of the mutiny. Indians are a cringing inferior race of beings. To take a characteristic example of his many strictures:—

The measures of self-government granted from time to time have frequently been worked listlessly, or—I am afraid it is impossible to avoid repetition of the word—dishonestly. The world's literature of abuse might be ransacked and still the crown for utter irrelevance and reckless unfairness allowed to rest with the Indian extremist Press.

He enlarges on this theme for pages. But he has a remedy. We should tell the truth about the mutiny, for what Indians need is for their

self-respect to be given back to them. Make them free again and enable them to look us and everyone in the eyes, and they will behave like free people and cease to lie.

That, one supposes, is the missionary standpoint. Whatever the intention, the book is an insult to India, and will certainly there be regarded as such, although it is illuminating to notice that this does not seem to have struck reviewers in this country (including even reviewers in the Labour press). The time has gone by for the complacent insolence that can speak of "Sir Henry Fowler's noble appeal to the House of Commons that every member should consider himself a member for India," and those canting philanthropists who do not understand the condescension of this attitude should give up politics and confine themselves to parochial charity.

C. P. D.

A POOR STORY OF COAL

The Other Story of Coal. By T. J. Parry Jones. (George Allen & Unwin, 2s. 6d.)

MR. PARRY JONES, who informs us that he has worked thirty-one years in the mines, has written a very poor story indeed. The book, the author tells us, is an effort "to place the views of 'Jack Jones,' the miner, to the forefront." "Jack Jones" will not feel complimented at the picture that one of his mates has drawn of him. Here is a sample: "The observations of the rustics below ground are pithy and often show a wealth of pictorial mind." How quaint!

The book contains a grave warning to commercial travellers. Upon so insignificant a person as a commercial traveller may rest the responsibility of a revolutionary and dangerous decision at a miners' conference. He tells them to be most careful and discreet. "Haphazard criticism when travelling by train might rouse passions in a delegate on his way to a conference; therefore it is necessary to be cautious."

It is being generous to the author not to dig out a whole mass of contradictions and inconsistencies. His qualification to write of the political views of the miner may be judged from his conception of the various shades of political thought amongst the miners. He places the miners into four categories: "A," the rigid constitutional Socialist; "B," the Socialist who firmly believes in both the "industrial aim as well as the political for the preservation and advancement of the workers' rights." "The 'C' section are the Syndicalist or Industrial section. They are termed under various names, such as 'the Left Wing,' 'the Ginger Group,' the erstwhile 'Unofficial Reform Union,' and its latest term, 'the Minority Movement.'" He then goes on to say, "*It may also be stated that from the ranks of these varied sections the Communist Party gets its ardent and enthusiastic support. This motley crew is made up of all anti-political sections in the mining industry*" (italics ours). After reading the book one is not surprised that the author should fail to see how inconsistent it must be of a "motley crew" of anti-politicals, such as he describes, to be the "most ardent and enthusiastic" supporters of a political party.

Much "sob stuff" is thrown in about choirs, ambulance, mining students, &c., and harsh things are said about coalowners, and, in particular, about trusts and combines.

Speaking of the coming crisis in May the author says:—

Unless all parties—workers, owners and Government—are prepared to listen attentively to the voice of reason, we shall witness unparalleled scenes in this country. The country and its communal welfare should receive prior consideration before any other. Everyone's prayers should have an addition: "O Lord, give us sound common sense."

If Mr. Parry Jones ventures into print at any time in the future, we, too, would add a prayer: "O Lord, give Parry Jones some sound common sense."

B. W.

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - - -	Page 131
<i>COALITION OR WORKING-CLASS UNITY?</i>		
The Revolution in China and in Europe	-	„ 145
	<i>By KARL MARX</i>	
The Industrial Alliance	- - - -	„ 153
	<i>By W. H. HUTCHINSON</i>	
The Coal Crisis and the Way Out	- -	„ 157
	<i>By A. J. COOK</i>	
Where is Mr. Baldwin Going ?	- - -	„ 163
	<i>By "OUTPOST"</i>	
Colour v. Class in South Africa	- - -	„ 172
	<i>By M. G. DESAI</i>	
A Soviet Prison	- - - -	„ 178
	<i>By W. M. CITRINE</i>	
The World of Labour	- - - -	„ 186
	<i>Russia—India</i>	
Book Reviews	- - - -	„ 188
	<i>Between the Millstones</i>	<i>F. & I. C.</i>
	<i>A Revolutionary Epic</i>	<i>W. P.</i>

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NOTES of the MONTH

Fruits of Liverpool—Coalition Question—What Liverpool Prepared — Snowden's View — Henderson's View — What Coalition Means—Back to the Liberal Party—Exclusion Question—Local Parties Banned—Trades Councils and Labour Parties—Breaking Trade Union Solidarity—Discipline ? —Fainthearted Advice—Giving an Inch—No Coalition and No Splits.

SINCE the Liverpool Conference of the Labour Party six months ago, two new developments have taken place which are the fruits of the "spirit of Liverpool" and the inevitable results of the policy there adopted. In the first place, an important section of the leadership which was responsible for Liverpool has now openly begun to advocate a Liberal-Labour alliance as the basis of the next Labour Government. In the second place, the policy of exclusion, as was foretold from the first, has now begun to extend from individuals to whole sections of the working class movement, to old and strong local sections in leading working class areas. This realisation in actual practice of the meaning of Liverpool should awaken the whole movement to the issue in front. The capitalist attack within the working class movement, which showed itself in the Labour Government surrender, which showed itself in the Liverpool programme of denial of socialism, which showed itself in the isolation of the revolutionaries and their consequent abandonment to Government imprisonment, has now reached the stage of directly endeavouring to dismember the movement below at the same time as it is involving the leadership above in alliance with capitalism. If this policy is not defeated, it will mean that the Labour Party will inevitably go to smash in the same way as the old Liberal Party ; and in doing so, it will wreck the existing working class movement, which is built on the solidarity of the local movements and of the Trade Unions. This outlook is so serious that the

whole fight of working class unity must be concentrated on the effort to prevent this division at the outset.

IT is sometimes suggested that the question of Coalition is not serious, that it will not be entertained by more than a negligible minority, that the Labour Party is vowed to inviolable independence, and so forth. This is certainly a complete mistake. The present policy of the Labour Party leads straight to Coalition. This is the whole meaning of Liverpool. It is true that the Labour Party in the country has been built up on the propaganda of working class independence. But the practice of the Labour group in Parliament has always been a practice of coalition in one form or another. It was so in the Asquith Coalition of 1910-1914. It was so in the War Coalition of 1915-1918. It was so in the MacDonald Coalition of 1924. And it is being prepared to be so in the next Minority Labour Government on a basis of capitalist support. This divergence between the practice of the Labour Party in Parliament and the propaganda of the Labour Movement in the country is not accident. It reflects the fact that, although the Labour Party is based upon the organised working class movement in the country, the theory and practice of its leaders has never yet corresponded to that basis and expressed the actual struggle of the working class, but has always based itself, according to their own statement, on certain Liberal democratic premises. The general principle of working class independence, on which the Labour Party was brought together, has never been applied to actual daily questions, which have always been approached from a Liberal capitalist national point of view. This basic weakness of the Labour Party theory and programme is inevitably brought out most clearly in the Parliamentary Group, which has to take a position in relation to actual daily questions that can be ignored by the propagandist of utopian "socialism in general." Hence, until this weakness is corrected by placing Labour Party policy squarely on the basis of the class struggle, a growing conflict is inevitable between official Labour Party policy and practice and the working class movement, intensifying as the issues of the struggle deepen, and leading inevitably (despite the subjective wishes of many of those who are carried along by the consequences of their own policy) to coalition

with capitalism on the one hand, and divorce from the working class movement on the other. This is the significance of Liverpool and its sequel which is now revealing itself.

WHAT was the meaning of Liverpool? Liverpool was the ratification of the MacDonal Labour Government of 1924, and the preparation of the next Minority Labour Government. It was the attempt to adapt the Labour Party to the new situation. The old loose divergence, the riding of two horses, which had reached such a dangerous point in the episode of 1924, could not continue. In the post-war situation in England Capitalism could no longer provide the concessions to sections of the working class which afforded the basis of the old stable, peaceful Labour movement, but was compelled to launch more and more universal and concentrated attacks, driving the workers more and more towards revolutionary class struggle. The Labour Party, which before the war consisted of a Liberal leadership basing itself on the old peaceful Labour movement, was caught in the storm, and could no longer continue on the old basis. Either the Labour Party would have to throw itself into the gathering revolutionary struggle of the workers, directly taking the lead in the actual fight against capitalism, or else withdraw itself bit by bit from the working class and Socialism and enter into direct alignment with capitalism in the division of the two camps. The former required a transformation for which the movement was not yet ready, although the younger elements were moving towards it. The Left Wing was not ready. Therefore the old Liberal leadership was able to carry the latter, and to transform the Labour Party in a reactionary direction. For this change two things were necessary : first, to make the break with the working class basis, and second, to withdraw Socialism from the current programme. The first was accomplished by the exclusion of Communist workers and delegates, the full significance of which is now being revealed in the measures for the exclusion of whole sections of the organised movement ; the second was accomplished by the new programme of reconstruction and reform, shelving nationalisation and the capital levy, and explicitly providing a basis for the next Minority Labour Government to hold office with capitalist support.

HEREFORE, Messrs. Snowden and Spoor were only a little in advance of the opportune moment, and not at all speaking only for themselves, but very accurately interpreting the Liverpool policy, when they declared for Liberal-Labour Coalition as the next step. Mr. Snowden at Blackburn declared that after the next election Liberalism might very probably have a balancing vote, as Mr. Lloyd George had suggested, and that in that case the Labour Party should reach a "temporary understanding" with the Liberal Party to "govern on an agreed programme." Mr. Snowden advocated "an alliance and an agreement and an understanding of co-operation in Parliament upon agreed measures." This is very definite language. (The quotations are taken from *The Times* report of his speech; the *Daily Herald* report appears to have mislaid this section of his speech, or else considered it insufficiently important for insertion.) What would be the character of such a programme? Mr. Snowden suggested that "they might get a very large measure of land reform; they could deal with coal and the Tory Party, with unemployment, education and housing." How any of these problems could be "dealt with" on capitalist lines (*i.e.*, on an "agreed programme" with Liberalism) Mr. Snowden did not apparently explain. Mr. Spoor suggested that the Labour Party "stands theoretically for Socialism. In reality it is working for democracy and real human freedom" (the distinction is worth noticing), and that in consequence "we should be practical and face realities. A divided Opposition means indefinite continuance of the Tories in power, whereas a commonsense appreciation of the real issues would lead to something like fusion." When this striking statement was pressed on the attention of the *Daily Herald* by "a valued reader," the latter replied that "we noticed the article, but regarded it as having no importance." Mr. Spoor was, however, Chief Whip in the Labour Government; Mr. Snowden was Chancellor of the Exchequer. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Chief Whip of the last Labour Government, and still holding Front Bench position, express themselves so definitely on a question of policy without correction, it cannot be regarded as of "no importance."

AND in point of fact, are the views of, say, Messrs. Henderson, Thomas, Clynes and Webb really so different from those of Messrs. Snowden and Spoor, save that they would consider it wiser not to commit themselves to any statement until after the event? What are their views on the position that will arise after the next election? They hardly expect an absolute Labour majority: indeed, their speeches on the prospect of a Minority Labour Government make this clear. They expect, or hope, that the existing Conservative majority will be replaced by a Labour and Liberal majority. They then hope to form a Minority Labour Government to govern (to govern, not to make a socialist gesture and dissolve) with Liberal support. But the Liberals have made clear that such support will not be given without an agreed bargain as to programme. The conclusion is plain. If circumstances make it necessary, the agreed bargain will be made when the time comes, and the Coalition will exist as a fact for the movement and afford a plea to excuse all sins ("office, not power"). Indeed, Mr. Henderson hinted very plainly at this in his speech at Burnley in reply to Mr. Lloyd George. He said:—

True, no one could foresee the position of the three parties as the result of the next appeal to the people, but he could assure them it would not be for want of hard work on the part of the entire Labour Movement if Labour failed to secure a majority; but whatever happened, the Labour Party would not purchase Liberal support by a betrayal of its principles, the lowering of its ideals, or the mutilation of its programme as set out in its constitution and the decisions of its annual conference.

"Labour will not purchase Liberal support by a betrayal of its principles." Of course not. Who ever heard of a party that betrayed its principles? Mr. Henderson, with his vast experience of the War Coalition of Lloyd George and of the Secret Service administration against the Labour Movement in 1924, may be implicitly trusted to be a careful judge of this point. "Mutilation of its programme as set out in its constitution and the decisions of its annual conference." What need? The mutilation has been done already in the "decisions of its annual conference"—at Liverpool. Once Socialism has been thrown overboard (or, more politely, elevated into an ideal

like the Sermon on the Mount), what difficulty remains? Is there anything in the Liverpool programme that a Liberal could not swallow?

WHAT would such a Coalition mean? The Labour Party exists to fight for Socialism, to lead the workers against Capitalism. But the Labour Party would be forming a Government, not to introduce or endeavour to introduce Socialism and establish working class control, but to administer for Capitalism, to administer in alliance with Capitalism, to maintain with force the existing system of subjection at home and abroad. In consequence the workers, in their conflict with Capitalism, would invariably find themselves having to encounter the Labour Government at the head of the Capitalist machine. Every aspect of the capitalist subjection they were fighting would be under the sanction of their own Labour Government. And the Labour Government, directly allied with Capitalism, with its eye on the capitalist majority in the House of Commons, with its eye on the understanding with Liberalism, could not act otherwise. An inevitable divergence and disintegration would ensue, of which the nine months of 1924 were only a foretaste. The Labour Party would be stultified. The Labour Movement would be divided against itself. Socialism and the propaganda of the Labour Party would be discredited. As with the Trade Unions after the surrender of Black Friday, as with German Social Democracy after 1919, there would be a great falling away, with the disillusionment of the masses. All the work of a generation of building up the Labour Party distinct from Liberalism, on the basis of the working class, would be thrown away. Once again the working class would be outside, and within Parliament would be a great "reform" party, claiming to speak for "the whole of the people," offering promises and hollow reforms without attacking capitalism, and in reality driving along the road of capitalism and imperialism on the basis of the impoverishment of the workers and the growing accumulation of capital to an inevitable crash and war.

ONCE again the task of building up a mass political party of the workers would have to be taken up anew, but under different conditions. For the conditions would no longer be the same. The old Liberal Party was able to have a comparatively long run before the crash. Capitalism was still in the ascendant and only beginning to be shaken in the later years. The building up of the beginnings of political working class organisation took place under relatively peaceful conditions. Only in the final years, in 1911-1914, did the beginnings of the breaking out of the storm appear. But in the post-war period these conditions are gone. Capitalism can no longer be stable, nationally or internationally. The period of revolutionary struggle has begun. The pace of events is much more rapid, the antagonisms of capitalism and imperialism more intense, the reserves of capitalism less, the socialist consciousness of the workers stronger. The building up of the new mass political party of the workers would have to take place under these conditions of instability and desperate haste. The tasks for which it would have to prepare would have to correspond to the new revolutionary stage. And the building would have to take place on the foundations of an existing movement in the face of a leadership still claiming the allegiance of the workers, although in reality completely given over to Liberalism, and still able to hold large sections by associations of the past, traditions and discipline. The situation of the German working class movement, fatally divided between Social Democracy and Communism, and hampered by the relics of the past from responding to the revolutionary stage, would be in danger of being repeated in this country. This is the greatest danger of the policy of Coalition. The abandonment of the working class struggle by a section of the leadership means the fatal disrupting of the working class movement. Unity with capitalism means breaking the links with the revolutionary working class. The revolutionary mass party of the workers will inevitably develop in response to the needs of the present stage. But the struggle of to-day in this country is to secure that the main forces of the working class movement shall so far as possible be carried intact and united into the new stage.

IT is for this reason that the question of exclusions in the Labour Party is of such cardinal importance at the present time. When the question of Communist exclusions was taken by the Labour Party Executive, the full significance of this question was not realised by many working class leaders. They thought that it was a question simply of a small group of individuals and certain peculiar opinions. In consequence, even where sympathetic personally and ready to uphold the viewpoint of "tolerance" in general, they did not see their way to fight the issue politically, or even recognise it as a political issue of direct concern to themselves. This was a profound mistake. The consequences of this mistake are only now beginning to be realised in the direct menace to the unity of the whole working class movement. The question of Communism in the Labour Party was, in fact, the question of the Class Struggle in the Labour Party, and, therefore, the question of the future of the Labour Party. The Labour Party Executive, in proposing to exclude Communist delegates on the ground of disbelief in parliamentary democracy, were, in fact, directly destroying the class basis of the Labour Party and endeavouring to substitute a Liberal doctrinal basis. The importance of this went very much further than the Communist Party. The attempt to impose a Liberal doctrinal basis on a working class movement, which has hitherto been organised and recruited on the basis of working class solidarity through the Trade Unions, means inevitably to disrupt that movement. The working class organisations, in proportion as they advance beyond these Liberal illusions, are automatically ejected. It stands to reason that if Communist individuals are excluded, working class organisations holding similar views are also excluded. The Communists exist within the movement, and cannot be exorcised by a resolution. Therefore, the attempt to enforce the Labour Party Executive ban means that the working class organisations, which are the units of the Labour Party, must also destroy their class basis and break their ranks. If working class solidarity is too strong to be broken, then the centre must itself make the effort to break it. So the process of disruption spreads like a plague through the movement, with a wider and wider sweep at every stage, because the original principle of disruption, which may have seemed

so small at the outset, was not fought and prevented from the first. The growth of Communism in the working class movement cannot be prevented by a ban ; but it is possible to shatter and disrupt the working class movement by such a ban.

WHEN the proposal of Communist exclusion was first brought up by the Labour Party Executive four years ago, it was predicted in these Notes, in July, 1922, that the proposal, if carried, would have two consequences : (1) to exclude local labour parties ; and (2) eventually to exclude trade unions. The first part of this process has now begun. The Labour Party Executive announces the exclusion of three local labour parties: the Battersea Trades Council and Labour Party ; the Bethnal Green Trades Council and Labour Party, and the South-West Bethnal Green Divisional Labour Party. This is, of course, only a beginning, as many more local labour parties are involved. It is, however, quite sufficient to demonstrate the process. The Battersea movement is one of the historic centres of the socialist movement in England. Forty years ago the Socialist and working class banner was being carried forward in Battersea long before the existence of the Labour Party was brought about as a result of the efforts of the early pioneers. To-day the Trades and Labour Council focuses and organises an active working class movement which dominates the local and municipal political life, Communists and other Labour workers co-operating in the common fight. It is, indeed, one of the many significant pointers for the future of the working class movement in Britain that a typical pioneer centre such as Battersea should to-day be developing a strong Communist tendency and actively realising the united front. There is no question, here, of any lack of working class solidarity. Now, however, by an arbitrary fiat from above, from those who should be leading the way in working class solidarity and progress, this natural development of the working class movement is to be forbidden ; the working class solidarity is to be banned ; Battersea is to be cut off from the national working class movement ; and a split from outside is to be endeavoured to be made in the close-woven unity of the local movement.

WHAT does it mean to exclude a local labour party? A local labour party is a combination of trade union branches, socialist societies, co-operative societies and individual members in a locality. The trade union branches constitute the principal membership. Thus the local labour party comprises the local working class movement. It is not an abstract political entity which can be separated from the single and undivided working class movement. Indeed, the local Trades Council and the local Labour Party is often one and the same body (it will be noticed that two of the three cases which have been excluded are "Trades Councils and Labour Parties"). In fact the constitution of the Labour Party directly advocates the unity of the local trade union and political movement in a single body :—

RULE 8 (2b).—Where local Labour Parties and Trades Councils at present exist in the same area every effort must be made to amalgamate these bodies, retaining in one organisation the industrial and political functions.

Thus the local working class movement is a single whole. Any blow at the local Labour Party to divide its forces is a blow at the whole local working class movement, trade union no less than political. There can be no question of separation. It is this that gives the cardinal importance to the question of exclusions and splits in the Labour Party.

WHAT happens when a local Labour Party is excluded? The split is not simply a split of the local movement and the national movement. The split extends right into the fabric of the local movement. This is made clear by the official announcement following the Executive decision. The London Labour Party Executive, in pursuance of the National Executive decision, announces its intention—

In conjunction with the Headquarters of the Party to take steps for the strengthening of the Labour Party movement in the area concerned.

In these efforts we shall welcome the co-operation of every one who is willing to respect the constitution of the Party.

What does this mean in practice? New local Labour Parties will be set up in the areas concerned. But these new local Labour Parties will not be the old ones, which have refused to surrender

their solidarity. They will, therefore, be set up on the basis of such a minority of "loyal" branches as can be secured and induced to break away from the main body. Two bodies will now exist in place of one : an "official" "recognised" minority body being split off from the main body of the movement. These bodies will not be simply two parties, representing a division of view within the working class. It will be a division of the trade union movement, and therefore a smashing of working class solidarity. The local working class solidarity which is the bedrock of the Labour movement in this country will be artificially broken up. And this split will take place, not through any local disunity, but through external agents sent down to create a split under headquarters' orders. This is the gift of the Labour Party Executive to the working class on the eve of a heavy capitalist attack. It is a crime and a disgrace, and the whole movement must unite to stop it.

THE view has sometimes been expressed that this system of splits and expulsions should be accepted in the name of "discipline." This view has even been advocated in a journal of the Left, which in general advocates working class unity. Such a view is a travesty of discipline. It means to lose completely the end (working class solidarity) in the means (discipline). To travel this road means to travel the road of the unhampered shattering of the Trade Union movement by the Right Wing leaders after the German model. That road must be barred and blocked in this country by all genuine supporters of working class unity. What is discipline? Discipline in an army means in the last resort to keep the ranks in a fight—to keep the ranks, even though every officer has fled, shown the white feather or gone over to the enemy. Troops who are able to keep their ranks and not break up even under such conditions are spoken of as seasoned and disciplined troops. Working Class Discipline means to maintain working class solidarity in the face of every enemy. The first duty of every worker is to working class solidarity. If this is not understood, discipline becomes an instrument in the hands of the enemy, like the fettering of Liebknecht for the first six months of the war. The duty of every local Labour Party that has been expelled is to

fight to maintain an unbroken front of working class solidarity against every attempt to split them, until help comes to reinstate them in their rightful place in the movement once more : and every working class leader worth his salt should assist and encourage them to do so.

THE Executive Committee was within its rights," says the juridical *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*. "But we do earnestly hope that this is the last we shall hear of this topic, and that both Right and Left Wings will let it lie. There are far more important tasks before us. Nothing is more important than national trade union unity, provided that this is understood and operated in the sense of getting ready for the big united struggle that is coming." This is really wilful blindness. Local working class solidarity, which is the whole basis of trade union unity, is to be allowed to go by the board—in the name of the higher cause of trade union unity. How can there be trade union unity if it is not realised in the localities? What is the meaning of "getting ready" if the front is being broken in the localities? Why is "getting ready" adjudged "more important" than the United Front—as if the two things were different. But, indeed, the same issue of the same journal proceeds to define on another page what "Getting Ready" means. "Getting Ready" means, we are told:—

Stop Wrangling. Can we not, all of us, make an honest effort to get our internal disputes squared up so as to present a united front to the common enemy?

Work for the Trades Councils. What is your Trades Council doing? Are all the union branches in the town affiliated to it? . . . All these things want carefully looking to well before the crisis comes.

Rally round the one body in which men of all groups are used to working together—the Trade Union movement. The local Trades Council has been too long a debating society. Let us make of it a fighting reality.

Now apply this to Battersea. Battersea Trades Council and Labour Party is in process of being disaffiliated from the national movement; headquarter agents are to be sent to "reorganise" the movement, that is, to split the existing local movement and induce such trade union branches as can be secured to secede from the main body. This process is accepted without protest, and submission is urged.

“ We do hope that this is the last we shall hear of this topic ” (when every one knows that it is a question, not of three, but of something more like ninety-three local labour parties already); “ and that both Right and Left Wings will let it lie ” (why should working class disunity be let lie ?) And while this actual process of disruption in the heart of the local movements is going on and allowed to pass with expressions of pharisaic neutrality, the old watery generalisations of working class unity are trotted out : “ Rally round the one body,” “ Stop wrangling,” “ Are all the union branches in the town affiliated ? ” &c.—without the slightest regard for their real meaning in actual practice.

IT is not a question simply of three local labour parties. The Labour Party Executive has skilfully initiated its campaign by selecting three local labour parties as if to give the impression that there is only question of an insignificant minority and so to lull attention. In reality, as is well known, something like a hundred local labour parties have committed precisely the same “ offence ” as the three in question, *i.e.*, the offence of maintaining working class solidarity and refusing to carry out orders of disruption. In London alone, at the Left Wing Conference in January, fifty-three local labour parties were officially represented. If “ discipline ” is to be maintained all the hundred and more local labour parties will have to be subjected to the same process. To do this at one swoop would arouse a storm. And therefore, to accept quietly the expulsion of three, because it is only a question of three, is to play straight into the hands of the disruptionists. Nor is it a question simply of local labour parties. Sooner or later the same question will inevitably reach the Trade Unions. As soon as a trade union goes “ red,” the Labour Party Executive Right Wing will endeavour to apply the same process, and so begin the break-up of the national trade union movement. It is the issue of trade union unity itself that is at stake. The real fight for trade union unity must necessarily take account of this issue, and take up from the first the maintenance of working class solidarity throughout the movement. If the Labour Party Executive endeavours to lay hands on a Trades Council and Labour Party, the General Council itself should have

a say in the question. The hour was never more urgent for preparing the working class front ; and the work of disruption cannot be allowed to go on unchecked, pending the result of some future conference.

THEREFORE, the whole working class movement should make a firm and immediate stand on two issues which need to be laid down with absolute clearness. The first is No Coalition with Capitalism. And the second is No Splits in the Working Class. Both these dangers are visibly present ; and both—the coalition with capitalism, and the splits in the working class—are being directly worked for by the Right Wing leadership. They can only be prevented by a united Left Wing, which can mobilise the mass of working class feeling throughout the movement to check their realisation. The major issues of positive Left Wing policy are still in process of being worked out, and have still to be fought out through many stages in the Labour Party. But these two issues are of immediate urgency ; they will be readily agreed by the majority of the movement ; and both can be effectively realised if a decided stand is made from the outset by every leader and constituent organisation that is concerned for the future of the working class movement in this country. Any separation of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions is dangerous ; and the working class unity that is needed for the struggles in front must be established throughout the movement.

R. P. D.

THE REVOLUTION IN CHINA AND IN EUROPE

By KARL MARX

(We owe it to the courtesy of Professor Riazanov, Director of the Marx and Engels Institute in Moscow, that we are able to print the original English text of the following striking article on China. Together with the two articles on India reprinted in THE LABOUR MONTHLY, December, 1925, and the introductory article of Professor Riazanov which appeared in THE LABOUR MONTHLY last month, we are now able after the lapse of seventy years to appreciate the accuracy of Marx's analysis of the development of capitalism in Asia.)

A MOST profound yet fantastic speculator on the principles which govern the movements of Humanity, was wont to extol as one of the ruling secrets of nature, what he called the law of the contact of extremes. The homely proverb that "extremes meet" was, in his view, a grand and potent truth in every sphere of life; an axiom with which the philosopher could as little dispense as the astronomer with the laws of Kepler or the great discovery of Newton.

Whether the "contact of extremes" be such a universal principle or not, a striking illustration of it may be seen in the effect the Chinese revolution seems likely to exercise upon the civilised world. It may seem a very strange, and a very paradoxical assertion, that the next uprising of the people of Europe, and their next movement for republican freedom and economy of Government, may depend more probably on what is now passing in the Celestial Empire—the very opposite of Europe—than on any other political cause that now exists—more even than on the menaces of Russia and the consequent likelihood of a general European war. But yet it is no paradox, as all may understand by attentively considering the circumstances of the case.

Whatever be the social causes, and whatever religious, dynastic, or national shape they may assume, that have brought about the chronic rebellions subsisting in China for about ten years past, and now gathered together in one formidable revolution, the occasion

of this outbreak has unquestionably been afforded by the English cannon forcing upon China that soporific drug called opium. Before the British arms the authority of the Manchou dynasty fell to pieces ; the superstitious faith in the eternity of the Celestial Empire broke down ; the barbarous and hermetic isolation from the civilised world was infringed ; and an opening was made for that intercourse which has since proceeded so rapidly under the golden attractions of California and Australia. At the same time the silver coin of the Empire, its lifeblood, began to be drained away to the British East Indies.

Up to 1830, the balance of trade being continually in favour of the Chinese, there existed an uninterrupted importation of silver from India, Britain and the United States into China. Since 1833, and especially since 1840, the export of silver from China to India has become almost exhausting for the Celestial Empire. Hence the strong decrees of the Emperor against the opium trade, responded to by still stronger resistance to his measures. Besides this immediate economical consequence, the bribery connected with opium smuggling has entirely demoralised the Chinese State officers in the Southern provinces. Just as the Emperor was wont to be considered the father of all China, so his officers were looked upon as sustaining the paternal relation to their respective districts. But this patriarchal authority, the only moral link embracing the vast machinery of the State, has gradually been corroded by the corruption of those officers, who have made great gains by conniving at opium smuggling. This has occurred principally in the same Southern provinces where the rebellion commenced. It is almost needless to observe that, in the same measure in which opium has obtained the sovereignty over the Chinese, the Emperor and his staff of pedantic mandarins have become dispossessed of their own sovereignty. It would seem as though history had first to make this whole people drunk before it could rouse them out of their hereditary stupidity.

Though scarcely existing in former times, the import of English cottons, and to a small extent of English woollens, has rapidly risen since 1833, the epoch when the monopoly of trade with China was transferred from the East India Company to private commerce, and on a much greater scale since 1840, the epoch when

other nations, and especially our own, also obtained a share in the Chinese trade. This introduction of foreign manufactures has had a similar effect on the native industry to that which it formerly had on Asia Minor, Persia and India. In China the spinners and weavers have suffered greatly under this foreign competition, and the community has become unsettled in proportion.

The tribute to be paid to England after the unfortunate war of 1840, the great unproductive consumption of opium, the drain of the precious metals by this trade, the destructive influence of foreign competition on native manufactures, the demoralised condition of the public administration, produced two things ; the old taxation became more burdensome and harassing, and new taxation was added to the old. Thus in a decree of the Emperor, dated Peking, January 5, 1853, we find orders given to the viceroys and governors of the Southern provinces of Woo-chang and Hun-Yang to remit and defer the payment of taxes, and especially not in any case to exact more than the regular amount ; for otherwise, says the decree, " how will the poor people be able to bear it ? " " And thus, perhaps," continued the Emperor, " will my people, in a period of general hardship and distress, be exempted from the evils of being pursued and worried by the tax-gatherer." Such language as this, and such concessions we remember to have heard from Austria, the China of Germany, in 1848.

All these dissolving agencies acting together on the finances, the morals, the industry, and political structure of China, received their full development under the English cannon in 1840, which broke down the authority of the Emperor, and forced the Celestial Empire into contact with the terrestrial world. Complete isolation was the prime condition of the preservation of Old China. That isolation having come to a violent end by the medium of England, dissolution must follow as surely as that of any mummy carefully preserved in a hermetically sealed coffin, whenever it is brought into contact with the open air. Now, England having brought about the revolution of China, the question is how that revolution will in time react on England, and through England on Europe. This question is not difficult of solution.

The attention of our readers has often been called to the unparalleled growth of British manufacture since 1850. Amid the

most surprising prosperity, it has not been difficult to point out the clear symptoms of an approaching industrial crisis. Notwithstanding California and Australia, notwithstanding the immense and unprecedented emigration, there must ever, without any particular accident, in due time arrive a moment when the extension of the markets is unable to keep pace with the extension of British manufactures, and this disproportion must bring about a new crisis with the same certainty as it has done in the past. But, if one of the great markets suddenly becomes contracted, the arrival of the crisis is necessarily accelerated thereby. Now, the Chinese rebellion must, for the time being, have precisely this effect upon England. The necessity for opening new markets, or for extending the old ones, was one of the principle causes of the reduction of the British tea-duties, as, with an increased importation of tea, an increased exportation of manufactures to China was expected to take place. Now, the value of the annual exports from the United Kingdom to China amounted, before the repeal in 1834 of the trading monopoly possessed by the East India Company, to only £600,000 ; in 1836 it reached the sum of £1,326,388 ; in 1854 it had risen to £2,394,827 ; in 1852 it amounted to about £3,000,000. The quantity of tea imported from China did not exceed, in 1793, 16,167,331 lbs. ; but in 1845 it amounted to 50,714,657 lbs. ; in 1846 to 57,584,561 lbs. ; it is now above 60,000,000 lbs.

The tea crop of the last season will not prove short, as shown already by the export lists from Shanghai, of 2,000,000 lbs. above the preceding year. This excess is to be accounted for by two circumstances. On one hand, the state of the market at the close of 1851 was much depressed, and the large surplus stock left has been thrown into the export of 1852. On the other hand, the recent accounts of the altered British legislation with regard to imports of tea, reaching China, have brought forward all the available teas to a ready market, at greatly enhanced prices. But with respect to the coming crop, the case stands very differently. This is shown by the following extracts from the correspondence of a large tea firm in London :—

In Shanghai the terror is extreme. Gold has advanced upward of 25 per cent., *being eagerly sought for hoarding* ; silver has so far dis-

appeared that *none could be obtained* to pay the China dues on the British vessels requiring port clearance; and in consequence of which Mr. Alcock has consented to become responsible to the Chinese authorities for the payment of these dues, on receipt of East India Company's bills, or other approved securities. *The scarcity of the precious metals* is one of the most unfavourable features, when viewed in reference to the immediate future of commerce, as this abstraction occurs precisely at that period when their use is most needed, to enable the tea and silk buyers to go into the interior and effect their purchases, for which *a large portion of bullion is paid in advance, to enable the producers to carry on their operations.*

At this period of the year it is usual to begin making arrangements for the new teas, whereas at present nothing is talked of but the means of protecting person and property, all transactions being at a stand. . . . If the means are not supplied to secure the leaves in April and May, the early crop, which includes all the finer descriptions, both of black and green teas, will be as much lost as unreaped wheat at Christmas.

Now the means for securing the tea leaves will certainly not be given by the English, American or French squadrons stationed in the Chinese seas, but these may easily, by their interference, produce such complications, as to cut off all transactions between the tea-producing interior and the tea-exporting sea ports. Thus, for the present crop, a rise in the prices must be expected—speculation has already commenced in London—and for the crop to come a large deficit is as good as certain. Nor is this all. The Chinese, ready though they may be, as are all people in periods of revolutionary convulsion, to sell off to the foreigner all the bulky commodities they have on hand, will, as the Orientals are used to do in the apprehension of great changes, set to hoarding, not taking much in return for their tea and silk, except hard money. England has accordingly to expect a rise in the price of one of her chief articles of consumption, a drain of bullion, and a great contraction of an important market for her cotton and woollen goods. Even *The Economist*, that optimist conjuror of all things menacing the tranquil minds of the mercantile community, is compelled to use language like this :—

We must not flatter ourselves with finding as extensive a market for our exports to China as hitherto . . . It is more probable that our export trade to China should suffer, and that there should be a diminished demand for the produce of Manchester and Glasgow.

It must not be forgotten that the rise in the price of so indispensable an article as tea, and the contraction of so important a market as China, will coincide with a deficient harvest in Western Europe, and, therefore, with rising prices of meat, corn, and all other agricultural produce. Hence contracted markets for manufactures, because every rise in the prices of the first necessities of life is counterbalanced, at home and abroad, by a corresponding deduction in the demand for manufactures. From every part of Great Britain complaints have been received on the backward state of most of the crops. *The Economist* says on this subject :—

In the South of England not only will there be left much land unsown, until too late for a crop of any sort, but much of the sown land will prove to be foul, or otherwise in a bad state for corn-growing. On the wet or poor soils destined for wheat, signs that mischief is going on are apparent. The time for planting mangel-wurtzel may now be said to have passed away, and very little has been planted, while the time for preparing land for the turnip is rapidly going by, without any adequate preparation for this important crop having been accomplished . . . Oat sowing has been much interfered with by the snow and rain. Few oats were sown early, and late sown oats seldom produce a large crop . . . In many districts losses among the breeding flocks have been considerable.

The price of other farm-produce than corn is from 20 to 30, and even 50 per cent. higher than last year. On the Continent, corn has risen comparatively more than in England. Rye has risen in Belgium and Holland full 100 per cent. Wheat and other grains are following suit.

Under these circumstances, as the greater part of the regular commercial circle has already been run through by British trade, it may safely be augured that the Chinese revolution will throw the spark into the overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long prepared general crisis, which, spreading abroad will be closely followed by political revolutions on the Continent. It would be a curious spectacle, that of China sending disorder into the Western World while the Western powers, by English, French and American war steamers, are conveying "order" to Shanghai, Nankin, and the mouths of the Great Canal. Do these order-mongering powers, which would attempt to support the wavering Manchou dynasty, forget that the hatred against foreigners and their exclusion from the Empire, once the

mere result of China's geographical and ethnographical situation, have become a political system only since the conquest of the country by the race of the Manchou Tartars? There can be no doubt that the turbulent dissensions among the European nations who, at the later end of the seventeenth century, rivalled each other in the trade with China, lent a mighty aid to the exclusive policy adopted by the Manchous. But more than this was done by the fear of the new dynasty lest the foreigners might favour the discontent existing among a large proportion of the Chinese during the first half century or thereabouts of their subjection to the Tartars. From these considerations, foreigners were then prohibited from all communication with the Chinese except through Canton, a town at a great distance from Peking, and the tea districts and their commerce restricted to intercourse with the Hong Kong merchants, licensed by the Government expressly for the foreign trade, in order to keep the rest of its subjects from all connection with the odious strangers. In any case an interference on the part of the Western Governments at this time can only serve to render the revolution more violent, and protract the stagnation of trade.

At the same time it is to be observed with regard to India, that the British Government of that country depends for full one-seventh of its revenue on the sale of opium to the Chinese, while a considerable proportion of the Indian demand for British manufactures depends on the production of that opium in India. The Chinese, it is true, are no more likely to renounce the use of opium than are the Germans to forswear tobacco. But as the new Emperor is understood to be favourable to the culture of the poppy and the preparation of opium in China itself, it is evident that a death blow is very likely to be struck at once at the business of opium-raising in India, the Indian revenue and the commercial resources of Hindostan. Though this blow would not immediately be felt by the interests concerned, it would operate effectually in due time and would come in to intensify and prolong the universal financial crisis whose horoscope we have cast above.

Since the commencement of the eighteenth century there has been no serious revolution in Europe which had not been preceded by a commercial and financial crisis. This applies no less to the revolution of 1789 than to that of 1848. It is true not only that we

every day behold more threatening symptoms of conflict between the ruling powers and their subjects, between the State and society, between the various classes ; but also the conflict of the existing powers among each other gradually reaching that height where the sword must be drawn, and the *ultima ratio* of princes be recurred to. In the European capitals, every day brings despatches big with universal war, vanishing under the despatches of the following day, bearing the assurance of peace for a week or so. We may be sure, nevertheless, that to whatever height the conflict between the European powers may rise, however threatening the aspect of the diplomatic horizon may appear, whatever movements may be attempted by some enthusiastic fraction in this or that country, the rage of princes and the fury of the people are alike enervated by the breath of prosperity. Neither wars nor revolutions are likely to put Europe by the ears, unless in consequence of a general commercial and industrial crisis, the signal of which has, as usual, to be given by England, the representative of European industry in the market of the world.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the political consequences such a crisis must produce in these times, with the unprecedented extension of factories in England, with the utter dissolution of her official parties, with the whole State Machinery of France transformed into one immense swindling and stock-jobbing concern, with Austria on the eve of bankruptcy, with wrongs everywhere accumulated to be revenged by the people, with the conflicting interests of the reactionary powers themselves, and with the Russian dream of conquest once more revealed to the world.

THE INDUSTRIAL ALLIANCE

A Plea for Further Consolidation

By W. H. HUTCHINSON

(A.E.U. and Labour Party National Executive)

E VOLUTION, as every one knows, applies to Trade Unionism equally with industry, Government, and every other social institution. Social man, be he employer or employed, cannot escape from cosmic law. The history of British industry is a narrative of individualism extended, unfettered and unthinking. The mechanical inventions of the eighteenth century launched Britain, the precursor of power-driven industry, without one foreign rival. Every man possessed of the money, knowledge or acquisitiveness necessary became a Captain of Industry. He sweated his employees who were entirely at his mercy—for a space, as we know.

The point which interests us here, however, is the bearing which this absolute individualism had upon Labour in compelling a close relationship between the particular industry and the men who worked in it. A local character distinguished the early unionism, but the migratory habits induced by the rural exodus of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, to the towns which sprang up round the hastily devised factories, gradually induced a national type of organisation in labour unions. These, however, were purely of a craft, or occupational basis, which national organisation rendered—of necessity during that period—more solid and more rigid. Industry and Commerce continued on lines of utterly reckless individualism until the '60's, the Companies Act of 1862 giving the first legislative indication of a coming change. Trade Unionism, with its watchful eyes upon the employers, maintained its occupational formation in close correspondence with industry at each point.

Since the closing years of the nineteenth century, there have been many amalgamations and federations of separate unions functioning in certain industries. Some of these have been upon a

grand scale, but the changes effected have never transgressed the original idea underlying the craft basis. There have been groupings of allied crafts, notably in the engineering industry. But although the activities of the miner, the steelworker and the railwayman are perhaps as vital to the fitter as are those of the moulder, the craft line has not as yet been crossed by Trade Unionism. Employers have emerged under stress of foreign competition from the hamper of antiquated ideas. Competition is relegated to the school copy-book, and exists as the text of last Sunday's sermon. Employers are practising the co-operation which they affect to condemn. The Federation of British Industries is the outward and visible sign of the battle formation of British capitalism, and against this power Trade Unionism puts forward the hastily-conceived, undeveloped device—it is little more—of the General Council. The one gratifying feature of the step represented in Trade Union Evolution is the awakening it betokens: Trade Unionism is realising its dangers. Craft unionism has given endless evidence of its unfitness to cope either in conflict or negotiation with the massed power of employers in an industry. Doubts, also, have shaken the craft mind concerning the immunity of its kingdom from invasion by the unskilled. The progress of invention renders this daily more insecure, and the interests, the work and wages of allied craftsmen, necessitate a widening of the union outlook. We must, in the evolutionary spirit, adapt ourselves to the changed environment *until we can control it*. The craft idea must accept certain modification.

The emergence of the T.U.C. General Council, from which so much was hoped, has been succeeded quite naturally by demands to invest it with additional powers, presumably of an executive character. It is, however, unfair—even impossible—to subject these demands to effective criticism: the demands are too vaguely stated for that, in fact they are nowhere definitely laid down in anything resembling detail.

The Council functions within limits on behalf of hundreds of unions affiliated to it separately. Without plenary powers, the Council cannot act in a crisis on behalf of these unions. It may not pledge them to any expenditure in a dispute; it is fettered in any comprehensive strike by the hesitancy and conservatism of isolated unions which are disinclined to join in any movement which does not

affect their interests at the given moment. Obviously, some degree of consolidation of groups of unions is vitally necessary to any genuine functioning of the General Council. In effect, the Council is endeavouring to hold ground which it has not occupied. Employers have done better ; they perfected their Associations, gaining a wider view of their interests before risking failure in a grand effort. The F.B.I. is the culmination of a long evolutionary process which operated while Trade Unionism rested. Trade Unionism must search its mind. It must conquer its own ground. It must co-ordinate its units. When the General Council divided its affiliated organisations into groups of cognate occupations, what was the underlying idea ? Did the Council intend to consolidate each group into a massed industrial union ? That is what should have been proposed, but the absence of any step towards so obvious a consummation suggests either that the Council had no intention in that direction or was persuaded not to attempt it. In the present position of Trade Unionism, the extra powers needed by the Council cannot be obtained, and could not be used in the ultimate issue even if they were specifically conferred on that body. If, however, the necessary co-ordination of the craft units were achieved, the Council could function with efficiency and executive authority. For there is all the difference in the world between a Trade Union hierarchy operating on behalf of a proletariat, and a Council linked with the workers by an intelligent and loyal body of intermediate officers.

You cannot superimpose a structure like the General Council upon an organism like the Trade Union movement. Just as in the natural world function precedes structure, so in our Trade Union development the function which the movement must evolve must determine the character of the particular structure which will give the function fullest play.

This can only be secured by assimilation and co-ordination of kindred trades into a workable and efficient set of powerful groups which have effective control within their organisations. From these bodies the connective tissue will evolve quite naturally, and the structure of a General Staff and Council will reflect their ideas and purpose.

The Industrial Alliance of the " Big Five " is, perhaps, an ideal attempt to build an organisation of the larger Unions functioning on

behalf of a given co-ordinated industry. Representation on the Council or the Alliance is assured to Executives of all Unions constituting the Alliance—in a delegate capacity, of course, not as “directors.” This sort of Alliance is limited, possibly to key organisations, and unions of workmen related by occupation to them should, if perfect industrial action is desired, enter into alliance or amalgamation with their allied trades, and thus obtain representation through them on the Council. In this way Labour can be organised in Industrial Unions eligible for inclusion in the Alliance, and the effectiveness of Trade Unionism, not merely as a fighting force, but as a commercial asset, will be more nearly 100 per cent. than its present formation permits.

BOUND VOLUMES

for 1925

See particulars on

page 130.

THE COAL CRISIS AND THE WAY OUT

By A. J. COOK

(National Secretary, Miners' Federation of Great Britain)

A CRISIS of the greatest magnitude faces the British working-class movement. Capitalism in the mining industry has reached a stage at which the maintenance of the present basis has become impossible and drastic changes must take place if the industry is to continue to exist.

The mining industry is the key to the economic position of Great Britain. In the period of progressive development of British capitalism, the miners were in the vanguard of the working-class movement, building up a national industrial trade union organisation and leading the way in the struggle for better conditions and workers' control of industry. In the present period of capitalist decline the miners once again occupy the key position, but in a different way. They are now the most exposed to the capitalist attack, bearing the brunt of the attempt of capitalism to re-establish itself at the expense of the workers. The first attempt in this direction in 1921, ended victoriously for the employers, but it only staved off the crisis without providing any lasting solution for the problems facing the industry. The critical situation that has now arisen is a direct consequence of the flouting of the recommendations of the Sankey Commission. If the Sankey pledges had been honoured the coal industry would have been in a far sounder position altogether, it would have been in a position in a large measure to meet satisfactorily the difficulties of the present economic situation, and the crisis as it is now would never have come into existence.

The Sankey Commission recognised and stated in the clearest terms, that :—

The present system of ownership and working in the coal industry stands condemned, and some other system must be substituted for it, either nationalisation or a method of unification by national purchase and/or by joint control.

The second report of the Sankey Commission was devoted to working out in detail how the substitution should be made. The

report was ignored and the mine owners were permitted to carry on their short-sighted policy unchecked. The result is seen in the position of the industry to-day. No one can challenge the fact that private ownership has created chaos, conflict and confusion. While the miners' standard of living has been forced down below the pre-war level, all the tremendous economic waste of royalties, profit-making on inflated capital and uneconomical working and organisation have been retained.

At the present time wages are appallingly low. The average earnings per day worked vary from 8s. 5d. to 10s. 4d., for the most part the increase over the wages paid in July, 1914, lying between 50-60 per cent., although the official index of cost of living is 75 per cent. above pre-war. Even the mine owners in presenting their case quoted a figure of only 61 per cent. as the increase in miners' wages over the pre-war level, and their figure took no account of short time, and, therefore, is considerably in excess of the actual earnings. The average actual weekly earnings of the miner do not amount to more than 48s. 6d. per week. At this level, and there are many thousands of miners who are getting considerably less, the miners are receiving far less than any decent minimum of subsistence. Yet it is well-known that the industry has been a very profitable one in the past. The following table shows the aggregate profits made in the industry since the year 1913 :—

Year ended March 31 :	Aggregate Profits.
	£
1913	16,900,000
1914	21,100,000
1915	13,900,000
1916	26,200,000
1917	39,800,000
1918	26,300,000
1919	22,300,000
1920	41,800,000
1921	3,100,000
1922	(Loss) 1,800,000
1923	15,800,000
1924	28,800,000
1925	6,900,000

After 1917, when Government control was introduced, the profits from by-products are excluded. These profits are estimated to have been at least six million pounds sterling annually.

In addition to the profits of the colliery owners, the industry has also provided enormous sums in royalties and wayleaves. The amounts paid to royalty owners in Great Britain average over £6,000,000 per annum. The following are examples of the sums drawn from the industry by certain members of our aristocracy :—

	Per annum
	£
Ecclesiastical Commissioners	370,000
Marquis of Bute (six years average) . .	115,772
Duke of Hamilton (ten years average)	113,793
Lord Tredegar (six years average) . .	83,827
Duke of Northumberland (six years average)	82,450
Lord Dunraven (1918)	64,370
Earl Elsmere	43,497
Earl Durham	40,522

Notwithstanding that the industry is at present “on the dole” the royalty and wayleaves owners continue to draw these huge sums from the industry.

When the coal owners refer to the poor results of the industry in 1925 as regards dividend-paying capacity, they omit any consideration of the profits earned over a number of years. They say nothing of the extent of over-capitalisation by the issue of bonus shares or of the payment of royalties. More important still they say nothing of the profit of the coal industry as a whole, of which coal getting forms only one part, and a part which cannot rightly be considered in isolation. The official profit returns take no account of the other processes from which the owners derive substantial profits. The position is that the profits of coal getting may be deliberately kept at a low figure in order to enhance the profits of coal using concerns. As put by my colleague, Mr. S. O. Davies, before the Samuel Coal Commission :—

The statement in our appendix proves that the persons who largely control the coal trade to-day are interested in a number of other industries that use or deal with a great deal of our coal output. Now, we have come to the conclusion that there is not the same concern to-day in the mining industry to secure profits as there was in the past. It does not matter to the people who are largely interested in coal to-day, whether they make their profits from their coal or from their by-products or from the other concerns in which they are interested, which use, consume or handle a great deal of coal.

Even granting, therefore, the general dislocation and depression

of capitalist industry as a whole, there is no reason to believe that the coal industry is unable to pay a living wage to its workers. At present the industry is suffering more from the tremendous internal inefficiency, wasteful and unscientific method of working and costly and inefficient methods of distribution, than from the decline in the purchase of British coal by foreign users.

The whole world coal industry is suffering from the present crisis. The permanent causes of this crisis are to be found in the development of coal mining in countries like India, Canada, Australia and Africa, in the technical advances leading to economy in the use of coal and in the substitution of other forms of fuel (oil, hydro-electric power) for coal. But the real difficulty has arisen from the evil of private ownership in production. These difficulties have been augmented by the policy of successive capitalist Governments—and even of the Labour Government—by their insistence on Reparation in Coal, the Dawes Scheme, &c., which have done untold harm to the coal industry of every country.

Capitalism has no solution to offer but the maintenance of the present pitiful picture of social injustice, chaos and waste at the expense of the miners' standard of life. Despite the fact, now undisputed, that the miner is underpaid, underfed, and badly housed, the coal owners demand lower wages and longer hours.

The following table shows the average earnings per day which would be payable in the industry on the basis of the level of prices indicated by the owners and of present conditions of working, together with the resulting reduction from present earnings :—

District	Proposed Earnings		% Increase or Decrease over 1914	Reduction:	
	s.	d.		s.	d.
Scotland	6	4½	5*	4	0
Northumberland ..	6	4	2	2	10½
Durham	6	5	2	3	6½
South Wales	7	0	4	3	9
Eastern Division ..	7	5	11	3	6
Lancs. & Cheshire ..	5	11	1*	4	0½
North Wales	5	6	5*	3	7
Cumberland	5	8	8*	5	0
Forest of Dean	5	0	6*	3	11½
Somerset	6	.	27	2	4

* Decrease.

It will be observed that the actual money amounts received by the miners, would in several districts be less than those received by them in 1914, notwithstanding that the value of money, as measured by the increase in cost of living, has depreciated enormously.

It is quite certain that with wages at this level, the industry would inevitably collapse, as the mine workers could not sustain the necessary physical energy to perform their work. Such however, are the mine owners' proposals.

The owners aver that such a position would be mitigated if the men consented to a return to the eight-hour day. In the present condition of the International Coal Market it is certain that such a change would not help the economic position. The miners are bitterly opposed to any suggestion of longer hours and would fight it to the utmost, on social grounds alone. It must be remembered that the present seven-hour day excludes one winding time. That means that the average time spent below ground is really 7 hours 37 minutes, while in many cases the men are now below ground more than eight hours. When it is realised that in many cases they have to journey long distances to and from the collieries, that each day they have to cleanse themselves in their own homes, and prepare for the following day, the bitter opposition to a longer working day will be appreciated.

Capitalism in each country has no way out. Everywhere it preaches the old formula : "Longer hours and Lower wages," utterly disregarding the known economic condition. In Great Britain it believes that the present moment is favourable to destroy Trade Unionism, hence its desire to first break up the Miners' Federation.

It is an ominous sign that the Conservative Government has utilised the period of truce since last August in perfecting machinery to meet an industrial upheaval. It is an ominous sign that it has appeared to give official encouragement to agencies for the destruction of both trade unions and political organisations.

As in 1921, the mine owners' attack is directed not merely against the miners alone, but against the whole working class. Indeed, it will be remembered that at the Coal Commission the owners actually proposed that a reduction in railway and dock charges should be obtained through drastic reductions in the wages

of railwaymen and dock workers. The mine owners' blunt demand for the practical destruction of the National Miners' Federation, for lower wages and longer hours, is the same demand, only put in the crudest and cruellest terms, that capitalism is making to the workers of every industry. The only difference is that in the mining industry the situation is such that the direct issue of the continuance of capitalism has immediately to be faced. The mining industry has become the cock-pit of the first great conflict between labour and capital in this country. It is no longer a question of worse or slightly better conditions, it is a question of the fate of the industry itself. There is no alternative to ruin both for the workers and for the industry but the removal of the stranglehold of parasitism that is squeezing the life out of both.

The miners do not want a strike or a lock-out. They want peace and a settlement which will prevent the recurrence of such attacks as the present. They are preparing to defend their already low standard of living. They have not even put in an application for an increase of wages, though heaven knows they would be justified in doing so. In defending their standards and their national organisation they are confident of the support, not only of the whole British working class, but of the workers of the world.

A united defence of the workers to the challenge of capitalism must and will be given. But for a solution of the problems of the industry a bold plan is needed and not mere tinkering. Such a plan has been put forward by the miners, and, indeed, it has been widely remarked that the sole constructive proposals for the restoration of the industry have come from the miners. The mine owners have nothing to put forward except the demand for starvation conditions. It is not by these means that the coal industry, which is still the basis for British industry as a whole, can be placed on a secure foundation. For this, only the abolition of private ownership will suffice.

WHERE IS MR. BALDWIN GOING ?

By "OUTPOST"

IN a little spate of speeches, Cabinet Ministers performed an overture to the new session of Parliament. The theme of their piece was the sweet old melody, Optimism and Economy. Mr. Winston Churchill, always a good exponent of whatever line of argument happens to be opportune, was prominent among the performers.

At Leeds, on January 21, he announced that he perceived "an undoubted, though slow and slight, improvement in the industrial and commercial outlook."

"The world," he said, "is now peaceful; the harvests have been good; from many quarters come the reports that trade is on the mend. We know that unemployment has been sensibly reduced, and, apart from coal, substantially reduced, and reduced in spite of a continually increasing population of wage-earners. None of these conditions was present in August. There was nothing but gloom then, and now there is modest hope . . . Hope for all . . . Hope for the manufacturer . . . Hope for the merchant . . . Hope for the artisan . . . Hope for those who are out of employment . . . Prosperity . . . is on our threshold."

Again, the next day, at Bolton, Mr. Churchill claimed a "sensible improvement of the Government in the last six months," and mentioned the triumphs of Locarno, the Irish boundary settlement, widows' and orphans' pensions, housing and (a little more positive in his note to-day, like the thrush whose song strengthens from hour to hour in the early spring) "better trade." The Government, he said, was following a "national policy," whereas both Liberal and Labour parties were split from end to end by deep rifts.

And what was needed to make the picture even brighter in the future? Economy. We must, said Mr. Churchill, have economy all round.

A lesser songster, but a no less fervent, is Mr. Amery. At Glasgow, on the same day on which Mr. Churchill was singing the

Government's praises at Bolton, Mr. Amery was saying that "no greater volume of solid constructive work for peace at home or abroad was ever achieved by any Cabinet in the time available" as by the Baldwin Government in its period of office.

Mr. Baldwin himself told a London Conservative audience that :—

Our political credit and our financial credit abroad have been raised to a higher level than they have held since the war . . . our year's work will stand comparison with that of any previous Government in the same length of time.

But now, economy was necessary, in local government no less than nationally and imperially.

These will do as examples of the way in which the Optimism and Economy theme is given out. Let us now ask the question—To what purpose? The prospect of a coal crisis in May remains the dominant fact in current domestic politics. The presence of that menacing fact makes an answer easy, as far as the present moment is concerned. If we can espy, says Mr. Baldwin, in effect, the rosy dawn of trade revival, shall we blot it out by creating industrial clouds, or shall we prepare for it under the clear sky of good fellowship?

The effort to create belief in the coming trade revival (an illusion, in sober fact) is directed in the first place to weakening the workers' forces, in preparation for the May crisis, and to rendering impossible the recruiting of the Labour front, as in last July. Mr. Baldwin knows well enough how susceptible are Labour leaders to the argument that we should not foul our good British nest by internal strife at the moment when, by co-operation, we may make it snug and warm under the sun of better trade. That is why, simultaneously with the full blast of the Optimism and Economy overture, minor strains were heard (Lord Londonderry's, for instance) suggesting that workers and employers should again get together, and find "a way out." Minor strains, perhaps, and apparently unlikely to produce their full effect, but they serve what is, after all, their main purpose, of distracting the attention of a proportion of the Labour leaders from their task of preparing a united working class front. That is all Mr. Baldwin need aim at for the moment. It will, of course, be better from his point of view if the miners do not fight at all in May—that is, if the optimism

strain were to enchant them completely. It will be next best if they fight alone—that is, if the magic music overcomes the rest of the Labour ranks. In either case, he can then reckon pretty confidently on a victory for the capitalists, a delaying of the really big social issue—and the remark, “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,” has become very distinctly in these days a slogan for the capitalist class.

Nevertheless, the optimism theme has more far-reaching uses. Other voices are taking it up, producing variations on it more or less in harmony with Mr. Baldwin and Lord Londonderry, and completely in unison with them in the object of distracting and dividing the leaders of the working class. One of these voices is worth reproducing. It provides points to which we shall have to return later. It is that of the *Observer*, which says :—

The old lazy and unintelligent way of looking first to lower wage rates for economy is passing . . . This change had to begin on the side of capital. But capital by itself cannot complete it. It waits the response from Labour. We think the response will come.

The *Observer* goes on to commend the enterprise of the *Daily Mail*, which is organising an excursion of trade unionists to the United States, so that they may see how, in God’s own country, production unhampered by trade union restrictions has led to high wages and prosperity all round. That way, thinks the *Observer*, will come Labour’s response to the call for economy—by a revival of the “produce more” campaign.

But we have yet to complete the chorus of voices. Taking up again the economy theme, it is instructive to take the views of others than Cabinet Ministers. While Mr. Churchill was pluming himself on the Cabinet’s record, certain capitalists were expressing discontent. Thus Sir Christopher Needham, chairman of the District Bank (Manchester) expressed regret that Mr. Churchill had increased his estimates, and dwelt particularly on the “burden of local rates.” The rates on a typical cotton-weaving shed in 1914 were, he said, £184, and in 1924, with the same looms and machinery, they were £599. It is significant that local government expenditure was the feature attacked by several other capitalists at this same moment, when Mr. Churchill was boasting himself.

The Times quoted with approval and emphasis the remarks of Mr. Machin, the President of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, who reminded his audience of a deputation of business men who had gone to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to tell him that in the present circumstances an £800,000,000 a year budget was too much. And particularly regarding local government, Mr. Machin denounced the "mounting up" of expenditure, and declared there was "no more important duty that any man can undertake than that of devoting part of his time to the municipal affairs of his own locality." Reference to Mr. Baldwin's speech, quoted above, will show that he also mentioned local government as a suitable field for economy.

We have now given a pretty representative reproduction of the minor voices, dwelling on the theme of the Government's policy, as well as of those of Ministers themselves. On the whole, it can be said that optimism is the predominant ministerial note, and economy is most loudly sounded by the Government's critical friends. It is then duly, and naturally, of course, taken up by the Ministers themselves. And now, as we inquired into the immediate purpose of the optimism note, we may turn to the more complicated question of the purpose of economy.

The two notes are equally necessary to the harmony of the theme. Optimism dazzles the workers, creates conflicting impulses among them, weakens their resolution to form a united working-class front. That is to say, it prepares them to go down before a capitalist attack. Economy is the guise in which the attack is delivered. Economy in local, national and imperial affairs, says Mr. Baldwin, dutifully noting his masters' nod, and for the coming session there are put down Bills to extend the Local Authorities Emergency Provisions Act, to amend the Unemployment Insurance Acts, and "to reduce expenditure in connection with certain services and to effect economies." The professed object of all these measures is economy, and in addition, as is well known, the administration under existing Acts of education, public health, unemployment relief, has been pinched to the point of cruelty. The burden of all these economies falls upon the workers, employed and unemployed, and their wives and children. This Mr. Baldwin does in obedience to his masters' nod—but why do his masters nod? That question

brings us to some fundamental considerations of Mr. Baldwin's policy.

A year ago we were being promised trade revival as the result of the return to the gold standard. The return to the gold standard was made, but has the result been achieved? Mr. Churchill now offers "hope, modest hope" of the trade revival. In effect the figures for the past year offer nothing but ground for the most modest of hopes. Mr. Churchill's own colleague, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, President of the Board of Trade, had to admit this in the course of an argument in which he complained that it was "dangerous, misleading and fantastic to suggest that this country was living on its capital. There was a trade balance in its favour . . ." He went on to admit that, in visible trade, the balance was adverse. But to get the real position there must be an accurate estimate of invisible exports. Taking a strictly conservative estimate of invisible exports, the result was that last year we had a trade balance of not less than 28 or 30 millions. (The Board of Trade itself computes our favourable trade balance, secured on the basis of invisible exports, as £28,000,000 in 1925, £63,000,000 in 1924, and £153,000,000 in 1923—a very steep decline.) No wonder, in view of these figures, that Sir Philip concluded by saying that the balance to-day was insufficient. It was not nearly so much as before the war, and to-day the country needed a bigger balance for the purpose of providing new capital for the development of new markets.

This is where we get near to the root of this economy business. We have returned to the gold standard—and our trade balance is insufficient. What is the meaning of those two facts? The return to the gold standard was a stroke of the pen by which it became possible to release the masses of bullion—more than half of the world's supply—which had been locked up—"sterilised"—in the vaults of the United States banks, and to return this gold to Europe in the form of loans. The Dawes agreement was the beginning of this process. The British return to the gold standard carried it further—the re-conversion of "sterilised" gold into active American loan-capital, poured into Europe, and demanding interest for American financiers.

There's the rub. When our bankers glowed with pride because the pound looked the dollar in the face they did not explain that it

could only do so by dint of enormous payments of interest on loans. They did not explain that the obscure technical phrases in which they expressed their satisfaction would mean, if translated into English which the workers would understand, "Now, you devils, sweat your guts out, and pay that interest somehow."

But that is what it did mean. The flow of gold from the United States to Europe has only increased the indebtedness of European capitalists to American. That is, it has only piled up on the shoulders of the workers an increased burden of interest-payments on war-debt and every kind of capital holding. It has added those increased burdens to the already staggering loads of payments for militarism and imperialism, for our own three hundred odd millions a year of interest on national debt, &c. And we have a shrinking trade balance, secured by invisible exports, and computed last year at only £28,000,000.

Now we can see clearly the reason for the economy propaganda, and for Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister's plaint. The burden of interest-payments to America, of footing the bills for militarism, imperialism, and our own national debt, rests upon the shoulders of the workers, but how can they pay? The commodities which the workers produce must be sold before the payments can be made. That is how the desired "bigger balance" is to be achieved. But to sell, British capitalists must compete with the freer, wealthier system of production of the United States itself. They must produce commodities in the markets of the world at prices lower than those of their chief creditor. It is their last chance of struggling for independence, for dominance, against the power of America. That is the root reason for the "economy all round" cry. For the workers it is obvious that economy is limited to a few too-familiar forms: longer working hours; lower wages; more production. Both pre-requisite and corollary to these is the destruction of the power of the trade unions. We have seen already that the "produce more" campaign is being revived, and a select party of trade unionists is being sent to the United States to see how high productivity and high wages go hand in hand. The next step will be an open shop campaign in Britain. Here again the optimism note plays its part, by dissuading sections of the workers from "killing," by united front tactics, our "hopes" of reviving trade.

To maintain the gold standard, then, means intensified competition, and that means lower standard wages for the workers. But let us go a step further. In their efforts to get the necessary surplus, to pay America its interest, our capitalists must look for new markets. But they find the markets of the world shrinking. Europe still starved, its greatest workshop turned into a coolie plantation by the Dawes plan, Russia still cut off by the bankers' boycott, China's capacity for absorbing manufactures crippled by the very policy of the imperialists themselves, competitive industry springing up in the Dominions, all combined make the possibilities of selling manufactures less and less. Also, to get into the existing markets, we must undersell our competitors. Germany is forced by the Dawes Plan to export cheaply, in order to pay vast sums in interest and reparations; the depreciated franc and an enormous new industrial development enable France to sell cheaply: America pours forth goods—and *we*; if we are to maintain the gold standard, if the pound is to continue looking the dollar in the face, *we* must undersell them all. Again, there is no means of underselling save by cutting the standards of British workers—that is, by “economy all round.”

The worker may be pardoned for failing to see how his standards can possibly be reduced any lower. But supposing it were possible, supposing that, inversely to the depression of his standards, the virtue of “economy all round” were to rise to unprecedented achievements, and trade revival and more production as in America were to follow, a new question arises for the worker. Will it mean easier times for him, or yet lower standards, less freedom? An examination of the more permanent tendencies of the capitalist class suggests an answer here. We have referred to the talk of trade revival as dazzle for the labour leaders, as an inducement for them to stave off strikes. The “getting together” talk, we have said, gives the capitalists breathing space by disuniting the labour front. But the “getting together” talk is more than a casual bait. It is a definite piece of capitalist class equipment, it is camouflage which hides the preparation for the coming attack. It is a particularly valuable piece of camouflage, because it gives the impression that the capitalists are disunited, that there are well-meaning ones who want “peace,” and there are brutal ones who want to force an attack

on the workers. And thus it hides the fact that the attack is coming anyway, that behind this illusory screen blow after blow is preparing for the workers, each one to be driven home by the inevitable development of the capitalist world situation. A new coal truce may be patched up in May, but that in itself will only be the preparation for a yet heavier blow upon the workers. The situation demands these blows, as the inevitable acts of a class which is fighting for its power and existence in the future, and is steadily becoming conscious of its position, despite the lingering dreams of the "men of good will."

That, then, is one of the permanent tendencies of the capitalist class—the increasingly fierce attack on the workers as the world capitalist struggle grows fiercer. From that it follows that no economy and increased production campaigns can make the lot of the workers easier.

Another permanent tendency of the capitalist class is its growing conservatism. Mr. Lloyd George's millionaire colleague, Sir Alfred Mond, feels that the present is a time for the sternest resistance to all "socialistic" tendencies. That is, Sir Alfred feels the steady pull of conservatism, of the power of those who hold the wealth and are feeling the growing intensity of the struggle to maintain it, and whose struggles even for expansion are only struggles to remain in existence, because, in fact, they are on the down grade. Despite the chorus of optimism, despite all talk of the trade balances that can be built up, of the new markets that can be captured if only economy be practised, our financier-capitalist class knows well enough its economic vassalage. It knows, too, of the challenge of the growing revolutionary working class. Hence its own growing conservatism which is only the last desperate clutch at a means to maintain power. If the British capitalists were Marxist in outlook, they would know that the forces against them, first of the superior American capitalist class, and after that of the revolutionary working class, were overwhelming. But, as Trotsky remarks, they lack confidence in to-morrow, therefore, they do not peer too far ahead—only far enough to get the illusion of a dawn of better trade. This second permanent tendency then, that of conservatism, also robs the workers of any hope, even under better trade, of better standards. Everything must be subjected to the

effort to maintain the position of British capitalism in competition with American. That is, everything must be sacrificed to the maintenance of the gold standard. And that again means that the British workers must sweat, must bear the burden of economy, to pay tribute to the new Cæsar of Wall Street. But, as the figures show, our trade is on the down-grade all the time. Therefore, economy or no economy, more production or no more production, the standard of the British workers *cannot*, in the long run, rise. Only the beginning by the working class of the revolutionary struggle to replace the system of private ownership and vested interests by working class rule can offer the certainty of better conditions.

The effort to preserve the present system means one other thing. Competition, underselling, more production, economy, none of these can stop the decline of British capitalism bound by its golden chains of loans to the United States. None of these can free British capitalists of their vassalage to America. But, before the Imperial machine collapses, our capitalists will surely try conclusions with America by armed force. Nothing can be more certain than that the struggle against economic vassalage, for markets by the process of underselling, leads to war. That is where Mr. Baldwin, with his gold standard, his optimism and economy, is ultimately going.

COLOUR v. CLASS IN SOUTH AFRICA

By M. G. DESAI

TO-DAY, South Africa is perhaps the biggest menace to the growing unity of the world's workers. For representing, as it does, the meeting ground of races from all parts of the world, it is just here that racial divisions among the workers are most pronounced. With incredible short-sightedness the White workers of the Union are joining hands with the capitalists to beat back the Africans and Asiatics into a state of semi-slavery. In face of the monumental selfishness on the part of the White workers in South Africa itself, the long distance fraternal greetings of the European trade unionists are apt to sound as hypocritical to the dusky masses of the East as the sentimental cant of the missionaries with which they have been so long familiar.

It is significant that South Africa should be taking a lead in forcing the coloured races into economic serfdom and political helotry. Throughout the last century and more, she has been perfecting the science of turning men into robots. As late as 1834, the Boer farmers were battenning on the labour of the negroes and the Malayas bought from the English slave-dealers.

With the abolition of slavery, rapid progress in farming and industry met with a difficulty. The Bantu and Hottentot tribes, secure on their communal lands in the hinterland, could not be easily induced to work for others and the White workers would not remain long in service in view of the easy accessibility of land. It was, therefore, thought necessary to introduce labour that would have nothing to fall back upon. Special recruiting agencies were established to enlist negroes from Central Africa, and with the help of the obliging Indian Government, poor ignorant agricultural workers from India were trapped into indentured labour—periodic slavery. Besides this outside labour the South African natives were also gradually squeezed out of their ever narrowing reservations and forced to migrate to the mines and the towns to sell their labour to the Whites. The comparatively more skilled Indian

workers were employed in the development of the tea, tobacco, and sugar industry, and in railway construction ; while the Africans were harnessed to the more strenuous work in the coal, gold, and diamond mines.

The Indians were brought out on the clearest understanding that when they had served their five years' indenture, they would be treated as free men ; and if they preferred to relinquish their right to the free return passage, they would be given land of a corresponding value. But the colonists soon began to feel that a free Indian was not as desirable as an Indian coolie. So the Municipalities started placing restrictions on their trading activities ; and a heavy tax was imposed on all free Indians who would not re-indenture themselves. In the mining areas, the African workers were faring much worse. They were doing the deeper underground work for ridiculously low wages. And, even when off duty, they were not free, but were locked up like pigs into terribly insanitary compounds. The rate of mortality has been fearfully high, especially from phthisis and pneumonia. During the Boer war, these carefully built-up colonies of semi-slaves were scattered. Hence in 1904-5, some 50,000 indentured Chinese workers were introduced on the Rand. But after having exploited them for some six years, all of them were repatriated in 1910. The Indian experience had taught the colonists not to take any risks.

The policy of the employers has been to play one section of workers against another—the skilled half-castes against the whites ; the semi-skilled Indians and Africans against the half-castes and the " Poor Whites " ; and African workers from outside the Union against the natives. The White workers, if they had been wise, would have retaliated by taking a lead in organising all-inclusive Unions. But in the colonies, race hatred has been sublimated under high auspices into a Christian cult. And the White workers have followed an opportunist selfish policy with disastrous results even to themselves. It will be remembered how in 1922 the White workers on the Gold Reef struck as a protest against the admission of natives to semi-skilled work and the consequent reduction of the wages of the Whites. It soon developed into a general strike so far as the White workers were concerned. There were frequent collisions between the strikers and the police and

military leading to violence. But while these stirring things were happening, the vast masses of native workers were compelled to remain idle spectators. In the end martial law was declared, the strikers suppressed with bloodshed and the Whites had to resume work on the employers' terms, as far as work was available, and the recognition of their Federation was withdrawn.

South African industries are organised on a basis of an excessively large amount of cheap unskilled labour in relation to the skilled workers. There are in general eight natives to one European. In all the mines, for instance, there were 31,000 Europeans to 272,000 native workers in 1924. The White miner on the average gets £335 annually, while the native gets £27. So far as skilled work is concerned there is as yet no serious competition between the White and the coloured. The real competition is for semi-skilled work, and that, too, generally with the "Poor White" Boers, who have been flocking to the industrial areas from agricultural parts. With the introduction of railways, the Boer farmers, with their primitive methods of agriculture based on cheap land and cheap labour, had to face the fierce competition of the world market; and a process of elimination of inefficients set in. It is from the ranks of the latter that the Poor Whites of the city slums are recruited. In 1921, they numbered 120,000. It is largely for their benefit that the new legislation is being enacted.

By the Class Areas Bill and the Colour Bar Bill, and other kindred legislation, what is proposed in effect is a thorough-going segregation of all Asiatics¹ and Africans² in the Union—territorially, industrially, and politically. In rural areas, they will be crammed into certain narrow reservations. In the cities, the necessary number of workers will have to reside in well-defined slums. It will not be open to them to learn or engage in any skilled or semi-skilled work. No Indian or African can be so much as a lift-boy or chauffeur. If they would have to bore a well or run a tractor on their land, they will have to engage a White. They cannot aspire to any political rights. They are graciously allowed the privilege of electing a small number of Whites to represent them in the Union Parliament. The worst conditions in the worst parts of the Union at present in existence would thus be standardised throughout the

¹ 165,731

² 4,697,913

Union. Especially in the Cape Province, for instance, the coloured races had so far practically been on a footing of equality with Whites; but all that is to go. In view of the existing pressure on land in Native reservations and consequent drift to towns and in view of the congested condition of the 30 miles coastal belt in Natal to which Indians are to be confined, these restrictive proposals are evidently in effect a device to swell the ranks of the landless proletariat, and to further beat down the already low wages of the unskilled coloured workers.

The half-castes are exempted but the Asiatics, mainly Indians, are deliberately classed with the natives. The reasons for this special animus against Indians, who number at present 160,000, are obvious. Firstly, they fraternize with the natives. Secondly, their ranks have also been strengthened by the prosperous Indian merchants who followed in the wake of the Indian workers. The Whites object to the competition of this Indian trading class, who are moreover sufficiently influential to secure wide-spread attention to their grievances in India and elsewhere. After Gandhi's passive resistance campaign a compromise was patched up in 1913, and repeatedly confirmed at Imperial Conferences, providing that the lot of the already domiciled Indians should at least be improved, in return for which South Africa should be allowed to close its doors against further entry of free Indians. But as soon as the war was over, things have again been made too hot for Indians, and already 35,000 Indians have been turned out of S. Africa and dumped into India. This is not re-patriation but depatriation, because 70 per cent. of the South African Indians were born and brought up in the colony.

Among the Natives, the old tribal traditions of implicit obedience to the headman—in pay of the Government—are fast breaking down; and there is a rapid approximation to modern standards. Primary education is becoming general. In 1907, they started a college for higher education. The workers in the industrial areas are becoming class-conscious. Witness, for instance, the splendid strike of 71,000 native workers employed on the Rand in 1920. They have organised themselves politically and industrially into the S.A. Native National Congress and the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union. The trouble at

Bloemfontein last April leading to shooting and the boycott of the Prince's visit are evidences of their rising temper. At their last congress they have resolved to embark upon a passive resistance campaign if the proposed legislation be passed.

The following extract from the secretary's report to the Fifth Congress of the Native Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union is significant of the new spirit among the African workers.

We are aiming at the building up in Africa of a National Labour Organisation of the aboriginals, through which we shall break the wall of White autocracy and Capitalism. We shall not rest there. We shall open the gates of the Houses of Legislature now under the control of the White Oligarchy and from their steps we shall claim equality of purpose with the workers of the world to overthrow Capitalism and usher in a Co-operative Commonwealth—a system of government which is not foreign to the aboriginals of Africa.

What is the motive behind the White policy of enforcing racial subjection? That policy is, of course, intended to ensure the supremacy as an exploiting race of the tiny minority, one and a-half millions in all, of the White community. The ostensible justification for it, however, that is put forward is the necessity for preventing the racial purity of this minority from being submerged.

This racial bogey must be squarely faced by the workers if international unity is to be more than a dream. For the racial problem of South Africa is only an epitome of the whole racial problem throughout the world. Everywhere European Imperialism has not only transferred large sections of the European population to other continents, but also scattered vast masses of other races, helter-skelter, over the globe.

In the South African Union as elsewhere, permutations and combinations—between the Dutch, the British, the Jews, the "Poor Whites," the Hottentots, the Kaffirs, the Negroes, the Indians, the Malayans, the Arabs, the Chinese—have been in continuous development behind the transparent curtains of bourgeois respectability and racial purity. The number of half-castes is three to four times the entire Asiatic population.

Race fusion leads to decadence, say the purists and pseudo-scientists, and point to the position of half-castes the world over. Disowned by Westerners and despised by Orientals, it is true that the half-caste has on the whole been in unenviable plight. But

there is not a shred of evidence to prove that there is anything biologically wrong with him. It is the social forces that have been against him. In any case, any attempt at this hour to preserve the phantom of race purity by the erection of an intricate caste system will prove as futile and suicidal as the caste system in India. With the assertion of economic and political freedom by the coloured races, and the emancipation of women, there is likely to be a still greater admixture of races.

It is not whiteness, but civilisation that should be the goal of South Africa and similar countries. If the White colonists care only for their racial purity, let them remove themselves from countries where they are not the rightful inhabitants. But if, in order ostensibly to preserve their racial purity but really to maintain the race dominance of one-sixth of the population, they persist in the policy of attempting to separate and lock up the overwhelming majority of the people like cattle in the kraals, then let them beware for they are building their whited sepulchres on the slopes of a rumbling volcano.

A SOVIET PRISON

By WALTER M. CITRINE

(*Acting Secretary, T.U.C. General Council*)

IN no country in the world are greater social and economic experiments being tested than in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. A few months ago it was my privilege, in conjunction with my colleague, Mr. George Hicks, General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trades Workers, to visit Moscow and see for ourselves some of the methods by which the social problems of the new Republic are being tackled.

It is not my purpose in this article to attempt to give an analysis of the system by which it is sought to reduce, and possibly to eliminate, crime, but rather to describe in a somewhat colloquial fashion the incidents we encountered. It may be that by such a method the reader will himself be better able to draw conclusions than by any attempt at a reasoned analysis on my part.

Our visit to the Sokolniki Prison followed immediately after the inspection of the District Militia (or Police) system in Moscow, which we had been examining on the morning of October 15.

In conformity with our general plan we made up our minds that we would disclose our intentions as to where we should go at very short notice. We did this deliberately to avoid being shown only what the authorities might have desired us to see.

The Sokolniki Prison

Having settled that we should visit the Sokolniki Prison, we proceeded at once by motor car some twenty minutes' journey until we arrived at the outer gates of the prison. This prison consists of two portions, one a very old place, and the other a four-storey building which was erected just prior to the war. We passed an armed sentry at the gateway, and after disclosing our identity we were shown up into the room of the Commandant.

He explained that before going round the prison it would be well that we should be familiar with the broad outlines of the system. They did not call these establishments prisons, but

Educational Institutions for criminals. The utmost length of detention to which any person is confined in this establishment is ten years. The minimum term of detention at this establishment is six months.

I asked the Commandant as to what form of criminals they had in detention, and he stated they were principally there for general crime, but a few were in for counter-revolution. Generally the prisoners did not serve more than half of the term to which they were sentenced. There is a Guardian Committee which watches the effect of their detention upon the prisoners and carefully marks their progress. If the prisoner shows aptitude and a real desire to reform, his sentence is reduced materially. Every prisoner is given the opportunity of working at some useful trade and every two days which they work is counted as three days' imprisonment. The effect of this, therefore, is to reduce very materially the length of detention of those who undertake to work. The acceptance of work is not compulsory, but it has such advantages that there are very few prisoners who do not avail themselves of this opportunity.

They are paid the full trade union rates of wages, but one half of this is retained by the authorities until the end of the detention period, when the prisoner receives the balance in a lump sum, which should be sufficient to give him a decent restart in life. They work in three shifts of eight hours usually, but not every workshop is necessarily working the full three shifts.

An account is opened for the prisoner at a Co-operative Stores which is part of the prison establishment and where the prisoner may obtain all sorts of little luxuries if he so desires. He has to pay for these at a rate slightly more favourable to him than the general level of prices throughout Moscow.

If the prisoner is a family man with dependants he can allot half his wages for the maintenance of his family. I saw no women in this establishment.

A Tour of the Workshops

After this general explanation, we proceeded on a tour round the workshops. The first place we came to was the smithy, where we saw working a number of men, none of whom were in any special uniform. I remarked about this and was assured that it is

not the practice for a prisoner to wear anything other than his ordinary clothing. I asked as to whether we might speak to any of them and question them, and was freely given permission.

We then travelled along until we came to the woodworking shop, where I was amazed to find that with all sorts of inflammable material lying about, the men were smoking to their hearts' content. Among the men in this shop I could discern nothing that suggested the criminal type. I was informed that most of them had sentences varying from two to five years.

We then went into the metal shop where amongst other things they were making bedsteads. There were drilling machines, lathes, punching machines and all of the usual mechanical equipment that one would find in an engineering shop. The men were all working very assiduously, and I was informed that they were all on piece-work and did not require much overseeing.

Most of the prisoners were good humoured looking fellows, and they smiled rather quizzically as we approached them. Almost hidden away behind a drilling machine I saw a boy who did not appear to be more than about seventeen years old. I confess that I was somewhat horrified to find one so young in such a place. I remarked about this to the Commandant, who called the young fellow forward. He did not seem too well pleased at being disturbed from his work and came forward in a half aggressive mood. I said to our interpreter : " I do not like this idea of questioning these men before everybody. We have got to have some regard for their feelings." " Oh, they do not mind," he retorted. Still I was not satisfied, and when the matter was explained to the Commandant, he evidenced a ready desire to leave us in privacy.

I said, " How old are you ? " The answer surprised me.

" I am twenty-three."

I said, " What have you been sentenced for ? "

" Stealing."

" How long have you got ? "

" Three years."

" Is this the first time you have been in prison ? "

" No, I have been in three times before."

This somewhat staggered me and I secretly resolved not to rely too much on outward appearances.

Next we proceeded to where the prisoners were making photograph frames, then to the cardboard box making where we met a rather interesting old gentleman. My attention was attracted to him by the remark from Hicks, "He looks a regular old Tsarist." I turned and looked at the old fellow who had a long white drooping moustache, was very sharp featured and was smoking a cigarette in an elegant holder. He calmly went on with his work while we were watching him, and seemed perfectly at ease and quite unafraid. After a number of questions had been put, it transpired that he was an ex-colonel of the Tsar's army, and had been sentenced to five years for counter-revolution. He had been thirty-five years in the army, and was now sixty-three years old. I could see that the Commandant was looking suspiciously at him on hearing his replies to the questions, and the Commandant said something to our interpreter in Russian, who became visibly excited. "Ah," he broke out, "this man was Chief of the Omsk Department of Secret Police. You may depend upon it that he has been responsible for the loss of the lives of many of my comrades. He is lucky to be alive."

The old man, who evidently knew that his reputation was known, looked down with complete indifference on the cardboard boxes whose tops and sides he was glueing together as though it was a matter of no interest what any Bolshevik thought about him.

"How long have you been in prison?" I queried.

"Thirty-three months."

I looked round and observed that the Commandant had walked out of the room.

I said, "How are you treated?"

"Oh, very good," he returned nonchalantly.

One of his fellow prisoners, who was standing on the opposite side of the table working away, looked up, and in what appeared to me to be a rather embittered tone said in pretty good English: "He is treated very humanely."

The Dormitories

After this I said that I would like to see the cells where the prisoners slept.

"But there are no cells," replied the Commandant. "We have no such system here. The men sleep in dormitories. We do not

The Labour Monthly

believe in confining them by themselves." So we passed into the newer building and found ourselves in a long corridor about a dozen feet wide running down one side of which were a number of stout oak doors with a small square of glass in each. These were the dormitories. Up and down the corridor was passing an armed guard.

"Which would you like to go into first?" I was asked, and after a second's consultation with Hicks we decided upon one at the far end. The heavily padlocked door was quickly opened and we found ourselves in a room which had in it about twenty beds.

About half the beds were occupied, the remaining men being on their shift, while those we saw were having their time off. Some prisoners were sitting down reading, others were smoking and chatting together. One fellow had been tinkling away on a mandoline, which he stopped when we came in. They did not seem to bother about us very much, although one or two of them rose to their feet when they saw us.

A few towels were hanging up over the beds, while one chap had a good attaché case lying upon a shelf above him. On a table near the window (which incidentally was heavily barred) I saw a bunch of flowers. The dormitory was perfectly clean, although like most rooms in Russia not much fresh air was circulated, the windows all being closed.

We went into the other rooms and found much the same thing as I have described. On the floor above, and again selecting which dormitory we desired to enter, we found a man seated on the bed in a rich fur coat, although it was summer time. He was sewing some of his garments, and after a glance at us he resumed his work without concern. I asked him as to whether he had found any bugs in the prison, and he shook his head vigorously. I thought this question somewhat superfluous because it was quite evident that a high degree of cleanliness was observed everywhere.

Library and Co-operative Stores

We went down next to the library, where they had a good stock of books. The librarian, who was himself a prisoner, said that they had 600 prisoners in the institution and had changes of books for sixty or seventy people per day, which he thought very creditable.

Half the library consists of fiction and the majority of the remaining books deal with social subjects. The most widely read books are those of O. Henry and Jack London.

We then went down to the Co-operative Stores, where we saw a plentiful supply of bread, butter, tobacco, cheese, and a host of other commodities on sale.

There were two men in this place standing behind a low counter. One of them was doing some bookkeeping in the corner, and I was surprised to find that both of these men were prisoners also.

The Commandant shook his head when questioned about the bookkeeper. He said it was a very unfortunate case as this man had been a commissioner of a brigade in the "Red" Army and had occupied the rank of General. He had, however, embezzled some of the funds under his charge, and had been sentenced to ten years imprisonment. I said that it was a severe sentence, but the Commandant assured me that a betrayal of trust of that description was one of the most serious crimes which could be committed.

The other man was checking a list of the commodities on the shelves, and on inquiring into the system, I was informed that the prisoners received goods on credit, and that these are checked against their earnings.

I thought it rather risky to leave prisoners in charge of stock, but the Commandant said it was not more risky than it was for capitalists to leave hungry workers in charge of stocks that they can dispose of. At all events they had not found any disadvantage from the present method.

Just as we were about to leave I noticed this second man feeling in his waistcoat pocket. Finally he unearthed a cigarette, and after tapping it for a moment on the rack before him as smokers do, he felt for a match. Discovering he had not got one, he walked over to the Commandant with the cigarette in his left hand. The Commandant, who was smoking, in the most matter-of-fact way in the world held his lighted cigarette in order that the prisoner could get a light.

Hicks and I looked at one another, and it was as much as we could do to prevent ourselves from laughing outright.

"What sort of a place is this we have come to?" I said. "Is it a prison or a pantomime show?"

"I do not know," said Hicks," but I cannot imagine anyone wanting to run away."

With that we passed into the kitchen and inspected the food which the prisoners received. We tasted the soup, bread, and the meat, and it appeared very wholesome.

The Theatre

Next we went into the Prison Theatre. It was a long room, electrically lighted, and looking very sombre and drab. At the far end there was a tiny stage with some makeshift scenery. Round the walls were several portraits of Lenin, Kalinin, Marx and others. In front of the stage there was seated an orchestra of about twenty prisoners. Most of the instruments were mandolines and banjos, but there was a piano which had evidently seen better days.

"What would you like them to play for you?" asked the Commandant.

"Oh, anything," I replied. "Let them play some dance music."

The word was given to the conductor, who smartly rapped the stand and his men became alert on the instant.

They commenced playing a beautiful little Neapolitan dance. It sounded very pathetic to me, and I looked thoughtfully at the faces of the instrumentalists who were all earnestly intent on their music.

I thought to myself, "How complex a thing is crime. There does not appear to be a criminal among the lot."

It was a melancholy thought to me that these chaps, kept away from their families, were more the outcome of necessity than deliberate crime. I felt a little depressed. The music was so sad and these men were so deadly in earnest that I reflected that men who could respond to the inspiration of music could not be wholly bad. Anyhow if there is such a thing as reformative treatment for crime, the Russians are making a whole-hearted attempt to explore it to the full.

The orchestra stopped and we were very vigorous in our plaudits. They were quite appreciative of the encouragement and soon launched into a lively Russian tune. While they were playing

we went into the bioscope room, the theatre being supplied with a cinematograph installation.

The others had gone back into the theatre while I was examining the electrical appliances, and now to my astonishment the orchestra launched forth into the "Internationale." Of all the incongruous things which one can imagine, the "Internationale" played by a prison orchestra is surely the greatest. All those present took it very seriously. The Commandant and the two officials who accompanied me rose to their feet and remained at the salute while the three verses were being played. The armed guard who was on the door did likewise, and our guide looked the embodiment of solemnity as he did likewise.

We then went out into the courtyard to have our photographs taken, also an operation performed by a prisoner. By this time it was about 6 o'clock and the prisoners came flocking out of the workshops much in the same way that one would find at any British factory during the dinner hour. They lounged about the doors with their backs to the wall smoking in little groups, and watching us with idle curiosity.

Next we saw the room where the prisoners receive their visitors. There was one man on guard on the door, but there was none of the horrible netting and cubicles that I have seen in England. If a prisoner wishes to see his relatives he can do so privately, the guard being stationed outside of the door.

Prisoners are allowed to see their relatives twice a week and for a period not exceeding half-an-hour each visit.

This concluded our inspection, and returning to the Commandant's room we said farewell.

I am not able to verify as to whether the institution we visited is typical of the Russian system, but we were assured that such was the case.

It was a remarkably interesting and educative experience, and left one with the feeling that there is an earnest desire on the part of all concerned with the administration to strive for the elevation of those unfortunates, who for its own protection the Russian Community have been reluctantly compelled to deprive of their liberty.

The World of Labour

	PAGE
RUSSIA: Trade Union Resolution of C.P. Congress	186
INDIA: All-India Trade Union Congress'	187

RUSSIA

Trade Union Resolution of Communist Party Congress

DEALING with the tasks of the Russian trade unions in his speech at the Fourteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in December, 1925, Tomsky pointed to the successful growth of the trade unions and their activities on the basis of the decisions of the Eleventh Congress presided over by Lenin. The number of trade unionists increased from 5,823,000 in April, 1924, to 6,950,000 in April, 1925, and to 7,732,000 on October 1, 1925. The biggest increases are shown by the trade unions of agricultural workers (from 298,000 to 704,000 in the period mentioned above) and building workers (from 212,000 to 555,000).

In connection with the international work of the Russian unions, Tomsky commented on the successful developments under the watchword of unity of the international trade union movement. The Congress approved the international policy of the Russian trade unions in the following resolution:—

The economic growth of the Soviet Union has afforded its trade unions the possibility of taking up the task of establishing fraternal relations with the workers of other countries, and has doubtless been decisive in influencing the attitude of these workers towards the workers and trade unions of the Soviet Union. This has again given the trade unions of the Soviet Union the possibility of raising to its full extent the question of the establishment of international trade union unity by means of the formation of a united proletarian trade union international.

The enthusiastic echo awakened by the appeal of the Russian trade unions to international unity, among the workers of different countries, especially among the workers of England, and among the members of the numerous workers' delegations visiting Soviet Russia, despite all differences of political conviction and party, demonstrates the imperative necessity and supreme importance of the establishment of trade union unity among the whole international proletariat.

The Party Conference approves this line of international work on the part of the Central Council of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union, as also the energetic work being done by this body for the rallying of all adherents of unity, and expresses the conviction that the fraternal fighting alliance established between the trade unions of England and of the Soviet Union, based upon the common struggle for the unity of the international trade union movement, in the form of the Anglo-Russian Committee, as also the warmest sympathy shown by the workers and trade unions of other countries for this committee, are the first practical steps towards the establishment of international unity, and the pledge of its success.

INDIA

All-India Trade Union Congress

THE sixth annual session of the All-India Trade Union Congress was held in Madras on January 9-10. Over a hundred delegates were present, representing nearly seventy trade unions. In the absence of the Rev. C. F. Andrews, the Congress was presided over by Mr. V. V. Giri, LL.B., the head of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway Union. In his address he reviewed the history of the chief trade unions in India and uttered a warning against strike action. He remarked :—

It must be remembered that to organise a strike unlimited resources in money and sincere workers to lead are absolutely necessary. The capitalist can generally wait for a comparatively longer time than the labourer and break a strike.

Mr. Giri commented on the importance of organising agricultural labour and commended the efforts made by some “enlightened young men” to form educational associations among the ryots. He pointed out :—

These organisations are not against the landed interests of the landlords in any form, and this should be made abundantly clear. If they are properly organised, they will form a happy medium in bringing about peace and harmony to both the landlord and tenant.

These two extracts are significant of the tone of the Congress. Even the capitalist newspaper, the *Bombay Chronicle*, in a leading article on the Congress, pointed out the need for more energetic work on the part of leaders of Indian Labour in organising trade unions.

Following in the path of the representatives of Indian capitalism, the Congress passed a resolution demanding immediate granting of Dominion Status for India within the British Empire. A resolution was passed for special representation of labour on Legislative Councils, but not apparently for universal suffrage or even the extension of the franchise.

Other resolutions called for (1) establishment of the eight-hour day, (2) unemployment and health insurance, (3) maternity benefits, (4) legal abolition of the system of fining workers, (5) establishment of labour exchanges, (6) establishment by law of arbitration and conciliation boards.

A special resolution dealt with the treatment of Indians in South Africa, including an appeal to the International Labour Movement to assist in preventing the Union Government from depriving Indians in Natal of their rights.

Messages of greeting were read from the British Trades Union Congress, the British Minority Movement, the Central Council of the Russian Trade Unions and from the R.I.L.O., but the only British labour representatives present were Major Graham Pole and Councillor Mellan of Glasgow, in an unofficial capacity.

BOOK REVIEWS

BETWEEN THE MILL-STONES

The New Spirit in the European Theatre : 1914-1924. By Huntly Carter.
(Ernest Benn, 25s.)

MR. HUNTLY CARTER is a phenomenon ; that is to say, when one takes the broad view of him (*Sunday Worker*, *LABOUR MONTHLY* and all), one cannot explain him as "typical" or "symptomatic." A product of his class at every facet, he is yet in the lump an eccentric from it. He appears, in his rôle as Labour publicist, to have achieved by instinct what one should not venture to achieve unless by scientific analysis ; and when we relate the words "Labour" and "scientific" to one another, we mean Marxism and all the discipline that this implies.

To achieve by instinct in the class-struggle is sometimes—for a certain period—better than no achievement at all ; but it carries with it risks of every kind of misjudgment, false hope, disappointment and surprise. And here Mr. Carter is typical of that wide social stratum in which he moves. The book under review is typical. Subject-matter, method and author are bound inextricably together. All three spring from and illuminate, like a will o' the wisp, certain squashy irritated tendencies observable to-day on one level of our Capitalist social structure. The book is an implicit—and this review an explicit—essay on the Small Bourgeoisie of the era of Wars and Revolutions.

We live under Finance Capitalism ; and the Small Bourgeoisie (professional, artistic, minor commercial sections, &c.) reacts in its peculiar way to the ordeal. In an analysis of its reactions we may turn with interest to the Theatre (one of the vehicles of Capitalist propaganda), since the Theatre is probably more sensitive to emotional moods of the small bourgeoisie than to those of any other group. Here we can observe its mind at work, in the form and content of numerous dramas, in production, in "public interest," in criticism. Hence this book. As the struggle between the two main classes intensifies, the Middle Class (that is, the loose material between the mill-stones) drags forward more fiercely than ever all its old sweet Liberal idealisms. True, there is an unpleasant crushing sensation ; but one can still believe there is the "spirit of the nation" demanding to express itself adequately in such crises as wars and strikes.

When these idealists, draping themselves conjugally about such concepts as Peace, Rights of Small Peoples, or the Theatre, find nothing but ashes, they are deeply outraged. "Why," they ask, "is our spouse no longer pliable and responsive?" There can only be one answer—she has fallen into prostitution ; some evil genius controls her. Armament-combines, Secret Diplomacy, the Theatre Trusts. Many cries, the same emotion behind all of them. Mr. Carter feels it badly. Being remote (except by that occasional instinct of his) from the scientific theory of the Class-war, he seems to picture a popular spirit, one and indivisible, behind all shifting tides, pleading for full expression of its dignified moods ; if only the Trusts did not bar the way, and if only the Government would be less blind and invertebrate (Chaps. 2, 13, &c.).

The revenge of the small bourgeoisie on the Trusts is to show up minutely their liaisons (this is J. T. W. Newbold's position, whether he knows it or

not) ; it is mere spite and usually helps to obscure the more profound implications of the struggle between the Classes. Its revenge on the "State," for not mirroring the "public spirit" in the Theatre, is to say in effect, "If you can't do it, we shall do it ourselves."

So Mr. Carter drives forward his treatise—ample, exhaustive and finely illustrated—through its detailed chapters on the German theatre, the revolutionary influences on the stage, the "Machine" drama, &c. There is much meat here, but it still awaits the Marxian digestion. Wars, famines, and revolutions seem to pass over without cause (stage thunderstorms, as it were) ; and we are made to feel that the Theatre alone matters. True, it is affected by these critical events ; but that both it and they are together the results of profound economic tendencies appears nowhere to be clearly surmised. Doubts arise on every page, not as to Mr. Carter's precision, but as to his analytic judgments. One might suggest, for example, that the Trust theatre of this country reflected the war and post-war moods of the small bourgeoisie much better than Mr. Carter allows ; that Toller's work expresses, not pacifism, but the emotional conflicts of the intellectual ; and that a "dying Austria" could not have a truly "living theatre" (p. 178). Thus with Austria we come to the period of peace and stabilisation ; and to all the recent developments in the drama.

"We'll do it ourselves," says the small bourgeois. He comes into the post-war "reconstruction" period with the crushing sensation of the Class-war tightening on his ribs. He dislikes Trusts and Strikes. He is compelled to struggle against the dissolution of his class. Enlarge his personality he must ; and in the stage he finds an agreeable field of activity. The war taught him how pleasant is play-acting (Chap. 11) ; it is an escape from reality. Play-acting demands an audience—not too critical a one—and it may help to raise and humanise the disconcerting Lower Orders. Hence Popular Theatres, Leagues of Art Service, hordes of amateur theatrical groups, stage societies, &c. The small bourgeoisie of the Labour Party, peculiarly sensitive to the tightening of the Class-war, responds like the rest of its Class. It turns its attention to Dramatic Guilds and Choral Unions, finding in them an inoffensive field of "Socialist" activity. There is no harm. Probably such of these local Labour theatres as survive the overthrow of Capitalism can be utilised immediately by the proletariat, as in Russia (p. 223).

And at this point Mr. Carter, turning suddenly at a tangent, leads out his dark horse—the Proletariat. We applaud. He lays his money on the Proletariat. Excellent—that instinct of his, sharpened in Russia, is indubitably correct. He mounts and takes the reins—and has a few preliminary canthers through the *LABOUR MONTHLY* and the *Sunday Worker*. We observe him narrowly. We say, "You have certainly shown us the animal's paces and wakened a crowd of us to his potentialities ; but can you guide him through the course ? That, Sir, demands, not instinct, but science." Drop the metaphor. What are the "risks" we referred to in the first lines of this review ? They are precisely those that always await an intellectual who places himself in the vanguard of the Proletariat—by instinct alone. True, it is merely a question of the revitalisation of the Theatre—a small matter ; but the principle remains the same. Here is the point ; pre-revolutionary Britain is not the Russian

Workers' Republic. Does Mr. Carter understand that between one condition and the other lies the struggle for Power? If so, he has not plainly indicated it. Can the workers achieve real Class drama during the period of pre-revolutionary conflict? That depends on a number of factors. And if these factors be unfavourable, may not Mr. Carter be as disappointed with the Proletariat as he is with the Government and with his own Class? And will he not then, like "Leftists" in other fields, complain of the Proletariat that it will not be led direct towards its historic mission?

It can all be summed up in one sharp query.

Does Mr. Carter comprehend that between the Now and the Future lies the Struggle for Power?

F. & I. C.

A REVOLUTIONARY EPIC

Ten Days that Shook the World. By John Reed. 344 pages, art paper cover, 2s. 6d. (2s. 9½d. post free). (The Communist Bookshop, 16 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C. 2.)

JOHAN REED'S descriptive sketch of the opening scenes of the Soviet revolution is history portrayed with cinematographic vividness. After reading a few pages one seems to be whirled into the vortex of the revolution itself. So graphic is the writing that one does not read from page to page; one lives and moves from event to event.

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Kerensky and his Right Wing Socialist friends talked very gaily about Nationalisation. They were almost as blithe on this point as some of our I.L.P. friends. And like the I.L.P. they had not worked out the need for the struggle for power. Hence, when Kerensky was given office he could only accomplish, like his imitator MacDonald, a policy of capitalist continuity.

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Wm. P.

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THE
LABOUR
MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8

April, 1926

Number 4

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - -	- Page 195
<i>THE I.L.P. AND THE UNITED FRONT</i>		
The Importance of May Day	- - -	„ 208
<i>By A. A. PURCELL, M.P.</i>		
Great Britain, the Continent and Russia	-	„ 212
<i>By P. J. SCHMIDT</i>		
Trotsky and his English Critics	- - -	„ 223
<i>By R. PALME DUTT</i>		
The Attack on the Building Trade	- -	„ 242
<i>By R. COPPOCK</i>		
The World of Labour	- - - -	„ 249
<i>Finland—Japan—South Africa</i>		
Book Reviews	- - - -	„ 253
<i>The Golden Burden of Wall Street</i>		<i>H. P.</i>

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NOTES of the MONTH

*The I.L.P. and the Class Struggle—The I.L.P. and Unity—
What is I.L.P. Policy?—A Growing Division—The Failure
of Centristism—“New” Tendencies—And Old Habits
—Construction and Destruction—What is
“Constructive”?—Some Misconceptions—
Unification or United Front—
“Changing” Communism—Civil
War and Mass Struggle—
The Real Issue.*

THE Independent Labour Party Conference is meeting on the eve of heavy working-class struggles. The Coal Report is a declaration of war; and, taken in conjunction with the Engineering Employers' attack and the Government preparations, raises such clear signs of approaching widespread conflict that no working-class organisation can afford to ignore them. The *New Leader* has said that the Coal Report “means war.” What has the Independent Labour Party to offer to meet this situation? This is the question which the working class will have to ask of the Conference. A situation of this character makes more than ever inappropriate lengthy and elaborate “policy reports” for the ideal reconstruction of society. The crucial questions to be decided by the workers are the questions of working-class action and the united working-class front. By its answer to these questions the character of the Conference will be judged.

RECENTLY the Independent Labour Party has brought forward a proposal for a Unity Conference between the Second and Third Internationals. It is not in fact likely that the resolution in which they are making this proposal will be adopted by the Second International; the Labour Party has already declared uncompromising opposition, and the Labour Party is certainly not on the right of the Continental Social Democratic Parties. In that case nothing more will come of the resolution, unless the Independent Labour Party is prepared

to go a step further and take independent action—either alone or with such other parties or groups of parties as are prepared to act with it—in coming closer to the Third International with a view to realising that “working-class solidarity against capitalist and imperialist reaction” which is its declared objective in the resolution. But the proposal is already an indication of the present tendencies and processes within the Independent Labour Party; and in the resolution in which it is made, as well as in the statements accompanying it, the present leaders of the Independent Labour Party endeavour to state their position in relation to the Revolution. As the present leaders of the Independent Labour Party are endeavouring to provide an alternative policy for the Labour Movement to that of MacDonald, Henderson and the Right Wing, this statement (in conjunction with the proposals presented to the Easter Conference of their Party) is worth examination.

THE Independent Labour Party occupies to-day an extraordinary position. In name and in numbers it is the overwhelming dominant party of the leading sections of the Labour Movement. Over 70 per cent. of the Labour Members of Parliament belong to its ranks. It numbers the majority of the Parliamentary Executive, of the Labour Party Executive, of past and future Labour Ministers, and a good proportion of Trade Union officials. If ever a party was dominant and responsible in a Labour Movement it is the Independent Labour Party in the British Movement. If the Independent Labour Party had any policy, or if its members represented that policy, that policy could become the official policy of the Movement to-morrow. Yet what do we find? The Independent Labour Party is publicly attacking and criticising the official policy of the Labour Movement. The leaders of the Labour Party on their side—most of them members of the Independent Labour Party—are venomously attacking the Independent Labour Party. The leading responsible party in the Movement is endeavouring to disclaim responsibility for the policy which its own members are carrying out. This is a very significant stage to have reached. The phenomena here revealed are the

phenomena of a party in dissolution. They recall in many respects the parallel picture of the Liberal Party in dissolution. The parallel is indeed worth pursuing. The Liberal Party, which sought to deny the class struggle, is to-day in dissolution before its advance. The Independent Labour Party, which sought to perform the same task on a plane of greater concession to class organisation, is to-day at the beginning of the same process. Liberalism can appear in many garbs, including a "socialist" garb; but its essence is the same, the denial of the class struggle; and its fate is the same.

THE present process in the Independent Labour Party is a reflection of the process in the whole Labour Movement. So long as the workers, while moving in disillusionment from the Liberal Party, were content to accept the liberal leadership of the Independent Labour Party, that body could maintain in blissful peace its contradictory position: on the one hand, basing itself in practice on the working class and drawing its political strength from them; while at the same time denying in theory all class politics, and proclaiming Socialism, not as a brutal physical struggle of the dispossessed class against the possessing class for the material ownership of the means of production, but as a beautiful idealist's dream, existing in heaven above the classes and to be realised by a religious process of conversion. The maintaining of these two completely contradictory characters in equilibrium was performed by the creation of a mystic supra-rational "Spirit of the I.L.P.," "No Dogma," "Tolerance," "Fellowship," &c., under cover of which was ruled out any serious consideration of facts, logic, argument, reason, history and experience. But this position could not continue indefinitely. Facts inevitably break in on the elysium of harmony. On the one hand, the class struggle deepens: capitalism develops to war, increasing violence and driving down of the standard of the workers; the workers are forced forward by the struggle for existence to class consciousness and the necessity for overthrowing capitalist power. On the other hand, the I.L.P. leaders, raised up by the same process to governmental position,

are compelled to reveal the emptiness of their phrases and the impossibility of class neutrality, and to become in fact the servants of the capitalists. Division grows between the working class and MacDonald. The once conservative Trade Unions move to the left; the I.L.P. to the right. And the few individuals still clinging to the old I.L.P. tradition raise a lament as they find themselves stranded, complain of rebellion on one side and betrayal on the other, and call for the old halcyon days of Unity and Pure Socialism, without understanding the process that has taken place.

“IF you try to run a Socialist Party,” complained the chairman of the I.L.P., Clifford Allen, in an article on “Straight-forward Socialism,” in February, 1925, when the sequel of the Labour Government had begun to show itself, “if you try to run a Socialist Party or a Socialist paper, and happen to select Socialism as your programme, you are wiped off the map. The only thing that seems to matter is whether you call yourself a ‘Left Winger’ or, on the other hand, whether you face up to what are described as ‘political realities.’” Here is contained the eternal complaint of the unhappy Centrist when his day is past and the facts have exposed him: when the advance of the class struggle has left him stranded, driving all the leaders who are faced with action to right or to left, to answer yes or no, to capitalism or to the working class. Certainly, it is excellent to endeavour to raise again the banner of Socialism after the muddied experience of MacDonald’s Government. But first it is worth while to be clear what Socialism is, since MacDonald also has played with the banner of Socialism; and it is worth while to be clear why the muddied experience of MacDonald’s Government happened, and why MacDonald’s Socialism led to it; since like beginnings again may only lead to like conclusions. For after all MacDonald is not a simple renegade or runaway of the Barnes or Shackleton type; he is an I.L.P. leader, officially approved by the I.L.P. over his conduct of his government. MacDonald is in fact the practical expression of I.L.P. policy when confronted with realities. It is, therefore, worth while to be clear that those

who throw stones at him, in the name of primitive I.L.P. policy, are not themselves repetitions of MacDonaldism at an earlier stage of development, or not yet confronted with the necessity of facing realities.

IT is from this point of view that the new tendencies in the Independent Labour Party need to be estimated: whether they do in fact represent something new; whether they do show signs of breaking away from the old illusions of idealist socialism; or whether they are in reality only a fresh blossoming from the old tree of utopian beginnings and opportunist endings. It is not enough to attack MacDonald; it is necessary also to understand him and what he represents. MacDonald's socialism is a grafting of the old pre-Marxist socialism, which begins with the propaganda of a beautiful ideal society of the future, and then, in the name of that future classless society, endeavours to come forward as a classless saviour and statesman into the midst of the dog-fight of the existing class struggle. Unfortunately in existing class society there is no action or politics that is not the action and politics of one class or the other: either the maintenance of capitalist rule and repression or the attack on capitalist rule and repression (since it is impossible to live in a negative); and in consequence MacDonald, since he has rejected the "narrow" class politics of the workers, and still aspires to the reins of government in order to further his ideal schemes, can only administer in practice on behalf of the dominant class, the capitalist class. So our idealist socialist finds himself building cruisers, bombing Asiatic villagers, &c. This is the principal lesson of the MacDonald Government. Socialism has no meaning save as the politics and struggle of the working class. Socialism, when it is preached as an ideal in general, apart from the class struggle, becomes only a duping and enslaving of the working class. Socialism as an ideal only has meaning when its whole propaganda and objective in the present capitalist epoch is concentrated on the destruction and overthrow of existing capitalist class power by the working class.

HAS the lesson been learned by the new spokesmen arising in the Independent Labour Party? It is to be feared this is still doubtful. When we turn to the host of documents that have been poured out for the Easter Conference, we feel that we are on familiar ground. "Industry as a Public Service." "The reorganisation of society on the basis of both political and industrial democracy." "Revolution by Reason." "There should be a Minister of Industry answerable to Parliament." "A re-constituted mandate system." Really these "new" policies seem to contain a considerable amount of very old junk. The utopia-spinners are at their old hobby. The fashionable catchword of the moment may vary. One day it is "Industrial Democracy." Next day it is "Credit Control" and the "Raising of Purchasing Power" and "Ironing-out the Trade Cycle." But always the fundamental characteristic is the same. It is the conception that a "scheme" can solve capitalism; that, given a little organisation and goodwill and forethought, the anarchies and inequalities of capitalism can be smoothed over; that capitalism can be rationalised; that the tiger can cease to be a tiger and become a milch-cow. And the fashionable chatter and excitement of the moment always concerns the exact characteristics of the scheme of the moment—"Ought the consumers' representatives to have more than a consultative voice?" "Should family allowances be included in the living wage?"—and never the one plain brutal question which underlies all possibilities of reorganisation, namely, the material conquest of the means of production from a class which holds them by an elaborate apparatus ultimately based on armed force. Face That or Face Nothing—this is the one plain issue which confronts all who would be socialists. The result of not facing it is and can only be MacDonaldism in practice. The spinning of utopias is not an alternative to MacDonaldism; it is the counterpart of MacDonaldism: as the votes at the I.L.P. Conferences in official approval of MacDonald's policy clearly show. The only alternative to MacDonaldism is, not the spinning of schemes of reorganisation within capitalism, but the complete break with capitalism and complete concentration on the existing actual working-class struggle progressively up to the conquest of working-class power and dictatorship.

Whoever is not ready to face this is not in reality an opponent of MacDonald.

IT is in the light of this that the question of "Constructive" and "Destructive" policies, which so much exercises the Independent Labour Party, can alone be considered. The spokesmen of the I.L.P. often endeavour to state their difference from the revolutionaries by claiming that they stand for a constructive policy, whereas the revolutionaries stand for a destructive policy. A revolutionary party, declares Brailsford, in explaining the "central obstacle" to unity, which believes in the inevitability of civil war as the outcome of the class struggle, "will work with destruction rather than construction as its immediate objective." This opposition is extremely instructive. It is true that the revolutionaries do work for the destruction—of capitalism and capitalist class power: and, what is more, declare that the destruction of capitalist class power and the transference of power to the working class is the necessary preliminary for any socialist reconstruction. It is true also that the I.L.P. does completely neglect in practice this destructive task, and builds its castles in the air without any serious reference to the class enemy, his power and his methods. In this sense the revolutionaries are destructive—of capitalism; and the I.L.P. is not destructive—of capitalism. So far as this goes, Brailsford may enjoy the credit of his claim. But the sequel from this, when it comes to the sense of "constructive," is even more important.

FOR it is not true that the revolutionaries are not engaged in "constructive" tasks and the I.L.P. is. On the contrary, it is only necessary to look back over the history of the past few years to see the extent to which the constructive slogans of the Labour Movement—"Back to the Unions," "The United Front," "100 per cent. Trade Unionism," "The Workers' Alliance," &c.—have come directly from the revolutionaries in the first place, and have only at a later stage been slowly taken up by the reformists. But it is an entirely different sense of "constructive" that the I.L.P. means. When the revolutionary speaks of "constructive" he means the constructive

tasks of the working class, the constructive tasks of building up the forces of the workers for the overthrow of capitalist power and the organisation of the workers' society. But when the I.L.P. speak of "constructive" they mean the construction of existing society, that is, of capitalist society. This was the sense in which all the Labour leaders advocated "Producing More" as the necessary "constructive" task after the war in opposition to the "destructive" revolutionary policy. This kind of "constructive" policy leads only to destruction for the working class, to restoration for capitalism and misery for the workers, to renewed imperialist rivalry and world war. It is therefore in reality destructive in the highest sense. Thus the sham distinction which the I.L.P. sets up between "constructive" and "destructive" contains within itself in reality the whole difference between the service of capitalism and the service of the working class.

THIS consideration should make it easier to clear out of the way some of the alleged "obstacles" to "working-class solidarity" which the I.L.P. claims to find in the policy of the revolutionaries, although they exist only through the misunderstanding of revolutionary policy by the I.L.P. Brailsford writes:—

The central obstacle, as we see it, is the belief which this Communist International proclaimed, when it was founded, that civil war is the inevitable outcome of the class struggle. A party which holds that belief must base all its strategy upon it. It will take no pains to avoid the predestined conflict with arms; it will work with destruction rather than construction as its immediate objective. For our part we refuse to say "inevitable"; we should see in civil war the ruin of our hopes; if it must come, we would take care that it can come by the revolt of a lawless Fascist minority against a Socialist Majority Government. If this difference of opinion is unbridgeable, it is useless to talk of "a united front."

In the same way Brockway writes:—

Participation in the political and industrial sides of the Labour Movement has not been actuated by a sincere belief that through these means a real development can take place towards laying the foundations of the new Socialist Society, but because they offered an opportunity to prepare the psychology of the working class for armed revolution.

They believe, however, that they see signs of a change taking place. Brailsford goes on:—

We have good reasons for believing that of late many Communists have come to think—as Marx and Engels thought—that in democratic countries civil war is not the inevitable and necessary method. The French Party has just issued a pamphlet to this effect. If this obstacle can be removed, the ugly doctrine of the Dictatorship must go with it, and unity becomes possible.

The summary of the resolution published declares:—

British Communists have recently indicated that their conception of “armed revolution” is not a minority armed rising, but action by a Socialist Government to suppress any resistance by the possessing classes.

Similarly Brockway writes:—

A considerable body of Communists are more and more putting in the background, in countries with “democratic” constitutions, the insistence upon an armed revolution and the necessity to prepare the workers for it, and are concentrating upon an immediate policy to attack Capitalism and Imperialism by political and industrial means.

ON these statements it is necessary to make some comment. Any proposal of working-class unity is welcome; and above all any proposal for immediate or united action is welcome, whatever the differences of wider theory and outlook or even misconceptions there may exist. The Communist International, which originally brought forward the proposal of the United Front (and the United Front, or unity in action on immediate issues, is the only practical form of realising working-class unity at the present stage, while fundamental theoretical and political divergences still exist), has repeatedly declared that it is ready to join hands with its bitterest enemies among the labour leaders, or for the matter of that with the devil himself, provided that will assist in bringing closer together the working masses, at whose head the various leaders stand, in the unity of the actual struggle against capitalism. And this is not for any machiavellian reason, but for the simple certainty that the experience of the struggle will inevitably convince the working class of the correctness of the Communist policy. This incidentally is the reason why the reactionary leaders are opposed to unity. But it is not

desirable that the approach to unity should be based on illusions which can only make that approach sterile and valueless. The Independent Labour Party wishes to make any approach to unity conditional on the Communist International ceasing to be Communist (much as if the Communist International were to insist as a necessary first condition of any united action that the Independent Labour Party must accept Leninism—"if this difference of opinion is unbridgeable, it is useless to talk of a 'united front'"). Such an approach suggests a failure yet to consider the elementary conditions of the problem of unity. Unity is not a problem of reconciling and smoothing out irreconcilable differences of outlook in some meaningless common formula; unity is a problem of finding some common ground of immediate action, in spite of admitted and recognised fundamental theoretical differences on all ultimate questions. The theoretical misconceptions of the I.L.P. with regard to Communist policy would be of secondary importance in comparison with the practical issue of immediate united action; but if these theoretical misconceptions are actually made an obstacle to unity, then it is necessary to clear them out of the way.

IN the first place the suggestion that "some Communists," "British Communists," &c., hold certain views which are not Communist, or that the Communist International is "changing" its views and so forth, is a false and foolish method of approach that can lead nowhere, and that only reveals a complete misunderstanding of Communism. What has led these observers astray is the fact that Communism, or Marxism, being scientific, bases itself on the objective situation, and invariably adapts itself to every change in the objective situation—but always methodically, and with the single general aim, in the present epoch, of the complete capture of power by the working class, the complete crushing out of capitalist class power and the building up of the workers' communist social order. The concentration on the immediate seizure of power in 1917-1920 was not due to "revolutionary psychology" as the I.L.P. resolution suggests (it is only the I.L.P. that draws its policy out of its own psychology), but to the conditions of complete

capitalist break up, which made the moment ripe for the seizure of power in Europe had the proletarian parties been prepared. The Social Democrats chose instead to fight the revolution and concentrate all their efforts on patching up the crazy capitalist system in its rotting post-war shape. Owing to their inherited strength from pre-war conditions they were able to paralyse the action of the proletariat. In consequence, in the present succeeding period of capitalist "stabilisation," the Communist International necessarily concentrates its effort on the task of winning the majority of the working masses for the class struggle in order to be prepared for the inevitable next stage of capitalist break up, when the revolutionary struggle for power will be resumed with improved prospects of success: and the expression of this task of the present period is the United Front. For the fools who can only understand these phenomena in nursery interpretations of "extreme" and "moderate" policies, it may be profitable to consider that the revolutionary Marxists not only vary their policy in relation to each particular period of time, but that at one and the same time the same Marxists vary their policy in relation to different countries at different stages of development, so that at one and the same time the International may be concentrating on the technical tasks of armed struggle in one country, and in some other primitive country declaring that the principle task is to form trade unions. This does not mean however that any country (as the reformists of each country always fondly imagine of their own country, devoutly believing that God has marked their own country as "a special case") is exempt from the general laws of developing class struggle and the inevitable struggle for power, any more than the concentrating at a given moment on some elementary forms of the united front means a "change of mind" on the future task of the armed struggle.

MORE important, however, than these questions of the A B C of Marxist method is the complete confusion which is revealed in these quotations as to the central point at issue—the relationship of Civil War and Mass Struggle. Civil War is isolated by these writers as a kind of

independent weapon favoured by revolutionaries. "Drop this belief in civil war," they declare, "and we are with you." They have actually twisted themselves into a position in which they declare that they are ready to "accept" the class struggle, but they "reject" civil war. It is, of course, impossible to face the one without facing the other. Once you are in a fight, the choice of weapons depends on circumstances and your adversary. Civil War is simply the final most extreme form of the Class Struggle. Civil War is not a question of choice, as Mr. Brailsford might choose to have marmalade or jam for breakfast. In the words of the First Manifesto of the Communist International "Civil War is *forced upon* the labouring masses by their arch-enemies." The scientific certainty of civil war is based upon the proved certainty that the ruling class does use every weapon on its own behalf. (Whether the point of civil war is reached before or after a parliamentary majority is a secondary formal issue, the decision of which will not rest with the working class.) But this civil war is only the culminating outcome of a whole process of class struggle, and not the subjective choice of certain revolutionaries. The revolutionaries strive for working-class organisation and advance to power, including the facing of the issue of civil war. Civil War is not the antithesis of the Mass Movement, but its culmination.

BUT this union of the organised mass movement of the workers with the revolutionary struggle up to the point of civil war—which union is the very essence of Marxism—leaves the I.L.P. representatives completely helpless and uncomprehending. They have from the outset so filled themselves up with the notion of civil war as a kind of nightmare ambition of certain "impatient" revolutionaries, that when they discover that these same revolutionaries are working away patiently and laboriously at the building up of the workers' mass movement, including the most petty tasks of it and the fight for the most petty demands, they are in a maze and cannot for the life of them reconcile one with the other, simply because they started from a completely wrong understanding. They can only conclude that these revolutionaries are growing "sensible," and they declare:

“ Now swear definitely that you completely renounce this notion of civil war and we can co-operate with you.” Not at all. Co-operation by all means on immediate tasks; at the present stage there is still room for those who “ reject ” civil war to be of use in the constructive tasks of the working-class movement, provided they fight honestly for the immediate demands they can accept. But the issue of civil war will have to be faced, and by them also, if they do not wish to separate presently from the working class.

AND this, finally, is the most important point for the present moment. It is one thing to cherish still the belief that the working class may win without civil war. Such an outlook will inevitably have a demoralising effect even on current work (faith in bourgeois institutions and even in the “ good will ” of the bourgeoisie—a faith which every time costs dear to the workers). Nevertheless it is possible to help forward in immediate tasks of the working-class movement on which all are agreed despite such an outlook. But to make the future issue of civil war an excuse for not co-operating in the present urgent tasks of the working-class movement is indefensible. What is to prevent co-operation on trade union unity, the workers’ alliance, support to colonial workers, the fight against war and fascism and against government repression and reactionary legislation? Certainly to expect theoretical unity and an amalgamation of social democracy and communism, so long as social democracy stands for coalition with capitalism, is a tall order. But then on the grounds of this lofty ideal of unity to refuse the smallest actual step for unity on the most elementary current issues—this is to reverse the whole policy and suggests no desire for unity at all. If the demand for working-class unity is sincere, then that demand must find expression in the United Working Class Front on actual issues. This is the acid test for the Independent Labour Party.

R. P. D.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAY DAY

By A. A. PURCELL, M.P.

EVERY year, when the First of May comes round, our movement reacts to it in different ways. There is a general feeling that May Day ought to be celebrated by the Labour movement, and indeed by the working class, as a whole. But in fact, as everybody knows perfectly well, May Day in Britain, is rather a pathetic effort. Only a minute percentage of the organised workers, let alone the masses, cease work on May Day to celebrate the coming emancipation of Labour and to demonstrate their solidarity with their comrades in all lands.

True, we do hold May Day demonstrations, but we evade our responsibilities by shifting these demonstrations to the first Saturday or the first Sunday in May. I know that in many of our great industrial centres this departure from the First of May is difficult to avoid : none the less it is a departure which we should not willingly accept—since it is a departure from the whole original purpose of May Day—and one which we should seek to rectify as soon as we possibly can.

Let us, then, frankly face the fact that we do not celebrate May Day as we should, that we do not celebrate it as do our comrades in many other countries. It is not that our difficulties are greater than theirs. On the contrary : it is the general practice in most countries for May Day demonstrations to be attacked by all the forces of governmental repression, ranging from simple prohibition to the bludgeoning and shooting down of the demonstrators by police, troops, Fascisti and White Guards. Last year, for instance in Fascist Italy, Spain and Hungary, the celebration of May Day was absolutely forbidden. Yet in spite of all, our comrades on the continent and throughout the world, show their courage and *do* demonstrate on May Day ; and it is a common-place to read, in our newspapers, the press telegrams telling us of the savage attacks on, and in many cases the forcible breaking up of, May Day demonstrations abroad.

Why is it, therefore, that we, British Trade Unionists and workers, do not make a better thing of May Day? We have only to look at the Labour Press each year *after* May Day, to find the opinion variously expressed that there is a great deal lacking in our celebration of May Day, and that something ought to be done about it. But there the matter rests until the next May Day is upon us, and it is too late to do anything except, as previously, complain after the event. Here, I fancy, we come to the root of the question. Unless we have fully considered the question, and made all our preparations, well in advance, then we shall obviously not make a success of May Day. For this reason I welcome the present opportunity to examine briefly the importance of the May Day Celebration that will soon be upon us.

The younger generation in our movement naturally does not remember the early struggles associated with May Day, and to many of the old hands, time has dimmed the memory of these struggles: we find accordingly a general tendency to lose sight of the original purpose of May Day.

The institution of May Day goes back nearly forty years, to the foundation of the Second International in 1889. In that year the Socialist Parties, which had grown up in the various countries after the collapse of the First International (following the bloody suppression of the Paris Commune in '71), met together in Congress at Paris. They re-formed the International but they did something else. They resolved that each year on an appointed day the workers should strike work and should come out on the streets in great demonstrations, not to celebrate past glories, but as a token of their future emancipation. The day appointed was the traditional Labour Day—the First of May.

From the first, May Day has been, not in any sense merely a holiday, but a day of struggle. It is a day when the working class, while still in the chains of capitalism, looks forward to the time, growing ever nearer, when it shall have struck off those chains for ever: a day when the working class pledges itself to carry on the fight unremittingly until it has won its own freedom, which is at the same time the freedom of the whole of humanity.

In 1889 the institution of May Day was closely linked with the struggle for the shortening of the working day—for the

eight-hour day. That struggle has remained, and should remain in the forefront of our May Day demonstrations. At the present moment, with the eight-hour day vanished under the employers' attack in many countries, there is more need than ever to keep this question well to the fore. Let us not forget the sixty-year-old resolution of the First International :—

“The limitation of the working-day is a preliminary condition without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive.”

Here I think it is necessary to say that we cannot be content with a mere legal recognition of the forty-eight-hour week or the eight-hour day. In the first place because legal recognition provides no more security in the case of working hours than it has done in the case of the Factory Acts; that is to say, legal recognition is as strong as the strength of the workers makes it. In the second place because simply to talk of the eight-hour day or the forty-eight-hour week *as such*, is puerile. What we are aiming at is such a reduction of the hours of labour as will enable everyone ready and willing to work to be employed—a reduction that will absorb the unemployed.

I can recall the time, when, in 1893, I took part in the propagandist activity of a body called the International Legal Eight-Hours League, one of whose leading figures was Marx's daughter Eleanor Marx-Aveling. In 1894, I remember, we sent a deputation to Gladstone, then prime minister, urging that the Government should support the introduction of the eight-hour day. The answer he returned was that the Government would adopt our proposal as soon as the people favoured it. Much water has flowed under the bridges since then—and yet we are still having to fight for a shorter working day.

Washington Conventions may establish the eight-hour day—on paper—and the International Labour Office holds conference after conference, but the workers gain no benefit. Indeed the standards to which the I.L.O. may secure the agreement of governments and employers become a very potent weapon against the workers—the *minimum* standard that they set up soon becomes a *maximum*. Against the impotence of the I.L.O.—an impotence arising not out of ill-will, but out of the very constitution of that

body—we must offset the international unity of the working class.

This brings us to the second main slogan of our May Day fight—the All-Inclusive Trade Union International called for by the Scarborough Congress. This is really the fundamental demand, for without it there can be no successful struggle for the shorter working day. Nor can there be any successful fight for our third slogan—the securing of a minimum standard of living which pays full regard to the permanent betterment of the workers, and which recognises that there can be no satisfactory minimum without a full measure of workers' control.

Our fourth slogan is the defence of Workers in Russia—where the eight-hour day, and the six-hour day in some industries, is secured by the law of the Workers' State, and where the labour standards are, considering all the circumstances, the highest in the world. To this we may add the defence of those countries, such as China, which are the victims of imperialist aggression.

And, to conclude, can we, dare we, on May Day forget the capitalist repression which has struck down thousands of our brothers in Italy, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Serbia, aye, and in Britain itself, "democratic" Britain? We must on May Day show our solidarity with these comrades, particularly the twelve in Wandsworth and the anthracite miners. Their imprisonment by the forces of capitalism is a menace to us all, and one against which on May Day, of all days, we must organise a mighty protest, and a straightforward demand for their immediate release.

GREAT BRITAIN, THE CONTINENT AND RUSSIA

By P. J. SCHMIDT

[We have pleasure in printing the following article from Mr. P. J. Schmidt, who is a leading figure in the Dutch Social Democratic and Trade Union Movement, the editor of "Eenheid" (Unity), Amsterdam, and chief of the Publications and Research Department of the Netherlands Federation of Trade Unions. This article shows that there is developing a strong left tendency in Social Democracy and Trade Unions on the Continent in response to the left lead of the British Trade Unions. The importance of this needs no exaggeration. The British working-class movement will send hearty greetings to the Left Wing in their struggle against reactionary leadership and policies in the Labour Movement.—Editor, LABOUR MONTHLY.]

THE Labour Movement of Great Britain has made enormous progress, socially and mentally. Since the war, it has strengthened its position politically and industrially. It has gained considerable influence in national affairs, and—which seems even more important—it has increased its *international* prestige to such an extent that it may at present claim to belong to the vanguard of the international socialist movement. The word "Socialism" now sounds familiar in the ears of a great part of the British public. And the British rank and file of to-day has become what we term "class-conscious."

This rapid and striking development of the British organised working class has taken many a Continental socialist and trade-unionist by surprise. Although they are "trained in the school of Karl Marx," they seem to find it extremely difficult to apply in this case the elementary principles of the Marxian method of analysis; a method which would have shown them a safe way through the tangle of facts and figures, decisions and resolutions, words and deeds blowing across the Channel to the Continent. By applying that method, they might even have discovered why

it is that the British movement takes to the "Left," and why it is that the main point of Labour's activity now chiefly rests with the formerly "conservative" trade-union movement. They have probably forgotten "how to do it"—for even now, after years of writing, explaining, studying and deliberating, some of our Continental friends insist upon saying the most blundering nonsense about the British Labour movement and its organisations. The "note comique" of this case appears in statements made by the same Continental friends, to the effect "that our British comrades know so little about Continental affairs." That may also be true to some extent. But here we can properly apply the old saying: he sees the mote in his brother's eye, but not the beam in his own!

During all these thrilling deliberations on the position, the outlook, the activity and the future of the British movement, the question was almost neglected: *What about ourselves?* Are there any facts in the development of the Continental movement that are worth while looking at, and that may perhaps, make it easier to understand the changes in England? Indeed, that question is of vital importance for all Continental socialists. *For, while the British movement on the whole went solidly and rapidly ahead in outlook and mentality, a part of the Continental movement went distinctly backwards.* Where the English are standing now, many a Continental socialist party stood before the war. And *vice versa*. And as so many socialists on the Continent (I mean, of course, prominent socialists) have forgotten, simply and entirely *forgotten* their past—how should they be able, how could they be *willing* to understand the British movement of to-day?

It is an impossible task to sketch, within the limited space of this article, the history of the Continental movement during the last twenty years. I will merely try to put the position in general as it was before the war and as it is to-day.

The Policy of Coalition

The socialist political parties on the Continent were established at the time of relatively slow development of the major industries. Only the first symptoms of the hyper-modern industrial growth (trusts, cartels, concerns) could be noticed on the European

Continent. At that time the workers felt more *directly* the tyranny of private undertakings. They were looking for a power that could protect their conditions of working life against the excrescences of private enterprise. They set their hopes on Parliament, where the laws were made, where the necessary social protection could be gained. Parliament seemed to them an all-dominating power. Universal suffrage and a strong independent workers' party in parliament—that was the preliminary practical purpose of the socialist political parties.

At about the same time the trade unions came up, organised and managed on a "modern" basis. Their task was positively limited to looking after wages and working conditions. Occasional co-operation with the Socialist parties did not prevent both organisations from safeguarding, entirely and carefully, their "independence." In fact, the trade unions strongly objected to be called "socialist" or "social-democratic" organisations.

That was before the war. And along these lines the movement went rather normally and slowly ahead.

But—it cannot be said too often—war and revolutions brought fundamental changes. The coming up of gigantic industrial concerns—also in countries which did not know of the feverish influence of "war-industry"—created something like a sensation, not only in the world of industry, but also in the minds and outlook of the workers. In countries, where this shattering development was not accompanied by political revolution, parliamentary institutions did not take much trouble to keep pace with the demands of the new time. Of course, under pressure of the threatening revolution, under pressure of the awakening spirit of revolt among the workers, many a parliament granted, *nolens volens*, concessions to the workers in the field of social legislation and political reform. Indeed, in 1918 and 1919 the workers could record more gains than in the preceding twenty-five years of parliamentary deliberations. But soon reaction came and, in the years that followed, the same good old parliaments were used by the employers and the employers' parties to nullify, bit by bit, the gains of 1918-19. And, at present, the workers on the European Continent have to fight all they can to maintain what is left of their eight-hour day.

Thirty, even ten, years ago Parliament appeared to be the Great Power which would be able to protect the workers against capitalist tyranny. The irony of modern political and industrial evolution has seen to it, however, that—while the workers' parties in Parliament take up much stronger positions than before the war—Parliament has now first of all to protect *itself* against the ever increasing domination of industrial powers, which have grown far beyond the parliamentary sphere of influence.

Of these striking facts, the majority of Continental socialist parties failed to draw the proper consequences. While slowly increasing their number of seats in Parliament, their policy has, since the war, practically been based on the possibilities of *coalitions*, of co-operation with the bourgeoisie. Now, one can hardly object to *incidental* co-operation with "left-wing" capitalist parties, if the interests of the workers demand it. Even those of us (including the writer) who do not expect the least value from that incidental co-operation with bourgeois-parties (either Catholic "workers" parties or liberal "intellectuals") cannot reject it for all times and all circumstances. But every sincere socialist should object very strongly to *this policy being made the leading and dominating issue of the workers' fight for Socialism*. And it seems that it has now gone so far that some Continental socialist parties are willing to stop action outside Parliament, to withdraw from the front troops in the class-struggle, for the sake of "safeguarding" their coalition policy, for the sake of mixed Government. The Continental parties, on the whole, have made a definite swing to the Right.¹

We, in Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, etc., do not possess a party like your I.L.P. which under young and enthusiastic leadership is one of the freshest and keenest parties of the Second International—a party which boldly states that

¹ Here, and on the other pages, we must exclude entirely *Austria* and to some extent also the socialist parties of the *Scandinavian* countries. The Austrian party under the inspiring leadership of Otto Bauer, forms a bright spot on the Continent, and their *Arbeiter Zeitung* is undoubtedly one of the best socialist *dailies* in the world.

While talking about "the Continent" we should always bear in mind that sometimes the difference between two "Continental" countries is very much greater than between one particular Continental country and England

it has set before itself "*the object of winning Socialism for this generation.*" We have not a **LABOUR MONTHLY** nor a *New Leader*. And even *Die Gesellschaft*, perhaps the best Continental Socialist magazine (Austria excluded again) would not think of printing on its cover what the *Socialist Review* did on the cover of its February issue :—

It will be said that to attempt without postponement or compromise this profound transformation, is to pursue a policy of revolution. In a sense it is. But if this is to be revolutionary, then the *Socialist Review* aspires to be the most revolutionary newspaper in the country.

"Without postponement or compromise?" "Re-volution?" But that is exactly what our "Marxists" said before the war! They have forgotten it. They do not believe in it any more. They are absorbed in parliamentary "work," *i.e.* grouping and re-grouping, considering and re-considering, for maintaining present coalitions or creating future alliances with "Left-wing" anti-socialist parties. Besides they have grown old and tired and wise, oh, very, very wise! The thundering noise of modern forces either makes them hesitate, or frightens them. They do not dare to listen to it. They prefer to close both eyes and both ears. Tell them, that you want action, agitation; talk to them on revolution, on ardent, united fighting; say that you want the above statement of the I.L.P. printed on the cover of their official monthly; point out the increasing power and concentration of the employers, together with the changed position of Europe in the world-market; refer to the problems of the Far East and the millions of workers, who are on the point of offering (or have already sold) their disastrously cheap labour to Western and American employers. And *if* they listen to you, they will say: "Oh, young man, we have heard all that before," or, what is worse: "Don't bother, it will last our time."

I know you have men in your British Labour Party, who enjoy talking on class-peace, co-operation, etc. But they form an ever decreasing minority, and they confine their propaganda to dinner-party speeches. They fail to exert the influence and to get the support necessary for forcing their personal taste as a policy on the British Labour Movement. And there—we sincerely congratulate you!

The Trade Unions

The Continental *trade union* movement, too, went through a period of growth, and changes in position and outlook. And, again, our Continental party-leaders were taken by surprise; again they failed to apply that Marxian method which they had been applying so successfully before the war.

It is an undeniable fact that, to-day, political influences play a much more prominent part in the modern industrial development than thirty or forty years ago, when the Socialist parties on the Continent were established. It is also an undeniable fact that in politics of to-day modern industrial forces play even a dominating part. If you cannot or will not see that, you can, of course, realise neither the thorough and principal changes in the position of the trade union movement.

Modern times have practically effaced the traditional frontiers between "purely" industrial and "purely" political matters. The trade union claims for higher wages, better working conditions cannot be efficiently dealt with on a limited scale. Miners' wages are now narrowly connected with the whole problem of reorganising the industry—not merely from a national, but also from an international point of view. Again, the *living wage* policy (a typical "trade union matter"), advocated by the I.L.P., is positively and directly connected with *socialisation*. And socialisation touches upon the whole complex of problems, both politically and industrially. And so on. As a matter of fact, the leading issues of the socialist parties—disarmament, works' councils, socialisation—are now the leading issues of the trade unions as well, also on the Continent.

That the trade unions *had* to move forward as rapidly and thoroughly as industrial life itself—has not been realised by the majority of Continental socialist leaders, and not even by a part of the trade union leaders themselves. Many of them stick to their opinions that politics are "taboo" for trade unions. And they are the more willing to stick to that, because of fear of "domination" by the trade union leaders, who are now at the head of organisations, far better in spirit, and far better in management than most Socialist political parties.

British readers will see at once the importance of this point, when they bear in mind that in Germany, Switzerland, France, Holland and other Continental countries, a co-ordinating body, such as the British *Labour Party*, does not exist, and that—contrary to British historic events—the *socialist parties* are foremost in strongly objecting to such a co-ordinating body being created.

Under these circumstances it is obvious that the trade unions on the Continent, generally speaking, are more willing to move to the Left, more keen to see things on a broad basis, than the Socialist parties. The significance of this change will be more appreciated, when we remind the reader of the fact that, in 1905, the German trade unions rejected the general strike, while the socialist party, lead by Bebel, accepted that weapon of the working class with great enthusiasm ; and at the same time socialist papers accused the unions of being “ in no way a class-movement, but a workers’ aristocracy.” In Germany of *to-day*, the *socialist party* has its great doubts about that sort of “ non-parliamentary ” action, while the *trade unions* made the “ Kapp-Pustch ” a failure, by organised mass-action !

Although there are many symptoms of this new sentiment within the trade unions, we may not feel too optimistic about it. The traditional dominating influence of socialist politicians on the trade unions has not had its full effect yet !

Attitude towards Russia

It is especially in the Russian question that the greater part of Continental socialists and trade union leaders of the old school (or must I say the “ new ” school ?) have absolutely failed to understand the British point of view.

Apart from everything that has been said on the matter, it is rather painful to discover that the same men, who had always been hoping, as they said, that the British movement one day or another would develop into a genuine socialist movement and would turn towards “ internationalism ”—that these very men, instead of welcoming the new spirit in England with the greatest joy and satisfaction, are now indulging themselves with all kinds of sophistic arguments to reduce the importance of one of the most magnificent events in the recent history of the working class : *the*

awakening of socialist class-consciousness and socialist idealism throughout the British labour movement.

After all, this is not as strange as it is painful. Practically all problems of the international labour movement are, directly or indirectly, grouped around *Russia*, the Russian Soviet-Republic and the Russian revolution. And if we know the attitude of continental socialists towards Russia, we know at the same time, why they are so sceptical towards the recent developments in England.

Frankly speaking, the attitude towards Russia of a great part of Continental Socialists and trade union leaders, even at the present time, is very much like that of the politicians and historians in the middle and at the end of the former century, who used to frighten their well-to-do citizens with uncomfortable tales of the French revolution and more particularly of the deeds of those "blood-hounds" Robespierre, Danton, Marat. Even *Karl Kautsky*, that famous Marxian scholar, who published so many inspiring revolutionary documents, now sides with those who look at "revolution" as being a synonym of "crime" and "robbery"; and he would not mind assisting in the preparation of armed revolt against the bolshevist regime.¹ And if we, who never closed our eyes to the many points where Bolshevism failed, and who never held back our criticism when we thought they were wrong—if we dare to point out with *Mr. H. N. Brailsford* that "the Russian leaders, in 1917, gave proof of a daring which amounted to genius," and that this revolution is "one of the greatest exploits of the human will"²—or if we dare to stand with all our enthusiasm behind *Otto Bauer*, when he says: "whatever may divide us from the Bolsheviks, we must maintain complete solidarity with Russia in the face of capitalist acts of hostility"³—if we dare to take that course, many of our leaders on this side of the Channel are at once ready to accuse us of being "cell-builders," "agents of Russia" and the like. Here, in this bright and home-like capital of the Netherlands, it has even come so far, that a prominent leader wanted to dissolve a debating-club where *Mr. Purcell* had been speaking on Russia.

¹ *Karl Kautsky: Die Internationale und Sowjet-Russland.*

² *The New Leader*, November 6, 1925.

³ *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Vienna, December 22, 1925.

And at the same time it was publicly suggested that the editors of the newly established *Unity* paper should be expelled from the party !

I feel sure that many a reader of THE LABOUR MONTHLY will describe this attitude as sheer madness. And there he is right. But let us not for a moment forget that this attitude is indissolubly connected with the whole present-day political outlook of these Continental socialist leaders. If you are following a policy of "reconciliation" and "coalition" with statesmen of the opposite class *at home*, you will quite naturally turn to the same thing *abroad*. So, many of our Continental leaders showed great enthusiasm for the Dawes Scheme and the Locarno Treaties. They call M. Briand—the man who brutally turned down Captain Gordon Canning's attempt for fresh negotiations with Abd-el-Krim—"one of the most devoted friends of peace." They applaud Sir Austen Chamberlain, who is pursuing a most dangerous and intriguing policy in the East, and whose colleague, Mr. Churchill (did not the late H. W. Massingham describe him as "The Man of Blood" ?), calls Socialists "softies" and "fatheads." If one has been cheering and applauding men like those, one can hardly be expected to find an opportunity of reconciliation with the Russian revolutionary leaders, can one ?

Ever since 1920, much has been said about the trouble that the bolshevist policy has been causing in Continental workers' organisations. No doubt the Russian policy, in this respect, has been an absolute failure. They have made very grave mistakes, and an immense harm has been done by the creation of the "Red" Trade Union International.

Fortunately, symptoms can be noticed of a change in the Russian policy with regard to the Continental organisations. But that is not enough. We want to see also symptoms of a change in the Continental Socialist and trade union attitude towards Russia. For our Continental socialists have made very grave mistakes, too.

We could refer to what we stated above about their attitude in general, and further we could remind the reader of the fact that many Continental Socialist papers have ardently supported the

Capitalist Press in its actions against Soviet Russia, by publishing the bad news and by purposely concealing the favourable information. In addition to this, I just want to give one very actual and striking example concerning the grave accusations made by Continental socialists against Communists, in the ever burning question of the failure of the German revolution. Socialist leaders on the Continent never got tired of shouting in the ears of all who were willing to listen that the failure of the German revolution was due to the Communists, who broke the unity of the German workers. Some months ago, however, at the occasion of the Perlach murder case, where *Noske*, the Socialist "Reichswehrminister" of the revolution days, had to give evidence, the question of that failure came once more into the foreground. And the official organ of the Austrian social-democratic party, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (January 21, 1926), summing up the case in a leading article, stated that *Noske*, the social-democrat, *was more than anyone else responsible for destroying the Unity of the German workers and for the failure of the German revolution.*

These things, which can be said to-day without causing a storm of indignation among Continental Socialist leaders, mean, together with other recent statements, that also in Continental socialist circles, especially among some of the younger trade union leaders, symptoms of a change in outlook can be noticed. If you, readers of **THE LABOUR MONTHLY**, find this no reason for optimism, I must ask you to keep in mind that you—compared with the situation in various Continental countries—form a "left wing" in a *Left* movement!

Indeed the possibility of a *rapprochement* in the near future is coming nearer every day. We, Continental socialists and trade unionists of the Left, are sincerely trying to further that movement. We may be still weak in number, but we are growing day by day. Lately, we have been able to get into contact with each other, and we will do all we can to maintain and strengthen that contact. "Unity" papers are now established in Belgium, Germany and Holland, while the publication of pamphlets in four languages is under consideration. We want to concentrate first of all our attention on unity with Russia. Not only for organisational reasons. For we want fresh blood, fresh life, fresh

actions in our Continental movement. One united international movement is vitally necessary, but within that movement we want freedom of speech and freedom of criticism. And our Left wing could not be better supported, we believe, than by the Russians entering our Internationals.

After the things I have said on the Socialist political parties and the trade unions, it will be obvious that we have set our hopes first of all on the trade unions. And it will be obvious, too, that we, under these circumstances, sincerely admire the British movement for the bold stand it takes in the cause of international unity.

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TROTSKY AND HIS ENGLISH CRITICS¹

By R. PALME DUTT

NO one would guess from reading the reviews of Trotsky's book that it is a serious piece of work. However, it is. From the reviews the book might be considered to consist mainly of brilliant wit, revolutionary romance from a Russian who has never ventured beyond the borders of Russia, and malicious personalities. Actually the book is an objective estimate of the English situation, rapid, but carried out with a sure hand ; and the polemic is strictly subordinate to the objective argument.

A word must be said at the outset on the common plea that Trotsky " knows nothing of England " (the threadbare escape of every single reformist reviewer to avoid having to meet Trotsky's merciless argument). It would be more true to say that his critics know nothing of England—a charge that could be substantiated by every single statement of the reformist school for the past fifty years. Trotsky himself points out that

For decades the " leaders " of the British working class considered that an independent Labour Party was the mournful privilege of continental Europe. Not a trace is left to-day of that naive and doltish self-conceit. The proletariat has forced the trade unions to create an independent party. But the matter will not rest there. The Liberal and semi-Liberal leaders of the Labour Party still think that the social revolution is the mournful privilege of the European continent. And their backwardness will be revealed by events.

In fact, Trotsky is able justly to claim and substantiate that " we Marxians understand the tempo of development of the British Labour Movement and foresee its morrow much better than do the present ' theoreticians ' of the Labour Party. The call of the ancient philosophy to ' know thyself ' has not rung in their ears."

This self-ignorance of the reformist idealist school, which is so naively exposed in their reviews of Trotsky and their " British " repudiations of his " Russian " standpoint, can be illustrated in a very simple form. A challenge may safely be issued to the critics

¹ *Where is Britain Going ?* By L. TROTSKY. With an Introduction by H. N. BRAILSFORD. (Allen & Unwin. 2s. 6d.)

to name a single book by a single English author or politician, bourgeois or labour leader, which is as close to the essentials of the English situation as Trotsky's book. It cannot be done. And yet Trotsky is admittedly a busy man, for whom the English situation is only one factor in a complex of problems ; his sketch could obviously be improved and amplified by fuller study, knowledge, contact, &c.; these English authors have abundance of time (for their narrow horizon England is usually the world), copious information, contact on the spot and all the rest of it. Nevertheless there is none. And why not? The reason goes to the heart of the English situation. The expressions and books produced in England about English questions are all marked by the same subjective unscientific character, the same insular ignorance and unconsciousness (*My Ideals for Labour, Ethics of Empire, England's Awakening, The Future of Citizenship, Creative Socialism*, and all the rest of the dreary crew). In other words they are all "idealist," that is, unable to deal with the facts of the social process in their actual movement, unable to think dialectically. There is no social scientific, *i.e.* Marxist, school in England yet ; a fact which reflects the immaturity of the working class movement and the overpowering weight of the past bourgeois tradition. As Trotsky points out, the same conditions which gave England priority in the past make for backwardness in every sphere to-day. English Capitalism was the pioneer in the past, empirically finding out a way. This fact has stamped a deeply empirical character on English thought, and a contempt for all non-English thought and methods. To-day this traditional outlook has been inherited by the English labour leaders from the bourgeoisie just at a time when its foundation in fact has completely disappeared, and when England most needs to learn from the development of world scientific thought.

The notion that Trotsky is unfit to write on England because he is not an Englishman is a piece of abysmal national ignorance and self-conceit. It would be as sensible to argue that Marx could not write on "Capital" because he was not a capitalist. In point of fact, the best view of cheesemites at the end of a microscope is not necessarily at the cheesemites' end. When the critics proudly put Trotsky right on some irrelevant point of

detail (and in nine cases out of ten they are wrong even in their facts, and merely misunderstanding Trotsky's point),² they are only giving a measure of their own smallness. In short, the cheesemites are showing that they are cheesemites. Certainly the scientific handling needs, when we are concerned with the living problems of the class struggle, to be carried beyond a treatment of principles, and to be realised, elaborated and worked out in closest relation to the fullest living information, experience and action. But to imagine that the important thing is the possession of details of local information (which fifty million Englishmen have had for a generation without being any the wiser), and not the scientific handling, is childishness.

With this prelude we may come to Trotsky's analysis of the English situation.

Trotsky argues that England has reached a turning point at which no further capitalist development is possible, and the only

² One or two examples may be given of these corrections of Trotsky's "ignorance."
(1) Johnston takes as his principal proof of the falsity of Trotsky's facts the statement that MacDonald operated in the realm of diplomacy with the aid of false documents." This is a simple question of history. MacDonald was responsible head of the Foreign Office when it issued the Zinoviev forgery; he wrote and amended with his own hand the note utilising the forgery; he never repudiated the issue of the forgery; and he has never apologised for it since. In the light of these facts Johnston's ingenuous plea that "MacDonald did not operate the Zinoviev letter; it was operated against him" (which, even if it were true, would make of the Leader of the Labour Party an innocent baby unfit to be left in charge of a halfpennyworth of working class interests among the foxes of the bourgeoisie—and MacDonald is not entirely an innocent baby) makes no difference to the historical facts. The constitutional, legal and political responsibility for the Zinoviev forgery rests solely with MacDonald, and cannot be lifted by his lackeys on to any other shoulders. (2) Brailsford, Russell and others complain that Trotsky dares to suggest that the English electoral districts are weighted in favour of the Conservatives. Yet this is notoriously so, although the extent may be a matter for discussion. The agricultural districts, which are the Conservative strongholds, are heavily over-represented by the apportionment of electoral districts; and in addition there are the University seats, bogus "City" and "Exchange" constituencies, &c. Compare Dalton in the March *Socialist Review*: "Broadly, the industrial vote predominates in more than 400 constituencies, the agricultural in less than 200. . . . In the country as a whole, the agricultural areas are over-represented in relation to their electorates." This overweighting of agriculture—in industrial England—is a significant evidence of the reactionary character of the whole electoral system in England.

The same will be found to be the case with most of the other points raised, if subjected to closer analysis. The superficiality rests with the critics, who are startled at unsuspected angles of vision turned on to the conventional hypocritical bourgeois picture of events and conditions in England.

path forward is along the lines of Socialist reorganisation. This conception needs understanding correctly, as it is the basis of the whole argument. The decline of English Capitalism dates back for forty years, since the development of the more scientifically organised German and later American industry, and was already diagnosed by Engels in its main lines in 1885. This decline was partially veiled by the Imperialist expansion of the past forty years, which was in reality accelerating the decline, although giving an artificial appearance of prosperity. It is only the war and the post war period that has carried forward the whole process at a tremendous pace, and now laid bare to all the point of open decline reached and the emergence of new world forces. American industrial and financial preponderance, which grows more exacting and dominating each year; the centrifugal forces of the Empire and growth of the Dominions to an independent capitalist policy; the revolutionising and struggle to independence of the colonial and semi-colonial nations, which afforded the indispensable basis of English capitalist industry and exploitation; the loss of strategic immunity and sea power; the strangling weight of debt, inflated capital, and long continued accumulation; the historic disorganisation of industry and failure of development: all these are factors not affected by unbased hopes of a possible "revival of trade" (as if it were only a question of the ups and downs of "normal" capitalism); they are contradictions which no capitalist statesman can solve, because the economic reorganisation which alone can solve them, cannot be accomplished without cutting across the whole historic tangle of private property interests and legal rights which stand in the way. This is why only a revolution can solve the English situation: a legal transformation is not in practice possible, because the whole existing legal state framework and machine is in practice bound up with the maintenance of existing property rights.

What is the character of this revolution? It is here that comes the second essential point of Trotsky's argument. A political revolution is the necessary preliminary of carrying out the economic reorganisation. This point is the key to Trotsky's book: for the first point—the basic necessity of a unitary economic reorganisation on the lines of the social organisation of production

—is beginning in varying degrees to be understood. But the economic reorganisation cannot take place so long as power is in the hands of the capitalist class ; since the capitalist class will not carry out their own extinction. The economic reorganisation can only be carried out when power is in the hands of the working class, whose existence and future is bound up with the social organisation of production. The revolutionary conception is commonly treated in the vulgar bourgeois and reformist writers as the conception of a “ sudden ” transition to a socialist economy. This of course is nonsense, as the transition to a full socialist economy is a heavy process, involving many stages. But the reorganisation cannot begin until class power is changed : this is the essence of the revolutionary conception. Trotsky shows how the bourgeois political revolution of the seventeenth century (itself the outcome of the gradual rise of the bourgeoisie within the preceding state) was the necessary preliminary of the industrial revolution of the eighteenth century and the consequent full flourishing of capitalism. In the same way the working class has to win power into its own hands now. This is not accomplished by the sham of a “ Socialist ” ministry within the existing system, which in itself is no more than a cover for capitalist power. The actual transference means that the working class apparatus has to become the ruling apparatus throughout the country. This involves the certainty of struggle and civil war with the existing ruling capitalist class, which has already shown by its action all over the world that it will use all its resources to maintain itself by every means without limit. In comparison with the certainty of this struggle, for which the working class must prepare, the question of parliamentary right in relation to it is absolutely secondary, and, if allowed to occupy the foreground, even to the extent of hoping to avoid the struggle, is a deluding and disarming of the workers and a guaranteeing of capitalist armed power.

This brings us to the third stage in Trotsky’s argument—the working class movement in England, and its readiness for the future struggle. This is the central issue of the whole argument. A revolution that involves an actual transference of class power cannot be carried out by the working class without absolute clearness and determination of leadership, freedom from depend-

ence on bourgeois ideology, and strong central organisation—in other words, a revolutionary mass party, leading the workers to the struggle for proletarian dictatorship. These conditions do not yet exist in the English working class, and this weakness in the subjective readiness of the workers is the retarding fact in the development of the English situation. What is the explanation of this, and what is the line of development? What are the traditions and forces that stand in the way? Here Trotsky brings to bear all his wealth of polemical power and analysis to shatter the existing confusion, cant and humbug of the ruling leadership and ideology in the existing Labour Movement, and to show the workers the plain path forward.

The existing leadership in the Labour Movement is the inheritor of the Liberal, that is of the bourgeois tradition from the time of secure capitalist supremacy. All its outlook is bounded by the capitalist framework, by the permitted legal forms of parliamentary and trade union activity. All its beliefs are the echo of capitalism; of the bourgeois' national tradition, of Protestant Christianity, of the sanctity of the Empire, of the sinfulness of revolution, of the necessity of very gradual change, of the unity of classes and all the other cults which Capitalism has laboured to instil into the workers. The more conscious elements of this leadership, the Right Wing, work in direct co-operation with the capitalists. The more confused elements, the centre and so-called left, combine occasional verbal hankerings after socialism, with subordination in practice to the same policy and ideology. Repeated episodes show that the basic ideology of all is the same (Trotsky groups it collectively as Fabianism), and that the differences are still only differences of sentiment and phrase, of responsibility in the governmental sense and irresponsibility.

But this leadership is in complete conflict with the whole existing development of events, and with the development of the working class. Capitalism is no longer ascending, but descending; and there is therefore no longer any room for Liberalism. The capitalist class can no longer make concessions, but must cut the conditions of the workers; in consequence is no longer driven in a progressive direction by the fear of revolution, but in the opposite; develops increasingly to Conservatism, to

police repression, to Fascism. On the other hand the workers are driven to more and more revolutionary struggle ; first to maintain their conditions, and then, as this becomes more and more visibly impossible in the existing capitalist situation, to the political struggle for power. The revolutionary pressure of the workers throws up into existence the Labour Party against all the opposition of the old Liberal leaders. But the Labour Party is only a stage in the process. As certainly, the workers will throw off the old Liberal leadership, and find revolutionary leadership. And the form of this process will be the transition from the leadership of the Independent Labour Party to the leadership of the Communist Party.

This struggle for emancipation demands a break with the old traditions that still tie the workers to the leading strings of the bourgeoisie. Therefore Trotsky delivers the full force of his assault on these traditions ; and this assault is an essential part of the attack on capitalism in England. These traditions or conceptions to which Trotsky returns again and again, may be summed up under four heads : (1) Religion ; (2) Pacifism ; (3) Parliamentary Democracy ; and (4) Gradualism. All these, when analysed, reduce in the end to one thing : submission to the ruling class.

The attack on Religion has been widely misunderstood. Protestant religion has been the principal form in England for the transmission of bourgeois influence to the working class. Religion seeks to blur all class distinctions in a fictitious spiritual "brotherhood" alongside actual material relations of inequality and exploitation, and has therefore been the invariable weapon of an exploiting class. Religion is the negation of science, and therefore enslaves the mind, destroying mental clearness and honesty, and replacing revolutionary realism by illusion, fables and aspirations. For this reason the revolutionary working-class movement, fighting on a scientific basis, necessarily combats Religion, not only as an organised social force, but also as an individual ideology.

Nothing more completely exposes the mental stage of development of the Fabian Socialists than the universal disapproval and disagreement that Trotsky's attack on Religion in the Labour

Movement has aroused. It is not merely that such an attack is repudiated by every reformist critic (even Russell the philosopher, while agreeing with the attack on "organised religion," comes out with the old vicious social democratic distinction that "personal religion is a private matter"—without seeing that this is precisely what Trotsky is attacking). It is that Trotsky's attack has actually to be "explained away" by the solemn statement that he, Trotsky (with his abundant West European and American experience) can only be thinking of—the Old Russian Orthodox Eastern Church! This is a truly comic failure of Malvolio to recognise himself. Every page of Trotsky's book shows that he is thinking precisely of that ethical Protestant, Puritan, musty, dusty hymn-singing Christianity which was the basis of the old Liberal Party yesterday and of the upper sections of the Labour Movement to-day, and which, despite all its sham "democratic" pretensions, has always been the sheet-anchor of the Lloyd Georges and MacDonalds and all that is canting and reactionary in politics for the degradation of the workers and their enslavement. Nevertheless Brailsford, who ought to know enough at least of the facts of Marxism to know better, comes out with this foolish fable—which is solemnly repeated after him by all the scribes—and goes on to talk of Trotsky's failure to understand the "free" and "democratic" traditions of "English religion": "Would Trotsky's conviction that Protestant religion is necessarily a 'bourgeois' creed which no worker can honestly profess (what a pitiful and disingenuous parody of Trotsky's argument! Plenty of workers have 'honestly professed' Liberalism, which was none the less a bourgeois creed) survive a visit to a dissenting chapel in a mining district?" To which the answer is that precisely in the mining districts the principal battle has notoriously been in case after case between Religious Revivalism with its ally Spiritualism on the one hand and the Revolution and Communism on the other.³

³ The most complete and pathetic misunderstanding of the whole issue of Religion and Materialism is expressed by Lansbury:

"As I understand our comrade, he bases his whole philosophy of life on materialism. Well: he may be right, but my experience is that when men or women join our movement purely and simply because they think it is going to

What of Pacifism and Capitalist Democracy? Both are, on analysis, hypocritical forms of submission to the ruling class. Pacifism soon becomes entangled in an impossible network of distinctions between permissible and impermissible force, which in practice bases itself on one simple criterion—the bourgeois criminal code. In grosser forms (MacDonald, Ponsonby, etc.) Pacifism supports the armed forces of the Capitalist State and imperialist repression, the guns, tanks and cruisers of the bloody capitalist order; and only preaches submission and non-resistance to the workers and subject peoples. In subtler, more refined forms, the ugly contrast is veiled beneath phrases of centrist irresponsibility (“against all force”), but the practical basis remains the police Capitalist State. The same is true of Capitalist Democracy. It is soon found that there is very little democracy in Capitalist Democracy; and that the preaching of submission to Capitalist Democracy means, not submission to the ideal principle of democracy (in that case, the House of Commons, which legislates for 400 millions on a basis of one elector to eight colonial slaves, would have no claim to authority) but submission to the existing legal apparatus of the bourgeoisie, and the obedient attempt to pass through whatever “asses’ gate” the bourgeoisie choose to set as the only permitted path to proletarian freedom. Pacifism and Capitalist Democracy are in fact fine phrases which mean in reality the slavery of the working class.

“Gradualism” is subjected to a no less severe analysis. It is not difficult to see that “gradualism,” as soon as it is examined, disappears into a phrase meaning nothing at all save that progress must be slow, *i.e.* a catchphrase for the maintenance of the existing order. Its bombastic pseudo-scientific pretensions have no foundation either in fact, experience or in real science. It is an arbitrary and illegitimate jump from the conception of Evolution, *i.e.* of development, which is the basis of scientific thinking, to the conception that Evolution contains no leaps or conflicts, which is contrary to all the facts of nature and experience. The whole opposition of “Evolution” and “Revolution” is childish and

bring them individually a better life, they very soon find their way into the other camp.”

It is a shame that his staff, who should know some scraps of Marxism, should have been so malicious as to let this pass.

meaningless. "Evolution" leads to "Revolution," and "Revolution" is a part of "Evolution." Trotsky has no difficulty in showing that even in the plant and animal world (from which the obsolete MacDonald type of preachers profess to draw their social wisdom) the accumulation of gradual changes leads up to the necessity of sharp transformation or conflict: the butterfly bursts forth from the chrysalis; the chicken has to smash the prison of its egg. Much more so in the social world of human development, where the factors are so much more complex as to render biological metaphors worthless child's-play, and where the consciousness of men enters in as direct agents of the social process, this conscious rôle being expressed in the conflict of classes. But in fact to argue with these preachers in scientific terms is waste of time. Their arguments are not seriously meant save as a hypocritical cover for conservatism. The Baldwins and MacDonalds never think of using "gradual" and "persuasive" means when it comes to the tasks of imperialist repression. Guns, tanks and air-bombing are then their forms of "gradualism." It is only to the working class that they preach "gradualism," *i.e.* to put a brake on their advance.

Finally, what of the subtler arguments which profess to recognise the possibility of struggle and civil war with the bourgeoisie, but urge the necessity to exploit to the full the possibilities of parliamentary democracy, the desirability of fighting with the legal right of a parliamentary majority on the workers' side, and so forth? Here again the same double-dealing is visible. Communism has always advocated the fullest exploitation of the possibilities of parliament, but not as a substitute for the inevitable real struggle; if it is once advocated as a substitute for the real struggle, it becomes only an instrument of enslavement. Is the "recognition" of the possibility of civil war serious, or is it only a counter in an argument? If it is said that it is serious, then all the acts and daily propaganda of its spokesmen belie it.

The heroic promises of lightning-dealing opposition in the event of the Conservatives "daring," and so on, are not worth a brass farthing. One cannot sing lullabies to the masses day after day, full of gabble about a pacific, painless, law-abiding parliamentary democratic transfer to Socialism, and then, at the first serious blow received on the nose, to

arouse the masses to armed resistance. That is the surest way of assisting in reaction's break-up of the proletariat.

In burning words Trotsky describes how a real revolutionary situation arises, with how little regard for the niceties and forms of parliamentary right (how would these heroes act, if the Fascist attack were to develop on the working class movement, as in Italy, *before* any Parliamentary majority or Labour Government?) and throwing the responsibilities of action and of facing armed force on the leaders of the working class movement. The "passive" general strike inevitably gives rise to the necessity to protect it from guerilla attacks, saboteurs and provocateurs. The smaller conflicts inevitably extend to larger ones. The Government, once threatened, inevitably brings the armed troops into play. The coming over of the wavering troops inevitably depends on the determination of the revolutionary leaders and the direct attack on the "loyal" troops. The fate of the proletariat, the difference between victory and the scorpions of reaction let loose after defeat, depends on the political and organising preparations of the working class forces, and on the determination and strategy of the leaders, and not at all save in the most secondary degree on the legal and formal parliamentary and other "rights"—which will be covered at once in a cloud of arguments and counter-arguments, as in wartime, so soon as the fight begins ("the attempt of the Conservatives on the House of Commons would be one of the 'noble' motives for agitation, but this is in the ultimate a circumstance of third and fifth-rate importance"—and in addition the choice for this may not lie with the workers).

The more procrastinating, vacillating and compromising the policy of the leaders of the general strike, the less wavering will there be in the soldiers' ranks, the more determinedly will they support the existing authority, and the more chances will the latter have of coming out victors from the crisis, in order afterwards to let loose all the scorpions of bloody repression on the heads of the working class.

In the revolutionary struggle only the greatest determination is of avail to strike the arms out of the hands of reaction, to limit the period of civil war, and to lessen the number of its victims. If this course be not taken, it is better not to take to arms at all. If arms are not resorted to, it is impossible to organise a general strike; if the general strike is renounced, there can be no thought of any serious struggle. Then there remains only to educate the workers in the spirit of complete prostration, which the official school directing the party, the clergy of

all the churches, and . . . the socialistic proclaimers of the impermissibility of violence already do.

These words deserve to be burnt into the consciousness of every centre of the working class movement. They represent the kernel of the situation for the future in England, as in every Capitalist State, whatever the momentary liberal forms and phrases.

The treatment of this question of revolutionary and bourgeois force by the reviewers is deeply significant. Every reviewer combines to oppose Trotsky's argument: that is, to advocate unchallenged submission to the supremacy of bourgeois force and acceptance of only such methods of agitation as are permitted by the bourgeoisie. But the arguments of every reviewer are different, contradictory and in reality nothing but a catchword repetition of exactly the threadbare formulas Trotsky has been patiently pulling to pieces, without the slightest attempt to meet Trotsky's argument.

The arguments (if they can be so called) need only to be set out together to see their general character.

(a) Force is useless. "In the long run force accomplishes nothing" (Hunter). "The final word about violence is that this has been the weapon all through the ages, and we are as we were" (Lansbury). These confused "Tolstoyan" arguments bear no relation to the policy of the leadership of the Labour Party, who believe in and use imperialist force, and are therefore irrelevant. To use these arguments in defence of the policy of the existing leaders of the Labour Party against the policy of Trotsky is indefensible.

(b) Force is nasty. This is the argument of the Editor of the *Daily Herald*. Under the title "Two views of Life in Conflict" he quotes a phrase of Trotsky concerning Cromwell, about the right of a historic mission to cut through all obstacles and triumphantly affirms the "breakdown" of this argument because Mussolini and British Imperialism also believe in their "historic mission." Certainly they do, and this is precisely why their force can only be met by force, and the talk of arguing them out of their positions (let Fyfe try converting Mussolini) is transparent makebelieve, and evading the issue of repressive force confronting the working class. Fyfe rejects this as a "gloomy

view." He prefers to set against it the "hope of persuading people that Force is futile," etc. In other words, he puts his "hopes," wishes, personal feelings in front of the facts that he himself admits, because the latter are "gloomy." This is Illusionism. (In addition it is of course as indefensible as the first as a defence of official Labour policy, which accepts bourgeois force and only opposes working class force.)

(c) Force is unnecessary. "The battle for freedom is not yet lost. . . . Not only in Parliament, but in churches, trade unions and clubs, this respect for the majority has been inculcated on generations of Englishmen" (Brailsford). "Our traditions and training in majority rule" (Johnston). Here the wish is father to the thought. This is nowhere more curiously illustrated than in Brailsford's own introduction, where he is so eager to re-affirm the existence of English "freedom" after the "nightmare" of the Communist trial, that he actually declares that, if Trotsky's book is successfully issued in England and permitted to be discussed, "then for the moment at least the nightmare of this trial is dissipated." Unfortunately the twelve remain in prison; Hicks remains Home Secretary; the O.M.S. and Special Police recruiting go on; the intentions of the Conservatives are open. But for Brailsford all these mere facts are "dissipated," because a book is issued and he has written an introduction. The "dissipation" is in Brailsford's own mind. Once again, in all this "democratic" view, "hopes" are put forward instead of facing facts.

(d) We will fight if . . . etc. These are the "heroic promises" dealt with by Trotsky in the quotation already given, as "not worth a brass farthing." These promises are actually trotted out again by Brailsford, Johnston and others in exactly the same form as before without the slightest attempt to meet Trotsky's destructive arguments: that such promises are practically valueless without previous preparation, that the bourgeoisie will not necessarily allow the proletariat free choice of a strategic ground before attacking, etc.

(e) We can't fight because . . . etc. This is an alternative line of argument favoured by Johnston, Russell and others. The "because" always brings up some purely technical reason for

inability to face the ruling class. Before the war the favourite argument was modern artillery. After the Russian Revolution had disposed of that technical argument, the modern favourite argument follows the line of chemical warfare, the air force or—in England—the food supply.

It is worth noting the effect of this line of argument which places technical in front of political considerations. This means of course simple surrender to the bourgeoisie. It makes a present to the bourgeoisie of a public declaration that they are impregnable, and that the workers cannot face a struggle. If that were true, why enter on a struggle at all of which the end is thus foreseen? To imagine that in such circumstances the bourgeoisie would let themselves be circumvented by the paper formalities of parliament is excess of innocence. Nothing remains, as Trotsky says, but to “educate the workers in the spirit of complete prostration,” etc. In fact the calculation is false, and based on a completely formal unrealistic view of the actual factors and development. But its principal importance at the present moment is the light that it throws on the socialist determination of those who make it. As with all mensheviks in face of every practical difficulty, what should be a technical problem for the revolution to solve becomes at once (without even any attempt at serious consideration) a political reason *against* the revolution.

Johnston himself uses both the last two arguments together. On the one hand he argues, quoting Brailsford, that, if the bourgeoisie compel us we will fight. On the other hand he argues that if we fight, and are presumably certain to be blockaded, “we would perish.” How he reconciles his two arguments he does not stop to consider; but in fact both his arguments serve the same purpose—to put off Trotsky’s challenge.

Russell’s argument is even more instructive. He “agrees” benignly with almost all the points of Trotsky that the rest deny: he finds that “on the politics of the British Labour Movement Trotsky is remarkably well informed”; he agrees on the question of monarchy, on the question of religion, on the imperialism of the Labour Party, on the intellectual and social subservience of the leaders to the bourgeoisie, etc. Nor does he even dispute the inevitability of civil war with the bourgeoisie. But then

comes his little "practical" difficulty which enables him, as a British citizen, to avoid any revolutionary conclusion to the revolutionary principles, to which, as a philosopher, he has given his assent. Nothing can be done because—Britain is dependent on America. "It is impossible for us to advance at a pace which America will not tolerate." Here is the true English version of Austro-Marxism. Enlarging and developing this liberating conception, Russell discovers that this is the true unguessed-at explanation of the "pacifism" of the British Labour leaders. "The Pacifism which he dislikes in the Labour Movement is forced upon it by the dependence upon America which has resulted from our part in the Great War." Unfortunately for the truth of this statement, the "Pacifism" existed in the British Labour Movement long before there was any question of a "Great War" or dependence on America. The fact that Russell should be reduced to such a demonstrably false argument reveals the straits to which these theoreticians of the Labour Party have been reduced in their efforts to escape the issue raised by Trotsky.

Now these arguments, if placed together, are all mutually contradictory. We are told by these official spokesmen of the Labour Party in reply to Trotsky: (1) that force is useless, (2) that force is nasty, (3) that force is unnecessary (4) that we will fight if necessary, (5) that we can't fight. The argument that all force is wrong is in complete contradiction to the practice of the official Labour leadership. The argument that all force is useless is in complete contradiction to the argument that we will use force if necessary. The argument that we will use force if necessary is in complete contradiction to the argument that we could not fight if we would. And so on endlessly (for the arguments here reproduced are only a selection of the maze offered). But all these contradictory arguments agree in one thing, and in one thing only, and that is the practical conclusion: that we need do nothing now to face the question of bourgeois force and the working class struggle. This common principle alone unites these motley ranks. This is a very striking fact. It means that the arguments themselves are indifferent, variable, taken up and thrown aside at random, individually reached, unthought out, contradictory—that is to say, on a central problem confronting

the working class there is no attempt at a serious concerted answer : on one thing alone there is agreement ; one thing alone, that is to say, is serious for these " leaders " ; and that is servility to the existing State apparatus and bourgeois legality and force. This is the inevitable conclusion reached from the aggregate of the replies issued to Trotsky on behalf of the official Labour Party leadership.

This conclusion—the complete frivolousness and emptiness of the existing leadership in relation to the actual problems of the working class struggle, and their seriousness only in the question of bourgeois state servility—is the most important outcome of the replies issued to Trotsky on behalf of the official leadership. It is for this very reason that the divorce between these leaders and the working class inevitably grows greater, as the workers are compelled in daily life to find an answer to their problems and to find a leadership which is ready and able to drive a way forward.

In the concluding section of his argument Trotsky shows how the workers in England are already developing as a revolutionary class force, in spite of all the obstacles to hold them in. This is shown most clearly in the development of the trade unions more and more into the political sphere. The history of the Labour Party is only a stage in this process. The real character of this process is shown unmistakably in the trade union political levy, which is the very basis of the Labour Party, and which Trotsky seizes on with sure insight as the germ of the whole Bolshevik principle :

In the compulsory anti-Liberal "despotic" exaction of political levies, as the future stem and ear in the germ, is contained all those Bolshevistic methods against which MacDonalld does not cease to sprinkle the holy water of his own agitated limitations. The working class has the right and is obliged to place its own considered class will above all the fictions and sophisms of bourgeois democracy.

What is the future of the Trade Unions ? As the economic situation is increasingly bringing home, the Trade Unions have no longer any future in the capitalist framework of society. But this does not mean that they are played out, as the politicians of the Labour Party would like to suggest. On the contrary the Trade Unions have a tremendous future as the main lever of the economic transformation of the country, as the apparatus and source of personnel of the working class regime, and the schools of

education of the proletariat in the spirit of socialist production. But to accomplish this rôle they need to win power in the hands of the working class, and for this purpose they need to throw up and place at their head a revolutionary party, capable of carrying through the struggle for power. "A reformist, opportunistic, Liberal-Labour Party can only enfeeble the trade unions, thus paralysing the activity of the masses. A revolutionary Labour Party, based on the trade unions, will together with them become a mighty instrument for their restoration to health and their uplift." This transformation is the immediate task. The workers have already driven past the old Liberal Party. They have thrown forward the Independent Labour Party leaders, and these in their turn are being exposed to-day. The so-called Left leaders will in their turn be put to the test.

Those who in all probability will form the first substitutes, people of the type of Wheatley, Lansbury and Kirkwood, will inevitably reveal that they are only a Left variety of the same fundamentally Fabian type. Such radicalism is limited by democracy and religion, and poisoned with the national arrogance which mentally enslaves the British bourgeoisie. In all probability the working class will have to renew their directive formation several times before they create a party actually answering to the historical situation and tasks of the British proletariat.

But the needs of the workers and the force of events will drive forward to the future which must be reached.

The Communist Party must develop and come to power as the party of proletarian dictatorship. There are no ways round the difficulty. Whoever believes and preaches that there is can only delude the British workers. This is the main conclusion to be drawn from our analysis.

It will be seen even from the very incomplete survey here given that there is here an argument solidly built, based on a careful and exact estimate of the objective situation in England and the forces in the English working class movement, and requiring at least an equally exact and responsible treatment for an attempt at its refutation.

The bankruptcy of the answers published in the official Labour press is very striking. There is no attempt (with the single exception of the well-intentioned, but extremely innocent and uncomprehending, notice in the *Socialist Review*) to meet Trotsky's objective argument. There is no attempt to consider

the objective situation in England, the line of development, the policy of the bourgeoisie, the line of development of the working class movement, the next problems of the working class struggle. These questions, which are of very serious importance for the working class, do not exist for the light and airy writers of the official Labour press. For them everything is turned into the personal. Trotsky is "brilliant," "witty," but "arrogant," "offensive," with "execrable taste." Trotsky has "attacked" the Labour leaders, and the natural desire is to attack him back : it is felt as a personal quarrel (Lansbury, after admitting that the book is "theoretically sound"—as if this were an issue of only minor importance like a question of style—goes on to say : "If those of us whom he criticises were put into the mirror of truth, we should be in effect saying to him : 'Yes, and we do not like the look of you either'"). Trotsky is a "Russian" ; his standpoint—familiar enough in every country since the Communist Manifesto of 1847—is "the Russian standpoint" (Brailsford—perhaps Brailsford thinks the Communist Manifesto a "Russian" document ?) ; he sees everything through "Russian spectacles" and imagines every country must imitate Russia (Hunter) ; his real aim in advocating revolution in England is because it would be "advantageous to Russia" (Russell—what a childish little piece of spite !). Occasionally some critic discovers some incidental point or other at random, without reference to the context or the line of argument (like Johnston's indignant discovery that Trotsky dares to advocate the abolition of the monarchy as one among a series of demands for a decisive attack on bourgeois class power), and at once sets up an excited clucking, without even waiting or troubling to understand the point first. When finally an attempt is made to touch on any of the central themes and issues raised by Trotsky, such as the issue of bourgeois and revolutionary force or bourgeois democracy, the critic at once falls back on personal feelings, emotions, opinions, hopes, aspirations ; dismisses Trotsky's view as "a gloomy view," and expresses warmly, as if they were arguments, his private hopes and faiths, without even attempting to consider the alternative if his faiths should prove unfounded.

This bankruptcy is of course not accidental, but is simply the

expression of the ideological bankruptcy of the whole school of Fabian Socialism and the Independent Labour Party. To-day it is becoming more and more widely clear that the only coherent view of actual problems possible is the Communist view. Marxism is conquering in England also by the power of facts. Just as thirty years ago the Independent Labour Party was permeating and capturing the trade union bureaucracy, so to-day the younger trade union masses are advancing to Communism. The contrast and conflict between Trotsky's book, with its objective firmness and militant confidence, and his reviewers, with their vague confusion and shoddy sentiment in place of argument, is the contrast between two worlds and the conflict between two classes. Between these two worlds there can be no real contact. The older school of leaders who were bred up in the Liberal tradition (and their younger apprentices at the same trade) will never understand, but will go on repeating their catchphrases and empty sentiments until they pass away or are pushed aside. But the younger workers, who have been bred up in the conditions of the war and after, and whose eyes and ears are eager to take in the facts, the Labour students, the younger trade unionists, the workers' leaders of to-morrow, are learning very fast : and Trotsky's book will help them to learn. Among these Trotsky's book will be eagerly read, and will give stimulus and help ; will help to break the chains of enslavement to old ideas and leadership, to give confidence and clearness and strength, and to show the plain path forward of the struggle. The English working class has cause to be grateful to Trotsky for his book ; and to hope that he will not stay his hand at this short sketch, but will carry forward his work of interpretation, polemic and elucidation, and elaborate his analysis further, which is so much needed in England. For despite all the national philistines, the problems of England, more than of any country, will only be solved by the united force of the whole international movement.

THE ATTACK ON THE BUILDING TRADE

The Operatives' Reply

By R. COPPOCK

(*General Secretary, National Federation of Building Trades Operatives*)

THE building industry has long been vilified by the capitalist press and blamed for the deplorable housing conditions at present existing. But these are in reality the inevitable result of a European war under the capitalist system, which should itself be in the dock not merely for its post-war inefficiency but for the fact that even prior to the war it was progressively failing to cope with the housing question.

This will be quite clear if one or two facts are borne in mind. Prior to 1906, when the Conciliation Boards were established, wages and conditions were the playthings of chance, the result of good or bad organisation in a particular locality, and their stability, therefore, varied as organisation varied.

For the first five years' existence of the Boards the operatives' lack of understanding of their use caused them to militate against the workers, and as a result many left the industry and its personnel became somewhat depleted, but by 1911 the operatives' representatives had learned from experience how to operate them, and advances in wages began to be registered, although but slowly, chiefly through lack of organisation among the dozen or so unions in the building trade and the fact that local negotiations were still the order of the day. During the years immediately preceding 1918, it became obvious that some more stable and uniform method of procedure was absolutely necessary. As a result there came into existence the demand for a national flat rate and with it and much more important, the co-ordination of all the unions in the National Federation of Building Trades Operatives.

Whatever the enemies of the Federation may say to the contrary, the results of this co-ordination have been sufficiently

remarkable. Firstly, the North-Western Area Council was formed and the first uniform rate came into being, carrying with it the systematic grading of towns according to the relative cost of living in them. This was followed by the division of the country into ten Regional Councils in all. It was not long before the highest rate, which in 1914 had been 11½d. per hour, had risen to 2s. 4d., where it remained until 1921, whilst the whole of the towns throughout England, Wales and Scotland where employers and operatives were organised were graded.

In 1919 the Federation secured agreement to a uniform 46½ hour week in place of the normal 49½-60 hour week. This was followed in 1920 by the 44 hour week, in which year also national negotiations came definitely into being with the National Wages and Conditions Council for the Building Industry.

But the achievement of the Federation for which the capitalist press and its dupes will never forgive it, was its successful resistance to dilution in 1919-1921.

But now with the slump came the Federation's testing time. The sliding scale began to tell against the workers, and yet it can be quite justifiably maintained that the co-ordinated efforts of the building trade unions have maintained a higher standard of living against the employers' mass attacks than any other industry and have even secured national increases.

When the building trade operatives are accused of obstruction, &c., it should be remembered that they have had to be constantly on the defensive against their employers' attacks, particularly in the shape of claims for reductions in wages outside the terms of the National Agreement, and for the lengthening of the hours of work. This has been particularly marked since the failure of the Building Guilds. There can be no doubt that this menace to private enterprise was the cause of the employers adopting a much more conciliatory attitude towards the organised operatives than they had hitherto done ; it is indeed a fact that the advanced conditions operating on Guild contracts, such as holidays with pay, and payment for sickness and time lost, would have revolutionised the industry could the Guilds have maintained their position, and in fact at one time the employers were driven to seriously consider the Wet Time question in order to counteract them. On the failure

of the Guilds, however, the employers embarked on an intensive campaign for wage reductions and longer hours. They forced through 2d. reductions in April and June, 1922, and their demand for a further 20 per cent. (4d.) reduction brought on the dispute of 1923, which culminated in the unsatisfactory Frazer Award. There was a half-penny cost-of-living increase in February, 1924, and when the Frazer Award expired the Federation took the offensive with a demand for a 2d. increase, the first demand for a national wage increase in the history of British building trade unionism. The strike of 1924 followed, and although only a half-penny per hour increase was obtained, the retrogressive tendency in wages was definitely checked, and Wet Time payment as a principle for joint negotiation recognised as an item of first-class importance.

Meanwhile, ever since 1922, the Federation has through the National Wages Council improved the lot of its members in two ways which have not received sufficient recognition ; firstly by what is known as the mitigation of the incident by which the 25 per cent. difference between craftsmen's and labourers' rates progressively diminished in the case of the lower-paid areas, and secondly the system of upgrading by which there have been over 400 regrading decisions, thus raising the level throughout the country.

Bound up with the question of dilution is the alleged lack of personnel in the industry and the decay of apprenticeship.

It is not true to say that our personnel is inadequate to meet the tasks set before it ; the figures as to house-building which we shall give later amply show that we can meet all demands laid upon us. Only in Scotland has a small percentage of the personnel migrated to the United States to take advantage of the high rates which are certainly being paid in some American cities.

The decline in the apprenticeship system is entirely due to the fact that before the war the conditions in the industry were so bad that parents would not indenture their sons into it. Not only was it that rates were low, but the total weekly wage was liable to diminution through the seasonal nature of the trade. In 1914, 1s. per hour for craftsmen was operative in only .18 per cent. of places, 6d. in 5.04 per cent., 6½d. in 7.01 per cent., 7d. in

10·43 per cent., 7½d. in 8·09 per cent., 8d. in 13·85 per cent., 8½d. in 8·7 per cent., 9d. in 13·13 per cent., and 9½d. in 8·09 per cent. ; above this all but the 10d. rate which obtained in 4·67 per cent. of cases were less than 2 per cent., the 10½d. being ·77 per cent. and the 11d. ·36 per cent.

But of late years the various sections of the trade have very carefully considered this question and many of them evolved quite elaborate educational schemes.

As a result of the findings of the Building Industry Committee dated April 10, 1924, the apprenticeship question was, however, placed on a national basis, and local building industry committees representative of both sides are being set up all over the country. There are now some hundred of these local committees in existence. Last year the Federation made an inquiry among all its branches as to the state of apprenticeship in the industry, and it transpired that 40 per cent. of places in which the Federation has branches have the full complement, and over 27 per cent. under the full complement, whilst in 34 per cent. the position was not really known.

The lack of apprentices is due to quite natural causes apart from the bad conditions prevailing in the industry, conditions so poor that in many places youths prefer to take up work as labourers in order to get the better money. Thus it is due among other things to slackness of trade or of big contracts resulting in jobbing work, the prevalence of small employers, the existence of local charities which militate against the acceptance of a national scheme, and the fact that in some instances the organised operatives go out of the district to work or in others that the practice of indentured apprentices has died out. Apart from this we find that in many places the employers do not consider that apprenticeship is the operatives' business and will not brook any interference, meet them or answer correspondence ; they do not wish to be bothered with many apprentices, prefer unindentured labour on account of its cheapness, object to the rates payable under the scheme as too high or insist on a premium.

The main fear of the local operatives is lest the industry should be swamped with cheap labour, and the payment of expenses to those attending local committees under the Government Scheme.

This last is a very common ground of complaint. When it is remembered that originally the State intended that each side should pay its own expenses, it will be seen how hard the operative would be hit. He was expected on a weekly wage varying from £3 17s. 6d. in summer to £3 13s. 4d. in winter in the highest paid districts, and £3 in summer to £2 16s. od. in winter in the lowest paid districts (if he could get a full week's work), to miss perhaps half a day's work at stated intervals without any compensation for time lost or payment of travelling expenses, and we maintain that his objection was justified. Eventually the Treasury agreed to pay the munificent sum of 10s. per meeting for not more than four meetings per quarter to cover the total expenses of the whole of the operatives' side, perhaps 1s. 8d. per member. This generous grant was at first made from quarter to quarter only, but has now at long last been stabilised until 1927. The impudence of wealthy newspaper proprietors girding at the lack of the personnel of the industry, when the State is too stingy even adequately to meet the expenses justly incurred by the poorer section of those who are attempting to find a solution for it, is simply colossal.

We are accused among other things of not co-operating in housing, and one section of us in particular, the bricklayers, of practising *ca' canny*. The following brief statement as to the pre-war and present output of bricks and the decrease in personnel sufficiently refutes this last.

According to the Report on the Present Position of the Building Industry (Cmd. 2104, April 10, 1924), page 12, the number of bricklayers insured in December, 1913, was 68,920, while according to the *Labour Gazette* for January, 1926, the number at July, 1925, was 65,120. Harry Barnes, Vice-President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, in his book *Housing* (Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1923), page 167, states that :—

Estimates have been made of the amount of the principal materials required in the erection of 100,000 working-class houses by the Tudor Walters Committee as follows: Bricks 2,700,000,000. The output in or import into this country of the above was given as follows: 1911-1913, 2,800,000,000 (average.)

We have been informed by the Ministry of Health that the Building Material Supply Committee have recently made an

inquiry as to the output of common building bricks, and the replies show that the output at present is 5,114,000,000 for England and Wales. The figures are not available in respect of Scotland. The number of bricks imported during the first eleven months of 1925 was 148,765,000, which according to the Board of Trade, from which the figures were obtained, was not only in the form of bricks but also of brick earth and clay from which the equivalent in bricks was calculated. The Report on the Present Position of the Building Industry stated that the present output of bricks in Scotland was only 227,000,000 per annum, but that it was understood that this could be regularly increased to 300,000,000 in order to make provision for the housing programme (1924).

Our information can, therefore, be summed up as follows :—

SUPPLY	Bricks
1911-1913	2,800,000,000
1925.	
Output England and Wales	5,114,000,000
Scotland (1924) say	227,000,000
Imported January-November	148,765,000
	<hr/>
Approximate Total	5,489,765,000
	<hr/>
PERSONNEL	
Bricklayers :—	
December, 1913	68,920
July, 1925	65,120

So much for ca' canny !

As regards housing, 159,000 houses, or a greater number than in any year from 1899 onwards, were built in 1925, and 512,987 were rendered fit for habitation by repairs.

It should also be common knowledge, were it not deliberately obscured, that the building trade operatives through their Federation worked hand in glove with John Wheatley, when Minister of Health, in the Labour housing programme. We co-operated in the Building Industry Committee and had a large share in the preparation of the Report on the Present Position of the Building Industry already referred to, the basis of the Wheatley Scheme, and have also taken part in the Government inquiries into rings and possible alternative methods ever since their inception.

Our mind on alternative methods has been made perfectly clear time after time ; we have no objection to alternative methods as such, and are in fact working in perfect harmony with all the purveyors of steel houses except Lord Weir, but we must and do insist that all work which can be properly described as pertaining to our members involved in their erection must be paid the building trade rate. Lord Weir alone persists in refusing this, although after considerable pressure he has at length agreed to pay the building trade rates to the labourers engaged on excavation work. We have no objection to his paying the engineering rate for the purely engineering work involved, but the Weir house is largely a steel-lined wooden house, and we claim that the carpenters' and joiners' work connected therewith should be paid the full building trade rate. Our whole quarrel with the Government is not one of alternative methods being applied to Scotland, but with their determination to commission Weir to build houses on his own conditions, in doing which we claim that they are violating the Fair Wages Resolution of the House of Commons. The real reason for Lord Weir's preference for the engineering rates was made quite clear when his manager, Mr. Richmond, in reply to a question from Mr. T. Barron, the operatives' President, as to whether if the engineering rate were higher than the building trade rate Lord Weir would still elect to pay it, replied that in that case there would be no necessity to pay the engineering rate, because the building trade rate would have been sufficient to get the men !

Enough has been said in this article to show that the building trade operatives through their Federation have made every effort to efficiently organise their industry. The recent secession of two societies, the bricklayers and plasterers, has tended to undo some of that work, but the reunion of our forces, which we are confident must come sooner or later, will only be the necessary prelude to the development of the ideal which above all things is the reason for our existence, the socialisation of the building industry !

The World of Labour

	Pages
FINLAND : Split in Trade Unions	249
JAPAN : Labour Movement in 1925	249
SOUTH AFRICA : Native Progress	251

FINLAND

The Split in the Trade Unions

THE Trade Union movement of Finland has been recently the scene of important developments. Since 1918 it has existed under conditions of extreme persecution and terror, but has nevertheless maintained unity and persisted in a militant policy. The membership has recently begun to increase. There has been throughout, however, some conflict between "Left" and "Right" wings within the movement. In 1923, the originally "Left" majority of the Executive Committee decided, in spite of a congress resolution, to send a delegation to the Conference of the International Labour Office. Prolonged discussion followed, and eventually, in 1925, members of the E.C., including the President, Huttenen, resigned and were replaced by a Left Wing majority. This, together with the decision to support the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee, has brought matters to a head.

After a campaign in the Socialist Press, a conference was called in Helsingfors on January 17, 1926, of the members of the Social-Democratic Party in the Trade Unions. Some 300 members and delegates attended, and it was decided to present demands to the next Congress in May, with the threat that if these are not granted the formation of a new National Trade Union Organisation would "be considered." The demands were : a definite break with the R.U.U. (there is no affiliation, as this is illegal), and affiliation to the I.F.T.U. ; co-operation with the I.L.O. ; election of the E.C. by the Congress, instead of appointment of E.C. members by the individual unions ; "adequate" representation of the Social-Democrats, and "political neutrality."

JAPAN

The Japanese Labour Movement in 1925

THE developments taking place in the Japanese labour movement in 1925, mark the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the class struggle in Japan.

Since 1922, when the first waves of the world economic crisis reached Japan, the economic position has grown steadily worse. In June 1925, the official Government organ, the *Japan Advertiser*, reported that the number of unemployed considerably exceeded the figure of two millions at which it stood during the previous year, and was steadily increasing. The position was

accentuated by the troubles in China. Politically, the result was seen in the party of the Japanese bourgeoisie, the *Kenseikai*, taking complete control of the Government to the exclusion of the representatives of the agrarian interests (the *Seiyukai*). This is the first purely bourgeois government that Japan has had. A new franchise law was passed in March, 1925, extending the suffrage from three millions to twelve millions of voters, while simultaneously laws were passed for "safeguarding public tranquillity" which were obviously aimed at detaching the workers from Communist leadership and preventing the use of the extended suffrage in the interests of the revolutionary workers.

In connection with the operation of the above laws, and as a natural concomitant of bourgeois government in the imperialist epoch, the most characteristic feature of the Japanese labour movement during the past year has been the development of reformism. At the end of 1924, just when the Japanese government was changing its policy towards labour, a split appeared for the first time in the Japanese Labour Federation, and unions of communist tendency began to be excluded. By March, 1925, the excluded unions, about twenty-eight in all, founded the Japanese Trade Union Council (*Hyogi Kai*), representing the left wing in the Japanese T.U. movement.

This was the signal for the open appearance of reformism in Japan. The first step was a tacit agreement with the bourgeois government with regard to the persecution of revolutionary elements. The second step was an agreement with the reformist Trade Union organisations of the West concluded at the session of the International Labour Office in Geneva. Bunji Suzuki, the leader of the Japanese Labour delegation to Geneva, returned with the plan of an "All-Asiatic Labour Conference" to be called in Shanghai during 1926, which would bring together the reformist trade unions of the East, and form a sort of "Singapore Base" for the penetration of reformist influence from Europe.

As soon as the danger of expulsions from the Trade Union Federation began to threaten, there arose the movement for trade union unity. In January, 1925, a Unity Conference was convened in Tokio in which participated some fifty delegates from various unions in Eastern Japan. The object was to explore the possibility of creating a United General Federation of trade unions on a national scale. The reformists answered this by the formation of a reformist National Committee of Labour Unions (*Zenkoku Rodokumili Hyogi-kai*.)

Another step towards unity attempted by the left wing was the endeavour to form a "National Unemployed League." In spite of hard work this has not so far had much success. The *Hyogi-kai* has declared consistently for an all-inclusive trade union international and condemned the refusal of the Amsterdam International to take up the proposals of the Russian Unions. Important events in the history of the unity campaign in Japan in 1925 were the visits of a Russian Labour Delegation to Japan, and of Japanese metal workers to the U.S.S.R.

The culmination of the Unity Movement was the attempt at the formation of a proletarian party. This question is still a central one in the struggle between the reformist and revolutionary elements in the Japanese Labour movement. There have been from the beginning two tendencies. The

Hyogi-kai with the support of the Japanese peasants' union and a few of the larger trade union organisations has pressed for the establishment of a single, National centralised party comprising various proletarian elements. The Reformist Trade Union Federation proposed the formation of local parties containing only trade unionists.

On August 10, a first preparatory conference was called in Osaka on the initiative of the Japanese peasants' union supported by the Hyogi-kai. On December 1, 1925, the foundation congress of the new "Workers' and Peasants' Party" was held in Tokyo. On the previous day the reformists withdrew from the Committee organising the congress but this failed to prevent its being held. The Government, therefore, proceeded to compel the dissolution of the new party. It is reported that this was the result of a secret agreement between the Minister for Home Affairs and Bunji Suzuki, whereby the latter obtained permission for the creation of a party of his own.

On January 13, 1926, another preliminary conference to discuss the formation of a Labour Party was called by six trade unions and under the pressure of the reformist trade union federation, the peasants' union agreed to the exclusion of the Hyogi-kai from the conference. Thus the reformists are on the way towards the formation of a purely reformist labour party, from which all revolutionary elements will be excluded. It remains to be seen whether this can establish itself under present conditions.

SOUTH AFRICA

Native Progress in South Africa

WITH the growth and development of industry in S. Africa there has likewise taken place a corresponding development among the black and coloured peoples. Owing to their greater cheapness and lower standard of living, the native workers have gradually encroached on industry and been responsible for the steady displacement of large numbers of white workers. And again arising out of this process a strong antagonism has grown up and been displayed towards the blacks by the whites, an antagonism which the employing class have only too readily helped to foster. The white owners inflamed by racial prejudice have attempted to keep themselves strictly apart from the blacks in their industrial organisations, refusing them admittance to the Trade Unions. Faced with this situation and subject to the worst forms of exploitation in workshops, factory, mine, etc., it was only natural that the workers of the Bantu races should set about building up their own industrial organisation.

At the beginning of 1919 what is called the I.C.U. (Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union) was brought into existence. This union commenced its activities by organising the native workers in the Cape Town docks, and in one or two other coast towns, such as Port Elizabeth, East London, etc. Early in its career it found itself involved in strike action for higher wages, and to a certain extent was responsible for securing increased pay for the dock workers. Since that time right up to the present day it has drawn ever increasing numbers of black and coloured workers into its ranks until its actual membership at the moment totals more than 30,000 members.

In contradistinction to this extremely satisfactory progress in native Trade

Unionism, the plight of the white workers' union has been very woeful indeed. From a membership of 80,000 in 1920 their strength has dropped to less than 40,000 in 1926. Some unions have been worse off than others, particularly those in the Transvaal where the colour bar still remains in force. In the Cape Province (formerly Cape Colony) the colour bar has been broken down for some time past, and many coloured workers have been admitted to the various unions. Things are much different, to a big extent, in the Cape Province owing to the big proportion of coloured workers who serve in many cases as a connecting link between black and white. On the political side also the Cape natives have the "benefit" of the franchise, though how long this is likely to last seems problematical in view of the recent proposals of Premier Hertzog in regard to segregation.

Nowadays however, even in the Transvaal, the necessity of including *all* workers in the Trade Unions is slowly being forced into the minds of the white Trade Unionists. The ground in this direction is being more or less prepared by the admission of coloured workers into the Building Workers' Union and also that of the Tailors. Both these bodies still rigidly oppose the inclusion of blacks, however, and the latter Union, the Tailors', states its intention of limiting the number of coloured members to the seven Malays who have recently been admitted. Nevertheless a straw often shows the way the wind is blowing and the black workers cannot be excluded from the white unions for ever.

Meantime the colour bar policy hits at the white unions themselves. The further growth and development of the I.C.U. is bound to make the white workers seriously consider the overhauling of their ideas, especially when the economic forces at work are persistently pointing out the imperative need of unity of all workers without distinction of colour.

Realising the danger which working class unity presents to private ownership, the minions of the ruling class now at the Government helm in S. Africa, the Pact Government, are making preparations to ensure the maintenance of hostile divisions in the workers' camp. Towards this end Premier Hertzog has outlined a scheme which aims at ostensibly segregating the black from the white. The purpose of the scheme simply amounts to the formation of a white and Cape coloured bloc against the black.

The African Native Congress, which adopts a wholly racial attitude, has attracted many to its ideas, but has little real organisation worth speaking about. Not so is it in the case of the I.C.U. with its large membership and its numerous branches existing all over the country. It is rapidly getting its message of organisation home to the wide mass of the natives, and taking its stand on a working class platform as opposed to racialism.

The Communist Party of S. Africa lends its assistance in propagating the unity of all workers, both black and white, and before many more years have passed the organised might of the black in industry is going to become one of the most powerful factors in ridding a fertile country of human exploitation.

J. SHIELDS.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE GOLDEN BURDEN OF WALL STREET

American Foreign Investment. Robert W. Dunn. (185 pp. + 236 pp. \$5.00. Viking Press, 30 Irving Place, New York City.)

A NY scientific study of Imperialism clearly must embrace a study of overseas investment. Dunn's work will be judged by worker students in so far as it contributes to a clearer understanding of this extraordinarily rapid growth of the American bourgeoisie as a world Capitalist power. For, even told, as he tells it, in figures and lists, the story of the scattering of American surplus wealth over the world, especially since the war, is a startling one

Already by the turn of the century industrial development, the huge trusts and monopolies, the immense surplus accruing in the hands of the American Capitalists, had marked out all the conditions of Imperialist expansion. Various factors, however, mitigated against the export of capital. The extension of the "frontier" towards the Pacific, and the experiments in technique of imperialism in loans to Haiti, Cuba and the other near estates provided a sufficient field for the ever mounting surplus.

The United States Capitalists were strong enough to preserve their Tom Tiddler's ground intact, in spite of the heavy mortgages raised.

"The successful assertion of the Monroe Doctrine by the United States raised that country . . . to the status of a Great Power herself with Latin America as her exclusive field of influence. Thus the lesser American Countries entered into economic and financial relations of the European Powers with almost complete impunity,"

says one of the bourgeois historians. The whole estate however, borrowed pretty heavily. The total foreign investment in the United States in 1914, was \$4 to 5,000 millions (Dunn p.3); American investments only totalled \$2,605 millions, more than half of which was in Mexico (\$1,050 millions) and Canada (\$750 millions). The net indebtedness was \$2,500 to \$3,000 millions.

This debt was to a large extent liquidated during the war. D.R. Crissinger Controller of the Currency, estimates that \$3 billions worth of U.S. securities held in Europe were repurchased during this period. (Dunn, p. 4.)

Repurchase was however, only a minor item. The war acted as a forcing process to U.S. finance capital. By 1917, \$2.3 billions had been lent in foreign loans, \$1.9 billions of them as loans to the allied nations. Making the world safe for investment brought the allies altogether into the debt of America to the amount of \$9 billions, over \$7 billions of this being in direct loans of the U.S. Government to European Governments.

The process continued after the war ceased. In the five years 1919 to 1923, a total foreign investment of \$3.3 billions was made. \$2.3 billions of the total went to Governments, acting in many cases as reconstruction against the revolution.

1923 saw a check to this process. The world's new money mistress grew shy; she would not give herself to the world. She cultivated her own garden

But the teeming millions would not let her be shy for long : she could not afford it.

America therefore came back, to "bear the financial burden" as the National City Bank of New York charmingly phrases it, into world politics in order to secure the safety of the investments. The foreign financing increased enormously in 1925, it made a new record if the 1916 war issues are excluded. The Federal Reserve Bank figures are as follows :—

		\$ million
1924	.. .. .	1,250
1925	.. .. .	1,327

The chief mark of her political intervention was, of course, the Dawes Report, and the fruit of it is the investment in 1925 of \$651 millions, or nearly half the total, in Europe, \$233 millions going to Germany, and \$120 millions to Italy.

But the importance of the European investment must not blind us to the fact, that the United States financiers operate on a world scale. The following figures from Dunn (p. 183) of the total investment show this. His figures are for 1924. We have added the Federal Reserve Bank figures for 1925, though they are not on quite such an inclusive basis as his. It should too be remembered that many transactions are not recordable.

U.S. TOTAL FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

	At end of 1924	1925	Total
	Million dollars		
Canada and Newfoundland	2,460	266	2,726
Latin America	4,040	241	4,281
Europe	1,900	651	2,351
Asia and Oceania	690	148	838
	9,090	1,237*	10,417
Total			
European Government			
Total Indebtedness	12,151†		
(with accrued interest)			
Grand Total	21,241		22,568

Dunn's book is a record of this movement of capital. It is a compilation, almost a reference book. It gives lists of capital issues made in recent years ; lists of investments in particular countries ; a brief examination of the banking houses engaged ; a useful but indiscriminate bibliography and, in over half the book, documents printed *in extenso* of types of loan contracts of American banking houses.

The strictly limited nature of this work is disappointing. It does not tell us many things we want to know. For instance, what is the policy of the investing houses—has not the bulk of the capital in Europe gone to big heavy industry trusts and electric power concerns ? What is the competitive position of the U.S. capitalists in comparison with other imperialists in particular countries ? These lists tell us little. Dunn gives us some figures which show

*With \$ 21 millions "International."

† The amount to Governments, Municipal and Government guaranteed in 1925 to Europe was \$504 millions. The total above is chiefly war debts.

the gain in U.S. investments in Canada and Argentine (pp. 57, 62). But to get an accurate picture we need much fuller comparative figures. What are the issuing houses in Wall Street? How far are they merely intermediaries, if so who for? What are the rival interests inside American capitalism itself?

These questions and many others need to be answered as a preliminary to the understanding of one of the most important features of world capitalism. The expansion of the new Imperialists, and the harsh consolidation of the old, are the two significant movements of world capitalist politics. With sometimes a liaison, sometimes a break, they work towards the final trial of power. Meanwhile the financial burden is flung on to the workers, and chained on to them by all the paraphernalia of political machinery and armed force.

For it is not entirely fanciful to see in these Arabic figures of Dunn's pages, the human figures of millions of Chinese coolies, German miners, Argentine ranchers, the engineers at Hoe's, and many more who are bent and broken by the burden.

H.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

The Victory of Reason. A Pamphlet on Arbitration. By W. Arnold-Forster. (The Hogarth Press, 2s. 6d.)

How the League of Nations Works. By Kathleen E. Innes, B.A. (The Hogarth Press, 2s.)

Notes on Law and Order. (The Hogarth Essays.) By J. A. Hobson. (The Hogarth Press, 2s. 6d.)

Socialism. S.P.G.B. Library. No. 9. (S.P.G.B., 2d.)

Facts for Socialists. Thirteenth Edition. (Fabian Society, 6d.)

The Functioning of an English Second Chamber. By G. B. Roberts, LL.B. (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.)

The Land of Many Names. A Play in Three Acts and a Transformation. By Joseph Capek. Translated by Paul Selver. (Allen & Unwin, 3s. 6d.)

The History of the South Wales Miners. By Ness Edwards. (Labour Publishing Company, 2s. 6d.)

The Devil's Business. A Comedy in One Act. By A. Fenner Brockway. With a Foreword on Armaments and Peace. (I.L.P. Publications, 1s.)

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THE
LABOUR
MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8

May, 1926

Number 5

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - -	Page 259
	<i>MAY DAY, 1926</i>	
The Coal Report and After	- - -	„ 272
	<i>By ARTHUR HORNER</i>	
Shooting Niagara	- - -	„ 284
	<i>By R. PAGE ARNOT</i>	
The Geneva Fiasco	- - -	„ 288
	<i>By W. N. EWER</i>	
Teachers and the Class Struggle	- - -	„ 296
	<i>By A. M. A.</i>	
Italy To-day	- - -	„ 304
	<i>By L. W.</i>	
The Importance of the Trades Councils	- - -	„ 313
	<i>By TOM QUELCH</i>	
The World of Labour	- - -	„ 318
International		

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NOTES of the MONTH

*May Day—Prospects—New Reformist Illusions—What If—
Speculation or Marxism—New Technical Processes—The
Real Lesson—Contrast to Industrial Revolution—From
Locarno to Geneva—America and Europe—Chinese
National Struggle—China and Revolution—
Capitalist Offensive—The American Myth—
Whither America?—Facing Realities
—The Immediate Crisis*

MAY Day, the day of the workers' unity for action, falls this year at a moment when that unity is required more than ever before. It was no doubt without forethought that the Government, in fixing the nine months term of the subsidy, fixed the date of its expiry, and therefore by implication the date of the launching anew of the postponed offensive against the working class, to fall on International Labour Day. But the omen is one that may well be taken up by the working class. The capacity of the working class for united action is about to be tested more seriously than ever before. "Red Friday" was only a first round. Whatever the manoeuvres or postponements, both sides know that the inevitable conflict is in front. The Government may talk of peace; but their acts of preparation and mobilisation belie their words. No fair words or tricks can get round the realities of the coal situation. The coal crisis is itself only the acutest part of the whole crisis of Capitalism and the working class in Britain. And the crisis of Capitalism in Britain is only the acutest part of the whole crisis of Capitalism in the post-war world. May Day should therefore see the concentration and unification of the working class ranks all over the world for the enlarging period of struggles that is developing.

THERE are those who argue that Capitalism is recovering, and there are therefore no inevitable struggles in front. This argument is the obvious cover for the retreat into Reformism, and the refusal to face the tremendous issues that are confronting the working class. It is an argument that flies in the

face of the facts. Does the situation in Britain show recovery? Do the figures of production, trade, unemployment or wages show recovery? Does the position of the miners and the engineers, and the rock-bottom fight developing show recovery? Do the government preparations, the Communist trials, the police and military extensions, the O.M.S., the growth of the Minority Movement to a quarter of the Trades Union Congress, the concentration of wage issues to a single confrontation of Capitalism and the working class, show a weakening or intensifying of class antagonism in Britain? And internationally, has the stabilisation of Dawes and Locarno made progress or shown any power of permanence? Does the collapse of Geneva and the growing hostility of the United States and Europe show a diminution of capitalist antagonisms? Does the gigantic national struggle in China, do the wars in Syria and Morocco and the gathering unrest in India hold out the prospect of a smooth progression for world Capitalism? These are facts: and whoever wishes to hold out a lying prospect of a peaceful period before the working class must first deal with these facts. The revolutionary perspective is based, not on psychology or romanticism (as the vulgar reformists suppose), but on the consideration of objective facts, which hold out no alternative to the working class but a process of hard and increasing struggle in the present period.

WHAT is the basis of the new Reformism which holds out the propaganda of capitalist strength and recovery (new inventions and reorganisation, the economy of high wages, the American example, &c.) at the moment of the intensest conflict of the workers, when Capitalism is in fact driving down the standards of the workers to the lowest point? The old Reformism before the war had by comparison a superficial basis of facts on which to build, and only failed to understand the deeper tendencies of capitalism. It forgot the future in the present, and failed even to analyse correctly the present. But the new Reformism in the post-war world of capitalist decline is only able to live by a complete disregard of the present, and on the basis of a rose-coloured illusion of an imaginary future of capitalist harmony, with all the contradictions and antagonisms left out, and without

any relation to the actual working class struggle to-day. These theorists are actually at present discussing whether Capitalism may not be able too rapidly to satisfy the "mere material needs" of the masses before Socialism can establish its ideal—at a moment when in reality Capitalism is driving down the masses to poverty unequalled in their experience. This type of theory is so completely divorced from the actual struggle of the workers that it would not be worth discussing, were it not the only alternative and opposition, however feeble, to the plain revolutionary lead of united working class struggle with all the forces of capitalism, which the present period requires.

"**W**HAT if," writes one of these prophets of the rejuvenation of British Capitalism—

What if international finance scaled down still further German reparation payments, and if Wall Street and the City agreed, as already has been done in the case of Italy, to compound for smaller cash sums in settlement of war debts? European industry could then go ahead comparatively unburdened with bankers' mortgages.

"Comparatively." The fact that war-debt and reparations negotiations have been above all a lever for establishing a private hold on European industry (the total Dawes Loan was £40 millions, but American private investments in Germany already total £200 millions and are still increasing rapidly—the same process can be traced in the Italian negotiations) and that American private investments in Europe already total two and a half thousand million dollars, is left out of consideration.

What if the British Capitalists, seeing the red light, put through the unification of the British coalfields and got an international agreement on coal production to prevent undercutting?

What if they linked up coal with the electrical and chemical industry and made coal a basis for fuel, agricultural manures, dye-stuffs and explosives?

Then comes the grand conclusion to which all this is intended to lead :—

I venture to say that then we should be on the eve of a new industrial revolution, and the British Communist Movement would disappear in vapour just as Chartism faded away in the smoke of the steam engines, blast furnaces and collieries which covered and ran over England on the eve of the Victorian industrial revolution.

Not so fast. The wish is here too openly father to the thought.

Communism is not so easily to be exercised by a pipe-dream of "What Ifs."

ON this line of argument it is necessary to make one or two comments. The method of argument illustrated in the writer's "What If" is an interesting and often fruitful form of imagining known as Speculation, but it is not a Marxist method of thinking and seriously estimating a situation. The Marxist method, to begin with, bases itself on facts. It does not, for example, argue from a string of speculative hypotheses to the conclusion that Communism is bound to disappear, when the objective fact is that Communism in England is growing daily stronger at present at a very striking rate; on the contrary it is much more interested in the fact and its explanation. In the next place it bases itself on all the facts, on all the opposing tendencies and forces and their points of conflict, and only from the sum-total of these, and above all from the points of conflict, draws its deductions for the future. This applies most clearly to the Marxist analysis of Capitalism, where the whole essence of the Marxist method consists in the power to see the contradictions, and the whole character of reformist philistinism and revisionism is the inability to see the contradictions. Now it is to be noted that the whole of the writer's "What Ifs" are of one type only: they all assume the success of capitalist reorganisation, modification, overcoming of difficulties, unification, &c. But they leave out of account completely all the larger conflicts, antagonisms, inequalities and contradictions which form the real web of the capitalist structure. And this invalidates the whole argument.

NO less important is the actual basis of the argument. The main force of the argument as a whole is that the technical advance of production—"new scientific inventions"—is able to give Capitalism a new lease of life in the same way as the Industrial Revolution heralded a vast expansion of Capitalism.

Who will deny that we may not be on the eve of such a momentous economic change, which may make it easier for the bosses to buy off the workers in the new industrial processes with more favour-

able conditions than those which they afforded to the workers in the old ?

But the whole character of the present period of Capitalism, as opposed to the early period of the Industrial Revolution, is that to-day every technical advance increases and intensifies the problems of Capitalism. As the President of the Board of Trade has repeatedly declared, it is precisely the increase in the power of production which makes the problem more difficult :—

The efficiency of production is so much greater now than ten years ago that the same volume of trade will not employ the same number of people.—(House of Commons, 10-4-23.)

On this side of the picture the writer makes no attempt at consideration. Once again the writer sees only the factors of economic advance, but does not see at the same time the contradictions of Capitalism, which turn these very factors into revolutionary forces.

AN advance in technique or organisation may temporarily benefit a special country which is in advance of others ; though even here the gain is only temporary, and not in the event a net gain for Capitalism as a whole. But even on this basis, the argument is unable to establish its case as a solution for the special problems of British Capitalism. For, as any investigation of the facts has repeatedly shown, in respect of any advance of technique and organisation, the advantage inevitably lies with America or Germany, which are not trammelled to the same extent by the same insuperable inherited deadweight of interests as Britain. This is actually shown in the extreme backwardness of British electrical development (British consumption for 1924-5, 118 units per head, as against French and German 200, Belgian 230, Swedish, Norwegian and American 500, Canadian 900). To take Baldwin's very timid, very late, Electricity Bill, or the still more timid, temporising proposals of the Coal Report as evidence of the forwardness of British Capitalism, is an extraordinary example of the confusion of the whole argument, in which servility to the idol of Capitalism has led to complete blindness to the real decline. It is just this impotence to get past the conflicting tangle of interests and impasse which points the way to the necessity of revolutionary means outside the power of Capitalism as the sole effective engine to clear a way for the new technical forces which

are waiting to bring a new era to humanity. The new technical forces are for this reason the herald, not of the revival of Capitalism, but of the approach of the power of the proletariat.

THE situation is in fact in striking contrast to the situation accompanying the Industrial Revolution. Then Capitalism was carrying through a tremendous expansion in one country, Britain, in advance of the remainder. That one country was able to establish an effective world monopoly, and so had the scope for a virtually unlimited expansion. On the basis of that world monopoly British Capitalism was able to grant concessions of improved standards, mainly to the upper sections of the workers, above the standards of other countries, and in that sense to "buy off" the gathering attack of the working class. To-day, on the other hand, Capitalism has reached the stage of world development ; and British Capitalism is no longer leading. The modern world is a world of a series of Capitalist Powers, which have divided the world between them, and are engaged in fierce competition. The intensification of competition results in the fact that, despite increased powers of production, the standards of the workers have for the past generation not only relatively, but absolutely, worsened. Capitalism, instead of being able to make concessions to "buy off" the workers, is actually having to make renewed and yet harder attacks upon their standards. In this situation each advance in technique and organisation only intensifies the competition. As each State advances into the era of large-scale State Capitalism and modern technical methods, the competition does not disappear, but on the contrary the world-conflict becomes more fierce. This is already shown in the present world situation, with the increasing antagonism of the Powers and gathering menace of renewed world war. The whole analogy with the Victorian era of peaceful industrial expansion and the disappearance of Chartism is thus completely false. The reality is increasingly intense conflict both within each State and between the States. This is the reality, as opposed to the illusory dreams of capitalist harmony.

NOWHERE is this more clear than in the present world situation. The contrast between Victorian Cobdenism, Free Trade, Liberalism and Pacifism on the one hand, and modern Imperialism, Protection, Conservative domination and World War on the other, is complete. This was clear already before the war. The war and the Versailles Treaty stamped the character of the modern period of capitalist culmination and breakdown. To-day the Versailles Treaty is in liquidation. What follows it? Is it peace and international organisation, opening the way to an organic period of ascendant Capitalism? On the contrary. Versailles only gives place before newer and bigger antagonisms. This is the whole significance of the sequel of Locarno. The collapse of Geneva means that the first attempt at the formation of a United Front of Capitalist Europe has for the moment broken down. Even in the Old World of Europe the conflicts have proved still too strong. But this United Front of Capitalist Europe, of which Locarno was the first stage, was itself only a reflection of bigger antagonisms—against the Soviet Union, against the colonial peoples in Africa and the Near East, and eventually also against America. Locarno was a United Front based on a bargain; and when all the terms of the bargain came to be paid at Geneva, they could not be honoured. And the force that gave the decisive blow for the collapse was significantly enough the force of America.

IT is this increasingly open antagonism of America and Europe which is the most significant feature of the situation. The Houghton Report was not so much a gesture of “isolation” (America is the opposite of “isolated” from Europe, and only unwilling to take part as an equal in the conferences of European States, preferring to dictate from outside), but rather a direct throwing of discord into the gathering solidarity of the European States, and particularly of Britain and France. As a writer in the French *Information* acutely remarked, American policy in practice pursues “the perpetuation of anarchy in Europe” in just the same way as “France in the seventeenth century encouraged the anarchy of Germany.” The rôle of America at Geneva was quickly seized on by such an organ of British Imperialism as *The*

Times, and immediately related to the parallel raising of the dormant claims for damages against the British blockade. Brazil could not have held out without powerful backing : a small state is not in a position to resist on its own the forces of financial and economic intimidation that can be brought to bear on it, as is shown by the collapse of Uden over Mosul, as well as his retreat at Geneva. This backing has been found by some commentators to lie in Italy. But Mussolini is after all only the bailiff of American Capitalism ; and Brazil would not have risked venturing in an affair of no direct importance to itself in defiance of the United States as well as Britain.

ANOTHER aspect completely ignored by the facile prophet of capitalist rejuvenation is the line of development typified in the Chinese struggle. Colonial exploitation was admittedly the indispensable basis of nineteenth century capitalist expansion, as well as of the concessions to "buy off" the workers. Without it the technical advance would have already led to critical conflict. Nevertheless, the fact that just this basis is weakening and shaking is entirely ignored by this school. The Hong Kong boycott is estimated to have cost British Capitalism £75,000,000 in six months. British cotton exports to India have diminished by 57 per cent. since the war. Yet at the same time as this whole basis is disappearing, conventional speculations are made of the possibility of a repetition of the nineteenth century "buying off" of the workers, without any understanding of the dynamics of such a process.

EVEN though the colonial struggle should not carry for the time being beyond the bourgeois national limit, this is already sufficient to upset the capitalist equilibrium and create a situation hastening the decline of European Capitalism. But in fact the mass struggle in the present stage of world development inevitably carries further. The Imperialists are well aware of this ; as is shown in a striking message of the Hong Kong correspondent of *The Times*, which may be recommended to the attention of those Socialists and Liberals who affect to regard "Bolshevism" as something "alien" in China, and even in their

sublime neutrality (and freedom from consideration of economics or facts) profess to regard it as a form of "imperialism." *The Times* correspondent is endeavouring to explain why in China "the people were grateful to Moscow" for the solidarity of the Russian Workers' Republic in their life and death struggle against Imperialist plunder, corruption and militarism; and he proceeds to explain that the Chinese popular movement is not so much a racial, national or colour movement as comparable rather to "the hate of the poor for the rich," *i.e.* a social struggle. And he goes on to say:—

Revolutionary Communism is, it is said, entirely alien to the traditions and to the temperament of the educated Chinese. This may be true enough, but do the Chinese masses, for all their endurance and passivity, differ so much from other men as to be totally unaffected by revolutionary promptings sown in the fertile soil of grinding poverty, of general insecurity and increasing unemployment?

This Imperialist correspondent is less of a fool than many "Socialists": for he understands that at bottom, under all the many forms, the struggle of the masses for life is one in every country. And this is the secret of International Communism. The significance of the combination of the revolutionary struggle of the colonial masses with the struggle of the proletariat in Europe, which is one of the principal keys of Lenin's teaching, is already evident, not simply as a theory, but as a fact of experience. And once again the capitalists themselves are actually better aware of the factors making for their own decline than are the dreaming and servile Social Democrats who have abandoned Marxism or never understood it.

FINALLY, at home the actual situation confronting the working class is the exact opposite of that described, and is completely ignored in these airy speculations. The reality is not one of rising wages, growing prosperity, peaceful expansion, class conciliation, and "buying off" the workers, but instead is one of still actually falling wages, stagnant and even falling production, renewed attacks on the workers, and increasing class antagonism. In such a moment of impending desperate struggle to turn aside to idle and not even seriously grounded speculations

of the possibility of prosperity in the future, class conciliation, higher wages and "buying off" the workers, is a typical occupation of a social democratic theorist ("who will deny that we may not be," "he would be unwise to prophesy," &c.) who has no leadership for the workers in the present. The whole I.L.P. speculation of a supposed social credit control while Capitalism continues to function, of raising the purchasing power of the masses, of ironing out unemployment, &c., is a castle in the air which takes no account of the actual lines of direction of British Capitalism to-day, and therefore is useless and impotent for the actual present workers' struggle, and only an excuse for refusing to face it. At the same moment that it is being made comes the news of the new British two and a half millions loan for engineering works in Czecho-Slovakia at half the British rates of wages. Capitalism inevitably moves along the line of the highest profit. To change this is not a question of theories of social reorganisation, but of the class struggle.

THE propaganda of American Capitalism as the model for the British workers (which is the actual current line of propaganda of the I.L.P. and of Right Wing Labour, as indeed of the whole Second International) is radically false. The prosperity of American Capitalism is based on its world Imperialist position, which is in certain limited respects comparable to that of British Capitalism half a century ago: an immense superiority in material resources and the basis of production, comparative freedom from the economic and political entanglements of Europe, a credit relation to other countries, and consequent power of world domination and exploitation. To attempt to transfer this, without modification or correction, to the entirely different conditions of present-day British Capitalism is a piece of doltish stupidity which is comprehensible in Conservative "popular" propaganda ("America or Russia"), but a pitiful self-exposure of "Labour" economic theorists.

But in fact even in America the future problems are already visible. The continued expansion of profits and production (for how many years will Fords continue to find scope for their present rate of accumulation?) and the consequent growing rôle of the

export market leads to a situation which is only partially veiled, as with Britain before the war, by the growing export of capital, which in fact only intensifies the problem. In 1925, according to W. F. Dunne, American production increased by 17 per cent., while 12 per cent. fewer workers were in steady employment. The average wage in the textile industry is \$17 a week (nominally £3 10s., without allowing for the much higher prices of the means of life), or less than the minimum subsistence level laid down by the United States Department of Labour. Trade Unionism is practically non-existent in the basic industries outside the railways. Renewed wage attacks are already developing. As one of the I.L.P. credit theorists, who claims the American situation as "a vindication of the arguments of our party," nevertheless writes on his return from America :—

Great capitalist combinations have already succeeded in some industries in forcing down the standards of their workers far below the American average. Special measures have been taken by great combines, where no labour surplus existed, artificially to create conditions in which wages could be reduced. In these industries the workers have been caught unawares without industrial and political organisation ; strikes have been ruthlessly crushed, and the prospect is dark for Labour. (O. Mosley, *New Leader*, April 2, 1926.)

If this is the actual situation and struggle to be faced in America, where Capitalism is still ascendant, how much more so must it be in Britain, where Capitalism is declining and more and more placing its basis outside the home country ?

THIS is the final breakdown of the whole of this line of argument and leadership for the workers. It is no leadership for the actual struggle of the workers. This is most clearly shown in the conclusion reached in the article in question, in which the prophet of hypothetical capitalist recovery, after scolding the Communists for their blindness, because they base themselves on the facts of capitalist decline and intensified struggle, and draw practical lessons therefrom, proceeds to give his own advice for the leadership of the working class in their struggles. It is as follows : " If," he declares, what he says is correct, " if " there is going to be " a decade or two " of capitalist prosperity—

If it comes to this, then in Parliament, on the political field, and under the auspices of the General Council on the industrial field, the movement must wring from the bosses every reform possible to prevent the workers losing the benefits of the new inventions which capitalism has taken over from science, and so hasten the coming of a new crisis.

This was issued in a Labour journal on April 10—three weeks before the date fixed for the heaviest capitalist offensive on the standards of the workers, when every nerve was needing to be expended to awaken the workers to the desperate struggle in front even to maintain their existing standards, to unite the working class front and overcome the reactionary obstacles to unity, to show the full scope of the capitalist attack and the new types of struggle developing, and the consequent new methods and practical lessons that must be learnt by the working class. At this moment comes this bland talk, completely ignoring the actual situation and its needs, of a hypothetical future prosperity and the solemn advice in that case to “wring every reform possible,” “in Parliament” and “on the industrial field.” It is this colossal unawareness, this complete indifference to the actual struggle and needs of the workers, that is the vital difference between I.L.P. theory and Communism or the revolutionary class struggle.

A SURVEY of the world and home situation this May Day points to the same single conclusion. At the present stage of world capitalism the antagonisms both abroad and at home are growing more, and not less, acute. Capitalism shows no sign of carrying within it the possibility of a further organic period of even approximately harmonious development. Certainly the revolutionary process is not a single continuous process, but is an unequal process with ups and downs, ebbs and flows, pushing forward now here, now there, and throwing up a thousand temporary and transitional forms and situations. But of the character of the war and post-war period as a whole, and the correctness of Lenin's diagnosis of it as the epoch of capitalist break up, there can be no question. Even those partial and temporary stabilisations that can be accomplished within it, can only be accomplished by means that are themselves revolutionary

factors, intensifying the situation. Such has been the partial stabilisation of Europe on the basis of American indebtedness, or the temporary "solution" of the coal crisis on the basis of the subsidy. These devices only throw into greater clearness the fundamental antagonisms and inevitable conflict. In England the situation is that this inevitable conflict is reaching a critical and decisive stage, possibly even on May Day itself, or if it can yet be postponed, it cannot be postponed for long. The workers need to concentrate all their forces for this struggle, which makes demands that have not been known in England before. They will be well advised not to waste their time listening to the voices of those who for advice to-day can only offer them cloud-castles of an imaginary future. The danger to the working class movement is urgent. There is no magic way out of the impasse in England to-day. Only by united working class struggle, carried on with unhesitating determination, resourcefulness and sacrifice, can the workers even maintain their position in the present period of capitalist decline and hew a way forward to the next period, which must and can only be the period, not of capitalist revival, but of increasing capitalist break up, of intensified struggles, and eventually, where the workers have found their way, of working class power.

R. P. D.

THE COAL REPORT AND AFTER

By ARTHUR HORNER

THE Coal Commission Report must be regarded, not as something complete in itself, but rather as one phase of a much bigger problem. Therefore before attempting to analyse its contents, or seeking to understand its implications, one is bound to examine the purpose and intention of those responsible for the existence of the Commission.

The mining industry has for some time been the subject upon which the leading economic experts of capitalist Britain have operated, and naturally so, for is it not, in the opening words of the Commission's Report, the basis of our whole economic life, which in its turn is the basis of our whole society? Just as the Sankey Commission can only be understood if the revolutionary fervour of 1918-1919 is properly appreciated, so is it only possible to understand the Samuel Commission by and through a thorough comprehension of the situation as it existed in July, 1925.

The owners had launched their attack upon the miners' standard of living. Huge cuts in wages were proposed, district settlements were to be re-introduced, and customs of years' standing were to be swept away. In addition, in each district separate attacks were made on customs and payments local to particular areas. The coalowners were well supported by British capitalism in general, for to it the reduction in miners' wages meant cheaper coal, and would be a preliminary to cuts in the wages of other workers, for had it not been so in 1921? Moreover, there was now only the memory of a smashed and utterly discredited Triple Alliance, which nothing had replaced.

The Government, acting as the general council for capitalism, stood looking on, whilst Mr. Baldwin talked complacently, between whiffs from his pipe, about the inevitability of a return to economic stability via wage cuts for all workers. Everybody waited to see the miners make their futile, though gallant fight,

before succumbing to the superior forces of starvation and isolation.

The miners waited, prepared for the fray, seeking for allies, yet feeling the hopelessness of it all. No effective General Council for the whole British working class existed, for even the miners themselves, in that very year, had turned down the proposal for depositing power in this body to control the struggles of all or any section of the working class, though they had instructed the officials to seek to set up an Industrial Alliance as a successor to the dead Triple Alliance.

Moved as this proposal was by the little district of Forest of Dean, it lay forgotten and neglected, and would probably never have been called into the light of day, except that a new factor, in the shape of a militant secretary of the miners, had been elected, and he objected to resolutions of annual conferences being treated as merely pious expressions of opinion. Calls were sent out to the old members of the Triple Alliance, as well as to other organisations, and there was an atmosphere favourable to the setting up of such a body as was proposed, but on this occasion there was to be no dubiety concerning the responsibilities and obligations of the affiliated bodies. Rules of Unions must be changed so as to hand over authority to the Industrial Alliance, and Union autonomy and conservative restraint must go if the new organisation was to be made effective. All this demanded time for its realisation.

The Alliance proposal, however, was not taken very seriously at the time, firstly because very few believed it possible to get the National Union of Railwaymen in again, and, secondly, because nothing could be done which would build up this organisation in time for the mining crisis.

To the workers the position looked indeed hopeless. No power in the hands of the General Council, no Industrial Alliance, which meant that the miners must fight alone. But the unexpected happened, the great mass urge, more powerful than anything in its path, pressed forward, and in a conference called for the alleged purpose of discussing unemployment, and composed of all the executives of the Unions attached to the T.U.C., the miners and textile workers' representatives were permitted to

put the case for their men, and in a few minutes 1921, with its stories of betrayals, became to the British working class what 1905 was to the workers of Russia, not the overthrow, but the justification for the unity of the workers in the class struggle, regardless of rules, constitutions, laws or precedents.

The Communist slogan of " All Power to the General Council " was accomplished in fact, and the Industrial Alliance also justified itself through its potential elements forming a bloc in the T.U.C., thus bringing support for the miners. The General Council now commenced to use its power, and arrangements were made for effectively meeting the attack by a hold up of all coal, a policy which was bound in its operation to bring about a general strike of the whole organised British working class. This, in effect, meant war against the whole capitalist class, including war against its General Council, which is the British Government.

To capitalism the impossible had occurred, and they quickly sought to modify their tactics to meet the new situation. " Over the top in the daylight " was quite a good move when the miners lay defenceless and alone at their mercy, but more shrewd and cunning moves were necessary to meet this new Solidarity of the Workers.

Time became the great essential for Capitalism. Time to strengthen its own forces, time to weaken its enemies, the workers. But the latter, in their new found power, would not talk of the smallest concession, and the coalowners faced with their own administrative and economic bankruptcy could not pay the price of the truce, so Capitalism in general stepped in, with its contribution towards its bankrupt son, Mining Capitalism, unnerved and totally unprepared as it was to face the new situation, yet hopeful of ultimate success. So the subsidy to retain the *status quo* was granted, to terminate on April 30, 1926. Meantime a Commission to be set up to inquire how the mining industry could continue to function under a capitalist system and yet make it unnecessary for general capitalism to pay the price of the maladministration inherent in the system. So the terms of reference become in effect " how to force the miners into the acceptance of wage or working conditions in accord with the economic capacity of the industry,

regardless of mining capitalism's failure to provide a decent standard of life for those who work in the industry." If looked at from this angle, the problem simplifies itself and the apparent contradictions of the Report become clear and reconcilable.

The personnel of the Commission is ominous, for it is representative of all that is most dangerous, because most confusing, in capitalism's armoury. No coalowner sat upon it, and to the average man this conveys an impression of impartiality as between the owners and the miners. But this is no longer a coal industry problem, it is a class problem of the first category, and the important thing is to recognise that no worker is allowed to sit upon the commission, but that an astute capitalist politician presides over a Board which is representative of banks, railways, electricity, steel and textiles assisted by an astute capitalist economist. The following illuminating note on the personnel of the Commission will make this clear :—

THE COAL COMMISSION

WHO THEY ARE

Chairman : Rt. Hon. Sir HERBERT SAMUEL, P.C., G.B.E. Educated Balliol College, Oxford. Postmaster-General, 1910-1914 ; late High Commissioner of Palestine. Brother of Sir Stuart Montagu Samuel, Bart., of the banking firm of S. Montagu & Co., whose chief partner is Lord Swaythling.

Members : General Hon. Sir H. LAWRENCE. Retired from Army 1922. Managing partner of Glyn, Mills & Co., bankers. Director of Vickers, Ltd., L.M.S. Railway, Electrical Holdings, Ltd., and seven other companies, including three foreign banks.

Sir WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, K.C.B. Educated Balliol College, Oxford. Formerly leader-writer for the *Morning Post*. Later in Board of Trade. Invented Labour Exchanges. Now Director of London School of Economics.

KENNETH LEE, Esq. Textile capitalist. Chairman of Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee & Co., Ltd., and of the District Bank.

It was pointed out that this was to be no Sankey Circus, permitting a display by miners' representatives, but that the Commission and its personnel, was to be determined by the Government in order to perform the task of enabling the mining industry to be placed on an economic and self-sustaining basis.

Now it should be obvious to all that, if the Commission was intended to examine the capitalist administration of the mining

industry, it should have had at least one member who knew something about the intricacies of the most complicated industry in existence. But to discover what was wrong with the industry was not its purpose; on the contrary, its task was to justify its friends in the mining industry, whilst freeing general capitalism of the cost of its maladministration and throwing the burden on to the miners.

The task of the Commission was first of all to weaken the miners by seeking to alienate the support of the other workers from them. Right through the process of taking evidence, the representatives of other industries have been encouraged to declare that the high production costs of coal, due by implication to the miners' wage rates, are mainly responsible for the depression in trade which bears so hardly upon their employees, while, on the other hand, the mineowners sought time and again to place the responsibility upon dockers, trimmers, and railwaymen for their failure to give the miners a decent standard of existence. Fortunately the miners' representatives refused to be a party to these attacks upon their comrades, and defended them by declaring that the miners will never endeavour to solve their problems by stealing other workers' bread.

The Commission hearings have been merely the sounding boards for anti-working-class propaganda. Phrases of sympathy have been mouthed in order to allow for the destruction of the miners, through their isolation from the other workers, as the preliminary to the attack upon the wage slaves in other industries.

The Report itself is informative and is one of the most coolly calculated documents of its kind. Its voluminous character is misleading, because it conveys the impression of anxious and impartial searchings by honest, well intentioned men, whereas in fact its concrete and immediately applicable findings are very few and are contained in a few of the 294 pages, all of which give the coalowners what they have sought to secure, though it is done in a much more astute and able fashion than they have ever practised.

The Report opens with a general statement, emphasising the paramount importance of coal in the economic and social life of this country. It points out that the deficiency in selling capacity is to be found rather in the export than the import trade, and that

almost all European coal producing countries are suffering from the same cause—"glutted markets." We are further consoled by the statement that, assuming the present rate of production, there is enough coal to last four or five centuries, and probably for seven centuries, if fresh means can be found to work at present unworkable seams, and more economical methods of coal burning are discovered. Therefore, research should be encouraged and Government assistance provided for the purpose of experimenting in methods for making coal go further, though we have already been informed that the trouble is chiefly because of over production.

The organisation of the industry as at present constituted is discussed and re-organisation is proposed. It is pointed out that some collieries are producing at a loss of 5s. per ton, whilst others are making a profit of 5s. per ton. It is argued that the present difficulties in lowering production costs are largely the result of small-scale production, and that the large collieries are usually those which make a profit, and in consequence it is concluded, not that nationalisation should be introduced in order to increase the size of the unit to its maximum, as one is entitled to expect, but that a process of amalgamation of a voluntary character, through trustification, should be resorted to, and thus increase the magnitude of the units by the elimination of the small fry. On the question of wages they point out that no worker is entitled to expect pre-war wages, for to do so is to presume freedom from responsibility for the costs of waging the war. Therefore, they refuse the miners' claim for wages commensurate with the increase in the cost of living, because it would result in the miners obtaining exemption from the burdens left by the war and throwing it unfairly on to the shoulders of other sections of the community. This point of view is refreshing after the cant usually put forward in this connection, and should serve effectively to embitter the fruits of victory. The Commissioners say, however, that whilst the present method of wage determination is good in principle—"Profit Sharing and Loss Sharing without control"—it could be improved if there were a revision district by district, so as to enable wages to be paid in accordance with the economic capacity of each district.

The 1924 rate of wages is condemned as being too high in its minimum rates, and the conclusion is drawn, therefore, that

minimum wages must be reduced. The exact words are :—

The gap between proceeds and costs in mining can, in the near future, be filled only in two ways : by a sudden contraction in the industry and a rise in prices, or by an immediate lowering of the costs of production. The second way of filling the gap cannot be avoided. We come reluctantly, but unhesitatingly, to the conclusion that the costs of production, with the present hours and wages, are greater than the industry can bear. We see no escape from giving up the minimum of 1924 (*i.e.*, 33½ per cent. on basis rates) as at present. That does not simply mean a return to the minimum of 1921 (*i.e.*, 20 per cent. on basis rates) ; in some districts less (than 13½ per cent.) may be needed, in others more.

That means district settlements, and possible drops below the utterly inadequate wages forced upon the miners by starvation and misery in 1921 after Black Friday. An apparent concession is made when they say that the National Wages Board shall have power to fix a national minimum, which will be low enough to permit the worst district to pay it, but that the man getting 45s. per week as subsistence wages should not be reduced further, though if a particular district wants to give more to married men, and to take it from the single or childless men, they should be permitted to do so, and this process they describe as the Family Wage.

The most important part, however, is that which deals with "The present situation."

Here the whole of the Commission's work come to fruition. Here they comply with their terms of reference. For after recognising that the subsidy, in its present form, has produced conditions which were purely artificial in the beginning, but which have now become normal abroad, in so far as British coal has been dumped on to the world's markets at several shillings per ton below cost of production there has resulted a considerable worsening of labour conditions in competing countries, forced upon the workers in the endeavours of foreign coalowners to discover an equation to cancel the effect of the subsidy, and these conditions will not automatically re-adjust themselves with the cessation of the subsidy. The subsidy in amount varies from 1s. 7d. per ton in the eastern area to 4s. 7d. per ton in South Wales. In spite of this state of affairs they say the subsidy must stop and "the gap made up in one of three ways—

- (1) Marked rise in price of coal.
- (2) Better organisation.
- (3) Lower standard of living."

They provide their own answers : " The first is improbable, and at best uncertain." " The second to be hoped for." " The last is a price that may have to be paid in wages or hours or unemployment."

And then they have the nerve to say, " The suggestions of the Miners' Federation and the *Mining Association* are both rejected."

The owners' terms were, in fact, what the Commission Report actually recommends :—

- (1) Immediate cuts in wages nationally.
- (2) The removal of all real power from the National Board.
- (3) The introduction of variable district rates.
- (4) The abolition of customs peculiar to certain districts under penalties of an extended working day, *i.e.*, The introduction of multiple shift. The abolition of the six for five turns to night and afternoon workmen in South Wales, and permit demands for economic prices for house coal to miners, *i.e.*, approximately £1 instead of 5s. per ton in many cases, or payment of house rent in Durham, Northumberland, and Scotland.

(5) Optional re-arrangement of hours, which involves the conditional abrogation of the Seven Hours Act, and is a preliminary to its total elimination.

(6) Advocation of piece rates for those who are at present on day wages.

The whole report aims at the splitting of the miners from the workers generally by the introduction of pseudo-Socialist baits, such as nationalisation of royalties with compensation (which merely transforms royalty owners into bond holders), together with municipal coal supplies, new houses and electrification proposals.

The Commissioners next seek to set districts of miners at war with each other, and piece workers against day wage workers within a district, whilst Saturdays off is the bait thrown out to those anxious to participate in sports, in order to secure their support for tampering with the seven-hour day. The holidays with pay, " when prosperity returns," is a part of a proposal which must lead to penalisation for absenteeism ; whilst pit head baths and houses are merely sops thrown in.

The Commission Report is a part of the attack upon the miners as the preliminary to a general attack. Just as the setting up of the O.M.S., and the encouragement of Fascism, is part of the process of strengthening capitalism, just as the imprisonment of the Communists is part of the resistance of capitalism against attempts to weaken forces they intend to use against the workers, so is the propaganda of the Coal Owners' Association and the Coal Commission Report part of the process aimed at weakening the workers' forces by dividing and splitting.

It is the practice of the elementary and fundamental rules of strategy. What is our answer ?

This answer must be an unqualified refusal to retreat before the capitalist attack.

The coalowners' main line of approach is through district negotiations, as the preliminary to district settlements. Here the Miners' Federation is most vulnerable, owing to the varying economic situations which exist in the several districts. It is inconceivable that a reduction can be proposed nationally which will meet the situation in South Wales, &c., and which can at the same time be justified in Yorkshire or Notts. Therefore, however great the temptation in certain districts, no countenance must be given to leaders who toy with the idea of a break-away on the grounds of a particular district's temporary immunity from wage reductions.

The national minimum percentage must be maintained at all costs, for upon the retention of this principle can be built up Unity of Action upon the basis of common interest.

The Coalowners' invitation to discuss either the prolongation or the variation of the working day is dangerous in the extreme, particularly in the form it is being put forward, which is as an alternative to wage reductions. On the Commission's own statement 130,000 miners at present employed will be rendered redundant by a return to eight hours, and these men will become a menace to the local basis rates in consequence of their miserable state of destitution, due to their sacrifice upon the altar of capitalist necessity. There are 300,000 miners at present on the streets, refused the right to earn their daily bread. Wages are far too low, and there is every justification for the miners' claims to a six-hour

day in order to absorb the unemployed miners, whilst a guaranteed weekly wage, commensurate with the increase in the cost of living since 1914, is the right enjoyed by many workers in other industries. These demands cannot be satisfied whilst capitalism retains its bankrupt methods in the industry, and is allowed to keep out of the ascertainment the most prolific source of revenue, namely, the coke and by-product plants.

Therefore, the miners should be supported in the demand for "Nationalisation of the Mines (including coke and by-products) without compensation and with workers' control, through pit committees." Every trick calculated to split the miners into sections and to turn the T.U. Congress into an ally of the enemy is being utilised. Leaders are being brought into the fight in support of an extended working day, whilst every reactionary element in the General Council is being flattered into the perpetration of acts calculated to defeat the miners, on the ground that as advocates of peace they are serving the community. There must be no toying with this problem, the time for diplomatic manoeuvres is past. This is the time for gathering the whole of the organised workers into a disciplined force under the direction of the General Council, for the purpose of creating more power than the enemy can place against us. The Industrial Alliance must now justify itself by action. All power to the General Council must become a fact, it must remain a mere slogan no longer, and for the realisation of this a special congress of the E.C.s of the affiliated unions should be immediately called to complete the plans for action.

Negotiations must be seriously undertaken with the C.W.S. for the provisioning of the workers in the struggle, and all the necessary arrangements made to defend the workers against O.M.S. and Fascism. The International movement has now its opportunity to prove itself an organ of struggle. Let the General Council call upon the Amsterdam International and the R.I.L.U. to act with the British workers in this fight.

In the localities the Trades Councils should take their stand as the local sections of the General Council, by organising a real unity amongst the workers in the districts, using every means to bring to the average worker a full realisation of the issues involved

in this struggle, not only for the miners, but for the whole working-class movement. Everything depends upon the mass might of the working class. If that fails now, the engineers' and railwaymen's attempts to improve their position is doomed, whilst the aspirations of all other workers for a fuller and better standard of life will be for years delayed. For only workers in united struggle can hope to defeat the powerful forces of a united capitalism.

The Government have declared their willingness to accept the report of the Coal Commission, plus the granting of an extension of the subsidy for a further three months, subject to both sides accepting the report. This attitude of a Government such as this one is demonstrates the oneness of the Commission and itself. If further proof of the class character of this voluminous document were needed, it is to be found in the apologetic agreement of this policy by the Coalowners' Association, who see in the report *carte blanche* for their programme of action.

The sentimental suggestions are discussed as being impracticable until prosperity returns to the industry.

They say if the miners want to know what the exact wage effects are going to be in each district, each district board must commence negotiations with the coalowners in the district, and thus are the miners expected to give away the first plank in their platform.

This proposal means death to the M.F.G.B. as an organisation, and leaves each district to pursue its own separate policy unsupported by the Federation as a whole. The M.G.F.B. conferences have given the answer, and are preparing in conjunction with the G.C. of T.U.C. to resist the attack. Whilst it is regrettable that the miners have no policy for improving the miserable conditions obtaining in the coalfields now, it is exceedingly good to read the definite declaration that district settlements will be opposed, whilst wage reductions on any pretext cannot be tolerated, and that the very thin manœuvre to breakdown the seven-hour day is one which cannot be sanctioned. Therefore, it is now the business of the workers everywhere to prepare for the struggle, realising that we are face to face with a decaying system of production, and that no ordinary trickery or cajolery can on this occasion negotiate the mining industry out of its dilemma. The declaration to maintain the *status quo* must inevitably lead in the present condition of the

industry to a fight for nationalisation of the mining industry without compensation and with workers' control.

If this fight is to be won it must be a mass class struggle in Britain as the only means whereby we may evade the first steps in a new process of wage attacks in every industry.

Our answer must be unqualified refusal to surrender to the attack. There must be no retreat in the face of this capitalist manoeuvre. There must be no yielding on the national wage principle. There must be no reversion to district settlements. Above all there must be no sacrifice in wages, hours or conditions. On the contrary, we must endeavour to secure wages commensurate with the increase in the cost of living since 1914. Our solution of "nationalisation of the mines with workers' control and without compensation" remains as the sole means whereby the economic prosperity of the industry can be obtained and the miners assured of a decent standard of existence.

It remains to consolidate all our forces to resist the coming attack. The industrial alliance must be built up as a real and effective organ of working-class defence. In the meantime our slogan must be "all power to the General Council," and the organisation for a common struggle of all the workers involved in impending industrial disputes. We must unitedly demand the release of the class-war prisoners.

SHOOTING NIAGARA

By R. PAGE ARNOT

I HAD not intended to say anything about the way things are going until I had had a chance of reading about all that has happened and getting a complete grasp of the changes that I supposed would have taken place while I have been out of it. But the one startling thing that emerges from everything I have been able to read in the last few days (I write on April 15), from all the conversations I have had and questions asked from everyone I have been able to meet, is that the situation *in its essentials* is unchanged. The tendencies, the stream of forces that showed in what direction the current of events was running in July-August of last year have not been deflected, altered, changed in any essential, far less turned backward or stopped. As it was nine months ago so it is now, so far as the *direction* of events is concerned.

Nine months ago the workers and the capitalists of this country were on the very verge of conflict. The crisis was postponed; but the facts of that conflict were too plain to be hidden, too plain for even the most arrant self-deceivers to hide them from themselves. Everyone saw the facts, naked, clear, unfogged by illusions or smooth phrases. Everyone *knew* that the nine months' postponement was the period given to each side to make its preparations.

What is the position now? As it was then, nine months ago, so it is now, within a fortnight of the first of May. The only difference is that the brink of Niagara is fearfully near.

But when we turn to the actual preparations made, they appear to have been confined chiefly to one side. In one aspect after another, on sector after sector of the class-war front, the employers, the government and all the spiritual and material auxiliaries, from the Press and the pulpit to the strike-breaking organisations, both official and unofficial, feverish and unresting activity has brought almost complete preparedness.

I, for one, should not be surprised to learn that just as each European government, prior to 1914, had compiled under the

name of "The War Book" the steps that it would take on the commencement of hostilities, so now the Government have a similar Class-War Book prepared ready to be operated against the workers of this country the very moment a miners' lock-out is declared.

On our side, on the other hand, the absence of preparations is the most noticeable thing. With unflinching, unflinching belief in goodwill, good words, kindly atmosphere, give and take, fellowship, reconciliation, common ideals of citizenship, the forces on our side have been left unmarshalled, unprepared, unarrayed, immobilised, lest open preparations for a possible lock-out or strike should ruin the chance of agreement by seeming to show an intention to go to war. If this philosophy were right then how obvious is the intention of the government and the capitalists to go to war with the working class.

There ought to have been a fable of Aesop (and there may have been, but I cannot remember it) in which the sheep consult together and discuss whether or not the somewhat suspicious-looking animal, called the wolf, is really any other than a friend and brother. There would first of all be a discussion as to whether or not he had teeth, a considerable portion of the flock holding stoutly to the view that the animal's teeth and fangs were there only for the purpose of being employed against other wolves, and that granting the hypothetical possibility of the wolf's teeth being used in the abstract against sheep, it was clearly understood, and indeed the animal in question had offered to take a pledge, that he would, under no circumstances, put them to such a use.

We can imagine how Aesop would go on. "It is true," said the wolf, "that I was told by my father, who was told by his father, that if ever the sheep were to mutiny I might have to use my teeth." "But that," he added, "is a thing no sane sheep would think of doing, and so we can rule out the mere thought of my having to use my teeth in a such a way." Then the sheep said that they were much obliged to the wolf for putting the facts before them so clearly and courteously. And they agreed not to band themselves together in case it should be thought of as a mutiny.

After that the wolf used to eat them up one by one.

Well, is the situation as hopeless as it would appear at first sight? On the one hand, it is true that the main tendencies of the last year have run so smooth and so strong that, in fact, no contrary tendency of any validity or duration, nothing, that is, but eddies of illusions and phrases, have arisen to stem the rush of events towards a clash of forces, and it is equally true that, while the forces on the workers' side have been confined to gestures of goodwill, the other side have used gestures of goodwill as weapons in an arsenal that included full military, police and strike-breaking preparations.

On the other hand, there is a latent force in the working class which can nullify the whole of the careful preparations of the capitalists. That is the force of solidarity, of working-class unity, the force of a clear and immediate answer to a call for support even if that call comes at the eleventh hour. Not once, but several times, the British working class have shown that this can be done. It happened last July. The Government had not reckoned on it. They felt that 1921 was the type of all subsequent "crises" in the Labour movement. They were taken aback, and they knuckled down.

So, again, this time, month after month of precious opportunity is let slip, while every hour is utilised by the other side.¹

But the latent power of the working class to use the lesson of association and unity that they have learned in their daily lives in the factory, pit and workshop, to put it into practice in the form of a united defensive stand against the forces of capitalism, can

¹We must not minimise the efficiency of our enemies. During the last months they have scrapped the whole propaganda of the coalowners against the miners, as Lord "Jacky" Fisher used to scrap the obsolete ironclads, and have substituted for it the new, more deeply penetrating propaganda of the Coal Report. The coalowners' propaganda was a clumsy lie; the Coal Report is a clever lie. And being a clever lie it has already had a certain effect on the Labour movement. Some of those who ought to have known better have been captivated by its courteous words into accepting a cut in other people's wages.

The Coal Report is the latest version of the confidence trick. Beveridge, Samuel and the others are not merely not hand in glove with the mineowners but publicly took the occasion to be very rude to them, while the miner whose pocket had to be picked was treated in the most friendly and courteous fashion. We have all of us seen it done before in a railway carriage; but when it happens on a larger scale, the trick is not immediately recognised.

spoil all the careful preparations of months, the careful staging by the newspapers and the other agencies of our enemies, and out of a situation that appears desperate can easily snatch victory.

But for this every worker, every Trade Union branch, every workshop must make their will clear and unmistakable to their elected servants, the servants they have chosen, the Trade Union officials. So that these, feeling the pressure and strong determination of the masses, may be heartened and themselves strengthened in the responsibility they have to defend at all costs the workers' standard of life.

THE GENEVA FIASCO

By W. N. EWER

IT was not surprising that as the days passed in Geneva, nerves grew frayed and tempers jagged. For the statesmen of the great Powers were suffering from acute shock. When it was reported to Mr. Limbkins and his colleagues that Oliver Twist had demanded more porridge "horror was depicted on every countenance." The effect was pretty much the same when Sir Austen and M. Briand came to realise that they were being coolly defied by representatives of Sweden and Brazil.

Their dignity, their sense of decorum, were outraged. The impossible, the unthinkable, had happened. One of those things that is "simply not done" was visibly *being* done, could not be prevented by even the unanimous will of the Great Powers. They were baffled, bewildered, and intensely irritated.

It was worst, of course, for poor Sir Austen. M. Briand is a cynical player, able to extract amusement from the game, even when luck is running against him, able to play a bad hand coolly, and to score points even when the game itself is lost. Nor has his most bitter enemy ever accused him of being dignified. The Italians were laughing up the sleeves of their black shirts. Herr Luther and Herr Stresemann were out of the worst of it. Count Skrzynski walked on the hills in the daytime and read poetry in his rooms by night.

But poor Sir Austen suffered terribly. He is so dignified, so conscious of his dignity. Never was man so painstakingly and conscientiously aristocratic as this son of the Republican Mayor of Birmingham. He came to Geneva full of confidence in himself, full of pride in his office and in his Garter, complacently sure of a success that should crown the triumph of Locarno. When success turned to ludicrous failure, it must have been a bitter moment for him—not so much because he had failed as because of the manner of the failure. To have been checkmated by an equal, by a great statesman representing a great power, would have been endurable. To be stalemated by two miserable second-class states, about which nobody had ever troubled to

think, was intolerable: an affront to his dignity which at times reduced him to a furious paralysis.

For a hundred years and more, diplomacy has been conducted on the assumption that all important decisions are taken by the Great Powers and more or less willingly accepted by the small ones. The distinction, for all that it was then the mode to talk of equality between states, was definitely laid down both in the Treaty of Versailles and in the Covenant of the League. The Treaty placed Europe under the hegemony of the "Principal Allied and Associated Powers." The Covenant conferred a sort of peerage upon them by creating them Permanent Members of the Council of the League. It was the clear intention of the Covenant makers that these permanent members should control the League and dictate its decisions. And though, for form's sake, the non-permanent members had to be given, in theory, the same powers as the permanent members, it was never anticipated that they would presume to use them. It was expected that, in accordance with custom and decent usage, they would do as they were told.

So completely was this taken for granted that when Britain, France, Italy, and Japan had decided that Germany must be brought into the League and given a permanent seat on the Council, nobody troubled to ask seriously whether the small powers agreed with this decision. For form's sake a note was sent by the German Government to the non-permanent Council members to ask if they would support Germany's claim to a permanent seat. But this was so much a formality that nobody seems to have taken the trouble to look twice at the replies. And again, when the French Government decided that Germany's entry into the Council must be counter-balanced by Poland's promotion to a permanent seat, this was looked on as a question which might indeed provide difficulties, but which could and would naturally be settled by a negotiation between the Great European Powers. Again, nobody bothered to ask whether the minor powers had any views. The suggestion that it should all be arranged not by the League Council, but by a preliminary informal, secret meeting of the representatives of the "Locarno Powers," seemed perfectly natural to everybody. Germany raged

against the suggestion that she should enter the Council "arm-in-arm" with Poland. Sir Austen characteristically preferred that decadent Spain, instead of upstart Poland, should be given the peerage (Poland taking her vacant elective seat). British "public opinion" wanted the permanent seats kept really select and not vulgarised by the intrusion of any Power not indubitably and habitually recognised as of the first rank. But none of them dreamed of suggesting that the matter was one on which the smaller states ought to be consulted. They, it was assumed, would dutifully ratify any decision which was taken at the secret meeting.

So the statesmen came to Geneva: the Germans, determined to fight for entry in solitary state; M. Briand, determined to get a seat for Poland; Sir Austen, confident that, given a "free hand," his newly-discovered genius for negotiation would secure acceptance of the Spanish compromise; all of them quite sure that the whole business could be fixed up by a couple of days' bargaining between themselves.

The psychological reactions of the first day were significant. The Germans, finding themselves, for the first time since the armistice, in a strong diplomatic position, took full advantage of it. To all M. Briand's demands, to all Sir Austen's persuasions, they opposed a determined refusal. They had come to Geneva so that the arrangement made at Locarno should be carried out. That meant that they must enter the Council as it existed at the time of Locarno. Any pushing in of Spain or Poland simultaneously would be a breach of the Locarno understanding, to which they could not consent. The Allies argued that to insist on entering alone was to impose conditions not laid down at Locarno. They wrangled all day. But the Germans held firm. And by the evening Sir Austen, vaguely conscious that he was not going to be able to play his self-allotted rôle of triumphant conciliation, was already in a thoroughly bad temper. But the really significant thing is this—that although the Big Power statesmen had already had warning that Sweden and Brazil had very determined views of their own, they did not take them in the least seriously. They still took it for granted that, if they could do a deal with Germany, the Swedes and the Brazilians would toe the line. M. Briand went back to Paris. Sir Austen lapsed into a sulky

inertia for two days. But when, on Tuesday evening, he got busy again, he was still obsessed by the idea that the essential thing was to get a Big Power agreement, still quite unable to realise that he had to reckon with M. Uden and Senhor Mello Franco.

It was only on the Thursday, at the informal sitting of the Council members, that the truth began to dawn on Sir Austen and M. Briand. Having failed to persuade Germany to accept their demands, they determined to coerce her, or to throw upon her the full responsibility for a breakdown. But for this they must present her with a proposal unanimously approved by all the Council members. And M. Uden calmly announced that when Sweden had said that she would consent to no additions to the Council (other than Germany), she meant what she said, and that she had not the slightest intention of altering her decision at the dictation of Britain and France.

The cool effrontery of the Swedes in daring to have a view and a will of their own staggered and infuriated Sir Austen. He could not believe it. He would not believe it. The only explanation that his mind could formulate was that M. Uden was acting as the instrument and the mouthpiece of German policy. He told him so. He sneeringly recalled Sweden's stand and final capitulation over Mosul. He tried to browbeat him into giving way. But M. Uden simply sat tight. M. Briand tried persuasion. It was never contemplated, he urged, that the veto should be used in such circumstances—meaning, apparently, that it was only intended to be used by Great Powers. M. Uden sat tight. M. Briand tried menaces, reminded M. Uden that Louis XVI had been dubbed "Monsieur Veto," and that he had lost his head. M. Uden still sat tight.

At last, in very bad temper, they gave it up. But, again, their reaction is interesting. They assumed that Sweden must be the tool of Germany. They decided, therefore, that new pressure must be brought to bear on Herr Luther and Herr Stresemann. They completely ignored Brazil, though Senhor Mello Franco had already made it plain that he had categorical instructions to use his veto against Germany unless Brazil's claim to a permanent seat was simultaneously satisfied.

This ignorance of Brazil was one of the most remarkable and most significant features of the whole affair. M. Briand and Sir Austen simply could not bring themselves to take Brazil seriously or to admit it into their calculations. One pictured Sir Austen, with his glassy stare fixed on Senhor Mello Franco, murmuring: "Harrow I know, and Winchester I know, but who are ye?" Brazil just wasn't one of the countries that one knows. So they disregarded her and thereby made themselves finally and completely ridiculous. For their next three days' diplomacy was spent in manœuvres and in the elaboration of schemes every one of which was condemned in advance to futility by the attitude of Brazil.

They began, in the fit of anger engendered by Sweden's resistance, by launching an ultimatum at the Germans, conceived in the spirit of Versailles rather than in the spirit of Locarno. The Germans rejected it; whereupon Sir Austen and M. Briand behaved each in accordance with his character. Sir Austen threw his hand up, declared that it was no good going on and that it was all Germany's fault: behaviour half that of a petulant and stupid child, half that of the politician whose first instinct in a disaster is to look for somebody else on whom to throw the blame. He relapsed again into sulky inaction. M. Briand, on the other hand, began casting about for ways and means of circumventing the difficulty and of getting Poland on to the Council in spite of the German opposition and the Swedish veto. Freed from the handicap of Sir Austen's clumsy co-operation, he did succeed in devising that intricate scheme of resignations and replacements which, pleasing nobody, was accepted by everybody, but which, since it ignored Brazil, was as useless as it was ingenious and of no more value than Sir Austen's sulks.

And then came the final assembly, with its revelation that not only Brazil and Sweden, but all the more independent of the small powers—Holland, Norway, Denmark, China, Switzerland, Albania—were in vigorous revolt against the domination of the League by the Big Four. Had there been some co-ordination, they might have achieved something. But there was not. They were all in revolt, but they were all at cross purposes, pulling in different directions, quite incapable of uniting to fight the hege-

mony they resented. It was for all the world like a spluttering revolt of the back benches in the House of Commons, doomed to failure because the rebels have no organisation, no direction, no common objective. The control of the League by the Big Powers has been shaken; but it has not been broken; nor is it likely to be broken. But even Sir Austen must have realised at the end that a change of tactics will be necessary, and that, unless fresh disasters are to be courted, the small powers—and especially those which happen to be for the moment on the Council—will have to be treated less cavalierly than in the past.

How much more he has realised it is hard to say. At the end of it all he seemed rather pleased. For he saw, of course, that in Brazil he had the desired whipping-boy: that he could throw all the blame for failure on Senhor Mello Franco, and go home claiming to have preserved the unity of the European Powers. It was, in view of his attitude on the Saturday and Sunday, a singularly impudent claim. It sufficed, indeed, to satisfy the House of Commons and to avert the necessity for resignation. But the fact remains, though Sir Austen's realisation of it may be doubtful, that the really important outcome of the whole Geneva meeting is that it has upset every calculation on which the British "Locarno" policy was based.

Writing in the January *LABOUR MONTHLY* of the strategic plan which inspired that policy, I pointed out that, admirably as it was conceived, it might be very hard to carry out. "It is one thing to plan a strategy on paper and another thing to work it out in practice. Things are apt to go wrong. Diplomacy is a combination of Kriegspiel, chess and poker, at which the shrewdest calculation may be devastatingly upset."

But I certainly did not foresee that things would go wrong and calculations be upset quite so rapidly.

The whole plan of campaign in which Locarno was the first move was dependent upon the establishment of accord in Europe and of a firm union of the European Powers against the insurgent forces of the East and against the Communist menace of the Soviet Union. It was the prime task of British diplomacy to establish that union, and to establish it under British influence. Locarno was a big step in this direction. It gave Great Britain

an unquestioned ascendancy in European politics. The influence of Downing Street was paramount alike in Paris, in Berlin and in Rome.

In three months Sir Austen contrived by a series of blunders, of which his extraordinary behaviour at Geneva was the culmination, to destroy that ascendancy. From being the arbiter of Europe he has become its laughing stock. The influence which Lord D'Abernon had acquired by years of careful and brilliant work in Berlin has been dissipated. For, however much Herr Stresemann may declare that Germany still regards herself as bound by the Locarno agreements, though they are not technically in force, neither he nor his colleagues will easily forget either the attempt to bully Sweden into consenting to the promotion of Poland and Spain, or the vindictive attack on Germany when the Friday ultimatum was rejected.

And while Germany has been estranged, France has been offended. It has got neither its treaty of guarantee nor its increase of support on the Council, nor, as yet at any rate, its concessions in the matter of debts. Wherefore, French policy, both in Europe and in Asia, is becoming again markedly independent, and is showing distinct signs of becoming even antagonistic to that of Great Britain.

As to Italy she had, even before Geneva, proved herself characteristically faithless. For the moment that she had obtained her favourable debt settlement she cheerfully and cynically repudiated all the "gentleman's understandings" of Rapallo and began to pursue a policy which by no means fits in with the plans of Downing Street.

The united front of Locarno is, in fact, shattered to pieces. Again in the smaller capitals of Europe, France is intriguing against Germany, Britain against France, Italy against all three of them. The internal struggle for power is going on behind the façades of Locarno and Geneva. There will, for the time being, be no collaboration of Europe against the East. England, France and Italy are fighting an anxious kind of three-cornered duel, reminiscent of the Anglo-Franco-Russian conflict in 1840. Downing Street, having committed the tactical stupidity of allowing Sir

Austen himself to conduct negotiations far beyond his capacity, must needs devise a new strategic plan.

What will it be? Will the attempt be made to retrieve the failure of Geneva and to rebuild the shattered front? Will there be a reversion to the older plan of bringing the Border States under British influence and using them as a diplomatic and economic weapon against Russia? Or will there be a sudden decision to abandon the game as hopeless and to come to terms with the Soviet Union?

I think the second is the most likely. The first for the moment is too difficult. The third seems still unthinkable. And indeed there are already indications of an intensified activity in Helsingfors and in Warsaw and even of plans to hold out tempting offers to Turkey if she will desert her Russian entente, abandon her flirtation with France and enter the diplomatic service of Great Britain.

That is likely enough to be the new game. But it too requires consummately skilful playing. If Sir Austen insists not merely on remaining at the Foreign Office, but on himself playing the hand, the result may be edifying, but is not likely to be notably successful.

TEACHERS AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE

By A.M.A.

WHEN the Annual Conference of the Teachers' Labour League decided last December to affiliate to the Educational Workers' International, considerable excitement was aroused in the capitalist press. The T.L.L. received free, gratis and for nothing newspaper publicity which would have cost more than its total yearly income. At one jump the League leaped into fame and was accorded the honour of inclusion in the Red Lists of the *Morning Post* and the Anti-Socialist and Anti-Communist Union.

Needless to say the facts about the affiliation were grossly mis-represented and its significance exaggerated. As usual the Right Wing delegates to the Conference provided the Press with plenty of ammunition. Their ignorance and the unscrupulous fury of their attacks on the E.W.I. were hardly surpassed even by the professional panic-mongers of the Press. More than one opponent of the affiliation talked excitedly of Red plots and Moscow gold, while several dubbed as "Communist" the somewhat diluted Marxism of the new aim incorporated in the Constitution: "To enable teachers to identify themselves with other workers in the struggle to replace the Capitalist State by the Socialist Commonwealth." This, of course, provided excellent copy and was utilised to the full. Actually the E.W.I. is not a Communist organisation nor is it affiliated to Moscow. It is a Trade Union International affiliated neither to Moscow nor to Amsterdam, though it includes national sections affiliated to both bodies and others which are outside both. It does, however, include the Russian Educational Workers' Union, which is by far the strongest national section, though that strength is not fully represented on the Executive. Contact with the Russians is quite enough to account for the fury of the Press and of the right wingers. But even so the significance of the move was absurdly exaggerated. The scare-mongers conveniently forgot to inform their horror-stricken

readers that the League is not yet representative of the teachers of Great Britain. Apparently its total membership amounts to less than one per thousand of the organised teachers in this country.

Nevertheless the Press was faithfully performing its duty as the vigilant watch-dog in the capitalist garden. It is too late to bark when the invader is well inside the defences. Undoubtedly the outcry was a timely warning of the dawning class-consciousness in British teachers which foreshadows a real menace to the Capitalist system. As a matter of fact, the warning was hardly needed. The reactionaries had already begun by the formation in 1924 of a Conservative Teachers' Advisory Committee "to counteract the activities of the T.L.L."

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Until recently in this country, except for a few isolated rebels, the teachers have been above the battle, onlookers at the spectacle of the class war, often sympathetic to the workers whose struggles they understood from their close contact with the workers' children—but still onlookers. Many of them have a pathetic belief in the "uplifting" power of education which leads them to indulge in W.E.A. classes and other semi-philanthropic institutions. Others are badly infected with the "culture virus"—an infection which produces an obstinate worship of "pure" scholarship and "knowledge for its own sake." There are many devoted and enthusiastic teachers who fondly think that the schools are outside politics and that education can be neutral.

Such illusions are, of course, the outcome of a privileged economic position, especially with secondary teachers. Even the elementary teachers have enjoyed a wage and a security of tenure, which has put them economically above all but the best paid sections of manual labour. Moreover long holidays and comparatively short hours give them the luxury of leisure. Further the control over school appointments being, at any rate outside the big towns, largely in the hands of squire and parson, every care was taken to ensure that teachers were "safe" people. Raised above the poverty line and swaddled in the teachings of religion it was not surprising that the average teacher lost his contact with the working class from which he came and whose children he taught. Thus,

even when he realised the necessity for organisation his instinctive aim was rather to secure "professional status" than to utilise the weapons which manual workers were compelled to use. Even now the vast majority of secondary teachers and many elementary teachers hope rather to imitate the doctors and the lawyers than the miners or the railwaymen. Though teachers are comparatively well organised—it is the exception to find a teacher who does not belong to some organisation—none of their organisations are properly constituted Trade Unions. Finally the teaching profession has always been open to women, and the preponderance of women in the elementary schools has undoubtedly had a reactionary influence.

The more far-sighted capitalist politicians did not fail to realise the importance of keeping the teachers as a class contented with their lot, and, as it was not always easy to persuade local authorities to share this view, the central government has assumed a considerable share of the financial burden of teachers' salaries. Under the existing system—which is now to be ended apparently at the behest of a harassed Treasury—the Board of Education pays half of the salary bill. It was Mr. Lloyd George with the assistance of Mr. H. A. L. Fisher who secured the adoption of a national scale for teachers—no doubt as part of his insurance policy against revolution. The Burnham scale of 1920 was regarded by the majority of teachers, especially in the country areas, as a tremendous concession to the progressive spirit. Henceforth education and those connected with it were to take their rightful place in the community.

Satisfaction, however, was short-lived. Like the other "aristocrats of labour" the teachers were immediate sufferers from the acute crisis of a decaying capitalism, which with all its tender sympathy for the teachers can no longer afford to pay "high" wages.

The grandiose reconstruction schemes of the post-war boom period were hewed down by the Geddes Axe. Incidentally the teachers received their first lesson in the realities of the class struggle. The Burnham award had been accepted by the teachers and the local education authorities for a period of five years. It was a fixed scale, deliberately designed to provide a small but progressive

increase of real wages as prices returned to normal. It also included a non-contributory pension scheme. But before the scale came into force, the boom collapsed, and from the very start the local authorities used every loophole in the agreement to whittle down the actual wages. Next, Parliament itself took a hand. The Pensions Act was thrown out and 5 per cent. from salaries was deducted as a contribution towards the revised superannuation scheme. Thus encouraged, the local authorities had another go. The teachers were faced with a demand for a five per cent. cut as "a voluntary contribution towards national economy"—or a 10 per cent. enforced reduction. Not being prepared to take strike action the teachers submitted. Meanwhile guerilla warfare had broken out between the teachers and some of the more reactionary local authorities. At Lowestoft the National Union of Teachers successfully organised a strike, which was victorious after a six months' struggle. Elsewhere they were not so successful, chiefly owing to a lack of the militant spirit, and in several districts the scale has never been in force. In 1923 the Tory Minister of Education foreshadowed a further onslaught on teachers' wages which was, however, postponed by the fall of the Tory Government and the advent of the first Labour Government. Administratively, the Education Office was one of the few successes of the Labour Government. C. P. Trevelyan did succeed to some extent in "reversing the engines." The economy ramp was temporarily stopped, with the result that a considerable number of new entrants into the profession were absorbed after a period of unemployment, which had threatened to become permanent. But the respite was brief. In spite of generous election promises the Red Letter Government has returned to the economy policy. Circular 1371 and Memorandum 44 mean a progressive decrease in educational expenditure, which is a serious threat both to the workers' children and to those who teach them. Already the recent arbitration award by which the existing Burnham scale is confirmed for 5 years, is threatened. The award was accepted by the local educational authorities only on condition that the government grants were not cut, and in view of the avowed intention on the part of the Board of Education to economise, these authorities have expressly reserved the right to repudiate the award.

The lessons of the last five years have had their effect upon the teachers. The immediate effect was an impulse towards strike action. Even in the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters, which represents about 90 per cent. of the men secondary school teachers, there was a minority demand for registration as a Trade Union. Proposals were made that the N.U.T. should affiliate with the Trade Union Congress. As already mentioned the N.U.T. conducted a successful strike at Lowestoft.

But the impulse soon died away. On the whole the teachers retained their faith in the parliamentary weapon. Their influence at election time had always been considerable and they were eagerly courted by all parties. More than one M.P. owed his position largely to the efforts of teachers. Now they began to discover that these representatives were not to be trusted. At least one Coalition Minister climbed into power on the backs of the teachers—only to betray them at the behest of his capitalist masters. Such broken pledges caused a decided swing towards Labour, even in the secondary schools. At one school, out of a staff of thirty, at least fifteen secondary teachers voted Labour at the 1923 Election. As a result several prominent members of teachers' organisations obtained seats in Parliament as Labour M.P.'s. Dimly the teachers had begun to realise that the Labour Party was less likely to economise on working class education than the capitalist parties, and they were prepared to support that party with their votes and even by active propaganda.

It was at this time that the Teachers' Labour League came into existence. It was at first a purely political propagandist body. Its objects as defined in the Constitution were :—

To advance the cause of education by the creation of public opinion as to the value and significance thereof.

To focus this opinion by securing Labour representation on Local Governing Bodies and in Parliament.

To promote the interests of the teaching profession generally and, with these objects in view, to work wholeheartedly in support of the Labour Movement locally and nationally, to co-operate with other sections of the Labour and Socialist Movements in working towards a new social order, based upon the common ownership of the means of production and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry and service.

In practice the League functioned as a part of the vote-catching machinery of the Labour Party and provided a useful platform for a number of ambitious men and women who were intent on making a position for themselves in the Labour Movement.

In the League, however, there were always a number of class-conscious Left Wingers who aimed at a more thorough-going policy. The question of international affiliation has provided the test question between the two sections. In theory, of course, there is no difference of opinion as to the desirability of international connections. In practice, however, it soon became clear that there were violent objections to affiliating to the only existing International organisation of Socialist Teachers—the E.W.I. For that organisation stands uncompromisingly on the basis of the class struggle. It reflects with complete frankness the attitude of the Socialist teacher to the bourgeois state. Teachers in most European countries have never enjoyed the privileged position accorded to British teachers. As a result the more advanced sections are much closer to the realities of the class struggle. Indeed, in the backward countries of Europe, teachers have often been in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement. In Bulgaria, for instance, many teachers have lost their lives and others their liberty during the Fascist terror. The E.W.I. faithfully reflects these tendencies.

The General Secretary, in an article on the Third International Conference of the E.W.I. says :—

Our ideology is simple and primary. We want to organise on the class basis within a single United International, the five millions of teachers in the world, because they are wage-earners. We want to achieve through the victory of our class, the liberation of the school, which can only be performed by the suppression of wage-earning. . . . Appealing to every socialist tendency, we denounce the falsehood of the so-called "neutral" education, and assert that education is always practically a monopoly in the hands of the ruling class.

Not unnaturally, many members of the League unused to this frank and outspoken statement of the class position were inclined to shrink from too close a contact. Gradually, however, their sincere belief in the necessity for international action as well as sentiment won them over. At the Annual Conference of the Teachers' Labour League in London, on December 29 of last year, a resolution in favour of affiliation was carried.

That does not mean, of course, that the struggle within the League is over. It was not to be expected that the Right Wing would accept their defeat as final. Within a week of the Conference, individual members of the Executive were repeating in the *Daily Herald* the misrepresentations with which they had opposed the affiliation. Opposition will doubtless continue on the part of those elements who consciously or unconsciously are opposed to a class policy, national or international.

They argue that an open avowal of the class position will frighten off a large number of teachers who are ready to come into the Labour Movement. They are, in fact, in complete sympathy with the Liberalising tendencies at present in control of the Labour Party machinery—with or without the assistance of Eccleston Square, the minority may even be prepared to split the League rather than abide by a decision of which they disapprove. But, so far, the members of the League have refused to be stampeded by the Communist bogey. The new constitution and the affiliation marks the beginning of an attempt to rally the teachers round a clear cut socialist and working-class policy.

The T.L.L. has definitely set its feet on the right path, and deserves the active support of all who accept the class position. It has difficult tasks before it. First it has to break down the wall of prejudice which divides the teacher from the manual worker. It has to overcome not only the "snobbishness" of the teachers but also the ingrained suspicions of many workers for anybody and everybody who wears a white collar. This can only be done by recognising that the interests of teachers are identical with those of the children they teach and of their parents. The Annual Conference took the first step in this direction by openly supporting the promotion of an Educational Workers' Trade Union in this country, affiliated to the T.U.C. and the Labour Party. Once the teachers are linked up industrially with the rest of the workers nationally and locally, fraternisation will be easy.

The second task facing the League is the unification of all existing organisations and permeation of them with the class-conscious ideas formulated in its Constitution. There are at

present in existence no less than 57 different organisations competing for the allegiance of British teachers. Among them are organisations which are violently antagonistic to one another. Not one of them is registered as a Trade Union nor in contact with the working-class movement. Here, too, the League has made a start. A resolution was passed instructing the N.E.C. "to organise groups of League members inside all local and national bodies of teachers, these groups to meet regularly, to function as definite units of the League, and to pursue a common policy as outlined by the N.E.C. of the League."

Thirdly, the League should take up the cudgels on behalf of the lower paid grades. There are large numbers of uncertificated and supplementary teachers whose average wage is not more than £2 a week. There are the teachers in the profit-making commercial schools, who are mercilessly exploited. It is true that the League is not a Trade Union, and cannot therefore directly undertake industrial tasks, but that should not prevent it from exercising a powerful pressure from within upon the existing organisations.

These are necessary preliminary tasks if the League is to become a skeleton framework of a militant teachers' organisation, able to counteract fascist and counter-revolutionary attempts to use the teachers against the working class at a time of revolutionary crisis. The Annual Conference entered on these tasks and so definitely aligned itself with the Working Class Movement, nationally and internationally.

ITALY TO-DAY

By L. W.

THE process of political development in Italy has advanced at a rapid pace during the past twelve months and the Fascist government has now achieved a position of some stability, a fact which makes the present a suitable moment for a summing-up and an estimate of the situation.

The ministerial changes of last July marked the final formal break between the Fascist and other parliamentary parties. Di Nava, minister of national economy, was the last non-Fascist to occupy a ministerial post, and his replacement by Belluzzo indicated the complete success of Mussolini in securing control of Parliament. De Stefani, the Minister of Finance, had, in his endeavours to stabilise the exchange value of the lira, lowered the import duties, and restricted bourse currency speculations and the issue of credit. Such a policy was opposed to the interests of the large banks, and Farinacci, at the call of the *Banca Commerciale*, led a movement to remove Stefani. Success was achieved in July and Count Volpi, president of this bank, took his place.

The National Congress of the Fascist Party in June had indeed cause for the exultation in which it indulged. The constitutional opposition—the “Aventine”—had abstained from hostile action; the danger of attack from working-class quarters was reduced to a minimum by the violence which had now been developed to its highest point and had become fully incorporated in the machinery of State.

Fascism had become the State; the revolution of 1922 was fully legalised; the tyranny of the heavy industrialists could be exercised with the full sanction of law.

Three legislative measures of the first importance in the stabilisation of the Fascist political position had been passed in the parliamentary session just ended.

First in importance was the Act which gave the Government full power to legislate by decree instead of by parliamentary process. Even before the passing of this Act, the legislative

machine was almost completely under Fascist control ; the huge Fascist majority was swollen by the deliberate abstention of the liberal and democratic opposition, and such criticism of the Government as could be expressed by the Communists, who constituted the sole effective opposition, was severely hampered by the constant physical assaults made, even in the Chamber itself, on any speaker expressing antagonism to the Fascist policy. With the passing of legislative powers to the Executive, another important restriction has been placed on the power to criticise the dictatorship.

The second Act of 1925 which confirmed the Fascist revolution was that granting powers to the Government to dismiss any civil servant whose political views were not acceptable to those in power. Thus the strength of the Executive was further increased and the control of the State more firmly secured by the Fascist party.

The third measure of 1925 was the Press Law, rushed through the Chamber in a single night, which increased the powers of the Government to interfere with the publication of journals of which they did not approve.

Such was the legislation of the earlier part of 1925, which was the expression of the Fascist consolidation of power. In October it was followed by further measures expressing more openly the class character of Mussolini's Government. These were designed in the first place to carry on the work of intensifying Fascist control of the political organisation ; Acts were passed defining and extending the powers of the Prefects, and destroying the rights of self-government of the municipalities, which had often, by their anti-Fascist majorities, been a thorn in the side of the government. The exclusion of working-class representatives from local councils was ensured by a provision that members of associations " tending to subvert the political organisation of the State " should be inadmissible for election. At the same time the personal control of Mussolini over the executive was increased and criticism of his acts made a criminal offence, while powers were taken to denationalise Italians living abroad who indulged in hostile comments on Fascism.

Having thus destroyed the possibility of any constitutional participation of the opposition in the forms of parliamentary or local government, the Fascists turned their attention to the trade unions. The task of the Fascists was made easy by the inaction of the General Confederation of Labour in face of an agreement made in October between the industrial capitalists and the Fascist corporations, whereby the latter were recognised as the sole organisation of workers and employers in their respective industries. Following this, the premises of numerous trade unions and trades councils were forcibly occupied by the Fascist organisers, and the whole proceeding was legally recognised by an Act passed in December. By this Act there can exist only one organisation of workers and employers for each branch of industry and it must be recognised by royal decree. Such an organisation may be recognised when not less than one-tenth of the workers are organised therein. All officers are subject to royal approval and they may be removed by government officials at any time and all power delegated to a government nominee. Other organisations of the workers are not, in general, prohibited, but they have no legal standing, they cannot enter into negotiation on behalf of their members on matters of pay or other conditions of service, and they may have no international connections.

Simultaneously with this solidification of the formal basis of the Fascist State, a vigorous policy has been pursued to mould the psychological factors in public life to the Fascist pattern. While all written criticism is prevented by law and all spoken criticism by personal violence, the Fascists themselves put out a constant stream of propaganda designed to conceal the facts of their tyranny, the rottenness of Italy's economic position, and the dangerous international situation created by Mussolini's foreign policy.

The line of argument has varied little since the early days of Fascism, only the tone is even less conciliatory. Italy has been rescued, runs the story, by the high-souled patriots of the Fascist party from Bolshevist excesses and the risk of red ruin. Italy is recovering from the results of the war and is gradually taking up the position among nations to which it has so clearly pleased Mussolini and God to call her. Flag-wagging and imperialist

sentiment are the only arguments of the Fascists : when these are exhausted they fall back on threats and actual violence.

Another device now freely used by the Fascist government is the frame-up. Many minor instances could be recorded, but the Zaniboni affair, in November 1925, will furnish the best example. This occurred when the " third phase " of Fascism was in view and Mussolini required all the personal popularity which could be obtained to secure the acceptance of these last links in the chain of repression. Italy's economic position was growing worse and the bloody scenes in Florence against non-Fascists had swung middle and working-class opinion once more against the Government. The story is a confused and incoherent one, but the essence is that Zaniboni, a former unitarian socialist, was charged with proposing to shoot Mussolini with a rifle from the window of a hotel near the Foreign Office in Rome and that the plot was discovered just before its consummation. The reports of the matter which circulated were full of contradictory details and the selection of Zaniboni for the rôle of murderer was a tactical error : discussion of the plot was soon prohibited and the dilatory machine of Italian justice will prevent any more being heard for many months. Meanwhile, the news of a plot to kill Mussolini secured a sentimental reaction in his favour of great political value at the time.

The handling of the trial of the Matteotti murderers shows further the skill of the Fascist government in dealing with hostile public opinion. The murder took place in June, 1924. In view of Matteotti's high political importance (as secretary of the Socialist Party, a brilliant parliamentarian, and a penetrating critic of the Fascist party) the murder was a public affair of the first order. When it was followed by the arrest of prominent Fascist leaders, the issue at once became the chief event since the March on Rome. Political confusion was extreme. The fall of Fascism was momentarily expected, and many members of the Party, hoping to placate the opponents whose rise to power seemed imminent, wrote hysterical " confessions " which became part of the evidence in the trial. There followed the customary slow inquiry by the magistrature which has been prolonged until the last few weeks.

The major political personages (whose association with Mussolini in the matter invested the proceedings with added

significance) were found guilty only of inducing others to abduct Matteotti, and they were accordingly liberated under the terms of the amnesty of August, 1925. The trial of the other defendants was farcical in the extreme, and the result a foregone conclusion. Two were acquitted, while the remaining three were sentenced to periods of imprisonment which were reduced by the amnesty and the time already served while awaiting trial to a few weeks in each case. By ensuring delay and by clever stage management the Fascists have thus not only secured the practical acquittal of the murderers, but have prevented hostile public opinion from damaging their cause.

The application of the Press Law has resulted in the suppression of one of the last remnants of criticism of the Fascist hegemony. Innumerable papers have been suppressed wholly or periodically. All Socialist papers were entirely suppressed in November and December last and *Giustizia* has never re-appeared. *Unita* and *Avanti* are issued again but they are constantly sequestered whenever they deal with any topic even slightly political in character. The Catholic non-party press alone remains relatively undisturbed and occasionally is permitted to print mildly hostile comments on the rulers of Italy. The Journalists' Association has been placed under the control of government commissioners. A number of valuable clandestine papers are circulated both by the bourgeois and by the working-class opposition but the technical difficulties are immense and the risk of capture and suppression is very high.

The replacement of Farinacci as secretary of the Fascist Party to the end of March marks the achievement of a stage in Italian events, and the consummation of a definite task by the leaders of the Party.

The replacement coincided with the successful termination of the Matteotti trial. At this point, Mussolini at long last felt a measure of security in a degree he had never experienced since the murder. In the political crisis which followed this event, the Fascist militia was mobilised and it was found that *80 per cent. of the rank and file was in a state of desertion.*

This was a fact of profound significance. It meant that Mussolini could not rely on the armed support of the middle

classes, the peasantry and the miscellaneous declassed elements constituting the Black Shirt Army. Urgent measures were necessary. These classes must be rallied to the Fascist flag. Farinacci was selected for the job.

Farinacci was a member of the extremist wing of the Fascist Party. He pursued a notorious career of brutality as "Ras" (or dictator) of Cremona and established a reputation for unscrupulousness that fitted him for the task of "re-proselytising" on characteristically Fascist lines their wavering supporters.

Under his guidance the policy of repression was intensified and the last remnants of civil liberties disappeared. Simultaneously, the constitutional changes outlined above were carried through, the vigorous activity of Farinacci giving valuable aid in preventing effective opposition. At the same time, too, steps were taken to deal with the unreliability of the militia, which was incorporated in the regular forces (though still subject to Mussolini and not to the crown) and brought under full military law.

These measures being completed and the political dangers associated with the Matteotti affair being surmounted, Farinacci is permitted to retire, "his services being no longer required."

The stories current in the English press of a personal feud between Farinacci and Federzoni (Minister of the Interior) concentrate on the most superficial aspect of the matter. These two men are probably rivals for the succession to Mussolini when his career closes, and their hostility has thus a personal side. But the fact which has real significance in current history is that Farinacci represents the interests of the agrarians (always the violent militant element in Fascism) while Federzoni is the nominee of the financiers and industrialists and specifically of the Federation of Italian Industries.

The clue to the tangled threads of Italian events is found in the fact that the industrial capitalists (now co-operating with the bankers) are achieving complete control of the State; Fascism is their creation and its successive "waves" are the stages in the process whereby the other social classes are worsted in the struggle for power.

The working classes have been defeated in the manner outlined above. The peasantry, whose main political expression was

the Popular (Catholic) Party, are now largely disorganised ; the proletarian parties have captured a small section (particularly the Communists through their Workers' and Peasants' Councils) but the bulk have drifted to Fascism or are not organised at all. The Aventine opposition, expressive of middle-class aspirations, destroyed itself by its foolish tactic of abstention from Parliamentary activity. Thus the opposition to Fascism has been removed by force or by guile, while at the same time the social elements supporting Mussolini have been consolidating themselves. Finance and heavy industry now march hand-in-hand.

The efforts which have been made to stabilise the lira are an indication at one and the same time of this increasing unity among the governing classes of Italy and of their dependence upon American and English bankers. The investment of capital in Italian industry (essential for any development) on the part of American financiers was naturally made conditional on the establishment of stable economic conditions.

As the Fascist *Popolo d'Italia* said :—

The Fascist Government is the best guarantee to the American financiers that the money they are going to put into Italian industries will yield them good, durable and safe interests and profits.

The exporting manufacturers desired a policy of inflation, which would favour purchases by foreigners, but they were induced to forego their own immediate interests for the sake of the bourgeoisie as a whole.

The settlement of the Italian debts to the American and English Governments was a further indication of the necessity for regularising the exchange so as to enable capital investments to be made on a secure basis. Other factors, to be dealt with later, also entered into these settlements, but the economic one mentioned here was the dominant consideration especially in the case of America. Only 25 per cent. of the Italian debt to the U.S.A. is to be repaid, as against 76 per cent. of the British and 45 per cent. of the Belgian debts to the same country.

This leads us now to the final and supreme factor in the politics of Fascism, and the overwhelming proof of the class

character of this movement as an expression of the interests of the manipulators of finance-capital, viz., the foreign policy of the Fascist government.

Italy to-day exhibits the inevitable tendency of a country dominated by finance-capital to develop an imperialist policy. The home market is no longer adequate for the absorption of the products of the steel and other manufacturers, nor are sufficient purchasers to be found among other industrial countries. Colonial markets must therefore be secured, and a policy of imperialist expansion has arisen as the official attitude of Fascism. Behind the romantic phraseology of Mussolini about the revival of Italy's greatness, "Queen of the Mediterranean," and so forth, lie the plain facts that the domination of the North African and other colonial areas is essential for the immediate objective of absorbing the manufactured articles of the Italian capitalists, and (at a stage which is now only commencing) for the investment of surplus capital arising from the profits of Italian industry.

At the same time another factor is operating. Italy herself is becoming a colony of American finance, in the sense that the workers of Italy are to be used as a market for the consumption of American manufactured articles, and, more important, that Italy is to be used as a field for the investment of American capital. Italy is being "Dawesised." As the necessary price of American capitalist intervention, the standard of working-class living is being brought still lower. Real wages are still falling and all protection of hours of labour has gone by the board. The defences of the workers have been removed by terror and by capitalist law.

The imperialist policy finds expression in a jingoism as extreme as the pre-war utterances of German junkers. Fascist politicians and the press put forward fantastic demands for the Italianisation of Tunis, of Nice, of Corsica, of Savoy. An anti-French tone is given to all writings on foreign affairs. Liberal pacifism is discredited and the glories of war are sung in a rhapsody of question-begging phrases. War is the natural climax of Mussolini's present policy and he faces this fact without misgiving. Jingoism is a valuable dope for the workers, which the Fascists use to the full. Nor are they blind to the benefit they would secure from the actual outbreak of war, which would divert the masses from

internal affairs and harness them more securely to the yoke of imperialism, while at the same time providing markets for the products of the steel manufacturers and State loans for the money-lenders.

The policy of sitting on the safety-valve has been carried through more completely and relentlessly by the rulers of Italy than in any other country of recent years. The opposition is smashed. But signs are yet visible which indicate the lines on which Fascism will ultimately break up. In the first place, no propaganda, no jingo dope, can conceal the plain and inevitable consequences of the control of Italy by capitalists in the interests of their class and that of their comrades from Wall Street and London. The cost of living, in terms of wages, remains at a fantastically high figure. It is difficult to obtain recent statistics (an Italian journal was sequestered for publishing cost-of-living figures), but at October, 1925, the index showed an increase of 572 per cent. on 1913 figures, and it had shown a constant upward movement throughout that year.

This degradation of the workers cannot go beyond a certain point, without provoking a revolt. The middle-class opposition to Fascism is smashed for ever. No Liberal revival in Italy is conceivable. The capitalists and the workers are face to face. The constitutional Socialists, having thrown in their lot with the middle-class opponents of Mussolini, have shared in their ruin, and they are not likely to regain their ascendancy over the workers. Until a genuine workers' organisation (of which the Italian Communist Party is the only conceivable nucleus to-day) can be re-established, Fascism will remain triumphant. The question is whether the workers will assert themselves before Fascism leads to its inevitable climax in an imperialist war, or whether this catastrophe will have to supervene before the capitalists are finally driven from power in Italy.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRADES COUNCILS

By TOM QUELCH

THE pressure of events on the Trade Unions since the close of the war has emphasised the need of having in the towns and districts central bodies which will be something more than electoral agencies. The local Labour Parties have been found wanting. Their complete pre-occupation with Municipal and Parliamentary affairs, the contesting of elections, the selection and running of candidates, and so on, to the exclusion of the more intimate, and more immediate, day to day, wage and working conditions struggles of the workers, in which the Trade Unions and their branches have been engaged, has compelled the workers to realise their insufficiency and to seek to establish a wider central local organ. Whatever at present exists, in the way of working-class organisation in the localities, is largely, preponderatingly, Trade Union. The main bulk of the local movements consists of the Trade Union branches. It was only to be expected that when the Trade Unions became engaged in serious struggles—fierce, life-and-death struggles such as we have had since Black Friday—that the Trade Unionists would be made to discover the complete lack of industrial strength, and interest, in the local Labour Parties.

Hence the great revival of the Trades Councils.

But this revival has not meant a diminution in the political consciousness of the workers. The experiences and the lessons of the past have not been suddenly forgotten. The workers are not less aware of the need for working-class political action. On the contrary. The growth of the Labour Party, the growth of the Labour vote—the very fact of having had for a short spell a Labour Government—all indicate that the workers are becoming increasingly interested in politics, and that their political consciousness is being intensified. The revival of the Trades Councils has not meant a swing of the pendulum from political to industrial interest and activity. There has been no swing back : no pendulum. It

has been rather a groping towards a central local body which will be of service both politically and industrially : which will serve both wings of the movement, and which will neglect no weapon in the workers' armoury.

More than that. Events have compelled a keen all-round examination of the organised working-class movement. And, in consequence, questions have been raised as to how the co-operative movement, the women's and youths' movements, the educational movement, such organisations as those of the Workmen's Clubs, etc., can all be made to fit into the general mosaic of a single unified movement, concentrated in the localities under the central leadership of the Trades Council. Time has proved that all these movements, born of the class struggle, toilsomely and painfully evolved through long historical processes, are all phases of the one movement. They each and all have their part to play. They each and all can be of service in the class struggle. Thus, gradually, there has arisen a conception of a central local body which will gather all sections and phases together, which will unite them and lead them into action on general issues. The Trades Councils of to-day are endeavouring to become, not Trades Councils of loosely-affiliated Trade Union branches as they were in the dim past, not local Labour Parties only, as they have been during the present generation, but a close combination of all organised working-class factors—Trade Union, political, Co-operative, educational, social and so on—presenting a united front on all issues, in all struggles with the capitalist enemy. As the class struggle proceeds, so the interdependence of the various sections of the movement becomes increasingly apparent. Strikers have to be fed. Hence the discussion as to how far it is possible for the Co-operative movement to act as the commissariat for the Trade Unions.

Strikers have to be supported in their homes, and need to have their fighting morale sustained by the womenfolk—hence the need for bringing the women in the homes into closer relationship with the Trade Union movement. The treatment of the young workers consequent on the curse of unemployment ; the blacklegging of apprentices, the lack, in the movement, of the virility, enthusiasm and audacity of the young : these have been amongst the contributory reasons why the need is felt for the

youths' movement and the children's movement to be co-ordinated with and developed by the different phases of the adult movement.

The working-class movement in the localities has been, during the past three or four years, embarked upon a continuous voyage of discovery. And it has really been discovering itself. It has seen the need to strengthen the Trade Union movement, and to stop the rapid decline in membership. Hence the "Back to the Unions" campaigns, and the endeavours to establish 100 per cent. organised Trade Union branches. It has seen the need to strengthen the political movement, the co-operative movement; to bring all workers into the struggle. Hence the campaigns to organise the women and the youth; hence the quickened interest in the co-operative guilds and societies, in working-class education and so on.

From out of this the Trades Councils have gropingly re-organised their principal functions: (1) to gather together the whole of the organised movement, and (2) to use that organised movement as a great machine for organising the unorganised.

Sooner or later there was bound to be a reaction against the centralisation of the Trade Union and working-class movement generally. The big unions have concentrated their forces nationally, and have built around their head offices powerful bureaucratic machines. The Trade Unions, particularly the General labour unions and such organisations as those of the railwaymen and engineers, have become Gomperised: have established the same kind of control over their memberships, to a large degree, as did the late Samuel Gompers over the American Federation of Labour. Though the fact is not so crudely brutal here as in America, nevertheless, we have our Labour Bosses also. And these Labour Bosses exercise their control, and abuse their power, to a much greater extent than is generally realised. The employers, and the capitalist class generally, exercise a most pernicious influence over many of these Labour Bosses, both industrial and political. The National Council of Employers and Employed, the pet body of the Federation of British Industries for netting and demoralising our Labour Bosses, is very much on a par with the American National Civic Federation. The consequence of this has been that the voices of the localities have been stifled: movements—quite legitimate movements—arising in the branches have been crushed

at birth, and quite capable and useful men in the towns and districts have been kept down and out, prevented from serving the movement as they might have served it—by the bureaucratic machines. This reaction is now being expressed through the Trades Councils. The Trades Councils will, as they increase in size and power, serve as a balance to this central domination, and will provide a fruitful field of activity to the energetic and willing men and women.

When the General Council of the Trades Union Congress seriously contemplated doing something it was compelled to recognise the Trades Councils. Without the Trades Councils the General Council is like a head without its body. The roots, the foundations, of the movement, are in the localities. National unity of action is obviously impossible without local unity of action. The vague, hesitating and nervous manner in which the General Council has proceeded with its relations and work in regard to the Trades Councils is indicative of the fear the Central Labour Bosses have of raising competitive factors. The Trades Councils have been treated like unwanted babies, and have been gathered into the fold as much out of anxiety lest some such organisation as the National Minority Movement should exercise undue influence over them than anything else. The General Council will be lax in giving them that recognition and standing which is their due. It will endeavour to shepherd them along "sure and safe" channels of local futility: anything, so long as they do not challenge the vested interests and power of the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracy. It will endeavour to impose fixed constitutions upon them, to crop and shear them, to confine their activities, and render them docile, malleable and subservient. In spite of this Official attitude towards the Trades Councils, we are confident that they are destined to grow immeasurably, and to increase in power and importance. The springs of life are in the localities: the new blood, the new ideas, the new methods all come from the towns and districts. The national central bodies are woefully conservative, lacking in initiative, and increasingly subject to capitalist pressure and influence. The most remarkable historical fact of the times in which we live has been the glaring incompetence of the Trade Union leaders and central executive

The Importance of the Trades Councils 317

since Black Friday, and through the long period of the crushing capitalist offensive which has since followed. For the past five years these leaders and officials have witnessed the battering of their organisations—the flogging of them “from Dan to Beersheba”—and have done nothing but lie down to it, to accept it, with many words and much fluttering, but never a sensible attempt, apart from that of last July, to make a determined fight. And the stand of last July was more consequent upon the hammering these leaders and central executives received from the rank and file than anything else. The real spirit and progressive urge of the movement is in the localities. This is made evident by the living interest which the local Labour Parties give to Labour Party Conferences, which would, otherwise, be dull and dreary beyond imagining.

The Trades Councils are necessarily going to increase in power and importance because they are definitely emerging as organs of the class struggle. Being central bodies, covering all sections, they must inevitably think and act for the working class as a whole—as a class. They, as the resolutions passed by the recent Trades Councils Conference demonstrate, are definitely setting about the intensive re-organisation of their towns and districts by getting within the industrial fabric and establishing workshop organisations. In every direction they are seeking for means to bring all workers, no matter what their age or sex, into the movement : there to encourage them to participate actively in the work of the Councils and to train and discipline themselves for the struggle. The Trades Councils are free from that network of corrupting capitalist influences which besiege the central bodies, and which dangle place and position, P.C.'s and Government jobs, and all manner of shoddy honours and more substantial rewards before the eyes of the leaders. The Trades Councils are in and of the rank and file, are, necessarily, truly expressive of real working-class thought and feeling. As organising bodies, as propagandist and educational bodies, as fighting bodies, the Trades Councils are destined to win to the leading position in the movement, and to be in the van of the workers' struggle for emancipation.

The World of Labour

INTERNATIONAL

Enlarged Executive Meeting of the Communist International

A SESSION of the enlarged E.C.C.I. opened in Moscow on February 17. The chief items of the Agenda were:—

- (1) Report of the Executive.
- (2) The Trade Union Question.
- (3) Report of the Communist Party of Great Britain.
- (4) Work of the sections in the East, in France, America and Scandinavia.
- (5) Future work of the Executive up to the Sixth Congress, including means of increasing the influence of the various sections in the Executive.

The importance of developments in the East was emphasised by the addresses of greeting to the first session by a member of the Communist Party of China and by fraternal delegates from the Kuomintang Party and the Mongolian Revolutionary People's Party.

The report of the Executive dealt with the World economic and political situation, and the general tasks and line of policy to be pursued in consequence of recent developments. The situation of European capitalism was described in the most general way as one of "stabilisation" but it was emphasised that the stabilisation was to be regarded as of a partial and temporary character, and that it was at the moment rather less firm and well established than a year before, when this description was first adopted. This is shown by the current economic crises in France, Germany, Poland, and Britain, and the recent acceleration of the revolt of the colonial peoples. The Communist International thus continues to base its policy on the decline of capitalism, as opposed to the social-democrats, whose policy is based upon a belief in the permanence of capitalist reconstruction.

Stabilisation is carried out by various methods, involving "nationalisation of production," inflation, deflation, borrowing of capital, which have the common feature that they react adversely upon the position of the working class, and to some extent, of the peasantry. Thus in "stabilised" Europe the situation is that there is an apparently permanent unemployment crisis—the number of unemployed is at least five millions, the level of wages is considerably lower than before the war, the burden of taxation is increased, the indebtedness to America increases; and these conditions alone are equivalent to a revolutionising of the situation.

The two most important features of stabilisation then are the increased exploitation of the workers, and the tendency of the capitalists to obtain assistance from the United States. These supply the key to the understanding

of two important changes now becoming manifest in the European labour movement, the "leftward" turn of the working class, and the tendency on the part of the trade union and social-democratic leaders to turn to America for guidance. On the one hand the increasingly revolutionary working class shows its sympathy for the successes of the Soviet Republics in their economic reconstruction, and on the other hand the old stratum of leaders seeks salvation in the economic successes of the still rising American Imperialism, endeavouring to obtain the affiliation of the openly imperialist American Federation of Labour to Amsterdam, and even introducing American systems of class-collaboration into Europe. On the other hand, however, the increasing economic and political control of Europe exercised by the United States is leading to the formation of a West European *bloc*, a defensive alliance against American Imperialism. This naturally tends to fall under the leadership of Britain, whose growing conflict of interests with America is one of the most important features of the world situation. The Locarno Pact, in addition to its anti-Soviet orientation, exhibits this tendency, and it is to be noticed that the Second International is enthusiastic in its support of Locarno.

To meet this situation, the International put forward the slogan "The United States of Socialist Europe," which expresses the correct working-class policy in opposition to this spurious internationalism of the League of Nations and contemporary bourgeois policy. In conjunction with the support of the Soviet Republic and of the colonial revolutionary movements, this represents broadly the present line of action of the International.

In view of the incalculable nature of the era of "stabilisation," it is necessary to keep in view the two possibilities of a relatively slow and of a rapid maturing of revolutionary conflicts. It is further impossible at the moment to predict the course or path of revolutionary development. The present era must be utilised by the Communist Parties for winning over to their side the majority of the working class. It can be claimed that substantial gains have been made among the vanguard of the workers, and a proper employment of the "United Front" tactic, in the use of which important advances have recently been made, will enable this to be done in the existing favourable circumstances.

In the most important sphere in which this tactic is to be applied, the trade unions, the report pointed out that many important changes have occurred within the last eighteen months, principally in the direction of a *rapprochement* on the one hand with the Soviet Trade Unions, and on the other with the American Federation of Labour. There has further to be recorded a very marked growth in the organisation of workers in the colonial countries. There is a strong feeling developing in favour of national and international unity of the trade union movement, and the effort in this direction must be continued and extended. It was emphasised, however, that while the R.I.L.U. and its sections continue to exist, everything must be done to strengthen them, as this in itself promotes the cause of unity. While the negotiations between Moscow and Amsterdam have for the time being broken down, the R.I.L.U. having reached the limit of its possible concessions, the fight must be carried on by other means, in particular by en-

couraging the left wing movements which are crystallising in many reformist unions.

Much detailed discussion took place on this and related subjects. The discussion on the British situation emphasised as the most important features the loss of the former British hegemony to the United States, and the industrialisation of the colonies. These continue to bring about a weakening of the industrial position of the British capitalists.

This situation, in connection with the attempts of the capitalists to regain their former positions by attacking the working class, with the experience of the MacDonald Government and the example of the Soviet Union, produce a definite revolutionising of the British working class. The chief symptoms are: the growth of a "left" tendency in the trade unions—the minority movement and the decisions of the Scarborough Congress; the campaign for international trade union unity; "Red Friday"; the beginning of the formation of a left wing in the Labour Party, and its opposition to the Liverpool Conference decisions; the campaign for the release of the prisoners; the movement in the I.L.P. for the united front; the evident increase in the influence of the Communist Party.

Most of these indicate successes for the policy of the British Party, to be attributed to (1) the absence of fractional struggles within it. (2) The effectiveness of its trade union work. (3) The close connection maintained with the mass of workers generally. (4) The effort to obtain acceptance in the Labour Party. (5) A correct policy in relation to the unemployed workers. (6) The effective campaign for trade union unity. (7) The effective assistance given to the miners. (8) The campaign for propaganda in the armed forces. The future tasks of the Party consist in pursuing these former lines of activity and in addition in intensification of its colonial work, the pushing forward of reorganisation on the basis of factory groups, the formulation of a policy for the agricultural population, and the achievement of an increase in the Party membership.

Among other matters discussed at the Session one of the most important was the activity of the Workers' Party of America. The objective circumstances in the United States are not wholly unfavourable for the Party, in particular the recent policy of the Republican Party in discarding the petty-bourgeois sections of its members and programme in the interests of finance capital. The Workers' Party must take advantage of this state of things in supporting the movement for the formation of the Farmer-labour Party, and must support the anti-trust agitation of the middle-class and farmers. Further it must assist still more the left wing in the trade unions in particular in connection with the most recent methods of class-collaboration adopted by American capital, *e.g.*, in the "Company Unions." It must also concentrate on securing a better hold on the heavy industry where it is still comparatively weak. Perhaps the most important task is in connection with American Imperialism; the Party must take up the defence of the South American states and other colonies against the imperialist aggression of American capital and the American Federation of Labour.

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THE
LABOUR
MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8

June, 1926

Number 6

The whole issue is devoted to the
GENERAL STRIKE
and the
MINERS' STRUGGLE



Contributors include :

HERBERT SMITH

R. PAGE ARNOT

R. PALME DUTT



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[Edited by J. F. HORRABIN]

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - -	- Page 323
	<i>MAY 12, 1926</i>	
Introduction to the Study of the General Strike		„ 337
	<i>By R. PAGE ARNOT</i>	
A Workers' Council of Action	- - -	„ 352
	<i>By SECRETARY — TRADES COUNCIL</i>	
One Sector	- - - - -	„ 359
	<i>AN OFFICIAL REPORT</i>	
The Miners' Struggle Continues	- - -	„ 375
	<i>By HERBERT SMITH</i>	
Police Persecutions	- - - - -	„ 379

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NOTES of the MONTH

*Forward—A Beginning—Stronger Next Time—Lesson All-
Important—The Revolutionary Lesson—How the General
Strike Came—The Lesson of Black Friday—Towards
Mass Struggle—Leaders Old and New—A. J.
Cook—Bourgeois Calculations—Unprepared—
Dishonest Leadership—The Future General
Strike—Against the Capitalist State
—Astbury Judgment—Legal
and Illegal—Next Tasks*

EVERY prediction, policy and warning of the revolutionaries has been justified by the events of May. The Government's nine months of preparations have led to the inevitable and provoked conflict between the entire organised strength of capitalism and the working class in Britain, which the reformist leadership refused either to foresee or to prepare for, and proved unable to conduct. This conflict has proved the first great mass struggle between the united working class and the ruling class since the days of Chartism, and the opening of a new revolutionary era in Britain. The bourgeoisie believe that by their victory the revolution is henceforth killed in this country. They fail to see that the exact opposite is the case, and that the events of the past month are the greatest mass-revolutionary lesson in British history. In this conflict the forms of democracy have been flung to the winds, and the naked force of the State has been revealed in action against the working class. The unhesitating solidarity, enthusiasm and fighting energy of the workers in response has been the triumphant vindication of the working class, and the guarantee of future victory, and has proved the truth of the revolutionary contention that the masses in Britain are already far in advance, in class-instinct and revolutionary courage, of their backward leaders. That this first stage of the new revolutionary battle of the British workers should have been lost and betrayed by the collapse of the reformist leadership was inevitable. But the lesson will be learned. Even the bitter experience of defeat is an essential part of the learning of the revolutionary task. The crimes, follies and treacheries of the reformist

leadership are paid for in the blood of the workers. It is a heavy price. But the fight goes on; the miners already have shown the way. The way forward lies, not through weakening or abandonment of the struggle, but through renewed struggle, stronger unity, new leadership, new fighting methods, to pit stronger force against the force of the capitalist class and the State. The battle to-day is centred in the miners' struggle, and in the fight against reprisals on the working class. And from henceforth the whole dominating thought and will of every class-conscious worker is fixed with relentless determination on the supreme aim: **Next Time!**

THE bourgeoisie are shouting loudly that the revolution is henceforth dead in this country, that it has no future in the English-speaking world, that Parliamentary Government is saved, &c. Their cries would be more convincing if they did not shout so loud. It would not have occurred to the English bourgeoisie of fifty years ago to trumpet across the columns of every newspaper and the headlines of every political speech that they were still alive, and not yet overthrown. Their clamour betrays the measure of their fear; and their very asseverations that it can never occur again reveal their uneasy consciousness that it is only too certain to occur again, in a very much more serious form. The future in Britain depends, not on imaginary questions of national psychology, but on objective conditions. The crisis in Britain makes certain the recurrence of the struggle on a more intense scale. 1926 is not an isolated episode, but a point in an ascending scale. The past fifteen years have witnessed a continuous series of ever-enlarging conflicts between capitalism and the working class in Britain, not only because of the increasing concentration of organisation on each side, and the growth of class-consciousness, but also under the inescapable pressure of the worsening economic situation of capitalist decline in Britain, driving the capitalists to launch ever renewed attacks on the workers' standards, and the workers to awaken to more fundamental issues. All these conditions continue, and in an aggravated form, after the battle more than before. 1926, so far from being the final culminating point, marks the opening out from the old

limited struggles into a new and broader plane of mass struggle, which can only develop into revolutionary struggle.

THE new feature of 1926 was that for the first time the struggle was directly between the capitalist state and the whole working class. From this to conscious revolutionary struggle is an inevitable next stage. It is because they know this that the bourgeoisie are concentrating all their force on preparing for this future struggle, and are endeavouring to use the moment of victory in order to shackle the working-class movement for the future, introduce new legislation, make the general strike illegal, and in every way by process of law hold off the inevitable future. In obedience to their masters, the Right wing leaders are proclaiming that the general strike can never happen again, and are making "Never Again" the moral of 1926. Certainly the general strike can never happen again in the same form, with the workers' forces shackled and bound by a leadership which did not believe in the struggle, and lulled by the opiate of a tradition of passive economic weapons suitable only to the old condition of the sectional trade union struggle. When the general strike comes again, it will come with new leadership, a clearer aim, more active fighting methods, a hundred times stronger, not merely to show the passive strength of the workers, but to strike a blow at the seat of bourgeois power.

TO drive home the lesson of the events of May is now the supreme task. The whole working-class movement has been thrown into momentary confusion by the capitulation of May 12. On every side the insistent question rises up: Why? The strongest and most united working-class front in the history of this country was broken up and smashed in a day, not by the blows of the bourgeoisie, not by any weakening of the workers, but by a collapse of the leadership at the centre. The principal strike-breakers were, not Baldwin and the O.M.S., but Thomas, MacDonald and the General Council. To many well-intentioned spokesmen of the Left this fact, even while they admit it, is still "unbelievable," "incomprehensible" (Wheatley in *Forward*). This staggering confirmation of every revolutionary

warning came as a blow in the face of every worker who took part in the strike, driving the whole movement to self-questioning and inquiry. It is the heaviest blow yet dealt to the deep-seated tradition of long-suffering trust in leaders not deserving it, and to that false unity, which is not unity in the struggle, but unity in the sense of the tolerance of notorious treachery at the heart of the movement. That there is something profoundly wrong in the condition of the movement for such a thing to be possible to happen is more widely felt than ever before; and the deeper this question of what is wrong is taken, the better for the future and for the highest interests of the working class. What is important is, that this discussion should not be allowed to waste itself and peter out, between official silence on the one side, and random accusations, indictments, charges of treachery, revelations, "behind-the-scenes" details, &c., on the other, but that the broad revolutionary lesson to which the whole situation points should be clearly drawn out from it, and the practical conclusions for action reached.

IT is not a question of this or that individual leader. There is no need to palliate or minimise the personal failure that took place of those in whom the working class had placed its trust, and with whom the working class will have to settle its accounts. The picture presented by those most directly responsible is too obvious to need underlining. Their every word and act and gesture breathed a spirit of shameful humiliation and impotence; a confusion, distortion and evasion of the issues; a cringing servility and whining to the bourgeoisie; a fear and distrust of the workers; and finally a complete abdication and breakdown before the magnitude of what was involved. Their calling of the general strike without any expectation of having to carry it out, and consequently without any serious preparation beforehand, was an act of irresponsibles; their final blind faith in the obvious Samuel hoax of a "gentleman's agreement," at a time when the bourgeoisie was bringing every weapon into play against the workers, was, on the kindest interpretation, an act of greenhorns unfit to be let out without a nurse—and, on a

more realistic interpretation, rather worse. But all this personal failure was only the expression of something deeper; and it is this deeper underlying failure, which led to all these results, that is of revolutionary concern. This colossal treachery was not simply the treachery and failure of a handful of individuals; it was the treachery and failure of a whole policy, of a whole type of leadership, of the whole ruling, dominant tradition hitherto in the working-class movement, of the whole Second International. Unless this is recognised and changed, nothing is changed. The task of revolutionary propaganda is to deepen and widen the existing resentment against the particular specific acts and particular individual leaders into a conscious revolutionary understanding of the events that have taken place and a consequent constructive aim of future policy.

THE general strike was the inevitable outcome of the whole previous development of events of the class struggle in Britain. The understanding of this fact is the necessary beginning of any discussion of its occurrence and of the problems to which it has given rise. By common agreement the old sectional trade union struggle had reached a point at which it could develop no further along the existing lines. The concentration of organisation had already made every important industrial struggle a national struggle in each industry, and, therefore, from the beginning of the twentieth century, was more and more involving the direct intervention of the State in every important industrial struggle. For the past twenty years every big industrial struggle has been in fact, more and more visibly, a political struggle. Against the closely interlocked forces of the capitalist class, combined through common bodies and employers' associations, united by interlocking directorates and the growing amalgamation or extension of giant concerns beyond the bounds of any one industry, as well as by the close personal ties of a ruling class, but above all united and organised through the common apparatus and direction of the capitalist state, it was inevitable that the trade unions should find themselves compelled to draw closer together if they were to maintain the struggle.

WHAT hastened the whole process after the war was that the capitalist decline of Britain rapidly began to affect adversely just those skilled workers and workers in heavy industry who had been once the "aristocracy" of labour, and the backbone of the old reformist trade unionism. This capitalist decline, the economic situation of unemployment and "bad trade," knocked the bottom out of the old bargaining basis of trade unionism. The trade unions in the basic industries, in mining and in engineering, found that there was no basis left to bargain; and that, unless they were prepared to fight for fundamental changes in the organisation of industry and attack capitalist ownership itself, they could not even fight to maintain, let alone improve, the standards of their members. From that moment reformism in the British labour movement was doomed. The daily wage struggle had become in fact a revolutionary struggle and a political struggle. The workers could only advance as a class against the whole capitalist class. The battle for daily needs, which had once been the pillar of Liberalism, was now the driving force to revolution. The stronger organisation and concentration of the capitalists, shown dramatically in such bodies as the Federation of British Industries, and the skilful combined strategy of the wage-offensive of 1921-1924, drove the lesson home. The collapse of Black Friday only emphasised the need, and became the standing example of how not to do it. The collapse of Black Friday, and the years of heavy reverses that followed it, were the first great object lesson in the modern history of the working class in this country. By that experience the workers were convinced that they could only be defeated in sections, and that they must unite their forces in order to conquer.

AT the same time the workers threw themselves into the political struggle. Already the mass agitation against the war on Russia, which had forced into being the Council of Action in 1920, had shown the complete blending of the political and industrial struggle, natural and instinctive to the action of the masses, but fatally detrimental to the fig-leaves of constitutionalism of the leaders, who have since spent their time

trying to explain it away under formulae of sophistication. The workers came forward in millions to vote under the banner of the Labour Party, which held out the objective of a Labour Government and of Socialism. But here the vicious tradition of reformism, of making a complete separation of the political and industrial worlds, and of keeping the political and industrial struggles in watertight compartments, and endeavouring to confine the political struggle to the narrow limits of the parliamentary and electoral horizon, strangled the advance of the workers to a unification of their struggle against the whole capitalist class. The conception of the political struggle, not as the unification of the whole working class struggle, but as a process of the old parliamentary game, actually claiming to have no class basis and completely divorced from the daily struggle of the workers, could only lead to the MacDonald Labour Government of 1924, which set itself apart from the working class, and in consequence became simply a mouthpiece of capitalist policy. In consequence the workers, finding no help for their needs in a "Labour Government" of this kind, and no solution to the actual attacks of the capitalists, pressed forward once again in the trade union field to find the single leadership they needed. The campaign for trade union unity, for the workers' alliance, for single directing power in the hands of the General Council, were all expressions of this fundamental demand for a single class front and leadership. Thus this demand and campaign, expressed through trade union forms, was in reality already a political demand and campaign. The growth of the Minority Movement, which rapidly comprised one-quarter of the whole trade union movement, was also an expression of this new class principle and aim within the trade union organisations of the working class.

THUS by 1925 already a critical and menacing situation had been reached. The whole economic situation, the whole policy of the capitalist class, the whole development of the working class, was driving straight to mass-conflict between the entire strength of the capitalist class and the working class. All the most active elements in the working class, all the most far-seeing and thinking elements, were aware of this, and

were straining every nerve to prepare for it. But the entire existing dominant leadership, expressed through the official Labour Party and the majority of the General Council, belonged to the previous period and were soaked in its traditions and ideology, to the period of limited struggle, of the artificial confinement of the working-class struggle to the two limited, permitted compartments of sectional trade unionism and the parliamentary comedy, that is, to the period of submission to capitalism and adaptation to the capitalist state; and in consequence they were not only unable to see, but were fundamentally hostile to, the whole new period of mass struggle that was developing and to the real conditions and needs of the new period.

THE one new force that was thrown into the midst of the official leadership was the election in 1924 of the new miners' secretary by the ballot vote of the million miners, thus bringing a single representative of the mass movement outside into the ranks of the existing official leadership, there to carry on as heroic and desperate a fight for the new needs of mass solidarity as has ever been fought by any working-class leader: with the significant result that this one vital point gained by the mass movement became a decisive factor in the dynamics of the actual struggle and in the prevention of a surrender taking place before even the struggle had begun. The lesson of this experience, and of the whole-hearted response of the masses to a single piece of straight leadership and determined revolutionary struggle, is of very great importance for the future; and points the way forward to the revolutionary conquest of the working-class movement that must take place. But at this time the struggle only threw into relief the dominant character of the existing direction; and although an important Left movement developed in official ranks, this was not yet strong enough or clear enough to counter the Right, in whose hands the real direction lay; and at the Scarborough Congress, the decisive congress before the conflict, while the resolutions—coming, not from the leadership, but from the rank and file under revolutionary guidance—reflected a sweeping mass movement to the Left unprecedented in British

working-class history, the Right wing was actually strengthened in the General Council.

SENSING this whole developing situation, Baldwin and the bourgeoisie in 1925, after the revelation of Red Friday, determined to throw their whole strength into preparing for the inevitable struggle. Sooner or later this conflict would have to come: and it was better that it should come, even with a little forcing of it on, at a date convenient to the bourgeoisie, when their preparations were ready, and before the impending changes in the character and leadership of the working-class movement had taken place. Therefore, reversing their tactics of the 1921-1924 offensive of defeat in detail, they now pursued a policy of deliberately provoking the widest general conflict in order to inflict the widest general defeat on the working class. They calculated that, while they were making the most elaborate preparations themselves, the reformist leadership would make no attempt to prepare against them, but would to the last trust in the old co-operation, and, even when the conflict had been forced upon them, would sabotage the fight and seek only a way out at any price. In this calculation they proved correct. The nine months of Government preparations met no response from the organised working-class movement. Right up to the last weeks, and even up to the last moment, the official Labour Party leadership, the Independent Labour Party, and the trade union leaders were declaring that they did not consider the struggle was inevitable, that measures of preparation were unnecessary or need not be hurried, that a way out would probably be found, that Baldwin was an honourable man, that the Government would probably continue the subsidy, and so forth.

WHY did the reformist leadership fail to make any serious preparations? Why did they fail to see the obvious approaching conflict? Why did they cling to the last to the belief that the struggle would not take place? Because to have admitted the real facts of what was taking place, the real character of the present period confronting the working class, would have been to admit their own bankruptcy and to

destroy the whole castle of dreams on which reformist democracy is built. If a struggle of this character is inevitable, then the game of parliamentarism is over, the pretence of a peaceful transition to power of the working class has vanished, there is nothing left in front but the hard struggle of two organised class forces with every weapon, and to prepare for it as ably and effectively as possible. Rather than admit this, they clung to every shred of illusion, and refused to face open facts. This did not make the facts any the less real; it did not lessen the blows on the working class; but it effectively prevented the working class from protecting themselves to meet those blows. Because the reformist leadership had placed parliamentary democracy, constitutional legality and the rest of it above the working class, therefore they could not lead the working class, when the hour of crisis came, but had to sacrifice the working class. This was the real treachery, of which the rest was only the inevitable working out. The real treachery was not any individual accidental breakdown: it was pacifism, legalism, constitutionalism, the acceptance of capitalist democracy, that was the treachery; and 1926 was only the working out of this.

FOR this leadership to call the general strike was a mockery. They had preached against the general strike. They had sworn their eternal opposition to the whole principle of the general strike. They had done everything to prevent any preparations for it, and to disarm the working class for any struggle, both materially and morally. Their calling of the general strike was a surrender to the overwhelming mass pressure on the one side, and the forcing tactics of the Government on the other, which left them no escape despite their "grovelling." It was a dishonest surrender against their own convictions; and the dishonesty is shown by nothing more clearly than by the fact that, the moment it is over and the defeat for which they prepared has taken place, the same leaders come hurrying forward to declare that the general strike is wrong in principle and in practice, and that henceforward the last should have been heard of it. If they had been honest, they would either have handed over the leadership to those who did believe in it, or they would have openly

come forward and confessed their error, confessed that the struggle was inevitable and that the working class could only save itself by fighting, and have thenceforth thrown their whole energy into winning the fight. They did neither. They called the general strike. They poured out the life-stream of working class sacrifice and enthusiasm. But they did nothing to carry forward the struggle or give a leadership worthy of that sacrifice. Instead, their whole effort was concentrated on limiting, restraining and sabotaging the fight, while in secret they gave themselves over to shady intrigues and negotiations with capitalist politicians, culminating in a settlement of surrender that was based, not merely on the desertion of the miners, but on the desertion of their own men.

WHY did they accept this shameful settlement? Because they were not ready to face the forces of the State. This is the most important lesson of the whole general strike experience. It is not possible to take up the general strike seriously without being prepared to enter into struggle with the whole capitalist forces, that is to say, to enter into a political struggle. From this lesson the Right wing leaders are already hastening to draw the deduction that the general strike must be abandoned, that there is no possibility of mass struggle, that the ballot box is the only method, &c. This deduction amounts to saying that the working class must remain in servitude, that the capitalist class is impregnable, and that the workers can only attempt what the capitalist class will permit them to attempt (which may in consequence be regarded as guaranteed harmless). The lesson for the working class is the opposite. The lesson of the general strike of 1926 is that the general strike is not enough by itself, that the general strike inevitably develops into a struggle with the Government and the whole capitalist state, and that henceforth the working class must be prepared for this. What happened in 1926 was that the workers, as a result of their experience and the compelling force of events, had reached the stage of mass struggle, but were not yet ready nor prepared for all that mass struggle involves, and were still trying to realise their fight through an obsolete apparatus and leadership of a

limited parliamentary and sectional trade union type, which confronted with the new issues, was wholly unable to face them and could only run away.

THE future struggle will inevitably be a struggle directly against the capitalist state. The myth of the classless state and pure democracy has been smashed by the circumstances of the present struggle. The workers, fighting for bread, have seen ranged against them the whole Government and constitution, law and armed force. And meanwhile their leaders were exhorting them to remain loyal to this Government and constitution, law and armed force. That contradiction cannot continue. The leaders, by exhorting the workers to remain loyal to the Government and constitution, made it impossible for the workers even to fight for bread. The fight for bread compels the fight against the Government and constitution. The experience of the present conflict has shown that the real enemy which the working class will have to fight is not simply an employer or a group of employers, but the Government and the capitalist state. "In Conservative hands," declares one pious Labour commentary, endeavouring to minimise the lesson, "the State is nothing but a strikebreaking organisation." There is no need of the limitation. In MacDonald's hands it would be exactly the same. MacDonald had already sanctioned an emergency powers proclamation even in the short tenure of his Government. The Zinoviev letter shows that the State machine knows how to carry out its work with any minister. The workers have to reckon with the fact that their fight is not simply an economic fight, on however massed a scale, but above all a political fight with the Government for power, and that only so can they win their economic emancipation.

THE Astbury judgment is of fundamental importance for the future. By the Astbury judgment the general strike is declared illegal, *i.e.*, outside the scope of permitted trade unionism. But in what does a general strike differ from an ordinary strike? Simply in that it inevitably raises the issue of class power, and therefore becomes a battle with the Government. That is what the bourgeoisie is aware of, and therefore

is concerned to proclaim the general strike as illegal and prevent its recurrence by every possible means. But in doing so they are in fact making present-day trade unionism illegal. They do not make trade unionism as such illegal. Sectional trade unionism they are prepared to allow and encourage: it is too useful an organising instrument for them to lose, especially if it can be turned by the new agreements into a tame adjunct of the employers, with its principal task laid down as the stopping of unofficial strikes. So soon, however, as the trade unions endeavour to combine, they rapidly find out that their struggle is not a purely industrial struggle, but that their whole being and activity is carried on under the shadow of the state.

BUT the whole development of modern trade unionism is beyond sectional trade unionism to combined trade unionism and even class unionism. There is no other meaning in the whole institution of the General Council, which must henceforth either abdicate in practice or else be prepared to face what a declaration of illegality means. Thus trade unionism is being brought up more sharply than ever before against the question of law, which is the question of politics and the state. Sectional trade unionism, which can no longer serve the workers, is declared legal by the bourgeoisie—that is to say is labelled “approved,” “safe,” “guaranteed harmless,” like the ballot box. But united trade unionism, leading to the general strike, is declared illegal—that is to say, not at all safe to the bourgeoisie. It is as if in a football game the umpire were to inform the players of one team that they are at complete liberty to play, so long as they only play one at a time, but that if they attempt to play as a team, he will introduce a new rule against it. Such an umpire would get short shrift from the players; and the Astbury judgment will receive short shrift from the workers.

THE working class will need to rally their ranks without delay to confront the new situation created by the capitulation of the General Council. The workers have been disorganised from their own side, but they have not been defeated in battle. Even the employers' attack on wages, attempted

as a wholesale onslaught immediately after the surrender, was defeated on the main field by the resistance of the working class. But the attack on wages will be carried forward in every trade; the attack on trade unionism has already gone far; the disorganisation of the workers' ranks is, they hope, to be made permanent by the shackling new agreements signed. Thus the position is that the fight is still in front; and a rapid recovery by the workers can still shatter the effects of the victory that has been given away to the capitalist class. The miners' stand is itself a lead to the whole working class. When the Trades Union Conference meets on June 25, it is to be hoped that it will not simply spend its time upon the past, but that, having clearly faced the past without sparing, then, in the light of that past, it will turn all thoughts to the present and the future, and to the measures to recover the position and to take up the struggle anew. Nothing of the present defeat should be accepted. The support of the miners' struggle is the first and urgent question. The second is the meeting of the capitalist campaign of repression, non-unionism, victimisation, and wage-attacks. For all this the way forward is, not through accepting defeat and disorganisation, but through stronger unity, stronger alliances, confederations of unions, more power to the General Council (a General Council whose composition must be changed), 100 per cent. trade unionism, and a determined fight against all agreements hindering the freedom of action of the trade unions. The trade unions have reached a stage when there is no way forward save the path of mass struggle, and the path of mass struggle is inevitably the path of revolutionary political struggle. This is the central lesson of the present crisis; and the learning of this lesson, and the practical consequences for action that it entails, is the condition of recovery in the present period.

R. P. D.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

By R. PAGE ARNOT

Introduction

THE British General Strike is the biggest single event in British working-class history: so big that it cannot be described. Everybody is stunned by it. The general strike weighs down like an alp upon the brain; and each man and each section of society records only the varying pressures to which they were subjected. It makes a great difference whether society is viewed from above or below. Equally so with the convulsion in society called the general strike.

The governing class, of course, had their point of view, and a singularly united and unequivocal viewpoint it was. But within the Labour Movement there are various views, and naturally so. Clearly, the general strike looks a different thing as viewed by the victimised railwayman who will never again be allowed to return to work on the railways because he urged a foreman to join the workers and was reported by that foreman as guilty of intimidation—this man as he waits six weeks along with his wife and children before he can draw the miserable unemployment pittance; as he mingles with his retrospect on the general strike certain pressing calculations of how much his furniture will fetch in the pawnshop and which of it has got to go next; or as he casts his mind back over the years in which he believed in trade unionism and fought for it, only to contrast these memories with the bitter knowledge that trade unionism has now signed away its rights to protect him any longer—that man will have a different outlook on the general strike; will see it from an entirely different angle from that of the House of Commons smoke-room, where thoroughly comfortable trade union officials still draw their salaries of from £500 to £1,000 a year and mildly bore one another with stories of their anxieties during the nine days that shook the General Council.

No doubt the views of the victimised trade unionist are to be considered "warped" by his "unfortunate" experience. No doubt such an event as the general strike must be taken as a whole and viewed as a whole. It is true that our conclusion on it must be reached free from any passion of resentment and free, too, from the curious, if causeless, jubilation that filled the editorial columns of the *Daily Herald* in the third week of May. Let us endeavour then in this number of the **LABOUR MONTHLY** to make such a survey, viewing the general strike as a whole and taking into account both the attitude of the victimised striker in Gateshead and the views of the trade union official in Westminster.

A "General Staff"—Unprepared!

On May 1, 1926, a conference of Trade Union executives, by a vote of 3,653,527 to 49,911, decided to call a general strike at midnight on May 3, in support of the miners' resistance to the employers' attack. It was five and a-half years since the passage of the Emergency Powers Act, nine months after the declared intention of the capitalists to use the whole of the subsidy period in preparation for the social conflict, and some two or three days since the General Council of the Trades Union Congress had formulated the general instructions for a general strike.

During the last week of April there had been some discussion in committees leading to the aforesaid formulation of broad instructions. Apart from this eleventh hour and extremely general anticipatory discussions, there had been no preparation on the workers' side.

Prior to August, 1925, there had been the series of changes which transformed the old Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress into the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. These changes had been urged during the war years by many writers under the name of "The Need for a General Staff." This phrase, the General Staff, was a natural enough, though mistaken, use of military terms transferred to the sphere of class warfare. We spoke of the Army of Labour. It was an easy jump from that to speak of the General Staff of the Army of

Introduction to Study of General Strike 339

Labour and then (here was the mistake) to think that the leading officials of trade unions, if taken together, would automatically constitute that General Staff. A little more knowledge of military matters or of Marxist thought, or of both, would have saved us all this error.

At its best, the General Council could only be likened to such a Federation of States as joined in the Declaration of Independence to wage the war against England from 1776 onward, but did not become an effective United States for ten years afterwards. That is to say, the General Council was a Federal Body somewhat resembling a Conference of Prime Ministers.

These preliminary considerations are needed because of the vagueness in trade union thought as to the precise meaning of the growth of a General Council or of the slogan "All Power to the General Council." A little thought will show us that ever since the forty hours strike in the spring of 1919, an entirely new epoch in strikes had opened. No measures in the way of concrete preparation for strikes on a large scale had taken place. On the enemy side, as we know, the strike-breaking preparations had begun in the spring of 1919, had received their legal sanctions in the Emergency Powers Act of 1920, and had been carried on with feverish energy and haste in the nine months preceding May, 1926. In sum, the growth of the General Council had made it possible to *declare* an embargo or a general strike—it had not made it possible to *conduct* either an embargo or a general strike. It could declare war. It could not conduct war. There was no machinery wherewith to do it. This, in concrete terms, is what is meant by the statement that the working class and the trades unions were not prepared, whereas the other side was.

To say this is not to decry the importance of the growth of the General Council. It is only to get an exact idea of what that peaceful Council of autonomous Trade Unions meant. It was an enormous advance on the junketing and lobbying Parliamentary Committee. But it was not a body designed to conduct class warfare. Only those, who, realising the inevitability of class warfare and the necessity in that warfare of the victory of the working class, can possibly think, plan and act as a General Staff. As in this country, so also all the European experience of trade

unions and co-operative societies would appear to show that no committee arising from these movements, but only a scientific revolutionary party, can function as a class war General Staff.

Enemy Preparedness

We are not concerned to prove that the enemy was prepared. Let Mr. Churchill speak for himself. In the House of Commons on December 10, in the middle of his nine months' gestation of civil strife, he said:

The Government thought, moreover, at that juncture, the end of July, that they saw possibilities of actual trade revival. We did not feel justified in predicting it, but we believed from the evidence submitted to us from many quarters that there were good probabilities of an improvement, of a diminution in unemployment, of an improvement in world prices, in relation to our own, and, in consequence, an appreciable bridging of the minimum wage. We were also impressed with the fact that the country as a whole was not sufficiently informed about the character and immense consequences of such a struggle as that with which it was confronted. It is quite clear that a conflict of this kind, launched in this way, might easily cease to be a mere ordinary industrial dispute about wages and conditions and might assume a character altogether different from such industrial disputes. If that were to ensue, then it is quite clear that such a conflict between the community on the one hand, with the Government at its head, and many of the great trade unions on the other, could only end in one way, namely, by the community, at whatever cost, emerging victorious over an organised section of its citizens, however valuable, important, and even numerous that section was. We considered, therefore, that should such a struggle be found to be inevitable at the very last moment, it was of supreme importance that it should only be undertaken under conditions which would not expose the nation needlessly or wantonly to perils the gravity of which cannot possibly be over-estimated. We therefore decided to postpone the crisis in the hope of averting it, or, if not of averting it, of coping effectually with it when the time came.

Now the point is, that as the end of the subsidy period approached, the technical advisors of the Government were in a position to tell that they were now prepared as never before to meet and defeat a general strike. Let no one under-estimate the effect of such communications. In the analysis of imperialist warfare it is clear that the exact date of the outbreak of war or of refusing to allow war to break out is largely determined to the estimate of the situation and to their degree of preparedness by the responsible military, naval and other technical authorities. So it was in this case; with this slight though significant difference,

that the preparations were on behalf of one class, and the enemy to be crushed, the other class, inside the British nation.

At the crisis-moments of negotiation the actual negotiators are, despite their personal pacifism or their personal belligerency, actually pushed over the brink or snatched back from it by the admonitions and whisperings of their technical advisors. The voice that whispers, "no matter how things go, don't forget that—if it is war—at *this moment we can* smash them." So Sir Eric Geddes stood at Lloyd George's ear in 1919. So now, too, all the feelings of the negotiators were wrought upon until they were fully worked up to the point of forcing their unwilling adversaries of the General Council into a general strike. That is to say, not only were the trade unions not prepared, but at the very last moment the general strike was forced upon them.

May Day Prospects

On the basis of these facts three propositions may confidently be set down.

- (1) That the actual prospects from the beginning were:—
 - (a) Favourable draw;
 - (b) Unfavourable draw.
- (2) There was no prospect from the beginning of a victory; because of lack of preparation on the workers' side.
- (3) There was no prospect from the beginning of defeat; because of the stubborn resistance of the working class.

These three propositions are, of course, made on the basis of the trial of strength between the two sides being tried out to a conclusion.

From that arises a fourth proposition:—

- (4) That the only possibility of a sudden ending to the general strike was by one or other headquarters giving way on grounds unconnected with the progress of the struggle, unconnected with the actual position of the conflicting forces.

To some these propositions may not be self-evident. On the one hand we have those to whom failure of the O.M.S. presaged an early surrender of the Government—a surrender which, of course, would have taken the shape of negotiations for a resumption of work on similar lines to those suggested in the Archbishop's Manifesto. This was a view quite commonly expressed by trade union officials in the districts; and it was in the districts only that the officials had any possibility to estimate the exact situation.

To others the casualties here and there in the shape of men returning to work in dribbles seemed a presage of imminent collapse on the part of the workers as a whole. Both these views are wrong, one wrong in its optimism as the other is wrong in its pessimism. The one wrong in its under-estimation of the enemy's strength, the other wrong in its under-estimation of its own strength.

In another article in this number of the *LABOUR MONTHLY*, a picture is given of the struggle as it developed on one sector, namely, on the N.E. Coast. This makes it needless to go into detail here, but a reply on general lines to each of these standpoints must be given here.

The viewpoint that the Government's side was likely to collapse any moment, shows a lack of understanding in two ways:—

First, it does not understand how extensive are the resources of any modern capitalist government for the purpose of imposing its will by force on a subject population.

Second, it does not understand that a government only collapses when it is rotten.

The other mistaken standpoint betrays an ignorance of the boundless resources of the working class to resist the attack of the employers operating through the Government. Nor do those pessimists and under-valuators of the working class realise the nature of a general strike, and what sort of struggle it is. It is not a series of coincident and synchronised sectional strikes. This is a head and front of their fallacy; that in the literal sense of the word they do not *know* what a general strike is.

Let us go on to clear up these matters further.

Under-Estimation of the Enemy's Resources

Those who thought the struggle was coming to an end, because the O.M.S. seemed a failure, did not realise that the struggle was only just beginning. The whole of the army had still to be brought in on the side of the Government. It is no use endeavouring to discount this factor by relying upon rumours of troops refusing to entrain, or calculating on troops refusing to fire. These arguments assume that troops cannot be used for any other purpose than shooting. Now the modern army, though its ultimate purpose is to fire, or be fired at, has various intermediate uses. How far, for example, can disciplined bodies of men be used to restore transport to a normal running condition? To find an answer to this question we must turn to recent history of happenings comparable to this general strike. The most recent and the nearest is the Ruhr Occupation by the French, and the main feature of that occupation was the French attempt to break the Ruhr general strikes. Pre-war general strikes, because of the undeveloped preparedness on either side, afford very few useful parallels. The general strikes of Limerick and Winnipeg after the war are more instructive, but were on too local a scale to provide a true parallel, and the same applies to the forty-hour strike in February, 1919, on the Clyde, and to the corresponding movement in Belfast. The railway strike of 1919 and the miners' lock-out of 1921 were each restricted to a single industry. The Ruhr Occupation and the struggle waged between the bourgeoisie of France and the bourgeoisie of Germany is the only parallel which can give us a measure of the forces involved. It is true there are fundamental differences. In the Ruhr there were capitalists on each side. Again, the French capitalists, rightly or wrongly, felt assured they could rely on the French soldiers to go to any length against the German workers. On the other hand, the German workers continued to be paid strike pay in the shape of Government unemployment benefit for weeks and weeks longer than union treasuries in any country could possibly have managed.

Nevertheless, with all the differences allowed for, the magnitudes of the Ruhr adventure of 1923 and the British general strike of 1926 were at least compatible. When we turn to look at the Ruhr we discover that a general strike, though persisted in with

the utmost tenacity, *can* be beaten by a Government, which, amongst other measures, is prepared to flood the countryside with troops and to employ them for transport purposes. All this can be done without a gun, without the use of a single high explosive shell, or without a single aeroplane bomb being dropped. The modern army with the experience of the Imperialist War behind it is an exceedingly powerful instrument.

When we turn again from the example of the Ruhr and look to our own country we realise another thing, which is that the general strike was a semi-military conflict from the very beginning. In that light it was certainly regarded by the Government, who were prepared, as we know from their own declarations, to go on with this semi-military strike to the point where it transformed itself into a complete military conflict, that is into naked civil war. In that process, the use of the O.M.S. and the failure or success of the O.M.S. represented a mere preliminary stage. It is true that as far as could be judged the O.M.S. was quite a remarkable failure, unless the view be taken that the function of the O.M.S. was to provide a camouflage whereby to deceive the General Council. If so, it was less than a failure. But as regards what everyone had thought its function would be, namely the maintenance of supplies, it did fail dismally. This weakness in the Government's first line was a serious disadvantage to them, but it would have been a mistake to assume that the Government had only one line of attack or advance.

Was it Revolution ?

I have already spoken of the over-estimation of our own strength and the under-estimation of the enemy's as the second form of error. But really a wider and deeper question arises from these wrong estimates, the question of whether or not a revolution was possible or likely. This is a question to be gone into very carefully, because the working class will learn more from the experience of a general strike than from many years of agitation. Undoubtedly, the British general strike presented several of the known features that accompany revolution. How far were these features fundamental? How far were other equally essential features absent?

Many thought it was a coming revolution, none more so than those who feared it most. The fear of revolution, so widespread amongst the bourgeoisie, makes them see it afar off, which it still is. Many union leaders shared their fears; and with preternaturally sharpened nostrils sniffed the blast of the oncoming revolution, sniffed and trembled. But the workers, so much dreaded both by their masters and their elected servants, were as yet unmoved. They knew little as yet of revolutionary situations. For them it was simply a strike to keep up the miners' wages—and all other wages too.

Now there are three different kinds of revolutionary situation. In recent discussions a distinction was drawn between:—

- (1) A revolutionary situation in general.
- (2) An immediately revolutionary situation.
- (3) An actual revolution.

“A Marxist,” so Lenin wrote, “knows perfectly well that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation, and also that not every revolutionary situation leads to revolution.”

Within living memory we have not had in Britain an immediately revolutionary situation, still less an actual revolution. But now for the first time we have experienced, in the turmoil of the last few years, the effects of a general revolutionary situation. That there is this general revolutionary situation in Britain need not be argued. Those who would deny that would deny the class struggle or even the ground on which they stand.

Under what conditions does a generally revolutionary situation become immediately revolutionary? And from that become actual revolution? To put it another way, what are the essential features or pre-conditions of revolution? To answer, we must get what help we can from proletarian experience of previous revolutions. The proletariat in the last century has been rich in that experience. Its lessons were summarised and summed up from time to time by such men as Marx and Lenin.

At various times in his writings, the latter set forth the pre-conditions of revolution. In their most abbreviated form these conditions are:—

- (1) The collapse of capitalism.
- (2) A working class with a will to victory.
- (3) A revolutionary party to lead the working class.

Were these conditions present in the first fortnight of May? To these questions answer cannot be given as a plain "No." And why? Because the general strike was of such magnitude, and so potent in its effects and ramifications, as itself to produce or ripen tendencies until that time latent or undeveloped; so that as day succeeded into night and night into day during the general strike, there came not merely a transition through time but also a transformation of values. "Nine times the space that measures day and night to mortal men" had potency enough for that.

Let us therefore take our stand in the last days of April and estimate how far the pre-conditions of revolution as hitherto known were to be found in British society.

(1) Was there an impending collapse of the bourgeoisie? The answer is no. Of course, the economic decline was still like a ceaseless river washing away the foundations of British Imperialism. But within that period of general decline there was actually by April a slight upward movement. See the unemployment figures' decrease. The pound (with its foot on the neck of the franc) was still looking the dollar proudly in the face. Moreover, the authority of the bourgeoisie was unimpaired, was, in fact, never stronger. The Colonial revolt of 1919 to 1925 had been crushed. The addled Parliament of Locarno was but a slight tear in the web being woven by British diplomacy. The employers' offensive against the railwaymen had been successfully carried through. Other sections of the working class had been cajoled or cowed. Above all, the authority of the Conservative Government was unchallenged, and in the person of Mr. Baldwin the newspaper Press had created just the kind of bull-dog Christ that exactly suited the requirements of both patriotism and religion.*

* If only the Prime Ministers of the eighteenth century could see Mr. Baldwin! The old Oligarchs would laugh at the postures to which the representative of Finance Oligarchy is put. They would never have considered it necessary for "a Gentleman" to pass himself off as "a typical Englishman."

Introduction to Study of General Strike 347

Yet beneath all this, beneath this surface tranquillity and triumph, there was a sharpening of the class struggle which boded them ill.

(2) Was there a working class with a will to victory? Yes; there was a working class with a will to victory, a will to stand by their fellow-workers, the miners, and not suffer their wages to be reduced.

But that will to victory had before it a limited objective. It had no horizon beyond bringing aid to the miners and thereby resisting the employers' offensive against themselves. Whatever revolutionary ends might be reached, they were neither stated nor implied in the minds of those who were willing to answer the call.

(3) Was there a revolutionary party pointing the way to the fulfilment of the working-class destiny? The answer is: Such a party did exist, a party young and growing, but still widely separated from many of the working class by the furious campaign carried on against them by the bourgeois Press and no less eagerly by the governing group of the Labour Party. Under these conditions, could it have led the working masses along the road of their destiny? To lead in that sense needs a widespread network of local centres responsive to the lead. Not yet had such a stage been reached in the last days of April; and though the period of the strike was to show the members of that party playing a part manfully in every place and bearing the brunt of the Government prosecutions and imprisonments, though it became clear to many that only in such a party could the working class hope to emancipate themselves; yet we cannot say in the last days of April that this particular pre-condition of revolution was fully ready and mature.

Thus it may be said that within the limits of working-class experience the known pre-requisites of a fully-developed revolutionary situation were not present in April, 1926. Does this mean that we answer the question "Was it revolution?" by a complete and categorical negative? By no means. To bind oneself at the end of April to an idea that a revolutionary situation, in the full sense of the word, was impossible, would have been completely non-Marxist and would have revealed only Marxist pedantry. It is true that for the reasons we have given a revolu-

tion was extremely unlikely: that the odds were heavily against it happening at this particular spring. So much is scientific calculation. But for anyone to hold up their hand to the advancing working class and say "Not yet! Not yet! my monthly prognostications forbid it! I have set my astrolabe and the conjunction of Mars and Saturn is not arrived. I have cast the horoscope of revolution, and its hour has not yet come"—for any Marxist to say these things is to prove himself not an astronomer scientist of the social skies but a mere astrologer and charlatan, whose pedantry in practice leads him into the same camp as those who were bawling "Constitutionalism" louder than the bourgeoisie.

What Happens in a General Strike?

This brings us to the opposite and much more serious error of those who under-estimate their own forces and over-estimate those of the enemy. It is a more serious error because optimism is cured and tamed by experience ; while pessimism, especially at the centre, is like a gnawing canker that may waste everything.

What is the fundamental source of this error? First of all, those who thus under-estimate clearly have no notion or vision of what a general strike must mean. They think, as has been said above, a general strike is no more than a series of coincident and synchronised sectional strikes. But just as any social whole is more than the sum total of its parts, so the forces of the working class revealed in a general strike is infinitely, enormously, more than the separate forces of the various unions all added together.

Take no more than a double component of the general strike in the shape of the miners and road transport workers. A strike of miners is one thing, a strike of road transport workers is another. A strike of the two together is certainly more than the sum of their separate efforts. Look at it this way. A miners' strike is a passive strike, or rather, it has been so in the past. They fold their arms. No O.M.S., no scion of a noble family is going to go down the shaft. The sacred battalions of plus fours under no circumstances are going to hew coal. But the whole army of blacklegs is ready to volunteer as chauffeurs ; and picketing, unnecessary in the case of the miners, is vital to the success of a transport strike. Let the

miners add their powers of picketing to those of the transport workers and the accession of strength to the strikers is very great indeed.

From this one example it is possible to judge how great are the resources of the working class called forth by a *general* strike. All unprepared as the trade unions were, nay, taken aback by the general strike, nevertheless the workers rallied to the support of the miners and began in place after place to build up an organisation. Into the minds of millions of men there began to creep a feeling that since the legally constituted authorities were fighting against them, they must of themselves begin to make arrangements to get things done, to put things through, in a word to *organise*. Things had to be done, and men and women in millions began to think of doing what was needed.

Contrast this with the ordinary strike, national or local. The other trade unionists, through their branches, or by individual contributions, help in one way or another, when the call is made upon them ; and think little more about it until the next call comes. They maintain the trade union principle not to touch "black" work. They may "in sympathy" come out here or there to support their mates. But in the main it is true that they rely on all the ordinary legal institutions carrying on as before ; and on capitalism doing everything for them. It is still their mother, their father and their God. At ordinary times, then, there is little scope for proletarian initiative. Such initiative as is shown by individuals or small sections is carefully canalised into the channels of Local and National capitalist electoral bodies ; is carefully trained in "the art of Government"—even up to the point where a Labour man can be trained to say with bland conviction that the "House of Commons is the best club in London."

How well the bourgeoisie have learned to apply Lord Sherbrooke's bitter maxim, "we must educate our masters !"

A general strike changes all that. It calls forth working-class initiative into new channels—channels that have not been carefully hollowed out aforetime by the shaping hand of the bourgeoisie. Men, and women too, do things not because their fathers did them or the class above them did them, but because they want or need to do them. An enormous liberation of energy begins—but

slowly—very slowly. It takes days before the workers begin to put off sleep and arise from slumber. Many of their own elected servants help to keep them chained in the habits of the time before there was a general strike.

Moreover, this first general strike was called not because there was an irresistible molecular movement, a bursting asunder of habits and a craving after immediate action for their fellows and in their own behoof. No. This was a general strike, with a limited horizon, and all action had to take place through the legally constituted bodies of the Trade Unions. Spontaneity did not appear, to begin with, to any large extent. Discipline was more evident. But enough has been said to show that a general strike calls up forces hitherto unsuspected in the working class. Our pessimists have no ground for their grouching and their tremors.

How does this general consideration work out in detail? In this way: after the first few days have passed and as working-class initiative develops, each day that the strike goes on makes the working-class side stronger and stronger. The forces of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, are strictly limited. They can be reckoned up beforehand with exactitude. They may not be brought into play all at once. But there are no unknown resources. In the working class, on the other hand, each day after the first few days have passed reveals new and unsuspected virtues or abilities. The general movement of the working class is gathering momentum all the time, irrespective of what additional (quantity) mobilisations are taking place or further resources being called forth.

A general strike cannot take place without casualties on both sides. The word "casualties," for the moment, I am using in a very restricted sense. I mean on the side of the Government such failures as partial breakdowns of the O.M.S.; on the workers' side by the return to their job of sections of the men on strike. These casualties are certain. They have to be allowed for; but until they assume the very highest proportion, they have little influence on the total effect of a movement which is actually gathering momentum from day to day. Even if no reserves are called forth, the dribblets back are more than nullified.

Can we say when the maximum effect of this gathering momentum will be reached? No, we cannot. But though we

cannot name the maximum we can, as the result of the experience in the localities, say with the utmost definiteness that on the ninth day of this last general strike the maximum had not yet nearly been attained. Remember it is not a question simply of the amount of men on the field. It is a question of the development to the full stretch of the working-class effort, only gradually released from its thralldom of customary subservience to the capitalist order.

So much for erroneous under-estimates of working-class forces in a general strike.

In the whole of the above section, beginning with the four propositions and followed by the arguments dealing with mistaken estimates of a general strike, two important factors have been left out of account. It was necessary to leave them out in order to have that abstract presentation of the argument through which alone clarity can be attained. For this reason also the propositions and the arguments were presented as they might appear to an observer making his reckonings in the latter part of April, 1926.

The abstraction was made partly by withdrawing from consideration the past record and political outlook of the members of the General Council, to whom, by an overwhelming vote, the Trade Unions of this country had committed the charge of the General Strike. This factor is at any time of great importance. It is allowed for in the fourth proposition on page 341.

The abstraction was also made by the further process of leaving out of account all consideration of force, of questions of what the State and the employers would do in order to break the strike by violence and intimidation. It will be remembered that in drawing the comparisons with the Ruhr Occupation I expressly dealt with the army only as an instrument for the Maintenance of Supplies and not as an instrument by whose bayonets, machine guns, tanks, aeroplane bombs, &c., &c., the will of a Government is imposed on subject population. Now of course this question enters very definitely into any consideration of the general strike. It is one that has to be faced ; if it is not faced then so much the worse for us. But it will be sufficient to discuss this question—which is nothing less than the question, “ Can a general strike succeed against the armed forces of the Crown? ”—in some future issue of this magazine.

A WORKERS' COUNCIL OF ACTION

By THE SECRETARY — TRADES COUNCIL

ON the afternoon of Sunday, May 2, 1926, the Trade Union Council sent forth the usual preparatory telegrams to the Unions that would be immediately affected by a general stoppage. Late on Sunday night a representative of the General Council who had been spending the time "trying to find a formula" received an ultimatum, a letter from the Prime Minister forcing the general stoppage. Accordingly on Monday, May 3, the strike telegrams were sent all over the country and the whole of "the first line," comprising amongst others heavy industry, transport, building and printing, were ordered to cease work. Above and beyond this, the only instructions or lines of action, the only orders of the day known to the workers, were comprised in the following meagre set of decisions:—

Trades Union Congress General Council

THE MINING SITUATION

PROPOSALS FOR CO-ORDINATED ACTION OF TRADE UNIONS

[It should be understood that memoranda giving detailed instructions will be issued as required.]

(1) SCOPE

The Trades Union Congress General Council and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain having been unable to obtain a satisfactory settlement of the matters in dispute in the coal-mining industry, and the Government and the mineowners having forced a lock-out, the General Council, in view of the need for co-ordinated action on the part of affiliated unions in defence of the policy laid down by the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, directs as follows:—

TRADES AND UNDERTAKINGS TO CEASE WORK

Except as hereinafter provided, the following trades and undertakings shall cease work as and when required by the General Council:—

Transport, including all affiliated unions connected with Transport, *i.e.*, railways, sea transport, docks, wharves, harbours, canals, road transport, railway repair shops and contractors for railways, and all unions connected with the maintenance of, or equipment, manufacturing, repairs, and groundsmen employed in connection with air transport.

Printing Trades, including the Press.

PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRIES

(a) *Iron and Steel.*

(b) *Metal and Heavy Chemicals Group.*—Including all metal workers and other workers who are engaged, or may be engaged, in installing alternative plant to take the place of coal.

Building Trade.—All workers engaged on building, except such as are employed definitely on housing and hospital work, together with all workers engaged in the supply of equipment to the building industry, shall cease work.

Electricity and Gas.—The General Council recommend that the Trade Unions connected with the supply of electricity and gas shall co-operate with the object of ceasing to supply power. The Council request that the Executives of the Trade Unions concerned shall meet at once with a view to formulating a common policy.

Sanitary Services.—The General Council direct that sanitary services be continued.

Health and Food Services.—The General Council recommend that there should be no interference in regard to these, and that the Trade Unions concerned should do everything in their power to organise the distribution of milk and food to the whole of the population.

With regard to hospitals, clinics, convalescent homes, sanatoria, infant welfare centres, maternity homes, nursing homes, schools, the General Council direct that affiliated unions take every opportunity to ensure that food, milk, medical and surgical supplies shall be efficiently provided.

(2) TRADE UNION DISCIPLINE

(a) The General Council direct that, in the event of Trade Unionists being called upon to cease work, the Trade Unions concerned shall take steps to keep a daily register to account for every one of their members. It should be made known that any workers called upon to cease work should not leave their own district, and by following another occupation, or the same occupation in another district, blackleg their fellow workers.

(b) The General Council recommend that the actual calling out of the workers should be left to the unions, and instructions should only be issued by the accredited representatives of the unions participating in the dispute.

(3) TRADES COUNCILS

The work of the Trades Councils in conjunction with the local officers of the Trade Unions actually participating in the dispute, shall be to assist in carrying out the foregoing provisions, and they shall be charged with the responsibility of organising the Trade Unionists in dispute in the most effective manner for the preservation of peace and order.

(4) INCITEMENT TO DISORDER AND SPIES

A strong warning must be issued to all localities that any person found inciting the workers to attack property, or inciting the workers to riot, must be dealt with immediately. It should be pointed out that our opponents will in all probability employ persons to act as spies and others to use violent language in order to incite the workers to disorder.

(5) TRADE UNION AGREEMENTS

The General Council further direct that the Executives of the Unions concerned shall definitely declare that in the event of any action being taken and Trade Union agreements being placed in jeopardy, it be definitely agreed that there will be no general resumption of work until those agreements are fully recognised.

(6) PROCEDURE

(a) These proposals shall be immediately considered by the Executives of the Trade Unions concerned in the stoppage, who will at once report as to whether they will place their powers in the hands of the General Council and carry out the instructions which the General Council may issue from time to time concerning the necessary action and conduct of the dispute.

(b) And, further, that the Executives of all other affiliated unions are asked to report at once as to whether they will place their powers in the hands of the General Council and carry out the instructions of the General Council from time to time, both regarding the conduct of the dispute and financial assistance.

A. PUGH, Chairman.

April 30, 1926.

WALTER M. CITRINE, Acting Secretary.

How exactly were these instructions, so broad and general in their lines, to be interpreted to meet the differing circumstances of each particular place and trade? And who was to do the interpreting? And how were the hundred and one things not mentioned in the Circular to be looked after? And by what machinery? And under what authority?

These were the questions suddenly arising before the Trade Unionists of Great Britain during that opening week-end of May.

How they were answered it is not possible to say. Full reports are not yet available. But we can say that in some few places they were content to leave the questions unanswered; at first in a vague feeling that the general strike could not possibly be about to take place; and thereafter in a pathetic expectation of the hourly arrival of detailed instructions from Eccleston Square, instructions that never came. In others, and these the majority, the trade unionists did what they could pending the arrival of instructions. They set up strike machinery, made arrangements for joint working of all trades, and began in one locality after another to do as best they might the preparatory work needed.

It was an attempt to cover the work of months and years in a couple of days.

The best way to get a picture of how and whither the workers

were moving in the towns and villages of Great Britain during the opening days is to set forth the plans and preparations of one particular locality. It is not perhaps typical of the whole. Others may have been better prepared. Many were certainly less well prepared. But nevertheless, in the first days of May the working class throughout Britain were moving along lines similar to those of this particular locality.

In this locality of _____, the local Trades and Labour Council had called a meeting of all its delegates for the Sunday evening, May 2 ; and had invited thereto all other sections and representatives of all working-class organisations, including members of Co-operative Boards of Management, officers of the Women's Co-operative Guild, and of the women's section of the Labour Party, representatives of the Communist Party and the Plebs League, Labour Guardians, Labour Councillors and County Councillors.

A plan of campaign was put before the meeting, which after brief discussion accepted the plans and constituted itself a Council of Action.

PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

Preamble.—No time to be spent to-night on discussion of *purpose* of strike (to aid the miners) or origin or possible ending or national aspect or international aspect. Not concerned for next few days with any wider horizons : concerned only with concentrating on our limited objective.

Objective.—To defeat the Civil Commissioner appointed for _____ Region. The Civil Commissioner is appointed by the Government and is armed with the Emergency Powers Act in order to break the strike. Our immediate aim is to prevent him doing that in this town. But in order to do that effectually we must offer a resistance throughout the whole region over which he has been given plenary powers. That is, we must defeat the Civil Commissioner and all his strike-breaking apparatus.

The E.P.A. Apparatus.—The apparatus of a regional Civil Commission comprises :—

- (1) The arrangements and organisation built up by the Ministry of Health during the last nine months.

- (2) The arrangements and special organisation prepared by the Home Office.
- (3) The plans and arrangements devised by the War Office, Admiralty and Air Force.
- (4) Sundry other arrangements and organisations provided or prepared by Government Departments and placed under his jurisdiction.

That is to say, there will be concentrated against the strikers in the ———— Region the whole of the Civil and Military institutions that are under central control ; and also the civil institutions usually classed as Local Government.

With regard to the last of these it remains to be seen whether he would be able to make the full use of them that he would wish.

The Strike-Breakers' Man-Power.—The actual bodies of men at the disposal of the Civil Commissioner are :—

- (1) Local and national Government Officials.
- (2) The Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies.
- (3) Various other strike-breaking bodies, composed mainly of middle-class persons.
- (4) The Fascisti, one of whose organisations had entered into an arrangement with the O.M.S.
- (5) The Special Constabulary, in which it was likely many of the Fascisti would enrol.
- (6) The Special Civil Constabulary, a body of armed men with steel helmets organised solely for the purpose of coping with the strike.
- (7) The regular County and Borough Police Forces.
- (8) The Army, the Navy and the Air Force, equipped with tanks, machine guns, submarines, torpedo boat and aeroplanes.

Working-Class Machinery.—To meet all this we must improvise. The improvised machinery must be simple, easy to throw up, all inclusive. All activities in each locality should be centralised in a single body to be called Council of Action, Strike Committee, Trades Council or what you will : all such bodies should be linked up and centralised in the county capital town under a body responsible for the whole region.

Councils of Action.—The first task: To-night's meeting should set up a Council of Action and plan out all the machinery and all the tasks for the locality.

The second task is to set up replicas of this Council of Action in every corresponding locality throughout the various counties, so as to make a network of Council of Actions linked up with a

central directing body whose authority and scope on our side would exactly answer to the Civil Commissioner.

The Regional Authority.—The third task is to assemble the district officers of Trade Unions, men who by experience and routine are capable of thinking in terms of the counties as a single whole. In certain unions there will not exist any such divisional officers or regional committee. In such case recourse must be had to other units of the organisation until such time as formal arrangements can be entered into and a formal constitution drawn up. Meantime an assembling of district or divisional officers will in itself constitute a body of sufficient experience and make sufficient pooling of authority to do the work effectively.

Special Newspaper.—Task No. 1 can be solved to-night. The other two tasks, the building of district authority and a network of local bodies must be solved mainly by the printing and scattering broadcast of a special strike newspaper.

Strike Bulletin.—This strike bulletin should appear each day during the strike, but it will have two purposes ; it will have one purpose up to the moment the general strike is declared and another purpose thereafter. Its purpose up to the moment of the declaring of the general strike is precisely this—to organise the whole of our counties in Councils of Action and to link up the organisation in a regional authority. It is impossible to send speakers all over the counties or to do anything else than to print this bulletin and spread it by despatch riders. In this way only can the necessary machinery be rapidly improvised.

Tasks of Councils of Action.—The Council of Action will have a number of tasks for which Sub-Committees should be set up. These will include :—

- Communications (Despatch Riders, &c.)
- Feeding Centres.
- Food and Transport.
- Co-operative Societies.
- Local Government.
- Sports (to serve a double purpose).
- Defence Corps.
- Picketing.

Permits.

Organisation of Women.

Publicity : (a) Local Stencils, (b) Other publicity.
Information.

Local Government.—The Urban District Councils, &c., are not necessarily to be handed over to the Civil Commission in their entirety. A struggle may take place for the possession of the machinery of such authority as is possessed by Boards of Guardians or Urban District Councils. It may be possible to impede the operations of the Civil Commissioner and his officers under the E.P.A. ; perhaps even to transform part at any rate of the Urban District Council into strike machinery.

Food and Transport.—The T.U.C. instructions for the general strike, if and when it should come off, include the provision of Food Transport and Health Services. Whatever the intention of the General Council in laying down this instruction, it is clear that on this point depends the success of the general strike. Whoever handles and transports food, that same person controls food : whoever controls food will find the “ neutral ” part of the population rallying to their side. Who feeds the people wins the strike ! The problem of the general strike can be focussed down to one thing—the struggle for food control.

Morale.—All these activities and all this machinery needed for these activities are designed for the purpose of defeating the Civil Commissioner’s attempt to break the general strike. But they have another object. That is the building up of our own morale both locally and nationally, and the breaking down of the enemy’s morale both locally and nationally. Every officer who reports that picketing has stopped his transport, every military officer who reports that he cannot trust his men to act against the strikers because of effective fraternisation, is a means by which when the report has filtered through to Whitehall the morale of the Chief Civil Commissioner, and thence of the Cabinet, is impaired and weakened.

ONE SECTOR

An Account of the Proceedings of the Northumberland and Durham General Council and Joint Strike Committee

[We give below the text, complete except for a few unimportant omissions, of this official report, presented to and accepted by the Northumberland and Durham General Council on May 20.]

AS a result of an informal meeting on Monday evening, May 3, 1926, at the offices of the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, Newcastle-on-Tyne, the possibility of setting up some co-ordinating Committee for the conduct of the general strike in the Durham and Northumberland area (the area of the Civil Commissioner), was discussed, and it was agreed to summon a meeting of representatives of other Unions for the next day (Tuesday, May 4).

On the Tuesday afternoon a meeting of the various Trade Union representatives was held in the offices of the N.U.D.A.W., 47 Leazes Terrace, Newcastle, at 2.30 p.m. It was agreed that Mr. James White, Area Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, be elected to the Chair, and Mr. Charles R. Flynn, Northern Divisional Officer, N.U.D.A.W., be elected Secretary.

At this initial meeting the following Unions were represented :—

Northumberland Miners' Association
Northumberland Colliery Mechanics' Association
National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers
Transport and General Workers' Union
National Union of Sailors and Firemen
Shop Assistants Union
National Union of General and Municipal Workers
Boilermakers' Union
Federation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades
Railway Clerks' Association
National Union of Railwaymen
Builders' Federation

together with the :—

Gateshead Labour Party and Trades Council
Newcastle Trades Council.

Mr. Will Lawther (a member of the Durham County Miners' Federation Board, and also Executive member of the National Labour Party) unofficially represented the Durham Miners' Association. Mr. R. Page Arnot (Director of the Labour Research Dept.) was also present.

The Chairman, Mr. James White, outlined the purpose of the meeting, and the organisation that it was proposed to form ; he stressed the need for co-ordination of the various activities that would have to be undertaken under the directions of the General Council and the instructions of the Executives of the National Trade Unions.

After a statement had been given of the position of each Union in relation to the general strike, which had then been in process for some fifteen hours, it was agreed, on the motion of Flynn, seconded by Ebby Edwards, to form a local General Council to cover the Northumberland and Durham area, with two representatives from each Trade Union.

It was agreed in addition to appoint a Strike Committee composed of one representative from each Trade Union, or Group of Trade Unions, on Strike or locked out.

Sub-Committees were suggested both for the General Council and the Joint Strike Committee as follows :—

GENERAL COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEES : Publishing, Propaganda, Demonstration and Entertainment, Ways and Means, &c., &c.
JOINT STRIKE COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEES: Transport Problems, Permits, Food Supplies, Picketing.

The General Council and the Joint Strike Committee were given power of co-optation and Mr. R. Page Arnot was co-opted on to both.

The first meeting of the Joint Strike Committee was decided for that evening at 7 o'clock, and it was settled that the General Council should meet daily at the Burt Hall, Northumberland Road, Newcastle, at 3 p.m.

The meeting terminated with the first hint of the difficulties of

a general strike in the shape of a complaint that miners' clubs faced with a drink shortage were sending in motors for beer whilst transport workers were out on strike.

FIRST MEETING OF STRIKE COMMITTEE

(Tuesday, May 4, 1926)

THE Joint Strike Committee met on the Tuesday evening. Nearly everybody present had a set of telegraphic instructions issued from the various Trade Union head offices which had to be co-ordinated with the sometimes conflicting instructions from other head offices. So far was it from being a question of putting previously prepared plans into action that the Committee were forced to spend the evening in problems of simple co-ordination. In short, by that Tuesday evening the improvised machinery had not yet begun to function as far as the conduct of the general strike was concerned.

Another instance of this was the question of Sub-Committees. The meeting on the Tuesday afternoon had agreed to various Sub-Committees being set up by the Strike Committee. But Sub-Committees must necessarily proceed from a body whose own movements have attained some degree of simple co-ordination, whose members know one another, and whose machinery has been tried and tested. The Strike Committee was not in this position! It could not set up Sub-Committees on points where so far it was not yet known whether the various Unions might not turn out to have conflicting regulations or policies. Under such circumstances Sub-Committees would simply have resulted in doubling the discussion on each problem, with an added amount of friction in each case. Accordingly the Strike Committee decided to set up no Sub-Committees but to deal with each question itself. This meant, of course, an enormous accumulation of work. It meant that within a few days the Committee began to sit in the morning, and to continue from morning to afternoon, evening and midnight. It resulted further in the concentration of all activities in the hands of the Strike Committee (*e.g.*, all permits were latterly centralised in the hands of the Joint Strike Committee and issued only under the signatures of its Chairman and Secretary), who thus learned to handle each problem, to know one another

by participating in common discussion and decisions, and finally to get the measure of what was important and what was relatively unimportant.

By the end of the first five days a stage had been reached where the Committee could confidently begin the process of decentralisation and a measure of this was already in operation when the strike was called off.

An example of the need for simple co-ordination in interpreting the General Council and Union Executive instructions was the following instance :—One Transport Union on the first day of the general strike had called out all men concerned with the transport of food but had given permits for the transport of building materials ; another Transport Union had rigidly stopped all transport of building material but was continuing to give a certain number of permits for the transport of food. Similar problems to this necessarily took a good deal of time to clear away.

In the same evening the Joint Strike Committee considered a Strike Bulletin which had been issued by the Spen and District Trades and Labour Council that morning, and printed by Thomas Summerbell of Sunderland. This strike sheet of four pages was very effectively printed and its tone was very calm and moderate. In view of the effect of the blackleg sheets which were appearing, it was decided that the Joint Strike Committee should take over this Strike Bulletin and issue a publication as soon as a permit from the Typographical Association could be granted. This question of printing permits was to be one of the main difficulties of the Joint Strike Committee.

The same evening a number of points as to Food Permits were raised with the General Council of the T.U.C., whose Acting Secretary (Mr. W. Citrine) was asked to remain in touch with the Joint Strike Committee directly as well as through the medium of the various Trade Union headquarters.

THE SECOND DAY—LABOUR WITHDRAWAL AND PERMITS

THINGS were a little cleared on the second day ; reports of the situation were given by the various Unions for areas varying from regions such as the whole of the North

of England to purely local reports. For the first time it became possible to appreciate the situation. It became clear that the stoppage had not been fully effective as ordered on Monday midnight ; and that the operation of the general strike had only been getting under weigh in the course of the Tuesday. For example : some obstruction had prevented the printers at Sunderland from coming out till Wednesday ; a scratch meeting of the Railway Clerks' Association for one locality had resulted in a vote against coming out on strike, a vote which was subsequently to be overwhelmingly reversed at a later meeting. Again there was still a considerable amount of transport at work caused by the various Unions' interpretations of the General Council's decision to continue to supply Food, Health and Sanitary services. All these hitches and delays were perhaps inevitable ; they were clearly incidental to the fact that on the Trade Union side no preparations had been made in advance for carrying out the general stoppage.

With regard to the constitution of the Committee matters were also further advanced; Unions whose representatives had been prevented from coming on the Tuesday were present on the Wednesday. The only Union not officially represented at this stage was the Durham Miners' Association.

In the morning of Wednesday Mr. Page Arnot travelled to Durham and saw Mr. James Robson, whom he informed of the formation of the Northumberland and Durham General Council and its desire that the Durham Miners should be represented upon it as soon as possible. Mr. Robson, in replying, stated that he would bring the matter up before his colleagues but that it would require a Board Meeting to make the necessary appointment. Meantime the Committee availed itself of the advice of Mr. Will Lawther, whom they co-opted on to both bodies pending the official appointment.

Another unofficial representative welcomed was Mr. James Rogers, the Regional Organiser for the North-East Coast of the Sailors and Firemen's Union. This Union as well as another had decided to take a ballot. But its officials in this region, and, as we afterwards found, in almost every area, had decided to obey the

orders of the Trade Union Congress General Council. In the special circumstances of this Union it was decided to accept Mr. Rogers on the Joint Strike Committee.

At the afternoon meeting of the General Council the representative of the Electrical Trades Union reported the decision of the Union to stop commercial and industrial power. It was stated that in order to obtain uniformity of action the representatives of the Workers' Side of the Joint Industrial Council for the Electricity Supply would place themselves in the hands of the Northumberland and Durham General Council. Accordingly it was decided to instruct those representatives that all power supplies of electricity should be cut off from Industrial concerns except where permits were granted by the Strike Committee.

At the evening meeting of the Joint Strike Committee a report was given on further negotiations that had taken place with the Newcastle Electric Supply, and that on the representation of the Manager it had been decided to postpone action till after meeting at 11 o'clock on the next morning (Thursday, May 6). The plea had been put forward by the Manager that it was necessary to make certain technical arrangements with regard to the supply of power to industrial concerns as distinct from the supply through the general network. This delay, it turned out afterwards, was a pretext. Every possible sort of arrangement had already been made for carrying on the Lighting and Power Supply with blackleg labour. The adjournment proposed by the Manager was merely a device to gain nearly 24 hours more time. The Workers' Side of the J.I.C. for the Electricity Supply Industry was eventually withdrawn on the Thursday afternoon.

Three main problems can be selected from the multitude of problems that crowded upon the Committee on the Wednesday evening. These are :—

- (a) The question of permits in general ;
- (b) The question of Printing Permits for the Joint Strike Committee itself ;
- (c) The negotiations initiated by Sir Kingsley Wood.

It has already been shown that a certain amount of inco-ordination in the issue of permits had already occurred due to the

General Council's instructions-in-chief published on the Saturday. As applications for permits began to pour into each separate union's District Office, to each local body (Council of Action, Trades Council, Local Transport Sub-Committees, &c.,) the position became more and more complicated. Beyond these complications, however, a much more serious aspect was the abuse of permits which was beginning to reach gigantic proportions in the course of Wednesday afternoon. Unscrupulous contractors or employers were conveying any and every sort of goods under the ægis of "Food Only" or "Housing Materials Only." On the Wednesday evening, therefore, it was decided on the reports received from the Transport Unions that all permits for transport of building materials should be withdrawn and no new ones issued. At the same time the Strike Committee expressed its opinion (for transmission to the General Council) that the exception to the general strike order in favour of Housing should now be withdrawn. The effect on the mind of the workers out on strike of any transport was found to be bad; the mere rumble of wheels was something that weakened the morale of our men and correspondingly cheered the other side. The attitude of the Joint Strike Committee in this matter was presently confirmed by a wire from Mr. Bevin urging the closest supervision over the issue of permits in view of the abuse that was being made of them. It should be noted at this point that the local Transport Sub-Committee had handed over its powers to and was itself incorporated with the Joint Strike Committee.

The Committee again considered the question of printing permits for the sole purpose of getting power to print such general strike literature, including the *Strike Bulletin*, as would be an effective counterpoise to the flood of propaganda and false news being poured into the improvised blackleg papers of the other side. So far the *British Gazette* had not appeared; it was not until a week later that the *British Worker* was to make its first appearance in its Newcastle edition. It was on this question of the need for clearly supplying all the information that the Committee felt its position to be weakest in the Northumberland and Durham region.

SIR KINGSLEY WOOD APPROACHES THE
COMMITTEE

IN the evening Mr. Tarbit, of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, informed the Committee that the O.M.S. had been brought on to the Newcastle Quayside for the discharge of Foodships ; whereupon the Trade Union labour already employed there under permit abandoned their work, because of the O.M.S. and because of the presence of two destroyers and a submarine moored alongside the Foodship in the river. Later in the evening the Committee were informed that Sir Kingsley Wood desired to see Mr. Tarbit, and by a later 'phone message that he desired also to see other members of the Strike Committee. Sir Kingsley Wood then visited the Burt Hall (the offices of the Northumberland Miners' Association), where the Strike Committee were in session. He interviewed Messrs. Tarbit, White and Flynn. After a lengthy conversation it was agreed that the conversation should be adjourned till the next day at 12.30 p.m. (Thursday, May 6), in order to enable Sir Kingsley Wood to consult his officers and to bring with him General Sir Kerr Montgomery and Mr. Moon, the former previously head of the O.M.S. for the region and now working directly under the Government, the latter being Food Controller. The Joint Strike Committee agreed to this arrangement. The conversation of Thursday began at 12.30 and lasted till 3 p.m.

As these interviews of Sir Kingsley Wood and his officers with the representatives of the Joint Strike Committee have received a certain amount of publicity, and since it has been officially denied in the House of Commons that any such negotiations took place, it may be well to give in some detail the substance of the negotiations as reported to the Joint Strike Committee immediately after each conversation had taken place. We quote from the Minutes of the Joint Strike Committee :—

*Extract from Minutes of the Joint Strike Committee, Wednesday,
May 5, 1926*

- (9) At this juncture White, Flynn and Tarbit left to interview Kingsley Wood in Edwards' office.
- (10) Subsequently the deputation reported as follows :—Wood had

stated that his duty was to see that food supplies are maintained. There would, he said, be no interference if the Trade Unionists would continue to do the work. Tarbit had explained why the men had withdrawn their labour, and Wood replied that he had no knowledge of the importation of the outside labour (O.M.S.), and it had certainly made its appearance on the quay without his knowledge or authority, and would not allow, so long as he got the food to the people of Newcastle and District, anyone, in any way, to interfere with the habitual occupations of people who usually do this, so long as they will do it. Tarbit raised the question of unloading ships, part of which only was foodstuffs, and stated that his men would equally object to working with the Emergency Organisation (formerly O.M.S.) if these people unloaded the other parts of the cargo. Wood asked what our proposal was in such cases. We made the suggestion to him that the ships could either go to anchorage in the river with their non-food cargoes on board, waiting the end of the dispute for complete discharge, or return to their port of origin. It was further represented by us to him with the utmost emphasis that he should take steps to have the naval contingent, which had been berthed alongside the quay, in a most provocative manner, moved back to the usual naval anchorage at Jarrow, as it was impossible for us to agree that our men should be forced to work under the shadow of their guns. Wood stated that he had no control over the Admiralty in this matter, but appeared to indicate that a suggestion from him to the Commanders of the vessels might have the desired effect. He repudiated the idea that the anchorage taken up by the naval contingent had reference to the quay workers, but that these boats were kept in their present position to deal with possible riots or attacks upon power stations. He expressed himself as being obliged to us for the statement of our position, and thanked us for the valuable information we had given relating to quay work, &c., and stated he would like an opportunity of talking the matter over with his officers. He asked if we would adjourn the conversations, and meet him and General Kerr Montgomery on the morrow at 12.30. We agreed. Report received and agreed that the same deputation continue the conversations to-morrow with the whole of the Strike Committee in session at 12.30 to consider any proposals which might come from Wood and colleagues.

Minutes of Strike Committee, Thursday, May 6

- (1) Flynn, White and Tarbit met Kingsley Wood, Kerr Montgomery, and Moon (Food Officer) in Edwards' room at 12.30, and subsequently reported as follows :—

Wood stated they agreed to take steps to see that no outside people were brought in. He suggested that so far as the quay is concerned the Trade Unions appoint an officer to work in conjunction with an officer appointed by him (Wood) to deal with any trouble which

might arise and to supervise the work. Generally, they (Wood & Co.) agreed to the definition of foodstuffs as outlined by the T.U.C. and felt that no disagreement would arise on this head. We asked what would be the position regarding non-unionists and blacklegs, as our men would only acknowledge permits issued to the Trade Unionists by the Strike Committee. Wood replied, "they would welcome any suggestions which we can make inside the Government scheme, but any question of Trade Union labour loading and unloading vessels should be obviated by dual control. We suggested that this could only be met by him clearing off the quay altogether and leaving the men who usually did the work to carry on as usual. He replied that he could not abrogate his functions or act contrary to the instructions he had received. Montgomery stated that the full extent to which they would go, and they were anxious that this should operate, was that "all men now doing their ordinary work should continue to do so." Wood concurred, and stated "he would take any steps in conjunction with the Executive here to see that this is carried out." The general discussion then took place in reference to non-union labour, and Montgomery stated that they would go as far as to see that any chauffeur whose normal work is not to drive the lorries would be put off. Wood concurred, and in saying the position was reasonable, stated he would take steps to stop anyone not normally doing the work of transport. We replied that we would have to make a report to our Executive and would convey our decision later, and Wood requested that his proposals should be put fairly before the Executive. In promising to do this Flynn stated that he would not be able personally to recommend the form of dual control proposed. It was agreed that Montgomery should come back again at 4 p.m. to receive our reply.

- (2) It was agreed after hearing the foregoing report that the representatives of the Executive inform Montgomery that :—
 " Having heard this report and recognising that our men cannot, and will not, work in conjunction with O.M.S., we instruct that a reply be sent to the gentlemen named, that we cannot agree to our men working under any form of dual control."
- (3) It was further agreed that we strongly recommend to the Trade Union Congress General Council that they shall empower us to withdraw all permits for the transport of food and everything else for which permits have been issued.
- (4) Agreed that we now use the discretionary powers vested in us by the T.U.C. and withdraw *all* permits to-day.

The decision to withdraw all permits was forced upon the Committee by the local situation and re-inforced by the telegrams from headquarters. It was a momentous decision in that it immediately raised a number of other problems, but no other

policy was possible in view of the abuse of permits that had taken place. Had there been previously carefully worked out plans on the Trade Union side as there had been on the employers' and Governmental side it would have been possible to start the general strike on the first day with a complete and immediate withdrawal of labour, and thereafter to issue permits under a system of strict controls. That, however, had not been the position ; and it is to be noticed that by their decision of Thursday the Strike Committee gained for the first time the complete control over transport which was vital to the success of any centralised conduct of a general strike. Throughout most of the two counties this decision was loyally accepted and operated. In place after place the miners aided the transport workers in peaceful picketing, and the aid they gave was of an extremely effective nature.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GENERAL STRIKE

FOOD PROBLEMS : On Friday the success of the general strike appeared completely assured. It was clear to everyone that the O.M.S. organisation was unable to cope with the task imposed upon it. The attitude of the population was favourable to the strikers and unfavourable to the Government. There were no disturbances, the Trade Unionists maintained an almost perfect discipline. There was no change from the ordinary except for the quietness in the streets and the absence of traffic.

In the session of Friday evening the Joint Strike Committee were able to discuss the situation with Mr. C. P. Trevelyan, M.P., who had arrived from London as special emissary from the General Council, on a basis of the complete mastery of the difficulties that had so far confronted it. The situation as a whole was now well in hand.

On the same evening the Committee made the necessary arrangements to carry out the T.U.C. General Council's design of publishing the *British Worker* in Newcastle-on-Tyne. As will be seen later, this project was considerably interfered with by unforeseen obstacles, and the paper did not eventually appear until the Tuesday morning in its Newcastle edition.

Meantime, on Friday evening the new problems confronting the Committee began to assume an aspect of urgency. Our embargo

on food transport had been generally effective, but particularly so in the case of the retail Co-operative Societies, whose highly organised staffs ceased work to a man. This meant that those private traders who were in a position to convey essential foods, either by owner drivers or by non-unionists, were placed in a position of superiority to the Co-operative Societies. On the other hand the picketing, we were informed, was least effective in the Gateshead and Newcastle area and most effective in the outlying district. Accordingly the Committee had an interview with the Newcastle Co-operative Society, and it was agreed to release their bread and milk for the period of the week-end, to the extent of fifteen bread vans and a larger proportionate number of milk carriers. This was done by special permit valid for two days only. A similar arrangement was reached with the Gateshead Society.

The previous problem of obtaining printing permits still remained with us. The dispatch sent off to the T.U.C. General Council on the Friday afternoon emphasised the necessity, as every telephonic conversation had emphasised it up till then, of having in the Newcastle district a paper which would give accurate information, up-to-date information, and local information, to meet the extremely virulent poison that was being poured out from the blackleg sheets. No matter how much our people might be warned against believing the wireless or the blackleg press, it was impossible to cope with the lies and rumours set going without an effective means of reply. This we were denied up till then by the absence of any permit from the Typographical Association, and the Committee were resolved even when it was against the most obvious requirements of the emergency not to go a single step beyond the Trade Union Congress and the Trade Union Executives' instructions or prohibitions. Where they had discretionary power the Committee were prepared to use it as determined by the local situation and the local needs ; where they had no discretionary power the Committee felt themselves bound to carry out the Trade Union Congress decisions to the letter, no matter how many misgivings they might have. The disciplined attitude of the Joint Strike Committee towards Eccleston Square and the Trade Union Executives was assumed from the beginning and never questioned at any moment,

The other main group of problems that was soon to confront the Committee was occasioned by the changing attitude on the part of the Capitalist authorities. In a telephone conversation with the Intelligence Department of the Trade Union Congress on Friday evening, we stated that the next move of Sir Kingsley Wood, as far as could be judged, was likely to be an attempt to break down picketing by force. It was clear that O.M.S. had failed. The alternative was local negotiations, which Sir Kingsley Wood was not likely to undertake after the parliamentary incident to which we have referred earlier, or an attempt to use force and other provocative measures which, whatever the immediate effect, would in the long run furnish the necessary excuses for bringing in the Military forces and the Naval ratings. It would appear, however, that over and above Sir Kingsley Wood the decision to break down picketing by force came from some central authority. At the time we were only in a position to speak locally, and locally we had reached the conclusion that this was going to be Sir Kingsley Wood's attitude. As will be seen this forecast proved to be right, and the actions of the police culminated during the week-end in many baton charges and in the arrest of several prominent persons.

On the Saturday morning (May 8), there assembled in the Gateshead Town Hall a Conference of Councils of Action, Strike Committees &c., &c., from all parts of the counties of Northumberland and Durham, and also from other places further afield such as Carlisle, Middlesbrough and Workington. After the business of the Conference had been briefly introduced by the Chairman, Mr. James White, it was addressed at some length by Mr. Chas. Trevelyan, M.P., who gave them a message from the Trade Union Congress General Council. Mr. Flynn, the Secretary, then gave a report of the work done to date. This report, after discussion, was adopted and the action of the Joint Strike Committee confirmed and approved. On the other hand, it was made clear that the Strike Committee was subject to the decisions of the Trade Union Congress General Council together with the Trade Union Executives and was not subject in any way to the decisions of that particular Conference.

The main discussion centred round the question of the embargo

on food supplies. It was pointed out that intensive picketing had effectively stopped all transport in certain mining areas, such as Annfield Plain, Houghton-le-Spring, Chopwell, &c., &c. At the same time the embargo on food transport had stopped all co-operative societies. The result was the fear of shortage in the villages. As against an instruction to the Strike Committee *re* food the Conference by a small majority—69 to 64—passed a resolution remitting the whole matter to the Strike Committee for them to decide. This accordingly became the main item on the agenda of the Strike Committee meeting held subsequent to the Conference.

In the evening (Saturday, May 8), the Joint Strike Committee discussed once more, and this time at great length, the question of releasing food transport for the Co-operative Societies. It should be clearly understood that there was not, so far as could be ascertained at that time or at any time during the strike, any shortage of essential foods in any village, but the feeling expressed at the Conference of Councils of Action was something that had to be reckoned with and met as far as possible. Alarmist fears of a food shortage were only less serious than an actual food shortage. On the other hand the Committee had its instructions from the Trade Union Congress General Council and from the Union executives. Between these instructions on the one hand and the local feeling on the other the Committee's business was to find a correct line of policy, and that line once found, to pursue it steadily but carefully.

Before proceeding to deal with the line adopted by the Committee it must be realised that one apparently obvious solution had been already ruled out, or if not ruled out left so far on one side as to make it very difficult to adopt—That was the provisioning of the strikers by means of the Co-operative movement. This policy, had it been possible to follow it to the full and from the beginning, would have been part of the general strategy of the general strike ; and the kernel of that strategy would have been *the struggle for food control*.

Why had this been ruled out ? It is important to ask this question even in the middle of a narrative and to have it answered, because it is not easy otherwise to understand the position of the Committee or the policy it followed. This policy, however obvious

and expedient it might seem, could not be adopted at the beginning for several reasons, viz :—

- (1) The Trade Unions had no permanent or even provisional arrangements with the Co-operative movement or any representative part of it.
- (2) The C.W.S. directors had in the earlier spring issued a note refusing credits in advance, and by this act had most definitely been ranged, at any rate in public opinion, on the side of the Government and the Capitalists as against the coal miners and their possible allies, the other Trade Unions.
- (3) The same absence of detailed preparation, to which we have already referred, had of course precluded any local arrangements being come to between the Co-operative Societies and local Trade Unionists.

So that, as a result of these things, the policy which from a strategical view point might seem the best one, was almost out of court at the time of the strike, and could only be brought into it by a laborious and painful process of discovering that every other solution contained more difficulties than this particular policy. The general strike, however, had run its course before the final stage of any such process could be reached.

These points, however, will serve to illuminate the discussions which took place on the Joint Strike Committee on the Saturday night, and on other nights both before and after. They are probably paralleled by similar discussions in every strike centre throughout the country. On the one hand there was the necessity of seeing that our own people were fed, and the immediate necessity of dispelling the alarmist rumours of shortage. There was equally the necessity of seeing that the ranks of the transport workers and others concerned in the production and distribution of food were not broken by any unwarranted or excessive supply of permits.

It was clear on the Sunday that the Co-operative Wholesale Society and possibly the Retail Societies had before them the very difficult choice of closing down many of their activities or of openly becoming suppliants for the aid of a strike breaking organisation. The dilemma was a difficult one, and the members of the Joint Strike Committee, all of them co-operators, had the

utmost sympathy with the plight into which the Co-operative movement was thrust. It appeared possible that at any rate a partial solution, a day to day solution, or even an hourly solution, might be devised by means of a Sub-Committee. It was equally apparent that any general yielding on the question of removing the embargo on the food supplies was at the moment completely out of the question. Still less was it possible to accept the suggestion put forward very strongly by some of the Co-operators that supplies of coal should be released for transport. In fact it might be said that applications of this kind, that is for the transport of coal, served only to make the problems confronting the two bodies more difficult in that it tended to persuade the trade unionists that they could not rely upon the co-operators to exhibit a sympathetic understanding of the aims and purposes of the general strike into which the movement had been forced. Without a sympathetic understanding of that kind the best efforts to solve the dilemma in which the Co-operative movement found itself were likely to prove fruitless.

THE MINERS' STRUGGLE CONTINUES

By HERBERT SMITH

WHEN we held our Miners' Federation Conference on Friday, May 14, two days after the General Strike had been declared off, the first thing that we did was to express our heartfelt thanks to our fellow-workers who had so nobly come out in their millions in support of the miners. It was a wonderful response to the call. In every part of England, Scotland and Wales, the organised workers showed themselves ready and eager to help our men. And unorganised workers too came with them. For it was not only the trade unionists who helped us but the whole working class, headed and led by the trade unionists. There has never been such a nation-wide demonstration in this country of the workers' solidarity and unstinted readiness to help one another. As one of the working class I feel proud of what my class could do. As a miners' representative I feel a tremendous debt of gratitude.

We did more than express our thanks on that last Federation Conference on May 14. We were meeting at a moment when it seemed that hundreds of thousands of the best fighters in our movement were going to be victimised, thrown on the scrap heap only for this cause that they helped their fellow workers. At the same time we were hearing every day of more and more arrests of active trade unionists for "crimes" invented by the Emergency Powers Act. So we there and then recorded our determination as a Federation to do what we could for these men, to get them out of prison or back into employment, by whatever means we could, to stand by them as they had stood by us. We sent out at once to the districts of the Federation to let us know of the cases (seventeen hundred and sixty in all, the Home Secretary stated when the Emergency Powers Act was being renewed), so that we might see what could be done. If any man's case has been overlooked, I hope he, or his wife, or his mates will not hesitate to write up and let us know the details. This is a matter in which we feel

ourselves bound to do everything we possibly can, for the lads that were jailed for our sakes.

But if we thus recorded our thanks for all that was done for us up till the end of that second week of May, we as miners have still to go on with our struggle. In that struggle we hope that the other workers will still continue to help us. We hope that their magnificent effort of the first fortnight of May, that the tremendous display of solidarity then shown will, now that the general strike has been called off, be formed into other channels. I am sure that the spirit that was then displayed will go on expressing itself either by sympathetic action, of one kind or another, by help to our miners' wives and children, by one or another form of aid and support. I don't want to particularise, because each group of men will be able to help in a different manner. I simply want to make it clear that just as we looked to the other workers at the end of April, so now at the beginning of June we look to them to continue that help.

As workers we have all had a great object lesson : a lesson in solidarity. I am sure the spirit displayed during the nine days general strike and since amongst the rank and file has done more to build up our movement, to cement every stone of it together, than all the propaganda of the last ten years. Not that I am against chaps getting up on the soap-box. I do a bit of it myself, and if we had not had our people going round the country speaking in the last few years, we shouldn't have had this great event of May, 1926. But what I mean is that solidarity in action *teaches* the workers ten times more, nay, a hundred times more, than solidarity in words or good wishes.

Hammersmith bye-election showed that the lesson of solidarity had been learnt. I hope it will never be forgotten again. Whether it is at the ballot box, or at their daily work, in their household buying and selling, in the papers they read, in whatever activity, the workers must learn that lesson to stand together. That is the lesson for our movement.

And it must never be forgotten that Movements are bigger than Men. Think of what our Movement has shown itself capable of, not only nationally but internationally as well. Our appeal brought a wonderful response from all over the world. From the

Russian workers alone we received a gift of two hundred and seventy-four thousand pounds. And I know—for it is not eighteen months ago that I was meeting those same Russian workers—that they send that money because they *understand* the meaning of solidarity. They know it means that if their fellow workers are attacked, no matter in what part of the world, they too are attacked. They know it because they have had ten years and more at that lesson. We began to learn it thoroughly this last year.

It is nine months ago since I wrote something that is just as true now.

All these things have but one conclusion. That conclusion is that we have *got to fight*. Our back is up against the wall. We have no choice. On this the Federation Conference was absolutely and completely of one mind.

Nevertheless, though we miners are united on this, it is worth while to point out for the benefit of the readers of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* (amongst whom are included many colliers) what would be the effect of a retreat. A retreat would mean starvation wages now, *followed by yet another cut six or nine months hence*. And other workers will begin to feel the draught. A retreat would mean the partial break-up of the Miners' Federation, it would mean that the owners would be strong enough to compel the miners to cringe, to abandon all the forward policies of the past fifteen years, and for years to come to accept all reductions without a murmur. A retreat now might well prove a turning point not only for the miners but for the whole of British Trade Unionism. Fortunately there is no question of a retreat. I am not even arguing against it: for the simple reason that it has never been suggested. But I deal with it because I want our fellow Trade Unionists to realise that their lot is at stake along with ours; and that in helping the miners, they will be doing so not for sentimental reasons, but for their own dear sake as well. *

Now take what has happened in the last two years. In these twenty-four months the miners have been getting a wage that isn't high enough, as we all know. But they have been *keeping it*. Against all other arguments we can point out to all the politicians and busy-bodies (and I am one that thinks if a man has got a job to do in our Movement he ought to stick to it and not keep interfering in other people's jobs), that all these schemes would have lost millions of pounds to the miners and their wives and children.

* The quotation is from "The Strategy of the Miners' Struggle," by Herbert Smith, which appeared in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, August, 1925.

Our Federation by its policy has maintained these wages rates, low as they are : and every miner's wife ought to be thankful to the Federation that she hasn't got less in her pocket every time she goes to the store.

What applies to wages applies even more to hours and agreements. I am not prepared at my age to recommend that men should go down the pit to work longer hours. If mineowners had approached the Sankey scheme in a proper spirit it should be a question of six hours we would be discussing now. Same with national agreements. We must stick to that. It is a basic principle. We ought to press towards the workers in every coalfield having similar wages for similar work. National Agreements takes us along that road.

That similar wage in every coalfield must begin by being a living wage. Nobody, not even our bitterest opponents, can pretend our present wage is a living wage. Yet if the industry were reorganised, if the load of wastefulness and extravagance were tumbled off its back, even if the meagre reorganisation of the Coal Commission were carried out, if the bye-products, earned profits, &c., were bound up with the rest of the industry, we could easily have coal sold at an economic price that would yield a living wage to the miners and yet be cheaper to the consumer than it is now.

THE POLICE PERSECUTIONS

A Document of the General Strike

DURING the latter part of the General Strike and in the days that followed, many hundreds of the working class were laid by the heels. In case after case these men have gone to prison for performing their ordinary trade union duty of peaceful picketing—a duty which under the Emergency Powers Act had suddenly become extremely hazardous.

In other cases men were sent to gaol for doing nothing, literally nothing. They came upon a crowd. In the usual way, curiosity impelled them to “go over and see what is up.” They find themselves suddenly caught in a baton charge. Arrest, trial and sentence followed.

In yet another case a man is visited in his own house by two policemen : he is drawn into conversation : he reminds the policemen that they too belong to the working class. He is at once arrested, and is given a savage sentence of imprisonment. A friend of his present at the colloquy (who might conceivably have proved an awkward witness if not implicated in the charge) is stated to have said, “I agree with him.” *For this statement he is given a month's imprisonment.*

Usually the reports of these cases in the Fleet Street dailies have been so meagre that the enormity of the procedure, the class bias of the magistrates, are not made evident. Below we give from the *Blaydon Courier* of May 22 a complete report of a police prosecution. The case is not selected. Much worse instances could be found. But it is fairly typical.

Over all Great Britain things like this were happening during the month of May. For thousands of working-class homes these police prosecutions are something burned into their memory, as the Bloody Assizes of Judge Jeffreys burned into the peasantry of the West of England after the battle of Sedgemoor. And in the creation of a wide-spread resentment amongst the masses, the Government of Mr. Baldwin and the whole governing class may find the police pogroms and magisterial excesses will recoil on their own heads.

At the Gateshead County Police Court on Thursday, Edward Wilson (40), a miner, of Glenburn Terrace, Rowlands Gill, was summoned for having contravened Regulation 21 of the Emergency Regulations by doing a certain act which was likely to cause disaffection among the civil population by distributing a document known as the "Northern Light."

Mr. Frank J. Lambert appeared to prosecute on behalf of the police and the defendant was represented by Mr. Swinburn G. Wilson, who pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Lambert, in his opening statement, said the defendant was a Labour leader and, he understood, was a member of the Communist League. Defendant had taken a very active part in the unfortunate strike which had fortunately come to an end.

The document in this case (the "Northern Light") he would hand up to the Bench. It was published two days after the Court cases last Thursday. What the prosecution said—and the Bench would see as the case went on—was that the paper was a deliberate chronicle of wicked falsehoods and such as was likely to cause dissatisfaction amongst the civil population; and there could be no question about the underlying motives of that document. It would be necessary to call attention to the various accounts or reports which appeared in the paper, the "Northern Light," and which was printed by, as far as the prosecution knew, the Council of Action. In that paper there was an account of what happened at Gateshead last Thursday.

The paper went on to say:—

A band of 300 to 500 men and women (and not 90 or 100 as stated by the lying capitalist Press) marched to Gateshead from Spen and Highfield behind the Victoria Garesfield Miners' Lodge banner. They marched orderly into the town and settled themselves round about the police court to patiently await the result of the trial. This quiet gathering did not suit the police, and one officer in particular did his best to cause trouble. This swaggering Junker (who is being reported to the proper quarters) went about Swinburne Street the whole of the time, insulting and pushing people about, his sole object apparently being to create an excuse for a baton charge.

Mr. Lambert, proceeding, said the people were so hostile that the police had to send for reinforcements and to form their men up for a baton charge. There was this baton charge, and it was a serious baton charge. Men were knocked out and so forth and others were locked up. These men used serious threats to the police, while his (Mr. Lambert's) position, because he happened to be prosecuting in the case, was such that he had to close his office—which was a cowardly thing to force anyone to do—because he was simply carrying out his duties as a lawyer.

The baton charge took place and the crowd were smashed up. The paper also contained:—

Seeing what was brewing, and actually hearing some policemen say they wished to be given orders to charge the crowd, some of us did our best to keep order and succeeded after the decision of the

Court had been given in persuading the demonstrators to leave for home. They had proceeded some distance along Askew Road, on their way home, when a body of policemen, led by a well-known inspector and sergeant at their head, bearing the outward resemblance of gentlemen, went behind the peaceable and innocent procession with their brutally trained and uniformed bullies and belaboured unarmed people unmercifully. The sergeant in his usual heroic style hung back when the attack commenced.

The polluted rags like the *North Mail* and the *Northern Echo* print the foul lie that the demonstrators had attacked the police, but the hollowness of this frail excuse is exposed by the fact that not one policeman was injured, but a dozen or so of our men with wounds bore testimony to the brutality of the police. The powers that be are mistaken if they think tactics of this kind will crush our movement. We must get on with the fight and make our organisation better for the next time.

The statement that has appeared in the dirty scab Press that some of our boys were armed with pick-shafts is a deliberate lie and a vile slander on law-abiding citizens, many of whom during the years 1914 to 1918 were on active service and who were told, "A grateful country shall never forget you."

Mr. Lambert described the statements made as deliberate and wicked falsehoods.

The paper also went on to state—and this was the part he desired to call the attention of the Bench to :—

After Comrade Joice had been arrested he was kicked by the police. Mat. Joice saw four years on active service, but never in his experience has he seen such fiendishness as shown by these guardians of law and order.

Anthony Hession had been arrested, he was brutally belaboured by the police, and his heartrending shrieks could be heard inside the building. One of our comrades actually saw this brutal assault and is prepared to give his testimony on oath.

If the authorities think that such brutal attacks can smash our movement and crush our spirits they are mistaken, it only helps to strengthen our determination to carry the workers' cause to victory.

These men had got to understand, said Mr. Lambert—and he thought they were beginning to understand—as Sir Alfred rightly said last week, that no one would be allowed to over-ride the laws of this land ; and if these men insisted in this course of action, so would the authorities persist in their course of action, and they intended to meet force with force.

The paper went on :—

A MESSAGE FROM JAIL

An interview with the lads in prison took place for fifteen minutes after they were sentenced and the message was, "Go on with the fight, let not the prisons daunt you." That is their spirit. Let it be yours.

The Bench would remember that Messrs. Metcalf had not obtained a permit from the Council of Action to take food into Chopwell, and an item in the paper showed that they were still trying

to carry out this thing and to show that the Council of Action was the ruling authority of Chopwell. About the only true thing in the paper was "That every edition of the 'Northern Light' is eagerly awaited by the police."

He wanted to read, for the benefit of the Court, what they thought about the police force, and it was this :—

The lowest aim in life is to be a policeman. When a policeman dies he goes so low he has to climb up a ladder to get into hell, and even then he is not a welcome guest. (Laughter.)

Sir Alfred : It is rather funny, that.

Mr. Lambert said they knew that if this case was proved there was a place at Durham where these men and others would be welcomed, and perhaps shown the folly of having anything whatever to do with the distribution of the paper, or being associated in any way with this terrifying and despicable organisation known as the Council of Action which, he thought, was now dying a quick death.

It said in the report that these men were not armed, but as a matter of fact they were armed. One had a pick-shaft, with which he struck an officer over the arm. It was a very serious allegation to make against the police force which, they must admit, had done their work in a most admirable way. They had not to seek the assistance of the military, and he thought they were to be complimented in every possible way.

Sir Alfred M. Palmer : I did compliment them last week.

Mr. Lambert said the defendant was seen at Rowlands Gill on May 15, about 8.15 p.m., carrying a batch of these papers. He went up to a woman and handed a copy of the paper to her. The officer asked him what he had in his possession and he said they were "Northern Lights."

Mr. Lambert said he thought the paper was printed by the Council of Action, and paper and material were provided by the local authority at Blaydon because the chairman, Bolton, who was in prison, happened to be chairman at that time, and he took unto himself the right to commandeer the office and their stationery and typewriter, as the Bench would no doubt have seen in the papers; it was known now as "The Blaydon Scandal."

Mr. Lambert said he hoped that that would be dealt with by the "powers that be." When the defendant was asked where he got the papers from he said he had been to Sedgefield seeing his son. He had just got back and found seventy-eight copies waiting for him. He did not know where they came from. A lad generally brought them, and he thought he came from Chopwell. Asked if he gave them away he replied that he was selling them for one penny.

Mr. Lambert pointed out to the Bench that, notwithstanding the appeal of the Prime Minister that good fellowship and so forth should prevail, and notwithstanding the leniency which the magistrates dealt out last week, and of which the Council of Action were taking no heed whatever, or the warning given by the

chairman of the Bench, they were continuing in their course of action.

They might not be using violence, but they were resorting to this method of creating dissatisfaction amongst the civil population, and he wanted the Bench to carry their minds back to the time when the strike was on.

The Council of Action was still carrying on their terrifying way. The paper was still being circulated in the districts, but they could not find out where it was being printed, therefore they could not raid the place and blot it out altogether in the same way as they hoped to be able to blot out this so-called Council of Action.

He appealed to the Court, for the safety of the community, for the safety of the people in the neighbourhood of Chopwell, Blaydon, Ryton and Spen, as there was no doubt about it that they were terrified to death by the members and those who were at present carrying out, and still maintaining, this Council of Action.

They were a menace to the neighbourhood and would have to be dealt with, and now that they had got them in their hands he was going to ask the Court to stamp them out.

The feeling was there, and they were making the lives of the people who had nothing to do with the Council of Action a perfect hell on earth in the district. He asked the Bench to take a very serious view, and if they found the case proved to send the defendant to prison.

Sergt. Curry gave evidence and said the defendant was a member of the Communist League.

Mr. Wilson said his client was not a member of the Communist League.

Inspector Gibson, of the Gateshead Borough Police Force, described the incidents which took place after the hearing of the case against Messrs. Bolton and Lawther, and said the police tried to avoid trouble. The police did not organise a baton charge. One of the constables received a blow on the right arm from a pick-shaft produced. The assailant was going to hit another officer when the police had to draw their batons to defend themselves. The pick-shaft was taken from a man named Purvis. Hession was not ill-treated, as had been alleged.

Mr. Wilson, for the defence, said the defendant was only distributing the paper as others were doing at the time, when men were not calm and things were not normal and did not know the consequences or the seriousness of their act. When checked he immediately gave the papers to the police. It was not true that the defendant was a member of the Communist League, or that he had been to Communist meetings.

Sir Alfred M. Palmer: Is he a Bolshevist?

Mr. Wilson: No, sir.

Sir Alfred: What is he—a Liberal, like myself?

Mr. Wilson said his client belonged to the Labour Party.

Mr. Wilson pointed out that his client was in no way identified with the contents of the publication. He was merely the scapegoat. That was what it amounted to. He thought he was acting in a lawful way. The defendant had not been in a police court before and bore an unblemished character.

The Bench retired, and on returning into Court, the chairman said: "Edward Wilson, by the unanimous verdict of the Bench you have been convicted of the offence with which you are charged. The only difference is as to the punishment which you should be given. We are all agreed that you must go to jail without the option of a fine. The only difference is as to the period. We cannot have Chopwell and the neighbourhood governed by a set of men like you. The inhabitants of Chopwell have to live under the laws passed by Parliament and approved of by the King. They are not to be governed by a set of laws which you and your colleagues and hooligans of your description choose to draw up; and they are the laws of the land.

"The manner in which Chopwell has been governed for some time past now is a scandal, and this Bench is determined, if it comes to us, that that state of affairs shall be put an end to.

"Why you and those who are associated with you don't go off to Russia I don't know. I am sure the Government and I, personally, would subscribe willingly to get rid of the whole lot of you and let you go and live in that country where everything is so peaceful and happy. You are making a mistake living in this country. You had far better get away, all of you. We don't want you, or anybody else like you. You are just a danger to the community, and the sooner you make up your minds to reform, or get away, the better for all concerned."

The accused was *sentenced to prison* for three months, with hard labour, the Chairman adding that if he had had his own way he would have sent him to prison for three months and fined him £100.



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Editor : R. PALME DUTT

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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - -	Page 387
<i>LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP</i>	
The Great Mining Crisis - - - -	„ 399
<i>By A. J. COOK</i>	
The Miners' Struggle in Midsummer, 1926	„ 402
<i>By R. PAGE ARNOT</i>	
The Rank and File and the General Strike	„ 415
<i>By JACK TANNER</i>	
Peace Utopias - - - - -	„ 421
<i>By ROSA LUXEMBURG</i>	
Are We Nearing Revolution? - - -	„ 429
<i>By EMILE BURNS</i>	
The Functions of a Communist University -	„ 435
<i>By M. N. LIADOV</i>	
The World of Labour - - - - -	„ 441
<i>International Unity in Action—The German Referendum</i>	

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NOTES of the MONTH

Five Years—First Principles—Capitalist Decline—Apparent Recovery—Artificial Profits—The Real Contradiction—Class Antagonism—Leadership—Masses and Leaders—Right Wing Rôle—The Left Wing—Shadows Before—Failure of Centrism—“No Recriminations”—A Necessary Fight—The New Spirit.

WITH the present issue **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** enters on its sixth year of publication. The past five years since 1921 have seen a whole phase of the Labour Movement, starting from the collapse and lessons of “Black Friday,” and rising up on an ascending scale to the mass strike of 1926, the Capitulation of May 12, and the present miners’ struggle in whose victory or defeat the immediate future of the working class is bound up. With the events of 1926 a new period opens, as much transcending in its scope 1921-1926 as that period went beyond the years preceding. 1921-1926 was the slow and painful learning of the first lesson of “Black Friday”—the necessity of united mass struggle to meet the conditions of modern capitalism. But the second lesson of “Black Friday” was not yet learnt : that such mass struggle could not be conducted by the old reformist leadership save to defeat ; that it necessarily led to new revolutionary tasks and problems of struggle with the whole forces of the State ; and that it required a new revolutionary leadership to guide it. This is the lesson now driven home in unmistakable guise by the events of 1926 ; and the struggle of the period now opening is the struggle for the new revolutionary leadership.

FROM the outset, with the first number following closely on “Black Friday,” **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** has fought for certain principles. First, that the present position of world capitalism as a whole after the war, and in particular of British Capitalism, is one of decline, making impossible the old gradual advance in conditions which the Western European working class was able to obtain during the latter half of the nineteenth century,

and compelling repeated capitalist attacks on working-class conditions as the only alternative to the replacement of capitalism by the socialist organisation of production. Second, that this situation has destroyed the basis of the old reformist parliamentary and sectional trade union traditions in which the working-class movement had grown up, and has driven the old leadership which represented these traditions, no longer along a peaceful path of gradual growth and progress, but into open and repeated betrayals, coalition with capitalism and attacks on and splitting of the working-class ranks. And third, that the problem of the working-class movements in the Western European countries, grown up under the old conditions and confronted now with the new, was to discover the means to adapt themselves in time to the new conditions of struggle : to widen their aims from the old limited and sectional aims to the conscious aim of the conquest of power ; to widen their action from the old limited sectional action to the action of the whole class ; to prepare for attack on every front by the whole strength of the capitalist class, and to recognise the path of revolutionary advance as the only way forward : and, therefore, in order to realise this, to seek first to achieve immediate unity of action to meet the capitalist attack, and at the same time to survey the whole ground, to think in terms of the working-class struggle as a whole, both in Britain and internationally, to search out the new tasks and weapons, and above all to build up the new leadership which could meet the new conditions. For this reason every type and sign of new leadership that has been prepared to consider the working-class struggle as a whole and the way forward, has been sought for and welcomed in the pages of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, in conjunction with the most important pronouncements of the international movement, while at the same time a policy of criticism has been maintained as the necessary condition of assisting in the common task of building up the new leadership.

ALL these conditions, which are the elementary starting point of any Marxist outlook, have been intensified by the experience of the past five years. The decline of Capitalism in Britain, whether measured in the figures of trade or of production, has developed at a startling and accelerating pace

between 1921 and 1926, with consequent intensified attacks upon all sections of the workers. During this period the visible adverse balance of trade has multiplied two and a-half times ; production in the basic industries has gone down ; the United States has at length outstripped Great Britain, not only in foreign markets and the export trade, but also in the issue of foreign investments. It has become universally admitted, what was not always admitted to begin with, that this decline is not simply part of a general world unsettlement, but specifically affects British Capitalism, which can no longer maintain its monopolist position in the face of the development of capitalism all over the world, and at the same time cannot adapt itself to the new position on the old capitalist lines. The reorganisation, unification and technical development, which has been partially possible in France and Germany on the basis of inflation, and in the United States on the basis of its modern growth and super-imperialist position, has not been possible in Britain, with its accumulated growth of property rights, watered capital, inflated debt, &c., which fetter effectively the development of production. The economic development which is essential to the life of the population of Britain, can now be effected only by the socialist organisation of production, which in its turn can be effected only by the working-class conquest of power, cutting away by direct blows (it cannot be done by any gradual process) the overgrowth of property rights, sectional interests and unproductive sinecure claims and incomes, and organising production on unified lines to meet actual needs. Until then the decline can only continue.

THIS decline in all the real basic factors of production is not affected, but is in reality only intensified by the fact that the bourgeoisie, during these years of national decline and poverty, has been able to extract increased profits for itself by its financial and imperial policy, has re-established on an economically unjustified basis the gold standard, thus doubling at a stroke its claims of exploitation from the workers, has extended profitable enterprise in the colonies, has maintained monopolist restriction and prices of certain commodities in the world market, and has been able to develop at a lightning rate of high profits

certain artificial and secondary industries at home. On this basis the wealth and profits of the bourgeoisie have increased year by year from 1921 to 1926 ; the capital value of estates subject to estate duty has risen from £372 millions in 1920-1 to £461 millions in 1924-5 ; the *Economist's* figure of standard industrial profits has risen from 7 per cent. in 1922 to 10·9 per cent. in 1925 ; the Board of Trade's estimate of income from foreign investments has risen from £175 millions in 1922 to £250 millions in 1925. Thus the Chancellor of the Exchequer was able to declare in his Budget speech of 1926 that :—

the nation is richer this afternoon than it was a year ago. The profits on which future calculations of income tax may be based show an increase, a substantial increase ;

but in the same speech he had also to declare :—

The basic industries of the country, those which employ the largest number of the workpeople, nearly all continue obstinately depressed under their heavy burden.

This is the contradiction of British Capitalism to-day, in which even the increasing prosperity of the bourgeoisie is only an intensifying factor of the decline.

THE increasing prosperity of the bourgeoisie in the present period bears no relation to the previous prosperous periods of British Capitalism. The previous periods of prosperity were centred on the basic industries of Britain : coal, iron, steel, engineering, textiles and shipping, in conjunction with a monopolist hold of the world market and trade, and a colonial control of raw materials, and on this basis was built up the financial hegemony. In consequence the pre-war prosperity, although based on world-exploitation, was able to concede to the home proletariat in the basic industries an improving standard of life, which provided the basis of reformism, craft unionism, nationalism and liberal democratic politics. This is no longer the case to-day. The present prosperity of the bourgeoisie is drawn from sources which are not centred on the basic industries of Britain, and which therefore do not draw the majority of the population within their scope. A large source of profit may come directly from foreign and colonial enterprise, from colonial subsidiary companies, from the rubber monopoly, tin, oil, &c. Another large source of profit

may come from home industries ; but even there the home industries yielding the highest and growing profits prove either to be luxury industries, or else special secondary industries directly dependent for their export upon the control of the colonies, *e.g.*, the motor industry (75 per cent. exports to the colonies), artificial silk (71 per cent. to the colonies), electrical goods (65 per cent. to the colonies), &c. But the basic industries of the country, in which the majority of the population are engaged, remain depressed by world competition, and neglected and without development under Capitalism, which has found avenues of more speedy profits : and in consequence, in order that these industries may be made equally profitable under Capitalism, the wages and standards of the workers in them have to be driven down.

HENCE the contradiction of the situation to-day. The pre-war prosperity of British Capitalism provided the means of buying off the leading sections of the workers with temporary gains and concessions. To-day, the exact opposite is the case. In face of the growing prosperity of the bourgeoisie, the workers have to be called on for growing "sacrifices" to save the declining industry. For Capitalism there is no escape from this position, save by the method of the subsidy, which Capitalism is not sufficiently united to be able to carry through on any large scale in industry. Therefore, the growing prosperity of the bourgeoisie, which might seem to be a contradiction of the decline, is the exact opposite : it is not only a symptom of the unhealthy character of the whole position (stagnant industry and rising profits), but it is an intensification of the decline, because it throws into the open and accentuates the complete antagonism of class interests in modern Britain.

THIS antagonism of class interests has developed at a tremendous pace during the five years. From the collapse of the limited alliance of 1921 to the four-million class solidarity and the threats of civil war in 1926 is a gigantic step. In between has come the growth of the Labour vote from two millions to five millions, and the experience of the MacDonald Government. The whole strength of the working class has entered into the first

stages of direct struggle with the bourgeoisie. The Liberal period of British history has ended. The right wing Labour leaders, in conjunction with the remnants of the Liberal party, will still endeavour to maintain the Liberal mask, and even at some future point may form a Government : but they can only do so now as open enemies of the advancing militant force of the working class. The MacDonald Government was already revealing the first signs of this break. The General Strike has brought it into the open. The General Strike has revealed beyond escape the two camps facing one another henceforth in Britain, and has laid bare the armoury of bourgeois power. Not only has the General Strike itself been the greatest lesson and impetus towards conscious class strength and action, but the whole policy, propaganda and action of the Government, the rôle of the reformist leaders, and the aftermath of the capitulation, the immediate attack upon all the workers and on the whole of trade unionism, the flinging aside of Commission pretences by both the Government and the mineowners, and the concentration of the full attack upon the miners, all this has been a lesson of the realities of the future struggle for millions of workers to draw from direct experience. The workers have learnt that, even to fight for their barest needs, they have to enter on a united mass struggle with the whole forces of the Government ; but they have had occasion to learn also that they cannot conduct this mass struggle under the existing reformist leadership.

FROM henceforward the question of leadership has been thrown to the front as the central question for the whole working-class movement. In previous years the insistence of the revolutionaries on the question of leadership has been met often with some hesitation and distrust as throwing excessive emphasis on differences which had better be left in the background, that the development of the movement should be left to take its course, that all forces should be concentrated on "the enemy," *i.e.* the bourgeoisie, without "wasting time" on inner differences, and so forth. These notions have been exploded once and for all by the experience of the General Strike. The experience of the General Strike has shown that the question of leadership is a life and death question for the workers, and that to neglect it or treat it lightly is

fatal. The experience of the General Strike has shown that "the enemy" exists, not only outside in the opposite camp, but also within the camp, that the enemy within is in fact the most dangerous, and that to neglect to fight this enemy means to destroy the fruits of the most heroic and determined fight against the enemy outside. In the discussions that are taking place over the experiences of the General Strike, in the lessons that are being drawn, the future of the working class is at stake ; and this future depends above all on the learning of the lesson that all the solidarity in the world, all the heroism and sacrifice and determination alone are not enough, it is necessary also to achieve revolutionary leadership.

IN all the discussions that have taken place, one fact has been universally admitted as established once and for all by the General Strike. That fact is, that it is no longer a question of the readiness of the masses for the struggle, but of the readiness of the leadership. The old reformist myth that it is only the backwardness of the workers which is the obstacle to the progressive intentions of the leaders is smashed. Only a couple of weeks before the General Strike, Brailsford, in his answer to Trotsky, was expressing polite incredulity at Trotsky's statement that the workers in Britain were already in practice far in advance of the I.L.P. leaders, and holding it up as a glaring example of Russian "ignorance" of British conditions. After the General Strike the statement appears as the merest commonplace. On the Continent, Social Democracy, to save the faces of their colleagues, has spread the myth throughout their Press that the General Strike was defeated by "mass strike-breaking," that the heroic fighting intentions of MacDonald, Thomas and the rest were only defeated by the narrow-spirited backwardness of the workers failing to respond. But the reformists themselves have had to give the opposite picture in England. MacDonald himself has testified to the success of the strike and the negligible figure of breakaways. And the Secretary of the I.L.P. has given as his explanation of the breakdown of the strike :—

The explanation is probably simple. The General Strike has been led by people who don't believe in it, and *they*—not the workers—cracked.

Thus the opposition of the readiness of the workers and the backwardness of the leaders is here made by the I.L.P. itself. That the question is a question of leadership is common ground.

THERE is only one alternative to facing the question of leadership, and that is to abandon the struggle. This is what the Right Wing leaders are advocating in their endeavours to proclaim the General Strike itself at fault as a wrong weapon. This proclamation is particularly shameless. At the moment of the decision and the opening of the struggle these same leaders gave no hint of their view, but instead came forward as the champions of the General Strike and established themselves at the head of its direction. Having established themselves at the head of its direction, they proceeded to strangle it and take every measure to ensure its defeat. Having ensured its defeat, they come forward to proclaim the final failure of the General Strike weapon, and even that they knew its folly all along. This is the typical rôle of Social Democracy. In Germany, Ebert, in the Leipzig lawsuit to establish his honour against the Nationalist imputation that he had participated in a revolutionary strike committee during the war, swore on oath and brought witnesses to prove that he had only entered on that strike committee by instruction of the Social Democratic Executive in order to bring the strike to an end and prevent the incipient movement against the war. This is the lowest rôle, lower than any spy or informer. It is to don the uniform of the workers' camp in order to lead the workers to defeat, while maintaining contact all the time with the enemy staff. Compared with such, the Right Wing leader who honestly opposes the forward struggle of the workers, and stands aside when defeated, is decent. With the former there is no question of discussion. It is the duty of every sincere working-class fighter to drive such types out of the Movement, or the ugly fate of the first German Revolution will be repeated in England.

ON the other hand, it was conspicuously the case that the Left Wing which had developed as an opposition tendency in the Trade Unions during the past two years, around the personalities of certain leaders in the General Council, such as

Hicks, Bromley, Purcell, Tillett and others, completely failed to provide any alternative leadership during the crisis, and in practice fell behind the Right Wing. This is an extremely significant fact, and it is all-important that the lesson from it should be learned. The Trade Union Left Wing was not able to provide any alternative leadership to the Right Wing, because the Trade Union Left Wing had not yet in practice reached any basic difference from the Right. The Trade Union Left Wing was the reflection of important growing tendencies and aspirations within the working class, of a growing opposition to the opportunism and betrayals of the existing leadership, and the demand for a policy of solidarity and class struggle. But these tendencies and aspirations were not translated into any positive programme and proposals, any organised action and policy, any recognition of the alternative to opportunism, or any clearly formulated tactics and methods of struggle. Therefore, the phrases of solidarity and class struggle inevitably became air without substance; in practice the Left Wing leaders were impotent, and therefore became the prisoners of the Right Wing, who at any rate had a positive policy, although a policy of surrender and co-operation with the bourgeoisie.

IN the symposium of all the Left Wing leaders on the General Council, which was published in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* during the first six months of 1924, and constituted the first general statement of their outlook and policy, their future rôle was already clearly revealed in the character of their statements, and was analysed at the time. While the mere fact of their readiness to come forward in a general discussion was important, it was clear that there was not yet readiness to go beyond the most general expressions of solidarity and class-consciousness, that there was not any actual alternative policy or proposals, or consideration of the current working-class struggle or issues likely to arise in the future, nor was there readiness to break with the Right Wing or with the old "business" trade union tradition. One particularly striking phrase, which cast a warning shadow for the future, occurred in the important article of George Hicks, in which he stated that, while the future socialist revolution should be prepared

for by "educational" propaganda, the current trade union struggle must be conducted on lines of "commercial practicability." This ominous phrase, which was singled out for comment at the time, received practical realisation in the crisis of 1926, when Hicks no less than Thomas and Baldwin was pressing a reduction of wages on the miners. Thus the actual submergence in the crisis was not surprising. But the failure of any attempt so far after the crisis to consider seriously the lessons to be learnt and the mistakes made, and the endeavour lightly to carry off the whole episode as a great success, is extremely grave, and makes for a complete and final identification with the Right Wing.

FROM these experiences the working class, and particularly the main body of workers who took part in the Left Wing fight, will learn big lessons for the future. The experience of the General Strike has shown that the only positive alternative policy in the crisis to that of the Right Wing was the policy of the Communist Party ; there was no third alternative in between. This fact is of very great significance for the future. The Communist Party, which alone advocated preparations for the inevitable struggle when the Left Wing leaders were either doubting its inevitability or declaring preparation inadvisable, was also alone in clearly recognising the struggle for what it was, not as a "purely industrial" struggle to be called off the moment the Government declared it a menace to the Constitution, but as a class struggle of the working class with the whole strength of the bourgeoisie and the Government, and therefore to be waged with every weapon of strength of the working class, to defeat or victory as a stage in the struggle for power, but not to surrender on a basis of wage-compromise, loyalty to the Constitution, disruption of the working class ranks, and trust in the benevolent intentions of the bourgeoisie. The Communist Party gave a clear, unhesitating leadership for united struggle against the Government without surrender; and both before and during the crisis showed concretely the forms and methods of struggle, at the same time as throwing its weight into the fight at every point. The main body of the Left Wing workers, however, were not yet ready to follow the lead of the Communist Party, and therefore inevitably were at the mercy of the

Right Wing. The collapse of the Left Wing leaders was, therefore, nothing other than the classic failure of Centrism. The very plea of self-defence of the Left Wing leaders, that they were fooled by the bourgeoisie over the Samuel Memorandum, is the clearest evidence of their complete lack of any clear outlook or policy, which left them thus at the mercy of the bourgeoisie. This experience will have a profound effect on the development of the Left Wing. The Left Wing workers will increasingly come to recognise that, only when the general aspirations and phrases of solidarity and the class struggle are translated into a positive programme, tactics and organisation, such as can, in fact, finally only be realised through a revolutionary mass-party, only then can a real alternative to the existing Right Wing opportunism be found.

THE Left Wing leaders are to-day declaring that there should be no recriminations, no dwelling on the past, or internal dissensions, but a united front against the enemy, a general readiness to forgive and forget, and preparation in a spirit of united harmony for next time. This, however, is completely to miss the real issue. There is not the slightest wish to spend time on recriminations or on personal questions. The united working-class front in the immediate struggle, the miners' struggle, is the first necessity (though that united front is realised to the extent that the workers are united in the struggle, that is to say, to the extent that the ban on coal is realised, not to the extent that controversy is silenced, while coal is being transported). But, alongside the current struggle, the lessons of what has taken place must be learned ; and they can only be learned by the fullest discussion, examination of every incident and every rôle, and hammering out of the points of difference, without consideration of personal feelings and susceptibilities. Discussion is essential on such burning questions arising from the strike as the rôle of leadership, the rôle of the State, the meaning of political struggle, the need of a centralised mass party, &c. To fail to do this is to neglect the interests of the working-class movement, to ban the way to all development, and to make certain the repetition of catastrophe. A working-class movement is strong in proportion as it is able to examine with absolute clearness its own experiences

and learn from its mistakes. The plea against discussion is, therefore, reactionary and harmful. The plea in the name of unity is equally mistaken. Working-class unity can only be realised under a leadership which believes in and is prepared to fight for and maintain working-class unity. To plead for unity with leaders whose whole policy is to disrupt the working-class ranks at every critical point is to plead for working-class disunity. The interests of working-class unity and of the future struggle demand that the lessons of the past crisis shall be learned and carried into effect, even at the cost of an inner struggle in the working-class movement, in order that the working-class movement shall be strong for the future struggle.

THE past five years have shown beyond question the development of the situation in England, the inevitable and accelerating capitalist decline, the growing clash of class interests, the worsening of the workers' standards, and the tearing aside of the veils of Liberalism and democracy, and a driving to greater and greater crisis. They have shown the growing stirring and awakening of the workers, the drive to mass struggle, the readiness to stride past the obsolete outlook of the old leadership, and the enthusiastic response to the first signs of a new fighting mass leadership. From this situation the tasks of the future stand out clear. The work of the coming period is to carry through the revolutionary transformation of the working-class movement, and to advance without hesitation to the entirely new type of struggles in front. The miners' struggle to-day is already evidence of a new spirit, the spirit of life-and-death proletarian struggle, which is stronger than starvation, defeat, and death, and which can only end, soon or late, in the crushing out of capitalist rule and the victory of the working class. All the conditions of to-day make for the spreading of that spirit. It is a new spirit for the conditions of Britain. The leadership which can express that spirit, which can most clearly comprehend the realities of the present situation and the inescapable tasks of the struggle in front, is the future leadership of the working class in Britain.

R. P. D.

THE GREAT MINING CRISIS

By A. J. COOK

THE Miners' Lock-Out, the General Strike, and the Government's Eight Hour Bill have created an unprecedented situation in Great Britain. Not for a century have the workers been stirred to such an extent. Capitalism has failed to smash trade unionism, the only barrier to their objective. Every industry, every worker at home and abroad, is affected by the struggle.

Just as the crisis is a world crisis, so the struggle is a world struggle.

Industrially the future of Britain is being determined. Politically, the fate of parties is being decided. Liberalism is dead. Toryism will be swept aside because of its brutal suppression of the workers' rights. New methods, industrial and political, will be adopted to meet the great Capitalist Offensive. To live, Capitalism must crush Trade Unionism. Wages must be reduced; hours must be lengthened—all to the tune of "markets and competition."

The conflict between the new and the old ideas will be intensified in every trade union branch, in every Labour Party. UNITY is the need of the moment.

The events leading up to the General Strike are well known to all active workers. For many years the miners have been the strongest organised section, having militant leaders such as Robert Smillie and Herbert Smith. During the period prior to and during 1921, the Great Lock-Out, Frank Hodges and others were responsible for a policy which led to defeat.

The left wing leaders had long ago pointed out the necessity for preparing for the Capitalist Offensive, but another section, with the parrot cries of "Produce More," "Increased Production," "Sanctity of Agreements," &c., doped the workers, while the economic realists worked for 100 per cent. trade union organisation and a Workers' Alliance, plus *All Power to the General Council*. In 1924, the Trades Union Congress declared in favour of a change, as did also the Trades Union Congress in 1925. The

rank and file, pressed and harassed in the pits, on the railways, workshops, &c., have had a real awakening : they demand action to protect their condition.

The First of May was a demonstration of the rank and file pressure which caused all the executives to be so unanimous. Every active worker could see in the miners' struggle his struggle.

The lack of preparation is entirely due to the ignorance of the position in the minds of many leaders who believed, and still believe, you can temporise with Capitalism.

The terrible slander and abuse to which I have been subject is evidence of the ferocity of the Master Class in their fear of losing power and control. The whole world is stirred by the miners' struggle, by the refusal of the men or their leaders to compromise on either hours or wages. The rallying of all Capitalism's forces, the Government's full support of the mineowners, their attempt with state aid and power to crush the miners, is proof positive of the nature of the struggle. The attempt to divide the prominent leaders failed. It is true Frank Hodges again played the masters' game by suggesting longer hours, which would not only be detrimental to the British miners, but is in direct opposition to the interests of the international miners. For they would suffer just as badly as we should, if the Government and the owners succeed.

A calm review of events of the past three years will convince any thoughtful student of industrial affairs that our policy has been fully vindicated. The rank and file *will* fight : the rank and file *will* unite, given a proper lead. We are, indeed, at the cross roads, and we must not take the wrong turning. The whole of our forces, the whole of our organisation, must be harnessed in this great epic struggle. For the whole future of trade unionism will depend on the success of the miners' struggle.

The need for scientific industrial re-organisation is now apparent to everyone. Let not personalities stand in the way. For drastic changes are necessary. The Trades Union Congress must be reconstituted as a real fighting machine. The Government has challenged the whole Labour Movement; Parliamentary and industrial passive resistance is useless. Men and women in industry are not to be palmed off with fine speeches of brotherhood, &c,

They are realists ; they have been made realists. And they will only place their faith and trust in men and movements that *act*.

The year 1926 has brought to the front new issues that are almost a New Age. Are we preparing ourselves to meet it ? Internationally the miners and other workers are reuniting. We are linking up for the great offensive. The Russian Workers in their help to the miners gave given a lead to the world. The Capitalist Press with their murder stories all fall on deaf ears, because now the workers know their true friends. *A friend in need is a friend indeed.*

The struggle for trade unionism will be intensified until it forces action from the Trade Unions and Labour Party. The employers, backed by a reactionary Government, mean business. Therefore, let us realise the facts and prepare to meet them. The miners are leading the way in this historic battle for Freedom and Emancipation in which all workers at home and abroad must participate.

Prepare your Trades Councils. Attend your Trade Union meetings, study the problems so that we shall not fail to lead the workers out of bondage.

THE MINERS' STRUGGLE IN MID- SUMMER, 1926

By R. PAGE ARNOT

THE General Strike lasted Nine Days. The Miners' Lock-out has already lasted Nine Weeks. All expectations have been dashed. The sweet apple of victory in the mouth of the bourgeoisie has turned to gall and wormwood. For a time they saw visions like the Book of Revelations ; but now their dreams of a new heaven (capitalist) and of a new earth (capitalist) " and there was no more Sea " (labour) have all faded slowly away. Meantime while the British working class is recovering with well-nigh unbelievable speed its solidarity, so rudely shattered in the second week of May, the workers of the Soviet Union by their gifts now amounting to £400,000 have, by this act alone, made out of the year 1926 an epoch of solidarity on a scale never known or imagined before.

What of the Miners themselves ?

Of them it is as it was in the " Song of the Fight at Maldon " well-nigh a thousand years ago :—

*Mind shall be harder,
Heart the keener,
Mood shall be greater
As our might lessens.*

In this heroic struggle, on which the eye of every conscious worker throughout the whole world is fixed, the fate of the entire working class is at stake. And not alone the workers. The bourgeoisie too know this struggle to be big with fate for their Empire ; and in the manner of its ending there may end much else as well.

Clearly there is nothing in any country more worthy of study than this present struggle. Let us review the forces and the order of events.

The Parties

(1) *The Miners' Federation of Great Britain*, the biggest single

section of the Trades Union Congress, in which it has a financial membership of 800,000, is the largest trade union federation in the world ; responsible for the million and more mineworkers who were locked out on the First of May.

The Miners' Federation of Great Britain acts through its four officials (one permanently in London), who are responsible to the Executive Committee, which in its turn takes its policy from the Federation Conference of miners' delegates, each of whom, as a rule, is instructed by his district. There are some fifteen constituent districts (*e.g.*, Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation), within each of which, in most cases, a decision as to policy is taken and instructions given to delegates as a result of lodge meetings before the Federation Conference. Finally, there is the referendum or ballot vote of the whole Federation. Thus, in this extremely democratic framework, provision is made for a maximum of control by the miners themselves, if they choose to take it. Herbert Smith and A. J. Cook, as they themselves would say, are the mouthpiece of a million miners.

When one right-wing leader, Frank Varley, put forward a policy involving acceptance of cuts in wages, his action and his policy were so strongly and so universally reprobated that even the capitalist press, which had welcomed his declaration, were forced to point out that he had at that moment no body of mining opinion behind him.

Similarly, Mr. Frank Hodges, who proposed the acceptance of a seven-and-a-half hour day and then became silent, will almost certainly be arraigned before the International Miners' Executive Committee for his breach of elementary trade union discipline. The miners allow for this sort of thing in the case of the politicians—within their own ranks it is regarded as a break-away to be sternly repressed.

On the other hand, the weakness of the Miners' Federation is that it is not a centralised union. The strike money is distributed according to financial membership and not according to where it is most needed. Being thus, in some ways, like an alliance of county associations, it has the weakness of all alliances ; and if in an alliance one constituent member fails . . .

(2) *The Mining Association of Great Britain* represents the

numerous colliery owners excepting some of the largest trustified concerns. It is truly representative of the individualistic nineteenth century coalowner who is still the symbol of private property in this industry. It does not represent the industry as a whole. It is the single owner multiplied a thousand times. Capitalistic anarchy of production and its mid-Victorian ideology speak through the mouth of the Mining Association. The coalowners' policy is always the policy of the single pit. It has no vision of British coal industry as one of half a dozen factors in the world market.

(3) *The Government* is composed of Baldwin with the harmonium and the legal Fascism of Churchill and Birkenhead. Flushed with its victory over the General Strike, it has felt the obligation to assume the leadership of the fight against the miners.

(4) *Trades Union Congress General Council* is composed of representatives from the several union interests, who, because they have no common class-struggle basis, are not yet capable of representing the movement as a whole. Unwillingly forced into the General Strike by the Government, they called it off as soon as possible, leaving the miners to fight alone and causing a débâcle of trade unionism by the manner of their calling off. The General Council, before the lock-out, was divisible into Left, Centre and Right. But they were unanimous in calling it off. Thus composed, and with this record, the General Council had, by its act of May 12, incapacitated itself for some time thereafter from bringing further assistance to the miners. Besides, they were most of them in favour of the miners accepting a wage reduction.

(5) *The British Trade Unions*. Deprived for the time being of a central lead, the separate trade unions were thrown back on their own resources. That is to say, some have helped the miners by grants; others have been mainly absorbed in rebuilding their own funds "squandered" in the Nine Days' Strike and have paid little further attention to the miners.

(6) *The Trade Unions of other Countries*.—From every other country help pours in to the British miners; from Soviet Russia far above and beyond every other working class. But the boycott of coal began to cease after the General Strike was called off, and this most effective form of international help is not yet again manifest.

(7) *The Miners' International*.—This body expresses good-will to

the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, but the miners in Germany, France, America, &c., are not stopping the production of coal, by which action they would also stimulate the transport workers to cease moving the coal already in stock. This ineffectiveness of the Miners' International is one of the strongest arguments for trade union unity.

(8) *Soviet Union Workers*.—The gift of well-nigh £400,000 from the trade unionists of the U.S.S.R. is an act of solidarity on so gigantic a scale as to place the Russian workers in the forefront of the world's proletariat, were they not there already. By this act, the Russian workers have made themselves an important party in the dispute. They, and not the Miners' International, have proved themselves to be the miners' closest ally. This 100 per cent. effectiveness of the Soviet workers is the strongest example of trade union unity.

(9) *The Labour Parliamentarians* were for the first seven weeks almost all in favour of a speedy termination of the dispute, if necessary with a reduction of wages. MacDonald, Thomas and Clynes took up their parable against the General Strike. Snowden advocated unity of interest between capital and labour on the field of industry at the same time as he was advocating a Liberal-Labour Alliance in his politics. As a party to the dispute, they may be reckoned as having weakened the miners. For one brief week, MacDonald came perilously near to being against the Trades Union Congress as well, until it was recalled to him that the Trade Unions, in the words of scripture, "held the bag."

(10) *The Liberal Party* is, apart from the person of Lloyd George, chiefly represented by the Liberal newspaper press. This has backed the Report of the Coal Commission and the Samuel recommendations in an attempt to represent the general interests of progressive capitalism against the mineowners—and of course, in its courteous way, against the miners.

(11) *The Conservative Press*, now thoroughly puzzled about the dispute, has fallen back on the simple policy of rousing bourgeois class feeling to white heat by repeated attacks on the miners' leaders, on the working miners and on their allies, the Russian workers.

(12) *The I.L.P.*, at present in the hands of the Left Wing

group, has criticised the General Council and demanded support for the miners. This appears in the *New Leader* (the official organ of the I.L.P.), edited by Brailsford, in *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, and in the speeches of John Wheatley. On the other hand, the I.L.P. has weakened the miners by putting forward such nostrums as a capitalist selling agency instead of nationalisation (which turns out to have been merely an ikon on the wall), and have expressed their approval of the Samuel recommendations.

(13) *The Communist Party* has supported the miners throughout, both in the General Strike and in the weeks that followed. Its attitude during the nine months that preceded the General Strike, the activities of its members during the Strike, and finally the behaviour of the General Council have had the effect of adding hundreds to its membership every week. The Communists number one-thousandth of the organised workers ; its members numbered one-tenth of those arrested under the police terrorism of the Emergency Powers Act. It thus becomes a factor in the struggle. It is not for nothing that the Government launches a special attack upon it by the publication of the beautifully printed Blue Book containing correspondence "lifted" during the police raid last autumn.

(14) *The Working Class*—which in this instance is to be carefully distinguished from the bureaucracy of the Trade Unions—is, as a whole, sympathetic. Money pours in from shop collections. Individual class-conscious workers pawn their belongings to help the miners in their struggle. Never since the Dock Strike of 1889 has there been such sympathy. It is more than sympathy—it is solidarity. As never before in Britain, the miners' struggle is felt and realised as a class struggle.

The Two Battle Fronts

Each day, the Press varies its fantastic, if flattering picture of the miners' leaders as "Never, Never Men," by some tale about "Pits re-opening," "Men repudiating Cook," "Herbert Smith gives Way," "Cook Sues for Peace," "Miners' New Demand," "Government's New Line," till in the end, not only is the middle class reader (including in this class not a few Trade Union

Officials) thoroughly bemused, but the Press scribes themselves begin to think the noise of their printing machines to be the actual voice of the coal mines. Each day brings Fleet Street the need to create a bright clangorous universe anew : and so by Thursday the world (in the newspapers) may be quite different from what it was on Tuesday (in the newspapers) ; though neither Tuesday's world nor Thursday's world are anything like the world of sober fact. Yet so limited is each man's personal experience within the complexities of capitalism that of the false coinage uttered daily he is simply not in a position to detect the falsity or otherwise of more than five per cent. of it. In this way the workers are "governed."

The facts, however, as to the miners' position are very simple and have not suffered any change since the National Conference of April 9.

(15) *The Miners' Standpoint.*—On June 12, an appeal to all Trade Unions was issued by the four officials of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, in which it was said :—

Our Executive, basing itself on the decisions of our Conferences, reinforced by the determined spirit shown by our members in every coalfield, declares that the only possible basis for a settlement is :—

- (1) The immediate reorganisation of the industry in order to remove the waste and inefficiency revealed by repeated enquiries.
- (2) Maintenance of the national basis of the wage agreement.
- (3) Maintenance of wages at not less than those ruling prior to the lock-out, in view of the fact that such wages are already much too low, and cannot be reduced without inflicting even more severe hardships and privation on our members.
- (4) Maintenance of hours and other conditions as before the lock-out.

On these points we are further encouraged to offer a stubborn resistance by our appreciation of the fact that any weakness on our part, while providing no remedy whatever for the coal problem, would be followed by the extension of wage cuts and longer hours to the workers in other industries. This is recognised by the whole Trade Union Movement, which has repeatedly pledged its support for the stand we are taking.

Reorganisation to the miners means Nationalisation. But at the moment, while completely and correctly sceptical of anything short of nationalisation, the Miners' Federation of Great Britain would not oppose the attempt to put into practice the meagre reorganisation proposals set forth this Spring in the Report of the Coal Commission.

(16) *The Coalowners' Standpoint.*—The Coalowners still demand :—

- (1) An all-round reduction of wages, averaging thirteen and a-third per cent. on standard rates.
- (2) One hour more to be worked per day and piece rates to be reduced correspondingly, *i.e.*, by about 14.2 per cent.

Their second demand is diametrically opposed to the no-change recommendation of the Coal Report of the Royal Commission. But the coalowners turned their backs to the Royal Commission as soon as it had reported, saying at the same time, there was no discourtesy intended.

(17) *The Government* has taken four lines :—

- (1) Mr. Baldwin said he would accept the Coal Commission Report and put its recommendations, including wage cuts, into practice, if the other two parties, miners and mineowners, would accept it.
- (2) Mr. Baldwin, just before the General Strike, said he would promise much and perform much if only the miners would consent *in advance* to take less wages.
- (3) *After* the General Strike, Mr. Baldwin, ignoring the Samuel Recommendations, proposed a 10 per cent. wage cut, followed by a further cut three months later, the amount of which was to be decided by compulsory arbitration. If both sides accepted, said Baldwin from his Olympus, he would grant £3,000,000 to the industry. But neither party would have this award of the great impartial Jupiter. The miners refused to be fleeced and the mineowners wanted longer hours. Jupiter, king of the gods, sends a lofty message to these erring mortals, deploring the attitude of both.
- (4) A month elapses. The god descends to earth and assumes the shape of a coalowner—Mr. Baldwin announces that reorganisation is eye-wash and *longer hours* are the goods. This attack on hours of labour and this disregard of the sybilline utterances of the Coal Commission are each put forward as a parliamentary bill on June 21.

Thus the Government has openly joined forces with the mineowners and formed with them a single battle front.

(18) *The General Council of the T.U.C.* had been faced by a difficult position, following on the General Strike. Thousands of workers being victimised wanted the General Council to tell them the reason why. They decided to reserve their defence and fixed a Conference of Trade Union Executives for June 25, by which time it was expected the miners' struggle would be finished. As June 25 approached and there was no sign of the miners' defeat it became more and more difficult to face the Conference. Not that

they feared the Conference : such a Conference, they had little doubt, would in its infinite mercy wash all their sins away. But because such a Conference would also, in its infinite justice, condemn the miners in the same measure as it condoned the General Council, its final effect would be to range the General Council publicly on the side of Baldwin. Some of them did not shrink from this conclusion. But a majority were against it. At this moment, Baldwin's trumpets sounded for the onset upon hours of labour. The General Council took the opportunity and proposed to the miners a postponement of the Conference, together with a united defence of hours of labour. The miners' leaders striving after unity, if only an appearance of unity, agreed to sign the General Council's deed of postponement.

But the General Council cannot recall the General Strike. They have shot that bolt. What they *can* do is to impose an embargo on the import and transport of coal and to levy all trade unionists a weekly 5 per cent. for the miners so as not to fall behind the example set by Russian trade unionists. What they *will* do remains to be seen.

(19) *The Liberal Party's* attitude as shown by its Press has already been mentioned. Mr. Lloyd George, the most astute politician of the the capitalist world, carried this attitude much further. He "sympathises" openly with the miners. He ridicules the Government and its Jix for their scaremongering attempt to stop the Russian workers' money in aid of the miners. He laughs at their Blue Books and defends the Labour Party front bench against both Jix and the Communists. In a perfectly magnificent blending of religiosity and (time-expired) revolutionary fervour—the bourgeois revolution be it understood—the one-time advocate of "the knock-out blow" extols Christ, *le bon sans-culotte*, as the exponent of Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood. He domiciles the French Revolution and even gets it to breed with the native Nonconformity of England : and their offspring is to be a new Social Gospel that will sweep away the slums without seriously hindering the increased rate of exploitation. MacDonald is thrown into the shade. Meantime Lloyd George, consistent with his advocacy of "coal and power," pushes forward the Report of the Royal Commission and attacks the Government for going against

that Report. In all this attitude of Mr. Lloyd George there is great significance.

What does it mean? It means that Baldwin has made a serious mistake, first in flouting the Report of the Coal Commission, second in coming down so openly on the side of the coalowners. And the former mistake is the worse.

From the point of view of twentieth century capitalism, coal production in Britain is a backward industry. Only the special conditions of the years 1900 to 1920 enabled it to survive with its present obsolete and Victorian methods of organisation. In the *general* interests of capitalism the coal industry should be re-organised and trustified. Baldwin has preferred the sectional interests of the coalowners (he is one himself) to the general interests of capitalism. For this he will suffer in the future. And Lloyd George may expect to gain in the next scene-shifting of the political stage, because he has understood better that the crisis gave an opportunity not only to beat down the miners, but also to humble the coalowners, to scrap their obsolete methods and start on a level with their German competitors.

Further, Baldwin, obsessed by his all too simple strategy of "smashing the Miners' Strike," has thrown away the mask of State impartiality much too lightly. It is true the farce could not be played on much longer: but many will feel that Baldwin gave away the game too soon. The Conservative Government of 1900 was a mineowners' Government—the mines were on the Witwatersrand. It fell, and great was the fall thereof. Baldwin's Government is a mineowners' Government. Herein Lloyd George reads its doom. Many for this cause will vote for him. Many amongst the Right Wing Labour parliamentarians will feel fascinated by the "Sanity" of his viewpoint and by his "democratic soul." So, thinks Lloyd George, perhaps . . . perhaps . . . And as he thinks he glances towards the Right Wing Labour Benches, and sees there looks that meet his own.

Economic Background

(20) *Hard Facts*.—The opinion is now prevalent that the Report of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry, 1925, while in its recommendations it may have been studiously vague (the usual

offspring of formal unanimity), put forward in its survey a complete and correct analysis. The survey is usually referred to as "the hard facts" of the coal industry. Publicists, Trade Union Officials, Labour peers and others all assume the validity of the Commission's survey, and hold it as proved that the "economics" of mining will not permit of reorganisations without some sacrifice by the miners.

But, what if the Report of the Coal Commission is not the New Testament of the coal industry? What if the Report is a skilful political document, whose main purpose was to create just this belief, that the miners had a hopeless case? What if the boot is on the other foot, and it is the capitalists who have a hopeless case? Then it is clear we have yet to find the "hard facts," and to see them in their proper light.

The Report set out to find a solution for the troubles of the coal industry within the bounds of that industry. They ruled out coke and by-product workers, they ruled out the ancillary industries. They carefully avoid reaching any conclusions that bore upon the world outside Britain. It was their business to find a solution within the bounds of the industry and they found it in wage cuts for the present and reorganisations in the future.

But, what if the solution of the difficulties of the coal industry is not to be discovered within its narrow bounds? In such a case the Report would have condemned itself to sterility, and its conclusions would be null.

The three obvious remedies for the troubles of the coal industry were :—

- (1) Restoration of markets abroad.
- (2) Restoration of the home market.
- (3) Reorganisation.

(21) *The Foreign Markets* shrank and dwindled after the war from a variety of causes, such as Reparations, new coal fields, new sources of power substituting coal, &c. Reparations, laid down by the Treaty of Versailles and brought to fruition under the Dawes Plan, have undoubtedly affected British coal exports. On this point the Commission forebore to say anything definite. Yet they had before them the fact that Mussolini had promised to pay a yearly tribute of millions of pounds to Great Britain; that he could

only pay by some transfer of goods ; that German Reparations coal was now entering the Italian market to the tune of four millions of tons per annum instead of a meagre million tons pre-war ; and that British coal imports into Italy had correspondingly diminished by a similar amount. If these figures mean anything at all, they mean that from the point of view of the British coal industry the Dawes Plan should be scrapped and the Treaty of Versailles torn up. To reach such a conclusion, to propose such a thing would have been to lay hands on the Ark of the Covenant. It would have been to confess a contradiction between the interests of the coal capitalists and the general politics of the British bourgeoisie. The Commission carefully abstained.

(22) *The Home Market* is much more important than the Foreign Market, and also, strange as it may seem, much more elastic. The simple and childlike economics of the coalowners runs somewhat upon this line, that if you can only lower the price of coal by cutting wages sufficiently, there is bound to be a market for it. Behind this there appears to be a vague idea that people eat coal ; that if you only brought the price low enough, cannibals of the river Congo would gladly consume it. This is wrong. You cannot, by no matter what lowering of the price, get people to put coal into their mouths, but if you can put coal into the mouths of the gaping blast furnaces, scores and scores of which are standing idle in this country, then you have found a market for coal, you have found the people who will really eat it. In other words, restore the metal industry, set on foot again the manufacture of iron and steel and general engineering, and you will then find a market for your coal in abundance. For into every ton of steel there goes four tons of coal.

Where is the market for iron and steel ? The answer is the needs of the hundred and forty millions of Russian peasants and workers. If they are given credits they will buy manufactured metal goods to the extent of at least one hundred million pounds.

But here at once there comes a snag. To admit this obvious partial solution would be to admit that the Labour Government were right in their proposed guarantee of a hundred millions loan to Soviet Russia to be spent mainly in purchases from Britain.

It would mean that once more there was a contradiction between the interests of the coal capitalists and the foreign politics of the British bourgeoisie.

(23) *Reorganisation* is a crying need, and the form it must take is Nationalisation. Anything short of that is mere patchwork. Only on condition of getting rid of the parasites and leeches that cling to the production of coal and hinder its effectiveness can this industry hope to be efficient. But, needless to say, the purpose of the Royal Commission was to turn down Nationalisation, and to destroy as far as possible the hopes raised by the Sankey Commission of 1919. It is on this question of Nationalisation that the Liberals and Conservatives part company. The Liberals, who more nearly represent the newest forms and tendencies of Capital, are in favour of large scale production and trustification; the Conservatives have accepted the idea of maintaining the *status quo*.

Since the Coal Commission, still more the Tory Government, and most of all the palaeolithic coalowners, are resolved to have nothing to do with any of those wider solutions, they are driven back on the temporary solution of a wage cut. It is a temporary solution because in a few months the advantage gained on the foreign market (they hope for a cut of 3s. per ton in price) would be overtaken by corresponding cuts in the wages of foreign workers. There would come another wage cut and then another and so on. What prevents this series of temporary solutions? Simply the fact that the working class will not agree to it. They have little enough to live on as it is. Therefore, here we are presented in the clearest possible form with the contradiction in modern Imperialism that it seeks only for temporary stabilisation and that this stabilisation can only be got by cuts in wages. Steering their ship along this course, the bourgeoisie are bound to run against the rock of working-class resistance.

The Keys of Victory

(24) *Money plus Embargo*.—At this moment, at the end of the ninth week, the question of victory or defeat can be put in very simple terms. It is this. How soon can the owners, backed by the Government, starve out the miners and their wives and families? How soon will the few thousand effective owners, the few score

members of the Government and the few hundreds of big coal-owners, succeed by means of their control of State resources and by their ownership of the mines in a society based on private property in starving out between three and four millions of the population of this country? Or will enough money be forthcoming to keep the miners going while the embargo on the movement of coal slowly compels the other side to give way. The tactics of the owners and the Government are to starve them out. Quite correctly from his point of view Lord Hunsdon spoke against giving money in aid of the starving wives and children. Lord Hunsdon believes in waging the class war ruthlessly; Quite naturally also Jix and the others have shown themselves ready to risk war in order to stop the money coming from the Russian workers.

Will the Labour Movement, will the workers in every country take as clear a view as Lord Hunsdon and Jix and the others? Above all, will they respond in time? If the twenty-five million and more trade unionists of the world respond in anything like the way the Russian workers have done, the miners and their wives and children can be fed and remain on the field until the end of this year. This is the real test of International Trade Union Unity.

But the embargo is the speedier method of ending the struggle. If they (Baldwin & Co.) would starve the British miners into submission, the transport workers of this and other countries could, by refusing to move coal, starve the British industries into submission. There is no other way out, no other choice.

Will the transport workers, railwaymen, dockers, stevedores, longshoremen, sailors and firemen—both British, French, Belgian, German, Dutch and American and all other countries—be bold and make this fateful choice that will force the miners' enemies to sue for peace?

THE RANK AND FILE AND THE GENERAL STRIKE

By JACK TANNER

IT is too soon yet to gauge or to understand fully what effect the General Strike will have upon the working-class movement. Much has been written already in the Labour Press on the subject. Books and pamphlets have been published outlining the history of it, the events that led to its taking place, and detailing progress from day to day. Articles have appeared analysing the factors that caused it, and that were responsible for its being called off.

Much more must be written and said, however, before a complete understanding of this great event can be obtained. All the facts are not yet known, and it is probable the rank and file of the Unions will never get to know the full story of what transpired in high places, or have an opportunity to appreciate all the elements, economic, historic, political, and personal, that influenced the General Council in its decisions. A complete survey of the general strike has yet to be made, and if all the factors can be collated, analysed, and their effects apportioned accurately, such a work will be of inestimable value to the working-class movement—a real Revolutionists' handbook.

A summary of the effects it has had upon the workers will not be the least difficult or least important part of such a work. At the present time it is only possible to give a brief and cursory outline of the thoughts and feelings of the rank and file.

While the theoreticians are theorising, and Labour writers are filling pages, while Trade Union leaders are orating—or remaining silent, according to their responsibilities and understanding of loyalty to the General Council—the members of the unions, the men and women who were in the struggle, have thoughts, feelings and impressions of the strike, that become more concrete and definite every day. Whether those thoughts and impressions are correct and justified is not the question. They are there. Circum-

stances and experiences have created them, and that they are in the main unfavourable to the leaders is generally known.

It has been said that it is not a question of criticism of this or that individual leader ; that abuse and condemnation of them will not help to a clearer understanding of the position. This is a cold and logical outlook ; one needs to have a knowledge of most of the facts that operated, and be somewhat detached also, to see things from such a standpoint. But the workers have not the knowledge, nor can they detach themselves, they can only judge things from a casual viewpoint, and from the immediate and material results of any action, or the lack of them.

The average general feeling is not against any particular individuals ; the whole General Council has been condemned. Its members, having apparently agreed among themselves to hang together, are being condemned together. That they have been condemned unheard is their own fault. If they choose to delay a full explanation indefinitely, they must not grumble if the workers form conclusions that may be wrong.

The general strike was called to assist the miners. This was clearly understood by all who took part in it. It was to prevent a reduction in wages, to prevent an increase in working hours, and interference with the principle of national agreements. The general strike did not achieve this, these issues are still unsettled. There has been no material or practical gain as a result of it. The splendid solidarity displayed, the sacrifices made seem to the average trade unionist to have been wasted. Nothing concrete or tangible has resulted.

Who is to blame for this " No decision " contest ? Not the workers, for their actions exceeded all expectations. There was no weakening on their part.

Amongst the ordinary members of the rank and file, the good average trade unionists, the members who have no very definite political opinions, the bulk of the T.U. membership, the opinion is that the General Council is to blame.

Their feelings can be summed up in three words : disappointment, disillusion and disgust. Disappointment at the calling off of the strike, when they felt so strongly that success was near at hand.

They knew the whole-hearted response to the call in their own

district, and they know now that that response was the same nationally. They knew that the full power of the unions had not been exercised, that the strike had not become really general, when it was called off. It was a sort of semi-private row, and not every trade unionist could join in.

The workers have been disillusioned as to the impartiality of the Government, a belief that still prevailed to a considerable extent. The use of the army and navy, the display of tanks, armoured cars, submarines, destroyers, tin hats and rifles, has given them a pretty clear indication of what they will have to face in future struggles. The operation of the Emergency Powers Act; the organisation of the upper and middle classes in the O.M.S., special constabulary, &c., demonstrated to what extent the governing class will go when they think their position is threatened.

Whatever the General Council may have thought and said—and they did stress the point—that the general strike was not against Constitutional Government, the workers know perfectly well now that Constitutional Government was against the general strike. A certain degree of disgust is felt and expressed at the attitude of the leaders in giving up the fight, without adequate reasons. Whatever explanation may be given by the General Council in the future will not remove from the minds of the workers the belief that it was called off through fear of it developing into something that would force the General Council to declare *their* position much more definitely than they have done now.

Cynical comments are made in regard to the message of the General Council to all trade unionists, at the opening of the second week of the strike.

“Stand firm, be loyal to instructions, and trust your leaders.” They did this all the time the strike was on. They stood firm, and displayed unexpected and unexampled loyalty. They trusted their leaders.

There is a feeling now that it would have probably been better if they had “trussed” them.

The counter-attack of the employers after the termination of the strike was apparently never considered or expected. Thousands of good trade unionists are “on the stones” as a consequence.

They are among the most class-conscious and active members of the unions. They have acted as shop stewards, members of councils of action, delegates on strike committees, &c. They have been the leaders in their shops and factories, the driving forces in their particular districts, always a dangerous position economically, always liable to be "sniped" for their activities. These men have felt the full blast of the counter-attack, and this has happened in spite of the splendid spirit of the workers, thousands of whom kept up the struggle for days after the strike was called off, acting on the slogan "All back or none" in an endeavour to prevent the victimisation of their more active fellow workers.

After the signing of the agreement by the railway unions, followed then by many others of a similar character, it was felt that the principle had been lost, and it became a matter of self-preservation. The spirit of "all for each and each for all" changed to one of each for himself.

Agreements and conditions that had taken years of struggle to obtain went by the board. Movements for better conditions that had been afoot long enough, and that were reaching a stage of development, now stand still. This applies particularly to the engineering workers' claim for a 20s. per week increase.

Just previous to the general strike, the ballot vote for strike action to enforce the demand in the London District began among the members of the sixteen unions affiliated to the London Engineering Trades Committee. The vote was returnable at the end of May, and many branches had not voted when the general strike took place. Those that had, showed a good majority for strike action. Following the strike the returns are very poor, though showing a majority in favour. Many members have refused to vote, in a belief that the time is not now opportune to force the issue, particularly in view of the continuation of the miners' struggle. Many of the big engineering firms are easing off production and discharging workers, due it is said to the lack of fuel and materials.

The engineering workers nationally were looking to London to strike the first real blow to obtain the £1 increase. They were prepared to give the fullest possible support to the London men,

and would have been willing to face a national lock-out on the issue, given some assurance of support from the general T.U. Movement. But that assurance is not now likely to be forthcoming, for the miners' case still fills the horizon. By better leadership, organisation, propaganda and publicity they have been able to obtain the official support of the T.U. Movement, and they will continue to get the fullest financial and moral support of the whole working class.

The Engineering Unions missed the tide, and it is now on the ebb. Preparations must now be made by intensive and extensive agitation and organisation to take advantage of the earliest opportunity to force the issue of the wage increase. It will not be long before the tide will again be at the flood, and London must be ready to move on it.

Some criticism has been made by the rank and file at the lack of anything like definite instructions from the T.U.C., or even from the respective E.C.'s of the unions involved in the general strike. This criticism is hardly justified in view of the difficulties of communication during the struggle. As a result of the failure to obtain a clear interpretation of the General Council's instructions to the trades ceasing work, the local strike organisations took power unto themselves, which in the majority of cases was accepted without question, by the workers. Acting on the principle of "when in doubt, call all out," the councils of action and strike committees drew out men who according to the General Council, were in the second and third line of defence, or attack. This was all to the good, so far as the actual strike was concerned, but probably resulted in more victimisation on resumption.

Though many of the unions were not in a position to pay full strike benefits, there has been comparatively little complaint by members of the financial loss incurred by them. Practically all the unions paid some benefit. The workers appreciated the position; they did not come out to get something for themselves. It was a matter of giving, and they showed they were prepared to make a sacrifice.

One of the most hopeful and surprising results of the call to action was the response of the non-unionists. In many factories with only a small minority of organised workers, all ceased work.

On such an issue, with such an object, class feeling prevailed. Of course there was also a mass psychology operating. This was the biggest thing the workers had known since August, 1914. They wanted to be in it, it was action, a change, something real and big.

There was also the uncertainty about it all. What would it lead to? How would it end? Who could remain in a workshop or factory, doing the ordinary every-day job, working at the bench or tending a machine, when millions of their fellows were on the streets, and when anything might happen? Being human, they could not help themselves, and left work holus-bolus, unionist or "non." These non-unionists realise more than ever they did before the power of organisation and mass action. They know it was not that trade unionism was defeated, but that the towel was thrown in the ring. That the General Council did not want the strike to develop into anything like a revolutionary situation is saying what everyone knows and admits. This also applies to the attitude of the average worker at the beginning of the strike, who felt that all he was called upon to do was to help the miners.

But after the first week this outlook changed somewhat. They were in the fight and up against all employers and the State. They began to realise that, and were prepared to continue. The British workers have shown they can and will fight if given a lead, and are prepared to go further than they were taken by the General Council during the nine days.

Those nine days will have a tremendous effect upon the Labour Movement generally. It has had its biggest lesson yet in the class war; the experiences will not be wasted upon the workers. They have gained confidence in themselves and their organisations. The rank and file know they are greater than their present leaders.

The general strike will mark the beginning of a different mental outlook for the rank and file in the trade unions. They will demand a greater, a more courageous and honest leadership. They will object to being preached at, instructed and led by men who have not these proven qualifications.

Let us hope the rank and file at the Trades Union Congress in September will put into operation some of the changes that the general strike has shown are so urgently needed.

PEACE UTOPIAS

By ROSA LUXEMBURG

(In view of the renewed attempts being made to revive the dreams of peace and disarmament within the capitalist order, in the same manner as before the last war, the following article of Rosa Luxemburg, dating from the theoretical controversy with Social Democracy before the last war, is peculiarly apposite as a statement of the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism. The article was published in the "Leipziger Volkzeitung" of May 6 and 8, 1911, and reprinted in a shorter form in "Die Internationale"—the journal founded by Rosa Luxemburg—of January, 1926, from which this version is taken.—Editor, THE LABOUR MONTHLY.)

WHAT is our task in the question of peace? It does not consist merely in vigorously demonstrating at all times the love of peace of the Social Democrats; but first and foremost our task is to make clear to the masses of people the nature of militarism and sharply and clearly to bring out the differences in principle between the standpoint of the Social Democrats and that of the bourgeois peace enthusiasts.

Wherein does this difference lie? Certainly not merely in the fact that the bourgeois apostles of peace are relying on the influence of fine words, while we do not depend on words alone. Our very points of departure are diametrically opposed: the friends of peace in bourgeois circles believe that world peace and disarmament can be realised within the frame-work of the present social order, whereas we, who base ourselves on the materialistic conception of history and on scientific socialism, are convinced that militarism can only be abolished from the world with the destruction of the capitalist class state. From this follows the mutual opposition of our tactics in propagating the idea of peace. The bourgeois friends of peace are endeavouring—and from their point of view this is perfectly logical and explicable—to invent all sorts of "practical" projects for gradually restraining militarism, and are naturally inclined to consider every outward apparent sign of a tendency toward peace as the genuine article, to take every expression of the ruling diplomacy in this vein at its

word, to exaggerate it into a basis for earnest activity. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, must consider it their duty in this matter, just as in all matters of social criticism, to expose the bourgeois attempts to restrain militarism as pitiful half-measures, and the expressions of such sentiments on the part of the governing circles as diplomatic make-believe, and to oppose the bourgeois claims and pretences with the ruthless analysis of capitalist reality.

From this same standpoint the tasks of the Social Democrats with regard to the declarations of the kind made by the British Government can only be to show up the idea of a partial limitation of armaments, in all its impracticability, as a half-measure, and to endeavour to make it clear to the people that militarism is closely linked up with colonial politics, with tariff politics, and with international politics, and that therefore the present Nations, if they really seriously and honestly wish to call a halt on competitive armaments, would have to begin by disarming in the commercial political field, give up colonial predatory campaigns and the international politics of spheres of influence in all parts of the world—in a word, in their foreign as well as in their domestic politics would have to do the exact contrary of everything which the nature of the present politics of a capitalist class state demands. And thus would be clearly explained what constitutes the kernel of the Social Democratic conception, that militarism in both its forms—as war and as armed peace—is a legitimate child, a logical result of capitalism, which can only be overcome with the destruction of capitalism, and that hence whoever honestly desires world peace and liberation from the tremendous burden of armaments must also desire Socialism. Only in this way can real Social Democratic enlightenment and recruiting be carried on in connection with the armaments debate.

This work, however, will be rendered somewhat difficult and the attitude of the Social Democrats will become obscure and vacillating if, by some strange exchange of rôles, our Party tries on the contrary to convince the bourgeois State that it can quite well limit armaments and bring about peace and that it can do this from its own standpoint, from that of a capitalist class State.

It has until now been the pride and the firm scientific basis of our Party, that not only the general lines of our programme but

also the slogans of our practical every-day policy were not invented out of odds and ends as something desirable, but that in all things we relied on our knowledge of the tendencies of social development and made the objective lines of this development the basis of our attitude. For us the determining factor until now has not been the possibility from the standpoint of the relation of forces within the State, but the possibility from the standpoint of the tendencies of development of society. The limitation of armaments, the retrenchment of militarism, does not coincide with the further development of international capitalism. Only those who believe in the mitigation and blunting of class antagonisms, and in the checking of the economic anarchy of capitalism, can believe in the possibility of these international conflicts allowing themselves to be slackened, to be mitigated and wiped out. For the international antagonisms of the capitalist states are but the complement of class antagonisms, and the world political anarchy but the reverse side of the anarchic system of production of capitalism. Both can grow only together and be overcome only together. "A little order and peace" is, therefore, just as impossible, just as much a petty-bourgeois Utopia, with regard to the capitalist world market as to world politics, and with regard to the limitation of crises as to the limitation of armaments.

Let us cast a glance at the events of the last fifteen years of international development. Where do they show any tendency toward peace, toward disarmament, toward settlement of conflicts by arbitration?

During these fifteen years we had this: in 1895 the war between Japan and China, which is the prelude to the East Asiatic period of imperialism; in 1898 the war between Spain and the United States; in 1899-1902 the British Boer War in South Africa; in 1900 the campaign of the European powers in China; in 1904 the Russo-Japanese War; in 1904-07 the German Herero War in Africa; and then there was also the military intervention of Russia in 1908 in Persia, at the present moment the military intervention of France in Morocco, without mentioning the incessant colonial skirmishes in Asia and in Africa. Hence the bare facts alone show that for fifteen years hardly a year has gone by without some war activity.

But more important still is the after effect of these wars. The war with China was followed in Japan by a military reorganisation which made it possible ten years later to undertake the war against Russia and which made Japan the predominant military power in the Pacific. The Boer War resulted in a military reorganisation of England, the strengthening of her armed forces on land. The war with Spain inspired the United States to reorganise its navy and moved it to enter colonial politics with imperialist interests in Asia, and thus was created the germ of the antagonism of interests between the United States and Japan in the Pacific. The Chinese campaign was accompanied in Germany by a thorough military reorganisation, the great Navy Law of 1900, which marks the beginning of the competition of Germany with England on the sea and the sharpening of the antagonisms between these two nations.

But there is another and extremely important factor besides : the social and political awakening of the hinterlands, of the colonies and the "spheres of interest," to independent life. The revolution in Turkey, in Persia, the revolutionary ferment in China, in India, in Egypt, in Arabia, in Morocco, in Mexico, all these are also starting points of world political antagonisms, tensions, military activities and armaments. It was just during the course of this fifteen years that the points of friction in international politics have increased to an unparalleled degree, a number of new States stepped into active struggle on the international stage, all the Great Powers underwent a thorough military reorganisation. The antagonisms, in consequence of all these events, have reached an acuteness never known before, and the process is going further and further, since on the one hand the ferment in the Orient is increasing from day to day, and on the other every settlement between the military powers unavoidably becomes the starting point for fresh conflicts. The Reval Entente between Russia, Great Britain and France, which Jaurès hailed as a guarantee for world peace, led to the sharpening of the crisis in the Balkans, accelerated the outbreak of the Turkish Revolution, encouraged Russia to military action in Persia and led to a rapprochement between Turkey and Germany which, in its turn, rendered the Anglo-German antagonisms more acute. The Potsdam agreement resulted

in the sharpening of the crisis in China and the Russo-Japanese agreement had the same effect.

Therefore, on a mere reckoning with facts, to refuse to realise that these facts give rise to anything rather than a mitigation of the international conflicts, of any sort of disposition toward world peace, is wilfully to close one's eyes.

In view of all this, how is it possible to speak of tendencies toward peace in bourgeois development which are supposed to neutralise and overcome its tendencies toward war? Wherein are they expressed?

In Sir Edward Grey's declaration and that of the French Parliament? In the "armament weariness" of the bourgeoisie? But the middle and petty bourgeois sections of the bourgeoisie have always been groaning at the burden of militarism, just as they groan at the devastation of free competition, at the economic crises, at the lack of conscience shown in stock exchange speculations, at the terrorism of the cartels and trusts. The tyranny of the trust magnates in America has even called forth a rebellion of broad masses of the people and a wearisome legal procedure against the trusts on the part of the State authorities. Do the Social Democrats interpret this as a symptom of the beginning of the limitation of trust development, or have they not rather a sympathetic shrug of the shoulders for that petty-bourgeois rebellion and a scornful smile for that State campaign? The "dialectic" of the peace tendency of capitalist development, which was supposed to have cut across its war tendency and to have overcome it, simply confirms the old truth that the roses of capitalist profit-making and class domination also have thorns for the bourgeoisie, which it prefers to wear as long as possible round its suffering head, in spite of all pain and woe, rather than get rid of it along with the head on the advice of the Social Democrats.

To explain this to the masses, ruthlessly to scatter all illusions with regard to attempts made at peace on the part of the bourgeoisie and to declare the proletarian revolution as the first and only step toward world peace—that is the task of the Social Democrats with regard to all disarmament trickeries, whether they are invented in Petersburg, London or Berlin.

II.

The Utopianism of the standpoint which expects an era of peace and retrenchment of militarism in the present social order is plainly revealed in the fact that it is having recourse to project making. For it is typical of Utopian strivings that, in order to demonstrate their practicability, they hatch "practical" recipes with the greatest possible details. To this also belongs the project of the "United States of Europe" as a basis for the limitation of international militarism.

"We support all efforts," said Comrade *Ledebour* in his speech in the Reichstag on April 3, "which aim at getting rid of the threadbare pretexts for the incessant war armaments. We demand the economic and political union of the European states. I am firmly convinced that, while it is certain to come during the period of Socialism, it can also come to pass before that time, that we will live to see the UNITED STATES OF EUROPE, as confronted at present by the business competition of the United States of America. At least we demand that capitalist society, that capitalist statesmen, in the interests of capitalist development in Europe itself, in order that Europe will later not be completely submerged in world competition, prepare for this union of Europe into the United States of Europe."

And in the *Neue Zeit* of April 28, Comrade Kautsky writes :—

. . . . For a lasting duration of peace, which banishes the ghost of war forever, there is only one way to-day : the union of the states of European civilisation into a league with a common commercial policy, a league parliament, a league government and a league army—the formation of the United States of Europe. Were this to succeed, then a tremendous step would be achieved. Such a United States would possess such a superiority of forces that without any war they could compel all the other nations which do not voluntarily join them to liquidate their armies and give up their fleets. But in that case all necessity for armaments for the new United States themselves would disappear. They would be in a position not only to relinquish all further armaments, give up the standing army and all aggressive weapons on the sea, which we are demanding to-day, but even give up all means of defence, the militia system itself. Thus the era of permanent peace would surely begin.

Plausible as the idea of the United States of Europe as a peace arrangement may seem to some at first glance, it has on closer

examination not the least thing in common with the method of thought and the standpoint of social democracy.

As adherents of the materialist conception of history, we have always adopted the standpoint that the modern States as political structures are not artificial products of a creative phantasy, like, for instance, the Duchy of Warsaw of Napoleonic memory, but historical products of economic development.

But what economic foundation lies at the bottom of the idea of a European State Federation? Europe, it is true, is a geographical and, within certain limits, an historical cultural conception. But the idea of Europe as an economic unit contradicts capitalist development in two ways. First of all there exist within Europe among the capitalist States—and will so long as these exist—the most violent struggles of competition and antagonisms, and secondly the European States can no longer get along economically without the non-European countries. As suppliers of foodstuffs, raw materials and wares, also as consumers of the same, the other parts of the world are linked in a thousand ways with Europe. At the present stage of development of the world market and of world economy, the conception of Europe as an isolated economic unit is a sterile concoction of the brain. Europe no more forms a special unit within world economy than does Asia or America.

And if the idea of a European union in the economic sense has long been outstripped, this is no less the case in the political sense.

The times when the centre of gravity of political development and the crystallising agent of capitalist contradictions lay on the European continent, are long gone by. To-day Europe is only a link in the tangled chain of international connections and contradictions. And what is of decisive significance—European antagonisms themselves no longer play their rôle on the European continent but in all parts of the world and on all the seas.

Only were one suddenly to lose sight of all these happenings and manœuvres, and to transfer oneself back to the blissful times of the European concert of powers, could one say, for instance, that for forty years we have had uninterrupted peace. This conception, which considers only events on the European continent, does not notice that the very reason why we have had no war in Europe for

decades is the fact that international antagonisms have grown infinitely beyond the narrow confines of the European continent, and that European problems and interests are now fought out on the world seas and in the by-corners of Europe.

Hence the "United States of Europe" is an idea which runs directly counter both economically and politically to the course of development, and which takes absolutely no account of the events of the last quarter of a century.

That an idea so little in accord with the tendency of development can fundamentally offer no progressive solution in spite of all radical disguises is confirmed also by the fate of the slogan of the "United States of Europe." Every time that bourgeois politicians have championed the idea of Europeanism, of the union of European States, it has been with an open or concealed point directed against the "yellow peril," the "dark continent," against the "inferior races," in short, it has always been an imperialist abortion.

And now if we, as Social Democrats, were to try to fill this old skin with fresh and apparently revolutionary wine, then it must be said that the advantages would not be on our side but on that of the bourgeoisie. Things have their own objective logic. And the solution of the European union within the capitalist social order can objectively, in the economic sense, mean only a tariff war with America, and in the political sense only a colonial race war. The Chinese campaign of the united European regiments, with the World Field Marshal Waldersee at the head, and the gospel of the Hun as our standard—that is the actual and not the fantastic, the only possible expression of the "European State Federation" in the present social order.

ARE WE NEARING REVOLUTION?

By EMILE BURNS

IMMEDIATELY after the war, with the firmer establishment of the Soviet Government in Russia, the revolutionary tendencies—and incidents—in Central Europe, and the widespread activity of the workers in every country, including Britain, it seemed as if revolution would sweep from one country to another in a continuous tide. In 1921 the industrial collapse was followed by the collapse of the workers' organisations, the weakening of the fighting spirit of the workers, and the gradual withdrawal by the capitalists of the concessions forced from them during the preceding years. Soon it began to be realised that capitalism had managed in some sense to "stabilise" itself, that in many countries reactionary movements were installed, and that the revolutionary tendencies had been overcome, or at least temporarily submerged. The prospect of revolution, here or in Europe, faded into the distance, and the working class seemed to be at the mercy of a capitalist class which had changed its policy from compromise to Fascism, its method from financial riot to "stabilisation."

But this period was to last no longer than the preceding period of wide revolutionary movements. Financial stabilisation was unable to change the course of industrial decline; in fact—as we shall find in the case of other capitalist "remedies"—it created serious new difficulties, culminating in an economic crisis throughout Europe on a scale that had not been reached even in 1921. The closing months of 1925 and the early months of 1926 have seen industrial collapse in Germany, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Czecho-Slovakia—all countries with a "stabilised" currency; a financial crisis in the three European countries with "un-stabilised" currencies—Belgium, France and Italy—and in England the general strike, with the continued paralysis of industry through the prolonged coal stoppage.

If it was wrong to take economic difficulties and revolutionary tendencies of 1917 to 1921 as evidence of an early collapse of

capitalism, it is no less wrong to take the very doubtful economic recovery of 1922 to 1924 as evidence of any permanent recovery of capitalism. The further developments of 1925 and 1926 have shown clearly enough that no such conclusion is justified.

There were many Labour writers who thought of the economic position after the war as being due to the war, and who looked forward to "normal" conditions when the immediate difficulties had been removed by time, peace, and goodwill. But those who had a more coherent idea of economics did not regard the war as an accidental intrusion on the development of capitalist prosperity. They saw the war itself as *a part in a process* necessarily reacting on capitalism by creating new and more intense obstacles in its way. But just as the after-war situation cannot be considered by itself, so the situation in 1925-26 cannot be considered by itself. Still less can one element in the present situation be considered by itself. Yet that is what many "sane" Labour apologists are constantly doing; in the *Socialist Review*, for example, Newbold seizes on

the displacement of the machine and the steam engine by the physical chemical analysis and synthesis of matter and the widest application of electric energy

and argues from this (as yet absolutely unrealised) development, that capitalism has yet another shot in its locker, a shot that will re-establish capitalism and hold up revolution for a considerable time to come.

This is about as justifiable as the conclusion of some Labour leaders that because Baldwin sees the need (for capitalism) of industrial peace, and because industrial peace methods are being partially applied, therefore there will be industrial peace.

And the reason why both conclusions are wrong is the same, namely, that they ignore the already existing facts which make such a development unrealisable.

The question whether we are nearing revolution cannot therefore be dismissed by summary statements that British workers love their Constitution, or even by a curt reference to new methods of production, even if these new methods are so diabolically clever that they must be described as "the physical-chemical analysis and synthesis of matter." The answer to the question must depend on a far more careful survey of the whole position, in which the social-

pacifist leanings of Labour leaders and the capitalist striving for new methods of production take their places, but only along with the Dawes plan and other "stabilising" measures, the acknowledged facts of declining production in capitalist countries and rising production in Soviet Russia, the rapidly increasing concentration of industrial capital under the control of finance capital, and above all, the effects on the workers and the reaction of the workers to all of these factors. Such a survey within the limits of a magazine article cannot be exhaustive, but it is nevertheless possible to put acknowledged facts into their place in the whole process, the main outlines of which are already familiar to readers of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*.

In an article in *Forward* (March 27, 1926), Newbold quotes Liebknecht's account of Marx, who, having seen a working model of an electric engine drawing a railroad train, in a moment of enthusiasm declared that the developments arising out of this invention would speedily bring about the social revolution. This was in 1850; Liebknecht, writing in 1896, notes that as yet no train was driven by an electric engine. Therefore, says Liebknecht, Marx was mistaken in the *tempo* of development; therefore, says Newbold, we who expect an early revolution will be equally mistaken, because the electric age must be established before capitalism dies.

But, with his quick grasp of the obvious, Newbold has failed to see the inner meaning of these facts *from a Marxian standpoint*. In 1850 a great new productive force was known to exist; in 1896 it had not yet been effectively applied; in 1926 the capitalist class in Britain was still unable to harness this force, rejected any attempt at a real "coal and power scheme," preferring to face a first-class industrial crisis, and finally produced a tin-pot Electricity Bill as the most that capitalism could do.

Now what is the meaning of this? Is the Socialist movement not right in pointing out that the hindrance to this development is capitalism itself? Is it not right to contrast this delay in applying electricity on an effective scale here with the tremendous advance towards electrification made in backward Russia during a few years of revolutionary rule? Is it not right to point to the present position in the coal industry as a perfect example of the constant

hampering by capitalism of any reorganisation and new methods ? Marx's *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* contains the following :—

“ At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or, what is but a legal expression for the same thing, with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution.”

Whether any particular forces of production can develop within a form of society depends on the extent to which the existing relations of production, property relations, hamper that development ; if they hamper it seriously, the new forces burst down the barriers by means of social revolution—a change in property relations so that the latter become favourable to the development which is essential to the future existence of society.

The bursting of the barriers does not however take place accidentally, without warning ; there are signs in the sky and other dreadful portents, such as General Strikes, widespread unemployment, Fascism. In other words, the social revolution requires the existence of an intensified class struggle, which itself arises out of the failure of production under the existing conditions. For this reason, the facts of declining production and the enormous growth of unemployment are of first-rate significance. The general strike or the coal lock-out did not happen by accident, any more than the Great War did. They arose out of the declining production of capitalist Britain.¹ The general strike and the coal lock-out in turn accelerate the process of decline. The accelerated process of decline, in turn, begets new industrial struggles.

Nor is it merely the situation in Britain which must be taken into account. The Empire is full of menacing dangers ; Europe, especially Germany, with industrial problems similar to those of Britain, is little better than a plague-spot for capitalism. The British colonial areas, it is true, may be of some use to capitalism,

¹ For a summary of the facts, see the pamphlet, *The Industrial Crisis*, issued by the Labour Research Department, *id.*

and may assist British industry in so far as they are able to place increasing orders for industrial products. But these, too, are insignificant, as anyone who knows the statistics must realise. The increase of orders for cottons from the African colonies is less than one per cent. of the loss of orders from the East. (Britain's total exports of cotton piece goods in 1925 were only 70 per cent. of the 1913 figure.) Even a £10 million loan to East Africa, to enable British products to be sent there, is insignificant, compared with the loss of machinery exports to other countries (Britain's total machinery exports were 689,000 tons in 1913; 516,000 tons in 1925). Phillips Price, in *Forward* (April 10, 1926), suggests that salvation for British capitalism may be found in Africa :—

What if orders began to pour into our great engineering works for railways, harbours, mining equipment for Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Tanganyika, and Kenya ?

Well, no doubt they will come in : they have already been dribbling in under the guiding hands of a capitalist government : but *not fast enough* to counterbalance the decline in orders from other markets, as is proved by the continuous decline in our trade statistics.

Nor can the nature of present-day monopoly capitalism be left out of account. The development of Africa under the guidance of finance capital is not a purely healthy process for capitalism. The stage of developing new real wealth, new sources of production, is passing away. It is becoming more a question of creating new means of production, at points where labour is cheap, to take the place of the old—cotton mills in India to do Lancashire's work ; or of creating new claims on the workers in interest, through the State machinery—subsidies, and loans for works that are never used productively. Colonial development under such conditions is continually aggravating the position in the mother country, continually creating new causes of industrial struggles ; while at the same time the colonies themselves become the arena of new struggles.

Finally, there is the menace of war, threatening further economic catastrophe. Capitalism which is conscious of increasing industrial difficulties at home becomes more aggressively interested in expansion ; and the United States is now just reaching

the acute Imperialist stage in her development under capitalism. France and Italy are also seeking new worlds to conquer, to provide the needs of their expanding industry.

The position, when all factors are considered, is not one that can offer capitalism any form of stability, or ordered progress. On the contrary, all the evidence goes to show the increasing difficulties for capitalist growth, throwing up crises at shorter and shorter intervals, while each crisis is more fundamental, more disturbing to the capitalist fabric as a whole. Moreover, the workers are becoming more conscious of the nature of the struggle, more determined in every phase of the continuous fight against the degradation which a decaying capitalism is trying to impose.

To sum up, therefore, the material conditions for a revolutionary change appear to exist ; and the psychological conditions, with the necessary preparation of the workers under the guidance of a revolutionary Party, are undoubtedly developing. Similar, in some cases more developed, conditions exist in other European countries ; war, or an unusually acute economic crisis (such as exists in Poland to-day) may cause far-reaching developments at any moment.

In such circumstances, the question whether we in Britain are nearing revolution loses its air of unreality. No serious student would attempt to say how near any country is to revolution in terms of months or years ; but the study of economic facts would be useless if it did not give sufficient grounds for a practical conclusion. And the facts of to-day show clearly enough that capitalist production has reached a stage in which decline, and the social effects of its decline, are becoming dominant, and the aspects of stability and recovery subordinate ; that the process towards collapse is consequently accelerating ; and that therefore the preparation of the workers to take over power is an urgent task, which, if resolutely undertaken, may appreciably shorten the period of conflict and suffering that must otherwise be bitter and prolonged.

THE FUNCTIONS OF A COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY

By M. N. LIADOV

THERE has been much discussion in Russia on the tasks and functions of the Communist Universities. The exact character of the instruction that should be given is still a vexed question, and the physiognomy, so to speak, of the Communist University as a whole is not yet clear and definite. The history of these universities is well-known. They arose primarily out of the short courses which were established to provide the party with a definite type of propagandist-agitator. Later, with the establishment of a basic three-years' course, considerable confusion has arisen. Some maintained that the task of the Communist University was to give a theoretical basis for the practical equipment already possessed by the student, others believed that a Communist University should elaborate a complete Marxist world philosophy, while still others were of the opinion that their task was to create educated Marxists.

Actually, our task cannot be comprehended under any of these heads. The provision of a Marxist basis means nothing. We all know that even our class enemies have such a basis. The Second International employs Marxist methods. Consequently this formula does not guarantee that we shall turn out a really useful type of worker, one of which the party stands in need. In the second place, to say that our task is simply to create an educated, literate intelligent worker is again no definition. It is much too diffuse. There is in no society such a thing as education which has not a class character. Education was always a weapon in the hands of the ruling class. Everywhere and at all times knowledge has been the appanage of a relatively small group of persons, who have made use of this weapon to re-inforce their mastery. The intelligentsia belonged, of course, to the ruling class, and through it the latter exerted their influence on the masses. Consequently the

system of instruction of education and of science was always adapted to the needs of government. We have never considered science to be non-political. We have always connected it, and should connect it with the tasks which the working class sets before itself.

There was a deep distinction between Russian pre-revolutionary education and West-European education. In the leading countries of the west the bourgeoisie appears as a clearly marked-off class with a sufficiently numerous intelligentsia of its own, and consequently higher education in France, England and other European countries represents a purely class privilege. There the composition of university students is exclusively bourgeois. The petty bourgeoisie even is not in a position to send its children to the higher educational institutions. Widespread popular education is meant to produce suitable servile material, but higher education is adapted for moulding men who will occupy commanding posts in economic and governmental activity. These persons come exclusively from the ranks of the ruling class and everything is directed towards putting them in a special position and strengthening their connection with the class from which they come.

In pre-revolutionary Russia the bourgeoisie was weak. It was not in a position to occupy by itself all the commanding posts and was compelled to recruit future commanders from outside. Consequently the Russian students in pre-war days were much more democratic in their composition, and consequently also the educational system was directed towards separating them as rapidly and completely as possible from the *milieu* from which they came. The prevailing type of these students came from the ranks of the petty officials, the peasantry, &c., and the task of the university and higher education was to estrange them from their former surroundings and to convert them into instruments of the power of the ruling class.

How was this carried out? In the first place, the student was at once dressed in a special uniform thus marking him off in external appearance from his contemporaries. Then he was instructed, not in subjects which would help him to understand the life around him, but on the contrary in those which would make him incomprehensible to his former circle. They bemused his mind with learning Latin and the history of ancient Rome, and so on. As a result,

The Functions of a Communist University 437

while the German technical schools were turning out fully fledged specialists, Russian students coming from a university or technical institution had no specialised knowledge at all. Russian engineers on leaving the technical schools had to go to factories and workshops and only there could they learn their speciality. The author himself had to go to Baku, and there he found among the engineers, railway engineers, electro-technical engineers, but with hardly an exception no mining engineers. All of them, even the last, on coming to the industry were making their first acquaintance with oil. For the university did not consider it as its task to acquaint the student with real conditions of work. Its task was to give instruction which would produce from the democratic strata of the people the necessary material for occupying commanding positions in bourgeois society.

After the revolution these methods of education were taken over as a whole from the old bourgeois world. There were the same instructors, the same science, and the same object. The ranks of the students were renewed, the proletarian youth poured into the university institutions, but the methods of instruction remained the same, there was the same break with real life, the same tendency to abstraction. The result was the same that was consciously aimed at by bourgeois science—the creation of elements foreign to their normal surroundings, and not even understanding them. Thanks to the retention of the old methods there was no guarantee that even those of proletarian origin would emerge with their own class point of view. The student youth was converted into the old type of intelligentsia, without any connection with the masses, torn from the surroundings from which it was derived.

This must be the starting point in considering the functions and tasks of a communist university. Even Marxism taught by these old methods will produce the same result. It will be Marxism divorced from concrete reality, giving a purely philosophical abstract approach to other science. Hence it is sufficient to say that the task of the Communist university is to create a Marxist view of the world.

The next important question is that of the class composition of the students. A strenuous attempt has been made to obtain a uniform body of students, and this has now been practically

achieved ; by 1924, over 80 per cent. of the students of the Sverdlov University came from the working class. But even the small remainder cannot be neglected, for they play a big role in the actual course of instruction. They already come partly prepared for separation from the masses, they are already incapable of thinking concretely, but approach each question from their purely separated point of view. In the schools they sit side by side with students who have worked out their world view point from experience of the class struggle, but very often the teachers themselves have had the old separated type of education, and find it easier to understand the psychology of those students who think in the same way as they do.

The result is that the working-class students who cannot think in this abstract fashion are cut off, and are compelled either to follow at all costs in the train of these leading comrades or to go away. And, as a matter of fact, during the first three years' course more than half of the students dropped out. Those that thus dropped out were not the worst elements—they were only worse from the point of view of the intelligentsia, but better from the class point of view.

To come now to the object itself of the university. At different times it has fulfilled various tasks. In the beginning it served for training agitators, propagandists. That was in the period of war communism. At the end of the civil war another task was clearly set out. The ranks of the old party fighters were thinned, a new generation was growing up outside the influence of the immediate class struggle, without the living experience which can only be derived from actual participation in the class struggle. Moreover, those comrades who came to the fore in the civil war were acutely conscious that, while their class instinct was rarely mistaken during the period of rapid growth of the revolution, when it became necessary to decide party questions under terribly complicated conditions such as exist under the new economic policy, then class instinct alone was not enough. It was essential for them to get a definite Marxist-revolutionary training and to learn how to understand dialectically all the phenomena of life. The Russian Communist Party were alive to this demand on the part of the members and began to reorganise the Communist Universities, converting them into long period courses. But a clear formulation of the task was

still not possible. If it was to create specialists in various branches, much greater time would be required. On the other hand, the workers faculties and special courses were producing trained men, the red "spetsi" (specialists), but for the time being they were not producing party leaders of whom there was an urgent need. The old guard, steeled in the class struggle, always found the right approach for decision of all the questions arising, but the young party members at the head of economic or professional bodies often put economic interests above those of the party.

The Communist University has to make up this deficiency in party education, taking a lesson from the experience of the bourgeoisie. The latter have not only institutions for the training of leaders in bourgeois economy in general, but also their own specially privileged purely class schools, where no proletarian can enter. The Communist University by its method of approach to science attempts to strengthen the connection between the students and the working class from which they spring. It must produce a party leader, armed with revolutionary Marxism, able to apply this method to the complicated circumstances of our life at every step. There are already a number of other educational institutions which are able to produce specialists in different spheres but only the Communist University with a uniform class composition can replenish our leading ranks, bodies with men and women permeated by the spirit of revolutionary Marxism.

The task of providing specialists is no longer a prime question for the Communist Universities. It was found, for instance, that the Sverdlov University was turning out students who were thoroughly conversant with biology and other sciences, but who did not even know the elements of the history of the Communist Party.

This has all been changed. The three years' course is now on the following basis. In the first year the working class student obtains a complete command of the Russian language so that he can express his thoughts in speech and writing. Mathematics and natural science have an auxiliary rôle. The student learns to analyse and synthesise phenomena. We do not want to produce scientific specialists but scientific knowledge is necessary to understand the dialectics of life. The student must understand his position in the world of nature, he must obtain a clear picture of the develop-

ment of the whole world. In the course of this he receives his first lesson in dialectics, understanding life from the struggle which exists throughout the world.

In this first year's course the bases are laid for all the chief subjects studied later on. The chief subjects are three in number, historical methods, economics and the party. The student studies : (1) the history of the development of social forms, learning to understand the meaning of life, the meaning of class struggle, the connection between existence and knowledge, (2) economic geography for the understanding of the concrete circumstances of life in which he lives, (3) the history of the Communist Party.

During the second year's course attention is concentrated on (1) the history of the class struggle in Russia and the West, as a continuation of the course on the history of the development of social forms, during which the student masters the methods of historical analysis. (2) Political economy, studied alongside the above chiefly on the basis of the concrete material obtained during the study of economic geography, and (3) Communist Party structure and tactics and strategy of the party.

The second year's course trains the student in theoretical thinking. In the third year the student comes to the study of a number of generalisations. He studies historical materialism, in close connection with the structure of the State, with the revolution, and he approaches the solution of a number of contemporary problems, problems of the Communist Party, of contemporary economics, of politics, &c.

All these studies are closely interconnected and supplement one another. Completing them the student becomes a conscious party worker, able to apply the method of revolutionary Marxism to the solution of all questions. During the years of training the student of course takes a systematic part in the practical life of the party, and maintains a close contact with the masses. Thus are created the reinforcements which will take a worthy place in the ranks of the old guard.

The World of Labour

INTERNATIONAL : The General Strike	..	..	..	..	441
GERMANY : The Referendum	..	..	..	..	446

INTERNATIONAL UNITY IN ACTION

ONE feature of the general strike that has not been sufficiently emphasised is the unexampled display of international solidarity to which it gave rise. Recognition of the solidarity of the workers here has not been wanting : it does not seem to be fully realised that their marvellous, almost automatic solidarity, was exactly paralleled by the solidarity of the workers in every country with the British general strike.

From the first day of the strike onwards telegrams from the four corners of the earth poured in, in an ever-increasing stream, to the General Council ; telegrams of fullest solidarity, telegrams transmitting money and promising more, telegrams announcing the active steps that were being taken to stop international black-legging. In a day and a night, it seemed, the supreme battle-cry of the working-class, "Workers of the world, unite !", had been translated into actual living fact. And it is worth noting that, since the struggle in Britain was conducted by the Trade Unions, so the international unity which sprang up to support it was essentially Trade Union unity. For near two years now, the campaign for international Trade Union unity has pursued its varied course—on the whole a campaign of leaders, and not of the masses. Suddenly the British general strike brought the issue right down among the masses, who actually realised international unity in action to an extent that till May 3-12, would hardly have been thought possible.

Here a caveat should be inserted. If the policy of Scarborough, and of the Russian Unions, had been followed out, and we had achieved a united Trade Union International—with the corollary of complete national unity in the various countries—it would have been possible to make the great wave of solidarity even more effective than it was. The lesson is one that should not be lost.

The power of international solidarity to bridge the gulf between rival local or national unions is well illustrated in the case of Holland—the classic country of Trade Union splits. There unions which had been at each other's throats for a generation unhesitatingly joined hands and stood together in support of their British comrades.

Not least in the indictment against the General Council is their failure to realise the enormous reserve of strength for the British workers represented by this vast display of international solidarity. As a continental Trade Unionist,

P. J. Schmidt, of Amsterdam, has said—"The continental workers were eager and anxious to help. All over Europe collecting sheets were being got out . . . An appeal from the General Council to the workers of Europe would have resulted in money and food being poured into England." (*Sunday Worker*, June 6, 1926.) Below we give a summary record, from the available published information, of the aid and sympathy shown by workers and Labour organisations abroad. It must be understood that the cases recorded here are, in the nature of things, but the merest fraction of the whole.

International

In modern industrial society transport is the key-position of any strike : and therefore any action of international solidarity depends principally on the attitude of the transport workers. The transport workers of Europe responded magnificently to the call of the British general strike. Their efforts were co-ordinated and directed by the International Transportworkers' Federation, under the indefatigable leadership of its Secretary, Edo Fimmen. Immediately the general strike took place the I.T.F. telegraphed the Transport Unions of France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany, to stop the export of coal to Britain and the bunkering of British ships, also to prevent seamen signing on in British ships. The Transport Unions of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, also immediately offered their help. In fact, the Danes and the Dutchmen had begun the embargo without waiting for instructions. Within a few days, the I.T.F. was the general staff of what had become a complete European boycott of all transport to Britain. On May 9 a conference of the I.T.F. was held in Ostend, attended by British representatives and also by representatives of the Miners' International, at which the whole position was reviewed and measures taken for consolidating and extending the boycott.

The first days of the strike also saw appeals from the *Red International of Labour Unions* to all its affiliated bodies, instructing the imposition of the boycott, suggesting that all workers should levy themselves a quarter of a day's pay, and urging the necessity of forming committees of action, representing all tendencies, to organise assistance for the British strikers. These points were also taken up in a manifesto of the Executive Committee of the *Communist International*, which especially stressed the importance of Communists in all countries inviting the Social Democrats to form united committees of action.

The *International Federation of Trade Unions* sent £1,000 and took no further action till May 10, when it held a joint meeting in Amsterdam, with the Executive of the *Labour and Socialist International*. This meeting decided to leave matters in the hands of the I.F.T.U. since the struggle was "purely industrial" : and on the following day, Messrs Brown and Oudegeest, two of the Secretaries, were sent to London to "discuss the situation." An appeal from the E.C.C.I. and the R.I.L.U. to the joint meeting, proposing the organisation of a joint campaign, received no response.

The Central Committee of the *Workers' International Relief* (Berlin), appealed to all its sections to organise collections and raise funds for the British workers.

Europe

When we begin to particularise, first place must be given to the unparalleled solidarity shown by the workers of *Soviet Russia*. The position was summed up by the chairman of the Leningrad Trades Council, who said: "The British workers in 1920 prevented the intervention of the British bourgeoisie against Soviet Russia. We will pay back our debt a hundredfold." That was the spirit throughout the Soviet Union. The decision of the Central Council of Trade Unions, for a general levy of a quarter of a day's pay was enthusiastically taken up. Even before this decision was arrived at, collections were everywhere being spontaneously undertaken.

In every town of the Soviet Union, down to the most remote corners of its far-flung territory, the workers came out on to the streets to demonstrate their solidarity; all reports speak of the intense excitement and enthusiasm that prevailed. Kharkov was a typical case. There the workers poured out of the factories at the end of the day, 150,000 of them, the crowd being so dense that the trams had to be stopped: the demonstrators carried banners with the significant legend "Our British brothers expect not only greetings, but actual help." That actual help took the shape of a first instalment of £350,000, whose subsequent history so far as this side is concerned is well known. In the Russian coalfields the miners resolved to contribute as much as two days' wages. In Leningrad, metalworkers decided to work two hours' overtime for several days and to send their overtime pay to the British strikers. Theatres held special performances on behalf of the British strikers. Newspapers opened special funds. The central and local Trade Union organisations voted money from their funds, over and above the levy on wages. The Co-operatives sent £3,000.

The seamen, dockers, and transport workers of the Soviet Union fell into line with the I.T.F., and operated a complete boycott, holding up all British ships in Russian ports. They were in fact instructed by their Trade Unions to declare a partial strike. All Soviet ships on the way to Britain were informed of this by wireless, and instructed to join the general strike immediately on entering the nearest British port, to prevent the unloading of their cargoes and only to allow loading or unloading with the consent of the General Council.

A meeting of scientists and professors in Leningrad issued an appeal to the intellectuals of Britain expressing the conviction that in this struggle of world-historical importance the British intellectuals would stand on the side of the working-class.

Typical of the spirit shown by the workers of *Germany* was the remarkable unity of the various Miners' Unions—"Free" (Social-Democratic), Christian, "Red," &c.,—who jointly appealed to the Ruhr miners to operate the Brussels decisions of the Miners' International, *i.e.*, to see that not a ton of coal left the Ruhr for England, by refusing to work overtime and by striking if such coal exports continued. Tremendous mass meetings were held all over Germany, and big collections were taken up, largely through the instrumentality of the Workers' International Relief: a street collection in Berlin alone realised over £2,000.

The Miners' Union in *Belgium* took action similar to the German miners, and promised financial assistance: workers in Brussels made an initial collection of 2,000 francs.

In *Czecho-Slovakia* the solidarity organisation was particularly thorough. The Miners' Unions unitedly informed the Ministry of Public Works and the Mineowners' Federation that they proposed to carry out the Brussels decisions: then in joint session with the Railwaymen's Union, they worked out the practical steps to be taken. These consisted of the organisation at frontier stations of special Trade Union Control Commissions, fully empowered to take the necessary measures to stop any increase in coal export. The large and influential Czecho-Slovak Communist Party, together with the "One Big Union" (the International All-Trade Union Federation affiliated to the R.I.L.U.), was noticeably the first in the field campaigning for united solidarity with the British strikers. It appealed to the orthodox (Amsterdam) German and Czech Trade Unions and to the Socialist Parties: these bodies uneasily held back, and it was not till May 10 that a first contribution was sent from the Trade Unions to Britain.

The split in the Trade Union movement in *France* did not prevent the organising of solidarity, though it unfortunately militated against that solidarity being as effective in all respects as it might otherwise have been. Both the C.G.T.U. and the C.G.T. arranged for financial aid, the former opening a national subscription. Up to May 11 the French section of the Workers' International Relief had collected 112,500 francs and Parisian printers, who had just gained a wage increase, decided to hand over the amount of the increase to the British strikers. Both Trade Union centres enforced the embargo through their miners', railwaymen's, dockers', and seamen's organisations. The C.G.T.U. telegraphed to the General Council placing its whole organisation at their disposal, announcing the enforcement of the embargo, and asking for instructions. It was announced that a Vigilance Committee had been set up to see that the embargo was rigidly enforced: unhappily—owing principally to the Union split, as mentioned above—there was a complete failure to stop the printing of the continental *Daily Mail* in Paris. The withdrawal of Union labour, and the refusal of the printers on the *Matin*, *Comoedia*, and other Paris newspapers to print extra editions of the continental *Daily Mail* certainly crippled that organ a great deal more than its exaggerated figures showed—but still it appeared.

Trade unionists in *Switzerland* were called upon by their organisations to levy themselves not less than one franc a head.

The *Dutch* Federation of Trade Unions sent a first contribution of £5,000 and arranged for collections all over the country, with collecting sheets and 25 cent. "stamps of solidarity."

All the Scandinavian trade unions, as noted above, loyally carried out the transport embargo. In addition, the Trades Union Congress of *Denmark* contributed £2,200, which it proposed to make a weekly payment "for the duration." The *Norwegian* workers had their hands full with a general lock-out, but the lock-out committee of the Builders' Union found time to send its assurances of solidarity and hopes for victory.

Among the trade unions in the Baltic States, those of *Poland* and *Latvia* come forward with support, the Polish unions forbidding coal export or the bunkering of British ships at Danzig.

The *Greek* Trade Union Federation adopted a resolution expressing its solidarity and promising financial assistance.

The *Austrian* Metal Workers' Union, one of the largest Trade Unions in Austria, resolved to offer full assistance and to organise mass meetings in order to explain to the Austrian workers the need for material solidarity with their British comrades.

Assistance was proffered by the *Irish* T.U.C., and also by the Labour organisations in *Northern Ireland*.

Africa

The *South African* T.U.C. decided on full support for the British strike, and called upon South African printers to refuse to print any misrepresentations of the British strikers and their cause.

America

So far as the *United States* were concerned, an attempt was made by William Green, the successor of Gompers as President of the A.F. of L., to sabotage solidarity. On the first day of the strike he found it necessary to make a statement condemning the general strike in principle. This earned him much Press and governmental praise, but it immediately became evident that he was not carrying American trade union opinion with him. Many A.F. of L. locals repudiated his attitude, for instance the Central Labour Council of New York City, and the Chicago local of the Machinists. Farrington, the President of the Illinois Miners, cabled promising moral and material support to the M.F.G.B. The United Mine Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies' Garment Workers came forward likewise. The Workers (Communist) Party appealed to transport workers to enforce the embargo, and invited the Socialist Party to a united front demonstration.

Green came down with a run and, though not referring to the general strike, stated that "American Labour desires to help the British miners": at the same time he cabled to the I.F.T.U., "Will give all support possible to the British miners in their fight for decent wages." It was stated that the A.F. of L. would take steps to prevent any recruiting of blacklegs in the United States.

The *Canadian* Trades and Labour Congress cabled to the General Council, "the full moral support of the Canadian workers in your present struggle to maintain the already meagre standards of living of the British workers" and made all arrangements for financial assistance. Similar assurances came from the Farmers' Union, the London (Ontario) Trades and Labour Council, the Toronto Central Council and an Edmonton (Alberta) convention of the Canadian Labour Party.

In *Mexico* the C.R.O.M.—the Trade Union Federation—forbade the loading of all fuel, coal or oil (including bunkering) for Britain. It sent a

preliminary gift of \$1,000, announcing that more was being collected. The electricians declared a one-hour sympathetic strike.

The Trade Unions of the *Argentine* and of *Cuba* recorded their solidarity : in Buenos Aires the Communist Party organised demonstrations and extensive collections were set on foot through the various Labour organisations, notably the W.I.R.

Asia and Australasia

One of the first trade union centres to send financial help was the *Palestine T.U.C.*, with a gift of £100.

From *India*, the very first day of the strike, a mass meeting of labourers at Lahore sent a message of solidarity. The All-India T.U.C. conveyed the wishes of all Indian workers for success in the "great fight for the maintenance of the standard of life." It sent sums amounting to £500 and took steps to prevent the bunkering of British ships in Indian ports.

The Federation of Trade Unions of *Japan* exhorted the British workers to "fight to the last," assuring them of its earnest support and announcing the taking of steps to collect money. A similar message came from the *Korean Labour League*.

The Revolutionary Government of *Canton* was reported to have expressed its solidarity in the name of the workers and peasants of Southern China.

In *Australia* the Sydney Trades Council got into touch with the Seamen's, Miners', and Coal Porters' Unions to enforce the embargo on coal for England, and to stop the bunkering of British ships. The Miners' Union took steps to operate this, and the Railwaymen's Union also declared their support of the British strike.

The *New Zealand Alliance of Labour* (T.U.C.) sent £1,000 as a first instalment.

GERMANY

The Referendum

AFTER the revolution in Germany, the disposal of the property of the ruling houses was left for future settlement, and early this year the members of those families, twenty-two princes in all, put in their claims amounting all together to between 2.5 and 3 milliard gold marks. The items of these demands include agricultural property, mansions, industrial rights, &c., and sums amounting to over five million gold marks for the mistresses of the late Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, as "hush money" and pensions. (*Manchester Guardian*, January 11, 1926.)

The first organised protest was raised by the Communist Party, and it was not until the rank and file of the Social-Democratic Party demanded definite action that the leaders raised similar protests. Through the mediation of the Trade Union Federation, the invitation of the Communist Party for a joint campaign of both parties was agreed to, and a bill was drawn up to be the subject of a preliminary Referendum on the basis of expropriation without compensation of all the property of the former ruling houses.

According to the German constitution, the Referendum must be demanded by 10 per cent. of the electorate before it can take place, that is 4,000,000 votes were required if the Expropriation Bill is to go before the entire electorate. Voting began on March 3, and lasted a fortnight. From the very beginning of the campaign the Social Democratic leaders sabotaged the work and engaged in calumniating the Communist Party. The Berlin correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote (March 19, 1926):—

The issue was raised by the Communist Party much against the will, not only of the Conservative parties, but also of the Centre and Democrats, and even the Socialists . . . The Socialist party discouraged the idea of expropriation until the mass of German Labour began to rebel.

The *Times* correspondent, in the issue of February 5, remarked that :—

The Socialists, having made their popular gesture by supporting the Referendum, would to all appearances not be sorry to find a way of evading it.

In spite of these difficulties, the threats and obstruction of the Conservative parties, and the great danger of victimisation under which rural voters had to sign, 12½ million votes were obtained for the Referendum, which represents about two million votes more than the combined Socialist and Communist vote at the last general election.

Accordingly the Expropriation Bill was put before the Reichstag, and was defeated. The next step was the Referendum itself, and for its success a favourable vote of half the total electorate was required, i.e., nearly 20,000,000. The voting took place on Sunday, June 20, and as the day approached, excitement grew considerably, as it was widely expected that the required number would be attained. Preparations, of a more than usually serious type, for a monarchist-fascist *coup d'etat*, organised apparently in direct response to the threat of expropriation, were discovered by the Prussian police.

Hindenburg, the President of the Republic, issued a letter in which expropriation was violently condemned. Herr Stresemann, the Foreign Minister, declared that even if the Referendum were successful "he could not conceive of any Government willing to carry through the expropriation of the ex-dynasties" (*Daily Herald*, June 1, 1926.) The official attitude adopted by both the Luther and Marx Governments was strong opposition to the bill, but the latter declared that if the Referendum were unsuccessful, the Government would press for a compromise, and would "face the consequences" if it were not attained. The Roman Catholic Church officially denounced the bill, and the Evangelical Church Committee declared that it was "contrary to the teachings of the gospel." The "right-wing" political parties naturally took up the question with the greatest energy, and were reported (*Observer*, June 20, 1926), to have spent over 20,000,000 marks on propaganda. Their policy was to advise their supporters to abstain from voting, as abstention on their part would facilitate victimisation of those who did vote, and would not affect the result. The Centre Party did not adopt this policy, but advised its followers to vote against, while the Democratic Party alone gave no official directions.

The Socialist and Communist Parties, with the Trade Union Federation, ran the campaign together, and in many localities "united front" committees

worked successfully, though in others differences could not be overcome. The enthusiasm shown by the working-class was great, and was reported to extend to many of the petty-bourgeoisie, and to the members of the Catholic and Liberal Trade Unions, and the "Centre" parties. *The Times* correspondent wrote (June 19, 1926) that although the Social Democratic Party leaders were initially doubtful

circumstances have since swept them into a whole-hearted struggle for the Referendum, with which in some measure their prestige is bound up.

On the other hand the *Observer* correspondent (June 20, 1926) asserted that what the Socialist leaders desired was a large, but insufficient, favourable vote, which would enable them to "exert pressure" in favour of a compromise.

The result, declared on the day after the poll, was provisionally given as 14,500,000. It was admitted (*e.g.*, *Manchester Guardian*, June 22, 1926), that but for the fear of victimisation, and, in rural districts, actual terrorism, the vote would have been very much greater.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- Children's Courts.* By W. Clarke Hall. (George Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.)
- Soviet Union Year Book.* 1926. (George Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.)
- If I were a Labour Leader.* By Ernest J. P. Benn. (Ernest Benn Ltd., 3s. 6d.)
- The Great Prophet of Modern Democracy.* By Bernard H. Hancock, Rector of Bishoptoke, Hants. (Richard Jackson Ltd., 4d.)
- Survey of Industrial Relations.* With an Introduction by the Committee on Industry and Trade. (His Majesty's Stationery Office, 5s.)
- Education in Soviet Russia.* By Scott Nearing. (The Plebs League, 2s.)
- Possibilities of British-Russian Trade.* An Investigation by British Members of Parliament. (Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, 1s.)
- Disarmament.* By Professor P. J. Noel Baker. (Hogarth Press, 12s. 6d.)
- The Human Hive.* Its Life and Law. By A. H. Mackmurdo. (Watts & Co., 7s. 6d.)
- Satirical Poems.* By Siegfried Sassoon. (Heinemann, 3s. 6d.)
- British Labour Bids for Power.* (The Historic Scarborough Conference of the Trades Union Congress.) By Scott Nearing. (Social Science Publishers, New York.)
- Russia Turns East.* By Scott Nearing. (Social Science Publishers, New York.)
- Glimpses of the Soviet Republic.* By Scott Nearing. (Social Science Publishers, New York.)
- World Labour Unity.* By Scott Nearing. (Social Science Publishers, New York.)
- Stopping War.* By Scott Nearing. (Social Science Publishers, New York.)
- Education in Soviet Russia.* By Scott Nearing. (International Publishers, New York.)
- Educational Frontiers.* By Scott Nearing. (Social Science Publishers, New York, \$1.60.)



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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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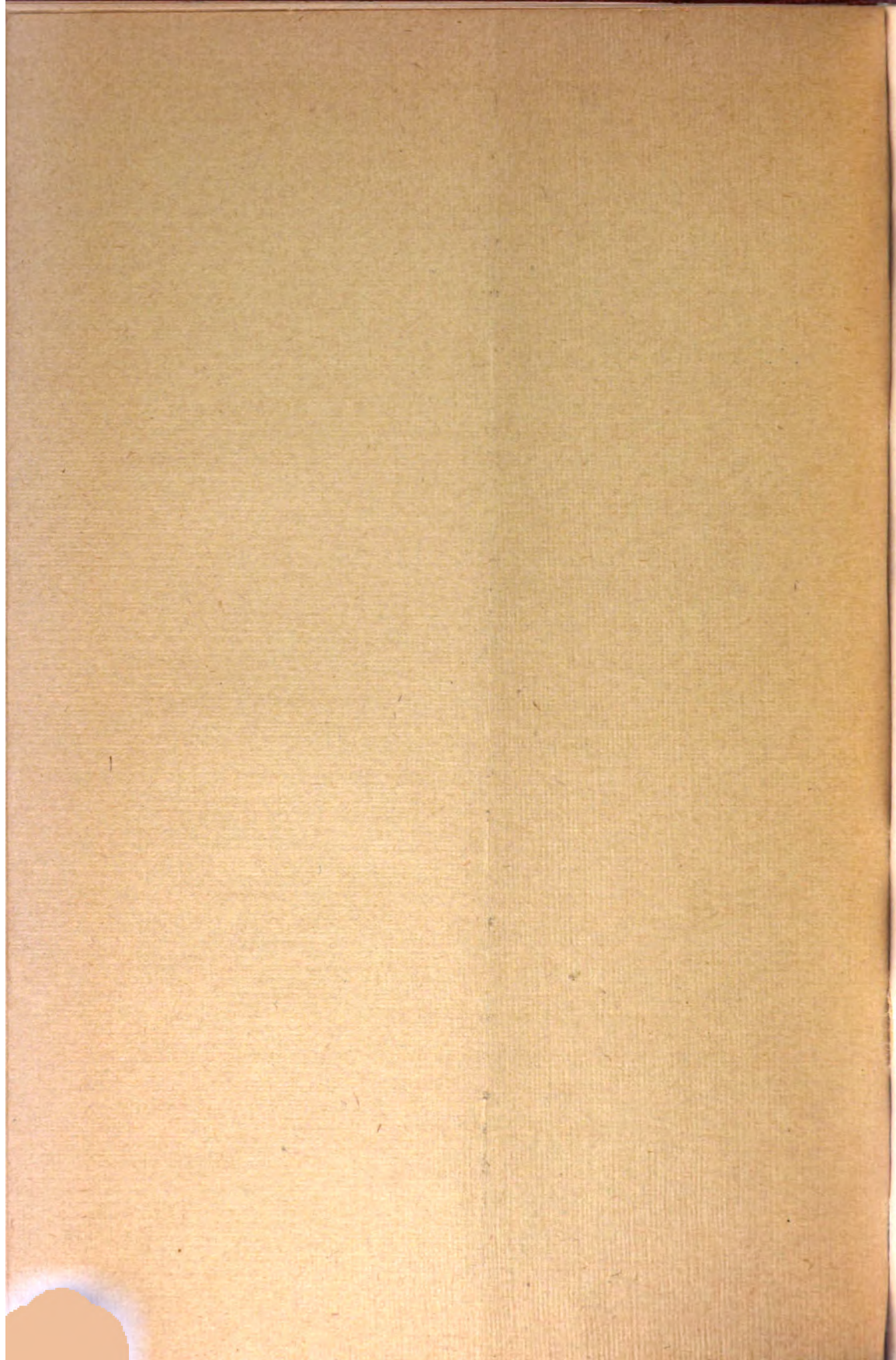
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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - -	Page 451
<i>THE GENERAL COUNCIL AND THE MINERS</i>	
Were the Miners Let Down? - - -	„ 463
<i>By J. R. CAMPBELL</i>	
The Miners' Struggle in the North - -	„ 471
<i>By WILL LAWTHOR</i>	
The Mosul "Victory" - - -	„ 475
<i>By W. N. EWER</i>	
Canton - - - - -	„ 484
<i>By COLONEL C. L. MALONE</i>	
Secret Service and the Labour Movement -	„ 492
<i>By HAROLD GRENFELL</i>	
The World of Labour - - - -	„ 498
Finland—Norway—Labour and Socialist International—Japan	
Book Reviews - - - - -	„ 503
The Workers' Theatre - - - - R.P.D.	
The Indian Peasant through official spectacles - C.P.D.	

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NOTES of the MONTH

The General Council's Report—Attacking the Miners—Why No Conference?—Pledge of February 26—Was It Repudiated?—Confusing the Air—The Cause of Collapse—A Worthless Defence—Summing Up—The Basic Assumption—"Wages Must Come Down"—The Political Issue—Advance or Surrender.

THE Report of the General Council on the miners' struggle and the calling off of the General Strike, which has been partially published, raises a plain issue for the whole working-class movement. The central character of the Report consists in this, that it endeavours to defend the General Council by creating a division, which should not exist and which does not exist, between the miners and the rest of the working-class movement. The miners are censured for fighting. The General Council praises itself for its surrender. Such a division is not only indefensible on grounds of barest working-class solidarity. It also shows a complete failure to understand the fight of the miners as the fight of the working class, and a complete failure of the General Council to perform its central function, namely, to go beyond thinking in terms of separate industries and think in terms of the whole working class. The General Council has only made its position worse by this defence.

WHAT is the position in England to-day? The whole policy of Capitalism is directed towards the ruthless reduction of wages and lengthening of hours for the working class as the sole means of maintaining its position. The whole working-class movement has declared, by every Conference decision, its opposition to such attack. The attack, as in each successive phase of the post-war crisis, centres on the miners. The miners, in resisting it, are fighting, not merely for themselves, but

for the whole working class, and for the whole international working class, and they are loyally carrying out the decisions of the whole working-class movement. Nevertheless, the General Council and Labour Party leaders deliberately smashed the solidarity of the workers alongside the miners, and are to-day using all their efforts, persuasion and threats to enforce surrender on the miners. Because of this disruption of the working-class ranks, the capitalist attack is stronger than it has ever been, threatening even the rights and organisation of the Trade Unions. In this situation the Report of the General Council has neither excuse nor apology for the past, nor policy for the future. The facts are admitted. It is admitted that their pledge was broken, that they joined with the Government against the miners and that they broke the ranks when the miners stood firm. Their only defence is to attack the miners as unreasonable—because they refused to accept a reduction in wages ! This is an issue with which the working-class movement will need to deal.

IT is impossible not to note the conditions under which the Report has been issued. The Trade Union Conference to which it should have been submitted was postponed, as it was explained, for the sake of the miners' struggle, so that no appearance of disunity should come out. According to the statement, the object was "that a united policy may be adopted to resist to the fullest possible extent the Government action." It was regarded as "of the greatest importance at this juncture that all sections and parties should avoid statements either in speech or writing which create friction or misunderstanding, and divert attention from the purpose in view." The miners' leaders themselves, with a trustfulness which recent experience should not have warranted, subscribed to this, and bound their own mouths not to repeat the plain truths they had to say of critical importance to the working class. This apparent devotion to the miners' struggle (a devotion less conspicuous in fact, since the same Union leaders were freely allowing blackleg coal to be transported) was in the forefront so long as it was a question of facing a critical Conference which would have been able to deal with statements made. But as soon as the objective was achieved of postponing the Conference and silencing

the miners' representatives, then there quickly comes out—informally, in a hole-and-corner fashion, without either official sanction or official disapproval—the Report of the General Council, which turns out to be an open, shameless attack on the miners, issued in the midst of their struggle, and repeating the lowest, calumniating propaganda of the *Daily Mail* and *Morning Post* type about miners receiving £13 a week, &c. In this way, after all the talk of unity and solidarity, the miners receive another stab in the back from the General Council without a sign of protest from a single member.

THE Report (in so far as the Bromley version issued is correct—the “unofficial” publication may no doubt give the opportunity of changes) contains a number of misleading statements, similar to that on the high wages of miners or the supposed effect of the miners' terms to mean the throwing of 300,000 miners out of employment, which do not require further comment for the moment. But the one central theme of the whole Report, the pivot on which the whole argument turns, is the plea that the miners ought to have been ready to accept a reduction in wages. It is claimed that the famous Pledge of February 26, by which the General Council pledged itself to “no reduction of wages” for the miners, and which the General Council broke, no longer held good because the appearance of the Commission's Report “had very materially changed the situation” and “to continue with mere slogans would have been silly.” The Pledge is apparently not even mentioned, but only the situation as it was after the Commission, when the General Council had already secretly gone back on the miners. The fact is divulged that already by the beginning of April they had refused to accept the miners' terms—no reduction of wages, no increase of hours and no district settlements—which were an exact replica of the Pledge of February 26 and therefore exactly corresponded to the public position of the whole movement. Any going back on this, which in fact simply reproduced the position of last July and of the Scarborough Congress, was an act of the General Council without mandate, which should have been plainly stated and submitted to the Conference; and failing this, *the miners alone represented, and to-day*

represent, the publicly decided position of the whole working-class movement. It is not a question of a difference between the General Council and the miners, but between the General Council and the working-class movement.

THIS secret surrender before the fight, which had already been completely accomplished by the beginning of April, and registered in the secret letter of the General Council to the miners on April 8, was never divulged to the Conference, and is only now wrung out into publicity two months after the event, when the work of treason has been done. Why was the General Council's letter of April 8 not divulged to the Conference? Was it because it was considered not important for the Conference to know that the General Council did not accept the miners' terms? Or was it because the General Council knew that if anyone had dared to suggest opposition to the miners' terms he would have been instantly repudiated; and therefore they preferred to keep their counsel to themselves, basking meanwhile in the applause of the Conference and mouthing sentiments about fighting and sacrificing to the last drop? Nevertheless this shameless secret surrender, which is only revealed now, is actually brought out as the whole basis of the defence, when it is in reality one of the strongest pieces of accusation. On the strength of this the Council declares that the General Strike began—

not on the formula of the miners, which had been definitely rejected by the Industrial Committee, but on the decision of the conference of executives to support the miners against having to accept reductions of wages before negotiations on the rest of the Commission's Report.

This is playing with the facts. The miners' formula had never been "definitely rejected" by the Conference, which was the responsible body: on the contrary, it was implicitly accepted by the Pledge of February 26, which was never publicly repudiated, and was therefore universally understood by the movement to represent the Council's policy and the basis on which the General Strike was fought. No secret rejection by a sub-committee could make a difference to this.

IT is true that the miners' leaders made a mistake, having once received the letter of April 8, in not bringing it before the Conference and getting a clear decision on the issue. Immediate publicity would have scotched the traitors' plans. Had the issue been plainly brought before the Conference, there is no question what the decision would have been. It was not sufficient to make an incidental declaration of policy in a speech ("reserving our revolvers"), and a statement as if affecting only the miners; it was necessary to secure a clear decision, and a decision of the whole working-class movement. Here is seen the old fallacy of endeavouring to cover up treachery in the supposed interests of unity, in the belief that, if only treachery is concealed and an appearance of unity maintained, no harm will be done. The exact contrary is the case. Fresh air is essential to the health of the working-class movement. Not the exposure of treachery, but the concealment of it, does the harm; unity is broken, not by dealing with treachery and the plain decision of issues, but by failing to deal with it and leaving issues unclear. The costly experience of the General Strike has driven this lesson home. The fog and ambiguity in which every issue is dealt with in the British Labour Movement is not practical caution and statesmanship; it is simply the cover of treachery, by which everything is intended to mean one thing for the working-class movement, who desire plain issues and a plain fight, and another thing for the opportunist leaders, who intend to "fix it up" subsequently with the Government or the employers. This was the case with the General Strike, where the workers believed they were fighting to prevent a reduction of the wages of the miners, whereas the leaders from the start never intended any such thing. The only way to prevent this is by much stronger and clearer fighting on the part of the left wing elements, who must know where they stand and be prepared to stand for it, not only in speeches and generalities, but in conference, in committees, in resolutions and in action. Otherwise the misleading fog of unanimity only plays into the hands of the skilful and versatile agents of the government (politely termed Right Wing). The error of the miners' leaders, however, in failing to bring the issue, once they knew it, straight to the Conference and getting it settled, was at the worst an error of judgment, of over-trustfulness. The crime of treachery was the Council's.

TAKING advantage of this ambiguity in the actual policy—an ambiguity that was never intended by the ordinary Conference delegate, who trustfully and enthusiastically voted the strike resolution, to conflict with or cancel out the Pledge of February 26 or in any way represent opposition to the miners' policy—the Council, from the moment of its voting, went completely against the spirit of the Conference, and, in place of a united front with the miners, acted as the agents of the Government to bring pressure on the miners to accept a reduction of wages. To-day for their defence they actually attack the miners for refusing to accept a reduction. They declare that such a policy is “puerile,” “silly,” “not leadership”; that the miners must have known that a reduction in wages must precede re-organisation, and so forth. Their one pre-occupation during the strike, which by their own statement was never intended to have been fought by them at all, but was only forced by the Government's ultimatum, was, not to win the fight, but to force the miners to give way. From the outset they determined that it was impossible to win the fight against the Government: that of the two alternatives, capitulation of the Government or termination by attrition, the first was out of the question owing to the resources of the Government, and the second would have meant the disorganisation of the trade union movement; and, therefore, they concentrated all their efforts on the submission of the miners, acting secretly in the midst of the battle, not as leaders of the workers' fight, but as go-betweens for the Government with the miners. When all their efforts either to force or bamboozle the miners failed, they finally broke with the miners and surrendered without terms (the threadbare pretence that the Samuel Memorandum represented “terms” is finally abandoned in the Report, thus giving the lie direct to a dozen prominent individual members of the General Council) and disrupted the workers' ranks. The Report attributes the sole cause of this collapse, not to any objective conditions, not to any weakening of the front (this point may be recommended to the attention of Otto Bauer and his colleagues), but solely to the miners and their refusal to surrender.

The strike was terminated for one sufficient reason only—namely, that in view of the attitude of the Miners' Federation its continuance would have rendered its purpose futile.

By "attitude of the Miners' Federation" is meant their refusal to accept a reduction in wages, the position to which the whole movement was pledged.

AS a defence this is so thin that it is not worth exposure. It may be pointed out that a pledge, once given, normally remains a pledge, at least until explicitly repudiated; and that, once broken, abuse of another party for remaining loyal to it is irrelevant. The Pledge of February 26, which was no formal question, but an explicit declaration on the most vital immediate question of working-class policy, was never openly repudiated; but on the contrary, according to the *Daily Herald*, was actually reaffirmed on April 30. The whole working-class movement believed that the pledge was still binding when they entered the strike, that that pledge was the basis on which the fight was being fought, that there was absolute unanimity between the movement and the miners on the basis of the miners' terms. The General Council knew that to have made the slightest suggestion to the contrary, to have given a hint of opposition to the miners of repudiation of their pledge, would have raised a storm; and, therefore, through the whole of the Conference of May 1 they never did so, and never stated honestly what was in their minds. Of all the secret diplomacy that these labour politicians pretend to attack in capitalist foreign politics, there was never such shameful secret diplomacy as this inside the working-class movement; because this was not secret diplomacy in order to keep the enemy uninformed; on the contrary, they told the Government readily enough before the fight their intention to break with the miners, and so strengthened the Government's hands by the certainty of future surrender; but it was their own working-class movement that they were afraid to tell. It is true that any skilled observer, knowing their habits and reading between the lines of the speeches at the Hypocrites' Conference on May 1, could easily see at the time what was afoot; but the workers had neither leisure nor practice to read between the lines in the game of formulas, nor did they then know that they had to deal with cardsharps. The only moral of this casuistical plea of the General Council to claim that they were not bound by their manifest obligations would appear to

be—a moral which the workers will certainly learn for the future—that, in dealing with these rogues, it is wise not to accept vague formulas and generalities uncritically in a general spirit of solidarity and good humour, as has been the habit in the movement, but to get things down in black and white—and then not to trust them. This is the lesson which the Council is apparently anxious to teach the workers. But on all the wider issues of the struggle there is not only no defence ; the defence directly admits every worst charge that has been brought against the Council.

WHAT is the root of the position ? The heaviest struggle between Capitalism and the working class is gathering over a period of nine months with a warning set as clearly as a clock. The Government's preparations are as open as they are complete. The General Council refuses to prepare, and diplomatically "ignores" the Government's preparations. The hour of crisis approaches ; the whole working-class movement declares for unity with the miners, on whom the attack has centred, and for common resistance to a common attack on the whole working class. The General Council intrigues secretly with the Government against the miners, exerts pressure on the miners to accept the Government's terms, offers the Government secretly—without informing the miners—to give up the miners' position and to call off the common working-class struggle which has been entrusted to their leadership. The Government, being determined on the struggle, and knowing that the offers of the General Council do not represent either the miners or the working-class movement, forces an ultimatum on a pretext, and then hastily cuts off communications in order not to receive the General Council's white flag : the struggle begins ; the Government throws the whole force of the State, strike-breaking machinery, police, military, special recruiting, &c., into the field. The General Council refuses to mobilise the full strength of the working class, does everything to damp down the working-class fight, refuses international support and conceals the Government's prevention of it, denies that there is any struggle with the Government ; meanwhile intrigues secretly with Government agents on a basis of surrender, and finally, when the workers' solidarity and fighting

spirit is at its height, surrenders unconditionally, abandoning without protection or guarantee both the locked-out miners and the other workers in the fight. The position of the working class is only saved from complete rout, first by the miners holding on, and second by the other workers refusing to come back immediately on the surrender without guarantees and thus checking the full employers' offensive that was intended. Thereupon the General Council, which is now sanctioning blackleg coal, comes out for its defence with an attack on the miners for sticking to the fight.

BEHIND all this policy of the General Council lies one basic assumption, common to Baldwin and to the General Council, the assumption that Wages Must Come Down. This is the pivot of their policy, the whole burden of their attack on the miners. The miners' policy of resisting wage-reductions (which rankled all the more because, as Bromley informed Cook, the other Union leaders had accepted wage-reductions for their men, therefore why should not the miners do the same ?) is attacked and condemned as "silly," "puerile," "no leadership," "starving on a slogan." This is the exact language of the Capitalist Press. There is not thought of turning the attack on royalties, on profits, on a genuine fight for nationalisation. No, the one thought, common to Baldwin, the Samuel Commission and the General Council, is that Wages Must Come Down. This is the very thinking of Capitalism, and the General Council is its prisoner. The words of Cook will be remembered :—

I have had experience of being bullied in colliery offices ; I had experience in 1920 and 1921 in meeting the Government ; but never have we been bullied by the employers or the Government to the extent that we were bullied by certain Trade Union leaders to accept a reduction of wages. ("Shame.") The Government knew that and the coalowners knew it. One man on the other side said to me : "The Trade Union Council will help us," and the Prime Minister on more than one occasion publicly thanked the Trade Union Council.

But the same thing is going on to-day : and it is possible for the governmental organ, *The Times*, to declare complacently in its issue of July 15 :—

As long as the miners, to use the words of the General Council, are prepared to face starvation for a "slogan," Labour Members of

Parliament realise that little can be done, but there is a growing feeling that, properly handled, the miners would not now prove quite so adamant as they were in the early days of the dispute.

Stripped of its language, this means that these Labour leaders count on starvation to break the miners. It is a pretty pass when workers' leaders can look for such weapons to bring down their fellow-workers before the capitalists.

THERE was a time when the Reformists used to claim to stand for positive gains, for wages, for bread and butter, against the visionary schemes and dreams, the theories and doctrines of the Revolutionaries. That day is past. To-day the banner of the Reformists is the Reduction of Wages. The fight for wages, the fight for bread and butter, is now declared by them to be "negative," a "theory," "doctrinaire," a mere "slogan." It is the Revolutionaries who are leading the wage-struggle, who are showing the way forward for the wage-struggle, at the same time as the way forward for the ultimate struggle. With this change a whole epoch has changed, and the leadership of the working-class movement will inevitably change. The banner of the Reformists has become the Reduction of Wages (and, therefore, hostility to, and disruption of, the working-class struggle), because the banner of Capitalism has become the Reduction of Wages ; and the Reformists must, willingly or unwillingly, walk the path with Capitalism. The General Council has not made the Reduction of Wages the centre of its policy because it likes it, but because it must ; and it must, because it dare not face the alternative. The Reduction of Wages is not "economically necessary." On the contrary, Nationalisation which genuinely wiped out all capitalist profits and royalties and unified the industry on the lines that have been a thousand times pointed out could pay, not only existing wages, but higher wages, and still retain all the men at present in the industry. But the General Council dare not touch this because it would be "political." Nationalisation ? That is a question for Parliament, "when Labour has a majority," &c. And meanwhile ? Meanwhile, royalties, interest and dividends are sacred and must not be menaced : what else is "the Constitution" for ? Therefore, Wages Must Come Down : this is

the only "economic," *i.e.*, capitalist, solution. So we get the monstrous picture of this General Council, set up to lead the workers' fight, these workers' leaders, these so-called socialists, using their position and their power to force down their fellow-workers, demanding, and demanding aggressively, with "bullying," that the miners on starvation wages must yield up 10 per cent. in order that the Duke of Northumberland may continue to receive his £75,000 a year. This is the practical position of the General Council, the position of Reformist Socialism in the period of capitalist decline. It is the inevitable position, the reality, of all "Constructive" Socialism, "Evolutionary" Socialism, MacDonald Socialism, Second International Socialism, when the mist of phrases and aspirations is translated into the experience of hard facts. And, therefore, the workers will have to look elsewhere for the leadership of their struggles.

THE General Council failed because they dared not face the political issues inevitably raised by the modern Trade Union struggle. As soon as the Government becomes involved, they run away "out of respect for the Constitution." They declare in effect—it is the whole burden of their Report—that it is impossible to meet the forces of the Government. If this were true, there would be no possibility of further working-class struggle, since every large-scale struggle in the modern period is a struggle with the forces of the Government and the State, and will be more and more so. The policy of the General Council is therefore a policy of surrender, not once, but always for the future. It is a policy of abdication, a declaration that Trade Unionism can go no further. Hence the General Council inevitably stands for a policy of wage-reductions : it can no other. The workers, however, have no intention of accepting wage-reductions, and will fight them, even against the Government, if necessary. Hence the working-class struggle will inevitably go on, even in spite of these leaders, and it will go on against the Government and the State, and will find the necessary means, and the leadership that is prepared to fight. The alternatives between wage-reduction and surrender or else struggle with the State are so clear that there can be no question of the answer.

MORE than this. It is sometimes stated as if the struggle with the State arises only because the State enters into the fight on behalf of large-scale capitalism, but that the character of the struggle will remain the old wage-struggle. This is a dangerously limited view, which would paralyse effective facing of the period in front. The struggle with the State develops, not only because the State places itself at the head of large industry, but also because the wage-issue to-day cannot be fought within the old bounds, but inevitably raises political issues more and more clearly, issues of reorganisation, of nationalisation, of encroachment on capitalist ownership as the only alternative to wage-reductions. Therefore the struggle with the State increasingly develops over political issues. But political issues inevitably raise more and more sharply the issue of power. The whole line of development of Trade Unionism leads straight to this in the present period, and the sooner this is clearly recognised the better. The development of the struggle takes place over a succession of crises, which do not necessarily raise ultimate issues at a stroke ; but the line of development is clear, and the failure to recognise this line at any point means inevitably the path of surrender, the path of the General Council, the failure to conduct even the daily struggle. This is the supreme lesson which the whole Trade Union movement must learn. The essential character of the future period is the struggle with the State, which begins in a limited form, but inevitably enlarges its character. The leadership of the future will have to face this and the consequent tasks, or fail. The General Council leadership, which refuses to face this, and declares instead that Trade Unionism can go no further and must henceforth only surrender, has thereby signed its own abdication.

R. P. D.

WERE THE MINERS LET DOWN?

By J. R. CAMPBELL

THE publication, by Mr. John Bromley, in the *Locomotive Journal* of extracts from the report which was to have been presented by the General Council to the meeting of Trade Union Executives called for June 25, has at last given the working class an opportunity of examining the reasons for the conduct of the General Council during the recent General Strike.

The extracts from the report of the General Council, in the article in question, are mixed up with rhetorical and, in some cases, hysterical interpolations emanating from Mr. Bromley himself. Some of these interpolations have been seized upon by the Capitalist Press as representing the considered opinion of the General Council, an action against which the General Council may have protested by the time this article appears in print.

In examining the General Council's case we have gone over the article exceedingly carefully, have excluded anything which might be regarded as an interpolation by Mr. Bromley, have endeavoured to give the General Council the benefit of the doubt in every doubtful instance, and yet the only result is that in considering the bare quotations from the Report itself we are led to the conclusion that the General Council's apology constitutes the most damning indictment of a leadership in the history of the Trade Union Movement of this country.

In order to approach the discussion in a realistic way, it is necessary to ask ourselves what is behind the attack on miners' wages and hours. Is this attack due to the fact that the mining industry, owing to bad management and to circumstances over which it had no control, got into a difficult position, while the rest of British Industry is moving along in a perfectly satisfactory fashion?

In other words, is the crisis which provoked the attack on miners' wages a mining industry crisis, or a crisis in British Capitalism?

Any intelligent worker will agree that what we are faced with at the present moment is a crisis in British Capitalism; that not only in the mining industry, but in the basic industries of the country also, there is a condition of absolute stagnation.

Out of this stagnation the employers only see one way, "The wages of all workers must come down." We need not remind the readers of the *LABOUR MONTHLY* that the mining employers attacked the miners' wages in the summer of 1925 at a time when the wages of the workers in the metal and cotton industries and on the railways were also being challenged. The victory of "Red Friday" stopped the capitalist offensive elsewhere except for the slight worsening of conditions forced upon the railwaymen, but no one with any intelligence could possibly doubt that if the miners go down in the present struggle the wages of all other workers will be attacked also.

It is shameful to be forced to occupy the space of the *LABOUR MONTHLY* in stressing this elementary fact. We do it not for the benefit of the rank and file who have grasped it long ago, but for the benefit of the General Council who had not apparently grasped it during the period of the General Strike. The whole case of the General Council in its Report to the Conference of Executives is based on the assumption that the workers in other unions who supported the miners were merely nobly and self-sacrificingly engaging in sympathetic action on behalf of the miners, whereas the truth of the matter is that they were engaged in resisting a mass attack of the capitalists directed not merely against the miners but against themselves.

This offensive of the capitalists was prepared openly under the noses of the Trade Union leadership. The recruitment of the O.M.S. and of special constabulary, the establishment of emergency strike-breaking machinery, were all undertaken in the open, and ought to have convinced the dullest individual that the Government was preparing to back the employers in a mass attack upon the working class. No one will dispute that the O.M.S. and the emergency preparations generally were weapons of the capitalists against the workers. What the General Council has not yet grasped is that the Coal Commission were equally a weapon of the offensive against the working class. Unless we believe that the

present Government is composed of madmen, it is impossible to conceive of them at one and the same time setting up emergency machinery to be used against the workers and setting up a Coal Commission to be used against the employers. Obviously, the Coal Commission, as its wholly capitalist composition showed, was a weapon of the capitalist offensive.

The case against the General Council is that it refused to prepare against the O.M.S. strike-breaking weapon of the Government, and that it absolutely succumbed to the Coal Commission strike-breaking weapon of the Government. In all the months between the granting of the subsidy and the issue of the Coal Commission Report, the General Council refused to elaborate any consistent wage policy to be pursued in relation to the mining dispute. The reason for this was obvious. Nothing that the Coal Commission could do could alter the basic facts of the mining industry, namely that present wages could not be paid without either the adoption of a drastic system of nationalisation and unification without compensation, or by a continuation of the subsidy. Both of these methods of retaining mining wages were ignored because both of them involved a challenge to the normal principles on which capitalist industry is carried on, and involved preparation to bring pressure to bear on the Government.

The result of their refusal to adopt a consistent wage policy was that the General Council simply drifted along, hoping that the Report of the Coal Commission which the Government intended to use as a weapon against the miners would in some miraculous way turn out to be a weapon directed against the mineowners and the capitalist offensive.

The development of this policy is clearly outlined in the General Council's document. On February 26, the Industrial Committee of the T.U.C. made a declaration in favour of no reductions in wages, no increase in hours and no interference with the principle of national agreements in the mining industry. On March 10, the Coal Commission issued its report which proved to be, as all intelligent rank and file workers expected it to be, a weapon directed against the miners and the working class. The General Council, afraid to enter into a struggle, persuaded themselves that this report was of value to the miners and their whole

policy from the issue of the Report was one of forcing its acceptance upon the miners' leaders.

On April 8, the miners asked the Industrial Committee of the General Council to give again a declaration in favour of no reductions in wages, no increase in hours, and national agreements. The Industrial Committee refused to do so. In conveying its decision to A. J. Cook in a letter of April 8, Mr. Citrine said that the Industrial Committee was "of the opinion that matters have not yet reached a stage when any final declaration of the General Council's policy can be made."

Here we have a piquant situation. The Government grants a subsidy to enable preparations to be made to defeat the miners as a preliminary to defeating the working class. It appoints a Coal Commission which presents a Report that will facilitate the defeat of the workers. The General Council accepts this defeatist Report and lines up with the Government of the capitalist class in endeavouring to force its acceptance on the miners! Only one thing prevented the success of this project, and that was that the mineowners' demands went far beyond the demands for reductions in wages in the Commission's Report, and forced the General Council for the time being to make a gesture on behalf of the miners. In making the gesture of solidarity by calling the General Strike on May 1, the General Council was endeavouring to bluff the Government. Bluff may sometimes justify itself in industrial warfare, but only upon the condition that those who are bluffing do not give the game away beforehand. The General Council had shown during the interval between May 1 and May 3 that it was prepared to force reductions in wages on the miners.

It made this attitude quite clear to the Government in accepting from Mr. Baldwin on May 2, the formula which it considered to be worthy of acceptance by the miners. The formula read as follows:—

The Prime Minister has satisfied himself that as a result of conversations he had with representatives of the T.U.C., if negotiations are continued, it being understood that the notices cease to be operative, the representatives of the T.U.C. are confident that a settlement could be reached along the lines of the Report within a fortnight.

Obviously, the most cowardly Capitalist Government that ever existed would be strengthened in its determination to fight the

workers by the spectacle of the leaders on the workers' side absolutely running away. Thus the General Council encouraged the Government to take up a strong attitude by its open display of weakness.

The Government felt that with such leaders the whole struggle would be over in a few days, the mining dispute included, and that as a result it was worth while calling the bluff.

When the General Strike took place, it took place with this leadership having no hope of victory. Dealing with the perspectives of the strike the General Council says :—

From the position, therefore, taken up by the Government through their ultimatum, there appeared to be only two alternatives ; the capitulation of the Government ; the disintegration of the strike by a process of attrition. It was clear that the Government would use their majority in the House and the utmost resources available to them to maintain the position they had taken up.

In other words, the General Council went through the strike with only one idea, *i.e.*, that the Government was impregnable, that nothing that the working class could do would shake its determination and therefore the strike ought to be called off at the first opportunity.

It has been freely said by its apologists since that no strike can possibly succeed which is directed against the Government. This is an idea which is hopelessly defeatist. All great struggles in our basic industries must under present conditions bring in the Government. The only way to avoid bringing the Government into an industrial dispute is either to assent to the reductions in wages imposed by the capitalists, or to conduct a fight in a sectional fashion and so produce defeat. If the workers are seriously concerned for the future, however, they will not waste their time in sectional struggles, but will bring all their forces to bear at the one moment. When this happens the Government is immediately bound to interfere and strike back. A strike is a political weapon. This only means, however, that in modern industry, any effective struggle of the working class to preserve their standards must come up against the Capitalist State, which is not the representative of the community, but is simply the principal employing-class weapon in the struggle against the workers' standards. A courageous leadership recognising this would have gone all out

to win. The case against the General Council is that it did not develop or attempt to develop the struggle so as to bring the full forces of the workers to bear.

It is worthy of note in this connection that most of the right wing leaders on the Continent could only explain the calling off of the strike by the General Council on the basis of mass strike breaking and a mass return to work. Even the Continental Amsterdam leaders failed to discover any reason why the strike should have been called off when the workers were still solid.

With regard to the Samuel Memorandum, which the General Council accepted as a basis of settlement, the Report does not claim for the memorandum any official Government connection but merely states that it is a good basis for settlement and that if the miners had accepted it as basis for negotiations, public opinion would have forced the Government to accept it also. We do not wish to quarrel with this statement, because we believe that the Samuel Memorandum, while a bad basis of settlement for the miners and the working class, is a good basis of settlement for the capitalist class. It asks the miners to place their destiny with regard to wages and conditions in the hands of an independent chairman of a National Wages Board. In other words, it sees as the solution of the wages problem in the coal industry the appointment of a capitalist arbitrator. What would have happened to the miners' wages if they had been fools enough to accept can readily be imagined.

Were the miners correct in refusing to accept reductions in wages? Both from their own point of view as miners, and from the point of view of the wider interests of the working class, they were undoubtedly correct. Nothing would be more likely to encourage the capitalists of other industries to attack the workers than an easy acceptance of wage cuts in an industry which has always been regarded as a stronghold of Trade Unionism.

The insistence of the miners has already ensured that any victory gained by the capitalist class is going to be ten times more costly than the granting of a subsidy would have been. Even when wage cuts are inevitable it is always good Trade Union policy to "die hard," thereby preventing the development of the offensive on a wider scale. As a matter of fact, however, wage cuts in the mining industry are not inevitable and given proper

support to the miners even at the present moment by means of the imposition of an embargo on coal, nationally and internationally, wage cuts could be avoided and a subsidy extracted from the capitalists for a further period.

Mr. John Bromley in presenting the Report deals with a further aspect of the matter which is well worth considering from the working-class standpoint. He says :—

To have adopted the slogan of the miners' leaders would, on their own admission, if accepted, have meant the immediate throwing out of work of some 300,000 mine workers by the closing of uneconomic mines, which appears too awful for any Trade Union leaders to contemplate. For to many thinking people it is bound to appear more sane for some highly paid men in a disorganised industry to suffer some temporary reduction than to throw 300,000 workers and their families into destitution so that a number of men earning on the admission of Mr. Cook, the Miners' Secretary, from £5 to £13 per week may retain every penny of their present wages.

It ought to be clear to every trade unionist that Mr. Bromley and such members of the General Council as agree with him in advocating this policy are challenging the everyday principles upon which the Trade Union Movement has hitherto conducted its wage struggles. It has always been the policy of the Trade Union Movement, even in its most reformist phases, to base its demands for wages upon what the most efficient business operating in any particular industry can pay. If the less efficient businesses are not able to pay the wages, then they have either got to make themselves more efficient or go out of the job. We are reaching a sorry pass in the British Labour Movement when it is being forced to adapt its minimum wage demands to the conditions of the uneconomic firms in a given industry. What this policy means any worker can grasp. It means starvation wages for the workers, and the preservation of parasitic, inefficient firms earning what is regarded as reasonable profits, while the up-to-date firms earn profits beyond the dreams of avarice.

Surely the sane policy to be adopted, even from the ordinary Trade Union standpoint, is the miners' policy of basing the minimum wage on what the most efficient firms and coalfields can pay, while a subsidy is being paid to enable wages to be maintained pending the reorganisation of the more inefficient firms.

That, we suggest, is the way to make minimum demands, as any

trade unionist will agree who regards Trade Unionism as an instrument for maintaining the workers' standards, and not an instrument to co-operate with the employers to secure the progressive reduction of the standards of the workers.

Since issuing its apology the General Council has sent a circular calling for assistance for the miners and pointing out that we are now in the presence of a capitalist attack on the whole working class. We hope that the General Council realises that the admission of this fact reduces the apology for its conduct in the dispute to absolute nonsense.

The one lesson that we must draw from the whole situation is the inevitability of the continuation of the capitalist offensive, and of fresh struggles on the part of the workers if they are to maintain their standards. To conduct these struggles successfully a new leadership is required. The failure of the Trade Union "left" among the leaders was the failure of men who had not thought out their problems ; who did not understand the nature of the situation they were facing, nor the methods which the working class would have to adopt to meet that situation. They were weak compared with the right wing, because the right wing in the person of Mr. Thomas has at least a policy—although it is one of treachery to the working class—and the ability to consistently pursue that policy through all its phases in a changing situation. Mr. Thomas knows his mind perfectly. The left-wing did not know their minds at all. The greatest lesson of the General Strike, therefore, is the need for a new leadership, who will study the complex problems arising out of the situation of British Capitalism, who will face temporary unpopularity and abuse in order to equip the British Labour Movement to face the changed situation and who in every struggle will go out to win, knowing no loyalty except loyalty to the working-class movement.

THE MINERS' STRUGGLE IN THE NORTH

By WILL LAWTHER

WHATEVER the readers of other magazines may think of the issues involved in this epic struggle of the miners "to keep and hold what they have won," the readers of the *LABOUR MONTHLY* need be under no illusions, as they have been specially favoured by articles from A. J. Cook and Herbert Smith on the principles at stake. We, therefore, intend only to give an outline of the situation from the point of view of the two exporting districts of Northumberland and Durham, as ascertained since June 29 ; for a few weeks prior to that we had no opportunity of reading anything or taking part in the struggle, thanks to little D.O.R.A., or rather her twin sister E.P.A.

If John Bromley had made inquiries as we have here, he would not have issued to his members (which has since been issued and broadcasted in the Press by the enemies of railwaymen and miners) the untrue statements about miners scabbing on railwaymen during the General Strike. Apparently it is a case of they "straight-way began to make excuses" of others, rather than explain the reason of their own shirking.

The oldest miners here have never known the spirit that exists to-day against the latest offer of the coalowners. Old men come up after meetings and describe what the shortened working-day meant to them, and they urge the younger generation to stick it, be the end and the cost what it may. Go where you care, nothing but the most grim determination to resist exists. Despite the efforts and wealth of our opponents the North remains impregnable. Not because of any leader, but because the men realise that to submit would be a living death.

In a statement issued with the owners' terms, under the permissive Eight Hours Act, Mr. Jas. Robson, secretary of the Durham

County Mining Federation Board, comprising all sections in and about the Durham mines, stated on July 8 :—

The terms on which the owners are prepared to allow work to be resumed after the 12th instant have been issued to the county, and no doubt your notice will have been drawn to them. Our duty at present is not to subject these proposals to a careful analysis *as they are so impossible*, at a glance we see they cut across all for which we have been standing for the last ten weeks, and they are precisely the same terms as were offered on April 30, 1926.

Our duty is not confined to any particular district, but to the Federation as a whole. You will remember that, at a Council meeting [Comprised of one delegate from each lodge.—W.L.] we were strongly opposed to any reductions in wages, lengthening of hours, or District settlements. We have attended National Conferences and voted to maintain those conditions with the rest of the coalfields. Therefore, we assisted in determining the general policy of the Federation as a whole in the present crisis, which carries us far beyond our obligation to our own county, and makes us responsible with the rest of the men in the coalfields.

As honourable men we must be loyal to our obligations and resist any District settlement and maintain the solidarity and strength of the Federation.

If it were possible to conceive that anyone could be inclined to favour these proposals let them for a moment consider what they would mean to the county, and we feel sure their resolution to resist such proposals would be strengthened. We have no hesitation in saying that if such conditions were accepted they would create conditions of employment in this county that would be intolerable.

In the meantime we strongly urge our people to offer the stoutest resistance possible to those offers. We have reason to believe that every possible means will be adopted to influence our members in favour of those terms, but we are confident that they will stand firm to the principle for which we have been fighting, and if a settlement is arrived at, it must be for the coalfields as a whole, and not for any district.

We have quoted this in order that those who are of faint heart, and perturbed at the resistance of the miners, should understand that it is the grim reality of the slave terms that is the urge. And this Federation Board has within its ranks all grades: enginemmen, miners, cokemen, &c.

We will not quote the wages offered except to say, that it means to the hewer, or coal-getter, in Durham an advance of from two hours to one hour on his working-day and a reduction in his wage from 9s. 8d. to 8s. 7.4od., or 1s. 0.6od. per shift. We

point out this simple statement of fact in order that the attention of the movement may be called to the following.

While the Eight Hours Bill was travelling through its final stages, an advertisement appeared in the *Daily Herald* issued by a group of business men (?), which said that the extra hour worked in Durham would mean 6d. per ton profit on every ton of coal raised to divide out amongst the men to the extent of 5d., one penny of the 6d. going to the owner. Judge what must be the opinion of the area that has done more for the *Daily Herald* than any other, when within four days of that advertisement appearing, the offer stated above was made by the Durham owners.

If ever the need was demonstrated for a new conception of Labour tactics, when a struggle was being waged, it is surely now. After eleven weeks of the most bitter struggle that has ever been waged, when all the forces of the most merciless ruling class the world has ever seen have been brought to bear on the miners, when imprisonment has been the lot of hundreds of their fellows, we read an advertisement in Labour's only daily that the mines can only pay if we submit. Surely it is well-known that according to mineowners, the coal mines have never paid. It took the Hartley disaster in order to get two shafts to each mine, it took a six weeks' strike in 1912 to enforce a minimum wage. Every improvement has always been resisted with the parrot-cry, the mines are losing.

Some pure and simple souls (we are not going to state which quality is the larger) in our movement, argue that to refuse such an advertisement would be interfering with the liberty of the Press. That was not said when the advertisement of the Minority Movement was refused. Liberty of the Press, when we are fighting for the liberty to exist. O, Liberty, what crimes are still committed in thy name. Freedom of the Press, and a Labour Press, to which the miners have given their all, when we are fighting in the North to retain the shorter working-day that was won for this generation half-a-century ago. This new tactic is only a short second in the muddling of our friends, to put it at its lowest estimate, to the calling off of the General Strike. The necessity of the moment demands that this game, this debating of the rights and wrongs of capitalist advertisements against the miners shall cease.

No area in the country is reaping the rewards of Labour in power, and using power, more than in Durham. We have, of course, that symptom in our midst, the respectable person, but on the whole it is a correct statement of fact to state that the spirit of the adults has been kept up, by the fact that the children were being fed through the Feeding of Necessitous School-Children's Act, and by Labour Boards of Guardians. Only, it is realised that even in these two channels, attempts at clogging their efforts are made by those who pull the strings in Whitehall.

Whatever the end of this may be, the lessons as indicated here must not be left over till "next time," we cannot afford ever again to allow those who funk the fight to have control. We learn by experience what must and shall be done, and to-day is the moment we must begin to make the changes.

THE MOSUL "VICTORY"

By W. N. EWER

THE Angora Treaty has been duly acclaimed a triumph for a firm but pacific diplomacy. Sir Ronald Lindsay has become a G.C.M.G., and the Foreign Secretary has gratefully welcomed the addition of some fresh leaves to the rather faded and disreputable laurels of Locarno.

Yet in cold fact the Anglo-Turkish settlement is, if not a defeat, at any rate a decided repulse for British diplomacy. To have gained the Turkish Government's recognition of the permanent annexation of the Mosul Vilayet to Iraq; to have secured at last the fixation of a dangerously disputed frontier; this is indeed something. But it is only a part of the programme. The real objectives of the negotiation lay much further than this. And there has been a complete failure to attain them.

Mosul, as I have frequently pointed out, is far more than an oil field of hypothetical value. Turkey is something far more than the neighbour state across the Hakkiari mountains. Sir Ronald Lindsay and his chiefs in London were concerned not only to establish a frontier but to establish Great Britain's position in South-Western Asia on a firm basis, to secure for British diplomacy a dominant influence from the Ægean to the Indian frontier—an influence which would at once oppose an impassable barrier to any pressure or influence from the north, and would secure for Great Britain the lion's share of the inheritance when, in the fulness of time, the remaining independent Asiatic states should collapse.

It had become gradually clear to Downing Street that the key to this position lay in Angora. Turkey, to-day, is not indeed the Turkey whose territories only a few years ago stretched from the Adriatic to the Persian Gulf, whose armies controlled the Straits and the desert routes to the East, whose frontiers lay within striking distance of the Suez Canal. But, in defiance of all the cheerful calculations of 1919, she has established herself as still a

power to be counted with. She is still in fact—whatever the treaties may say about it—mistress of the Straits. She still controls the Bagdad Railway. She still lies perilously near the increasingly important motor road and airway routes to the Gulf. And though she is no longer the seat of the Khilafat, her prestige in the Moslem world was never higher. You have only to walk through any bazaar in South-Western Asia or North Africa and note the portraits of Kemal in the shops to understand.

Since, then, Turkey had opposed an obstinate and successful resistance to the projects of tri-partition and dismemberment; since she had asserted, both in arms and in diplomacy, her strength and status, it was clear enough that British policy must be reversed, and that the Turkish Republic must be lured away from its dangerous friendship with Russia, must be persuaded that its real advantage lay in friendship and close co-operation with Great Britain, must—in a word—be brought into the British sphere of influence, both diplomatically and economically. If that could be achieved, Persia and Afghanistan would follow almost automatically. The barrier against Bolshevism would have been strongly built; the road would be open to that peaceful economic penetration which, in Euro-Asiatic or Euro-African relations, is the normal prelude to absorption.

Downing Street saw that the very fact that Anglo-Turkish relations were bad, and that there was definite cause of quarrel in the Mosul dispute, offered an admirable opening for such a policy. Skilfully conducted the settlement of sharp differences is an admirable prelude to an entente.

There must, according to all tradition, be two steps in the game. For it is an article of faith with our diplomacy that the Turk is an "Oriental," and that in all dealings with "Orientals" you must begin with a display of force, lest any conciliation be regarded as a sign of weakness. This Ethel M. Dellish conception of the way to treat "Orientals" has, incidentally, been responsible for an amazing series of diplomatic blunderings. But our diplomats do not lightly forsake their romantic conceptions.

The plain need for making friends with Turkey, added to this Dellish illusion about "Orientals" therefore determined the course of the negotiation. First the firm hand. The Turk must

be shown that if he continued to defy the British Empire he would pay very dearly for the amusement. When he had been taught this lesson he could be shown that if on the other hand he would enter the British parlour there would be very solid advantages awaiting him. To put things with an indecent bluntness, the plan was first to bully, then to bribe.

The obtaining, by some patient, not over easy, diplomacy, of judgment in Iraq's favour from the League of Nations was a necessary preliminary. But clearly the matter would not be left in the hands of the League; for the League could only reiterate its decision, could not bargain with Angora as the Foreign Office proposed to do. Turkey's anticipated refusal to recognise the Geneva judgment gave the necessary opportunity. Mr. Baldwin—nicely suited to the rôle—made the necessary "friendly gesture," offered to negotiate. He explained to an approving House of Commons that the Government was anxious for neighbourly amity and co-operation with Turkey, and that he proposed himself to begin conversations with the Turkish Ambassador. The Tory Press loudly praised this new evidence of the upright character and lofty idealism of the Prime Minister. The Liberal Press nodded complacently. And, of course, the warning note sounded in the *Daily Herald* was discounted as due to mere prejudice and cynicism.

Mr. Baldwin for the blandishment. The policy needed also a bully. For England prefers, when possible, to do her bullying by proxy. It is less disturbing to the Baldwin pose.

Now anyone looking round Europe for a bully would not look long. The qualifications of one candidate are too patent to be missed. And by great good fortune Turkey was the very state on which Signor Mussolini had his own eyes. Anatolia is his obvious plunder-ground. The coast which Italy had in her grip in 1919 and then (to Mussolini's intense disgust) abandoned is temptingly visible from the walls of Rhodes.

Sir Austen—by another happy chance—was in Italy, recuperating after the strenuous labours of the Locarno pact. The two statesmen met. They made, of course, no treaty, no pact, no agreement. These are crude methods of diplomacy not suitable to countries in which Parliament, whatever its faults, has an

awkward knack of asking disconcerting questions. So (with a view to the possibility of having to issue categorical denials that any agreement had been made) the two statesmen—after the classic example of Sir Edward Grey—merely exchanged views as to possible action in certain eventualities.

Suppose Turkey proved recalcitrant, would make no agreement. Suppose a war—in which, of course, she would be defying not merely Great Britain but the majesty of the League of Nations itself. Suppose this happened, would it be likely that Italy and her client, Greece, would care to take a hand ?

Italy—and Greece—most certainly would be delighted. But—supposing such a thing should happen, and Turkey were well defeated. There would have to be a new peace settlement. Would the British Government have any objection then to Greece coming back to Smyrna and repossessing herself of the Aidin Vilayet? And if Italy wanted the country to the south, the Meander Valley and Adalia and away east to perhaps Selindi or Anemur—would Great Britain support the claim ?

Naturally no promise of such a kind could be given. Certainly it would be unthinkable that a British Government—above all a Baldwin Government—could strike bargains for the partition of a State with which it was about to open friendly negotiations. But, as between gentlemen—one might almost venture to say as between Fascists, for was not His Britannic Excellency becoming an honorary member of that exalted body—as between gentlemen Sir Austen's views would be profoundly interesting to Sir Benito.

They were. They were both interesting and satisfactory. Sir Benito's views were equally interesting to Sir Austen. Had they been men of a lower social order they would have winked on parting. But Knights of the Garter do not wink, though they might advance their motto in extenuation.

Sir Austen came home. The necessary military preparations began. Angora guessed what had been afoot at Rapallo, and began to calculate the odds. They were clearly too great. The Soviet Union was the only reliable friend; and the Soviet Union could not help defend the Lycian coast or help repulse a Greek descent, backed, as in 1919, by the British Fleet, on the ruined water front of Smyrna. The Serbian Government, sounded by Rushdi

Bey on his way home from Paris, showed no eagerness to create a diversion by a move on Salonica. It would be too risky an enterprise; the candle of Salonica was not worth the game of challenging Italy and defying the League.

Therefore the astute diplomats of Angora decided that, since war was impossible, negotiation was necessary. A cordial, but guarded reply, was sent to Mr. Baldwin's kind invitation. Chuckling with glee, the Tory Press pointed out that Angora's new attitude was occasioned by a

healthy fear that, in the event of a conflict over Mosul, Italy, Greece and even other Balkan States (the reference is to Bulgaria with whom there had also been an "exchange of views") would not remain indifferent, but would see in it a useful and legitimate opportunity for carrying out their own aspirations and ambitions in Asia Minor.

That was the *Daily Telegraph*. The *Morning Post* began to drop hints of the next move

The Russian Treaty was "practically valueless to Turkey." It was positively dangerous. "The association of Turkey with her dangerous and unstable neighbour can bring no good to Turkey, and might result in her irremediable injury; for it must eventually bring Turkey both within the power of the Soviet and to enmity with the Western European Powers.

"The policy of Great Britain has always been friendly to the Turks. The overtures made by the Prime Minister are in accordance with the traditional attitude of this country towards Turkey . . .

"The British Government has condoned Turkey's infringement of the rules of international comity and expressed its willingness to give every consideration to the requirements of the Turkish Government. That Government cannot hope to receive a similar offer from any other nation, for no other nation can command the requisite resources, with the exception of the United States, which will do nothing for Turkey.

"Great Britain, however, in her dealings with Turkey, can rely upon the support of both France and Italy; and the worth of the friendship of the three most powerful nations in Europe is hardly to be despised."

And so on. A little crudely put perhaps. But one must not expect subtlety from the *Morning Post*. Besides it is as well to be frank with "Orientals"; to leave them no doubt of the bigness of your stick and the fatness of your purse, so that it is easy for them to choose which they prefer you to employ.

The objective of the negotiation was, then, plain enough. But the process of negotiating was delicate and complex. Secrecy was essential, and at once agreed to by both parties. And Sir Ronald Lindsay went to Angora towards the end of January.

First move was clearly for the Turks to ask what Great Britain would give them if they recognised Iraq's sovereignty over Mosul. It would have been crude to reply in the words of Punch's historic Fashoda cartoon—"You'll see what I'll give you if you don't." Something must obviously be done to save the face of the Turkish Government, and to allay its fears that Southern Kurdistan would be used as a base for fomenting insurrection in the north. A slight rectification of frontier and a share in the oil royalties would do the first. Satisfactory assurances could be given on the second. There was, it was felt, small doubt that this would more than satisfy the Turkish Government. To Angora, hard pressed for ready money, half a million pounds in the hand would far outweigh hypothetical chances of securing Mosul by arms—even were there no Italian, Greek and Bulgarian fleets and armies threatening the Western marches of the Republic.

But, of course, if Turkey wanted more ; if she would like not a slight frontier rectification but the cession of a large slice of territory; if she would like not a tiny half-million or so but a substantial loan; if she would like some arrangement that would ease her of part of her existing debt burden; then these things might be obtainable, on conditions.

Rushdi Bey, following the traditional and often successful technique of Turkish diplomacy, temporised. He wanted time to consider matters; really time to look round again and see if there were possibilities of support elsewhere. There seemed to be, for already M. de Jouvenel, new High Commissioner in Syria, was suggesting negotiations for the final delimitation of the Turco-Syrian frontier. France was not pleased by the prospect of a British ascendancy at Angora—which would mean the waste of much past effort on her part. M. de Jouvenel was quite ready to jump in quickly, repeat the coup of M. Franklin Bouillon, and prove to Kemal Pasha and his colleagues that the real friend was Codlin of Paris, not Short of London. He came to Angora on

February 10, a week or so after Sir Ronald had returned to Constantinople to report. Before another week was out he had provisionally signed a pact with which the Turks had good reason to be pleased. It gave them a good slice of valuable railway line. It provided for joint neutrality between Turkey and Syria. It did enough besides to arouse intense indignation in the Foreign Office. M. de Jouvenel had, indeed, done too well. He had not realised that the financial relations of Great Britain and France made it impossible for the Quai d'Orsay to defy Downing Street and to thwart its plans in this light manner. Strong—very strong—representations were made in Paris, and M. Briand hastily promised that before the treaty was definitely signed everything objectionable to Great Britain should be taken out of it. General Sarraut was sent off to Angora to revise M. de Jouvenel's over-zealous production.

Rushdi Bey's effort had failed. France could not help him. Russia, equally, could give no immediate effective aid. Things were going well with the project—due in the first place to Fevzi Pasha, the Chief of Staff, of a Turco-Persian-Afghan entente; but that could scarcely affect the situation. The reality of the Italo-Greek menace was now beyond question. Turkey was encircled. She must come to terms. Sir Ronald Lindsay came back to Angora in early March to find Rushdi ready to do business, ready to suggest terms on which Turkey would break—in fact if not, for the moment, in theory, her understanding with Russia, and would come into the League of Nations as an ally of the British Empire. If Sir Ronald would get a firm offer from his Government, they could get to business at once.

The plan, it seemed, had worked to perfection. The desired breach had been made between the Soviet Union and its only ally. And in the breach, if one may strain the metaphor, had been built a new section of the wall of encirclement round the Red Republics. There remained only the details of the bargain to be arranged—always a troublesome matter with "Orientals," but still a matter that could certainly be fixed with a little patience.

Sir Ronald went home to London to get authority for a firm offer. Before he returned to Angora, Sir William Tyrrell decided conveniently to take a holiday in Rome—as befitted a devout

Catholic. He saw Signor Mussolini. The war talk died down. The war preparations ceased. Official statements assured the world that Italy's intentions towards Turkey were as peaceful as her feelings were friendly. All was ready for the final triumph.

Sir Ronald went back to Angora. If Turkey were willing to break with Russia and to come at once into the League, England was willing that she should be given back a substantial portion of Southern Kurdistan. She should get her loan in the City—not, perhaps, the £30,000,000 Rushdi had suggested, but say £20,000,000 in three or four instalments. Arrangements could be made for a substantial reduction of the Ottoman Debt in consideration of the State properties which were passing to Iraq.

The bargaining began. The Turks asked more. The British refused. The familiar process went on. Agreement seemed to be getting very near indeed. All danger of war had completely passed away. The world was waiting the signature of the treaty.

And then, quietly but firmly, Rushdi Bey declared that the outstanding points of difference were insuperable, that the British offer was not enough, that Turkey would revert to the original bargain and recognise the annexation of Mosul to Iraq in return for the slight rectification of frontier, the assurances about Kurdistan, the £500,000 share in the Mosul royalties.

Whether this had been the Turks' intention all the time and they had merely entered on the wider negotiation in order to gain time until the war-danger was over; or whether, at the last moment, realising, as good Anatolians must have done since the days of Priam, the dangers of Western gifts, they decided that to take the British offer would be, in effect, to sell the independence they had won so dearly; these are matters the truth of which is probably known only to Kemal and Ismet and Rushdi. But whatever that truth may be, the effect was the same.

The British were in an impossible position. They could not draw back. They could not reject an arrangement which conceded all that they could confess to have been seeking. Italy and Greece might have been let loose on a Turkey defying the League of Nations. But it was impossible to do anything against a Turkey prepared, on the most reasonable terms, to accept the judgment of the League. There was nothing for it but to put a good face

on an unpleasant situation, sign the treaty, and pretend to be highly gratified that the Mosul question had been settled.

And indeed that is something, as I said earlier. But a small thing by comparison with the bigger, which had seemed actually within grasp and then had suddenly eluded it.

For consider the position. Turkey is decidedly stronger for having abandoned a practically hopeless claim and for being no longer representable as defying its own treaty obligations and the authority of the League. Turkey is still closely linked with Russia—a fact announced dramatically to the world by the signature of a new protocol supplementing the Treaty of Paris. Turkey has signed a treaty of mutual guarantee and amity with Persia, and has strengthened her relations with Afghanistan—moves which would have been very satisfactory if British influence were dominant in Angora, but terribly dangerous under these different circumstances. The position in southern Asia, in fact, altered not for the better but very markedly for the worse—as the recent outbreak of acute nervous anxiety in Simla testifies.

And in Europe the Locarno system still further shaken. Italy and Greece angry, feeling that they have been used as catspaws, looking elsewhere for "compensation," preparing diplomatic opposition everywhere to Great Britain and France. Signor Mussolini threatening to make a political and commercial entente with Moscow unless Italy is granted compensation elsewhere—in Abyssinia, Tangier, Tunis—for her baulked ambitions in Anatolia.

Those are the net results of a prettily devised diplomatic campaign in which there was only one flaw. It was based upon a totally false conception of the character of the Turkish statesmen—on the belief that they are some curious kind of "Oriental" who can always be successfully dealt with by an admixture of bullying and bribing. That traditional and closely-cherished fallacy has once again made a ghastly mess of this country's Eastern policy.

CANTON

By Colonel C. L. MALONE

OF all the great cities of China, Canton remains in the memory as the most interesting and the most wonderful. The city of Canton is 90 miles from Hongkong situated at the apex of the great delta of the Chu-kiang and Si-kiang rivers, which, as one approaches Canton, winds through flooded rice-fields and carefully tended litchi-orchards. It lies just within the tropics, having a reputed population variously estimated at two to three millions, including nearly half a million living in sampans, small shallow boats with curved shelters like half a barrel, and in these sometimes artistically fitted out "house-boats," little more than floating huts, families are born, live and die—a floating population indeed.

The commercial activity dates back to before 1511, when the Portuguese arrived at Canton, from which time it has grown from a small native camp to the market of Southern China.

There is a striking contrast even between the appearance of Canton and the other great cities of China. Elsewhere in China where East and West have come into contact—Tientsin, Hankow, Shanghai, for instance—the Foreign Settlement is the modern town with electric light, proper drainage, asphalt roads, trackless trams and other outward symbols of so-called civilisation ; whereas the Chinese quarter of these towns is in general mediæval and rather dirty.

Canton is just the reverse. The island of Shameen, the Foreign Concession, two-thirds British and one-third French, separated only by a narrow canal with two bridges from the main town of Canton, is rather a fly-blown corner—more so than ever at the time of my visit—as, owing to the strike, there had been few if any coolies on the island for nearly a year. On the other hand, the Chinese town occupying the main city is modern, clean, with new roads, motor buses, large hotels and stores. Canton dispels the idea which foreigners would like to give to the world that the Chinese cannot construct and maintain a modern city.

Shameen gave me the impression of a plague-stricken city.

You leave the active Chinese town, with its noises and its shouts, its teeming crowds of sweating coolies, women as well as men, staggering under gigantic loads ; you come to the Shakee Bund where 52 Chinese were killed and 117 wounded on the never-to-be-forgotten June 23, 1925, your car or rickshaw stops, the road is up, gangs of coolies are working, turning the Shakee Bund into a great avenue with modern surface and trees, soon to be called the Avenue of June the Twenty-Third, in memory of that fateful day ; past the armed strike picket in simple blue cotton uniform with red arm band who search all who wish to enter Shameen ; you cross the British Bridge and are confronted by Sikh Police, barbed wire and sandbags.

As you glance around while crossing the bridge along the narrow canal separating Shameen from Canton, with the buildings on either side—the office fronts on Shakee and the Victoria Hotel on Shameen still pocked with rifle and machine-gun bullet holes—you may well wonder how the British Consul or anyone else standing on that bridge could really have been able to swear on which side of the narrow waterway the first shot was fired, whether by the peaceful procession of students or by the armed foreigners on Shameen.

Dilapidated sandbag redoubts block every path converging towards the town, the telephone wires sag broken and unused, the Chinese post office is deserted, overgrown and covered with cobwebs. Rubbish is lying everywhere, fallen leaves cover the bricks of a half-finished building where the Chinese workers dropped their tools last June. White Russians and others maintain the little motor-boat which meets foreigners who chance to come in the usually empty steamer from Hongkong. The new British Acting Consul-General at Shameen sits in his office hoping to clear up the mess which his predecessors have made of Sino-British relations in Southern China.

Shameen, as far as one can see, will not last long. Apart from political considerations it is unbusinesslike. The British Consul and the business interests which he guards would be well advised to follow the German Consul into one of the main streets of the town where the business of the city is being conducted, instead of isolating themselves behind metaphorical drawbridges.

Canton is inseparably associated with the name of Dr. Sun Yat-sen. The City has always been the centre of Chinese progress. It is an interesting phenomenon that tropical Canton should be able to produce better organisers, clearer thinkers and harder workers than the cooler plains of the North.

Partly, also, perhaps because of its foreign contacts, Canton has been the historic mother of Chinese revolt. The Taiping rebellion began here, and Sun Yat-sen made it the centre of his long struggle against the Manchu Emperors. When Yuan Shi-kai betrayed the republic, Canton was the centre of the republican movement in China. The fact that the Government of Canton is the most progressive in China to-day cannot, therefore, be debited or credited solely to the political and military advisers brought from Soviet Russia. It has its historic origin. But the work done by Borodin and his assistants in Canton has shaped China's progress and rendered service to the Chinese people and especially to the Chinese workers which stands out in vivid contrast with the "assistance" given by the other Great Powers.

Whilst Canton has thus for long been the seat of progressive activities it was not until last year that radical organisations held the reins of power, when the Kuomintang (People's National Party) for the first time formed the Government. Up to that time, whilst Dr. Sun had nominally been the head, the political position in Canton was dominated by the presence of the Yunnanese mercenary troops. These were finally defeated and driven out in June, 1925, by the new Russian trained Canton Army—the Whampoa cadets.

The Government in Canton is now a purely Party Government composed of members of the Kuomintang. But in order that the situation in Canton may be clear, it is necessary to give some explanation of the Kuomintang Party throughout China.

The Kuomintang was founded by Dr. Sun Yat-sen on the famous San-min or threefold people's principles: Nationality, Race Equality and Democratic Government.

In February, 1924, a national congress of Dr. Sun's party was held in Canton and a bitter struggle took place between the right and left wings, resulting in a split. There is now a well-organised left wing Kuomintang in association with the Communists, having its headquarters at Canton and controlled by an executive of

thirty-five members. In May of this year the question of Communist affiliation to this left wing Kuomintang was discussed at an important conference, and it was decided that, while Communists may be members they may not hold office in the party.

Throughout China there are heterogeneous groups as well as individual members of the Kuomintang—the right wing they appear to be—who say that the Canton Kuomintang is illegal and a breakaway. So far as the right wing groups have a central organisation, there is an office at Shanghai in the French Concession and an executive of twenty-five. They held a conference on March 29, 1926, attended by 130 members, but it is stated that they were entirely from the Shanghai environs.

There is no fundamental difference in policy between the organised left wing centralised at Canton and the scattered right wing dissentients, except on one important point.

All are Nationalist, all oppose the Unequal Treaties, and so on; But the anti-lefts are anti-Russian. They talk about Soviet Imperialism in Mongolia; to which the Russians make the logical reply that if there is Soviet assistance in Mongolia it does not bargain for concessions and railway revenues such as other Powers invariably insist on in return for any help they may render. The right wing say that the Soviet should have demonstrated their friendship to China by giving up the Chinese Eastern Railway (the dispute regarding this railway in the early part of this year will be recalled), but are unable to answer the question, "Would this not really mean simply the surrender of the railway to Japan, in view of the Japanese domination of Manchuria?"

As a natural sequence of their anti-Russian attitude, they also oppose communist membership of the Kuomintang.

On the whole, the Kuomintang in Canton, which also has its different shades—it is very important to remember that the struggle within the Canton Kuomintang itself is a left and right struggle—is the more powerful force in China. They are actually doing executive work and one earnestly trusts that the scattered Kuomintang elements throughout China will find a means of coming together, for the Nationalist elements in China are so weak that they cannot well afford to be divided.

So we get back to the Canton Government. Actually in Canton

there are three concentric governments, the Canton National Government holding sway over the provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi and part of the province of Hunan, the provincial Government of Kwangtung and the municipal Government of Canton City.

The Municipal Government was formed on July 4, 1925. They wanted to have an electoral system, but found that the people were not ready for it. So they nominated members in the proportion and representing the interests which they thought should be on the Council. There are eighteen members : three each representing merchants, workers, peasants, educationalists, the liberal professions (doctors, lawyers, &c.) and big industries (electrical works, &c.). The salary is only nominal—\$500 (Mexican) a year. There are peasant members because the area includes some country districts surrounding the town.

With regard to the National Canton Government, *i.e.*, that controlling the three provinces, this is also composed of members of the Kuomintang Party. Throughout China all, even its enemies, praise the Canton Government as the most efficient and best managed that Kwangtung has known since the Republic.

Canton is important to China because it is the seat of the only Nationalist Government, a government fighting for the unification and liberation of China from the rule of bandit militarists and from foreign control. For the rest China is under the rule of a number of militarists. The influence of Canton, therefore, throughout China is bound to be great. Kalgan to the north-west of Peking is at present the headquarters of the Kuominchun (the People's National Army) which is in sympathy with the Kuomintang in Canton, although it is not actually the armed force of that party. Should the Kuominchun descend from its fortified position behind the Nankou pass and reoccupy Peking, the effect on the National movement in China might be very great.

Probably, however, the question which should interest readers of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* most is the fact that Canton is the headquarters of the "Red" Labour Movement and of other progressive organisations in China ; mostly, of course (and there is no secret about it), of Russian inspiration.

Most important of these is the "All China Labour Federation."

It was difficult to get very accurate information regarding its membership. Some of the figures obtained from different sources differed widely.

According to the third Congress just held, there are 699 unions comprising 1,241,245 workers. The Council of Labour Unions of Canton—a kind of local Trades Council—comprises 96 unions including 180,000 members. The central committee of the All China Labour Federation consists of 35 members. They represent the following national unions and industrial centres : Seamen 3, Railwaymen 4, Miners 4, Shanghai 7, Hankow 6, Hupeh 1, Kwansi 1, Tienstin 1, Shangtung 1, Peking 1.

It was stated that all the leaders were workers, but it appeared that a great many organisers were of the student class. This is perfectly natural in the early days of Labour organisation among people who have had no opportunity of becoming literate.

The seamen, railwaymen and miners have national organisations.

Shanghai is the largest industrial centre in China. Canton is not really an industrial city in the modern sense. There are the handicraft workers, chiefly organised in guilds, but the most important sections are the seamen and the silk workers. The Canton Government has not had time to attend to labour legislation yet, but at the conference this year a resolution was passed urging the National Government promptly to announce measures for Labour protection. The time must come when the All China Labour Federation will turn from purely political anti-foreign activities to broader Labour organisation.

As elsewhere in China there are in Canton rival "yellow" or "not so red" unions containing about 10,000 members. These are chiefly transformed guilds.

The Canton Strike Committee, whose chief work is the enforcement of the boycott against British goods, which was declared as the result of the shooting of Chinese men and women last year, is subordinate to the All China Labour Federation. Its official title is the "Hongkong-Canton Strike Committee of the All China Labour Federation." It consists of thirteen members, and Sou Chiu Ging is the chairman. He is also the chairman of the All China Labour Federation and of the Seamen's Union, in which

capacity he has led many strikes at Hong-kong. The Committee contains representatives of the Hong-kong stevedores, longshoremen, transport workers, servants and also the workers on Shameen, the Foreign Concession.

There is great discipline among the strikers. Delegate meetings, about 600 strong, are held three times a week. No Chinese can leave Canton for Hong-kong without a pass from the Strike Committee. No incoming vessel can unload at Canton without the permission of the Strike Committee which has established a kind of Customs inspection without a tariff. Outside the office of the Strike Committee is a large marquee where auctions of contraband, *i.e.*, British goods, are held. The place is filled with sacks and bags of rice and millet, tins of petrol and other goods confiscated by the pickets.

Almost as important as the Labour Federation is the "Canton Federation of Peasants' Unions." The influence of this organisation is more or less confined to Kwangtung and Kwangsi. There are sixty-six districts comprising 60,000 members.

Another activity at Canton is the organisation of women. The condition of Chinese women is very bad. They have many children. Frequently Chinese women in the south can be seen doing hard work with small babies strapped on their backs. Especially does one see them rowing large heavy boats both at Hongkong and Canton in this fashion. The boat women on the Pearl River are famous. Unfortunately the women's organisation is very short of funds and the terrible condition of the women who work both in the silk filatures and on the river has not yet been touched. A beginning is, however, now being made with the formation of groups and circles for propaganda work.

Finally, there is Whampoa, the military academy, on an island of that name situated about an hour's run by motor boat from Canton. When I visited Whampoa with General Chiang Kai Shih, last May, there were 2,800 military students at the academy. They are well disciplined and the barracks were clean and orderly. Political training is, as might be imagined, an important part of the curriculum. It is useless to deny that force is the governing factor in China to-day and unfortunately much energy has to be expended in putting down banditry and piracy.

Canton folks say that much of the banditry in their area is conceived in Hong-kong. Every time that there is disorder in Canton, rents go up in Hong-kong, because rich Chinese go there to seek shelter and deposit their money. The Canton dollar depreciates, the Hong-kong dollar appreciates. The Hong-kong merchants can buy more Canton goods. It is not, therefore, a matter for surprise if some persons in Hong-kong should, as is generally alleged, take a friendly interest in the continuance of banditry in Kwangtung.

The Canton Government is as much the Government of China as are the militarists Sun Chun-fang, Wu Pei Fu and Chang Tso-lin. Certainly it represents the National aspirations of new China as do none of these three nor their puppets who may temporarily hold the reins of government in Peking. But the surplus of the foreign controlled customs, including that from Kwangtung, nevertheless goes to Peking, often to be used against Canton in munitions and men.

The time is coming when the play-acting at Peking will have to cease. But whilst Canton is the government of China as much as, if not more than, Peking, it is unlikely that the Foreign Powers can reasonably yet recognise it as such. What certainly should be done is that the customs surplus of the two Kwangs district should be given to the Canton Government pending the granting of tariff autonomy.

One day Canton may be the capital of China. By the time that these notes appear in print, the Hong-kong-Canton strike negotiations will have begun and will even perhaps have ended. Both sides now desire a settlement. The building up of Whampoa as a rival port to "kill" Hong-kong is now no longer a part of the programme of the Canton Government.

Democracies throughout the world must follow events in South China closely and raise their voice against any attempt to overthrow the Canton Government with the aid of Wu Pei Fu or any other opponent.

Left to develop and to consolidate its position, Canton offers one of the best hopes for China. Students trained at Kwangtung University and Whampoa Military Academy may one day be the leaders of a great democratic and united China.

SECRET SERVICE AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

By HAROLD GRENFELL

OUR present Parliamentary vote for " Secret Services " is nearly ten times greater than its pre-War figure. Before 1914 the greater part of the comparatively small sum voted (£40,000) was spent upon acquiring information *abroad* of supposed naval or military interest. At the present time almost the whole of a far larger amount is used for purposes of political spying *at home*, thus pretty plainly showing which, by the ruling powers, is considered the more important " Front."

It is generally admitted that the Special Branch of Scotland Yard has been formed expressly to " follow " the spread of so-called Revolutionary thought in this country. Consequently, there can be no doubt but that Secret Service funds are being employed in maintaining an army of agents, abroad and at home, whose duty is to provide information for use against the new " National Peril " that now, in ministerial minds, appears to take the place of the former " German Danger " ; and this altered direction of the activities of the State Spy Service faithfully reflects the change in the outlook and obsession of the ruling class. The increase in amount of money provided may, therefore, fairly be taken as recognition of the relative strength and importance of the two enemies, and lends weight to the opinion of many of those who since 1914 have had special opportunities for observation, that your conscious Capitalist's fear of his fellow countrymen workers is far more deeply rooted than any that ever he lately and loudly professed against the " Hun."

When, too, one remembers that the inevitable offspring of fear is hatred, it becomes easier to understand the main reason against any possibility of reconciliation, or for any kind of co-operation, between convinced adherents of the two schools of political thought, whose fundamental antagonism is the cause of that overwhelming pre-occupation which now worries the Cabinet of every

“ democratically ” governed country throughout the two hemispheres.

However, when considering the present use of the Secret Service, involving the employment of special “ Political Police,” working in close touch with, indeed including within its ranks, Government spies, we should not forget (although most of us, happily, have done so) that this unpleasant institution is no novelty in our history. One has but to turn back to records of the disturbed times of the Napoleonic war, when Pitt’s harsh repressive legislation was aimed at the subversive ideas let loose by the French Revolution, or to those of the years, terrible to English workers, that followed Waterloo and Peterloo, to find many instances of the “ Secret Service ” of those days.

No political trial (and these were not few) took place without the assistance of spies, informers, agents-provocateurs, whether the accused were country labourers accustomed to starve on 8s. a week, or the more educated townsmen of the Cato Street “ Conspiracy.” Consequently, the unreliability and lying habits of these base tools, the evil effects of and dangers arising from their employ, are all handy for the information of our present rulers, who must, therefore, very well know that “ evidence ” sworn to and provided by spies in 1925 is not likely to be any more trustworthy than that of their fore-runners of 1824. For, one inevitable and fatal weakness of any “ Secret Political Police ” system is its own inherent tendency to corruption.

History teems with examples in support of this statement. Leaving out the classical instance of the “ Holy Inquisition,” although this is particularly applicable, since the political motive that brought it into being is precisely the same as that which now underlies the crusade against Communism (just as the “ League of Nations ” is merely the twentieth century form of the “ Holy Alliance ”), Napoleon’s organisation under Fouché, the Austrian institutions in Italy, the “ Okhrana ” of all the Romanovs since Peter, the “ Black and Tan ” infamy in Ireland, are all sufficiently recent, and sufficiently mal-odorous, reminders of its truth.

And this, not because of any extra-national wickedness in “ foreigners,” but solely due to the foul conditions of the institution itself. Therefore, let no one suppose that our present organisa-

tion is immune from the taint of corruption merely because it is "British." The character and moral sense of hired spies are not, *a priori*, of a specially high order. The average man's healthy loathing for their ugly business is plentiful proof of this fact.

Their temptations and opportunities for dishonestly making money are many and varied ; the risks of discovery, exposure, or prosecution practically do not exist. In these circumstances it is impossible that a sensible proportion of these "agents" do not rapidly become venal and entirely untrustworthy. Whilst our Government spies, up to 1914, were mostly used for the work of trying to get hold of German naval and military secrets, usually improvements in material and technique, their activity had at least some connection with the objective world, and it was possible to judge of their value, intelligence, or truthfulness by relation to subsequently known facts. But, with their present day employment in a realm of purest subjectivity, that of making reports upon the supposed opinions, sayings, associations and sympathies of suspected "Revolutionaries," there can be no bounds to the sweep of a dishonest "agent's" imagination or inventive faculties, and no reliable means, even given the desire, for his superiors to acquire a real estimation of his trustworthiness.

And, this being the case, once Ministers begin to rely and take action (as we see that they do) upon reports so furnished, the doors are open wide to every abuse, and the evil machine rapidly tends to become independent of its masters, through this exercise of irresponsible power.

This consideration, one may confidently assert, provides the real explanation of the notorious "Zinoviev Letter" scandal. The original "document" was forged, no doubt, some time before, and without thought of the 1924 Election, either as part of the general attack upon the Government that began so soon as MacDonald was forced by the pressure of the Labour Movement into signing the dropped Anglo-Russian Treaty, or merely as a means to show how useful, efficient and indispensable is our present Secret Service. In either case, it is likely that the "finders" of the famous "Letter" would have been well paid for their discovery ; but, clearly, so soon as the General Election appeared in sight, they could realise that they had got hold of a veritable gold-mine.

And, when it came to an inquiry, it is now quite obvious that the Committee set up by MacDonald was simply not allowed to probe too deeply into the "Letter's" origins. The only reasonable explanation of this Committee's failure to discover the truth is the supposition that the Secret Service, relying upon the support of the reactionary Press and other organisations hostile to Labour, felt itself sufficiently powerful to make use of sabotage. Because, on a supposition that your Secret Service is reliable, and loyal to whatever Government happens to be in office, it is clear that a short process of research by elimination must soon have produced the individual who provided the document from which was made the "typed copy" that came into the Foreign Office. And further examination behind this person could hardly have failed to establish whence the "document," if any, had been received, and the reason why no original, that could be shown, was in existence.

But Mr. Baldwin also set up his own Committee of Enquiry. Now, in this case, the members being Conservative Ministers, and assuming, as we must, that these desired to reach the truth of the mystery, "sabotage" tactics would have been too risky a proceeding, since it is a matter of common knowledge that the Tory party has more intimate sympathies for, and is in closer relation with, the Secret Service than the other political organisations, and consequently may be expected to know correspondingly more about the inner details of its working. It, therefore, may be taken for granted that the present Cabinet is perfectly aware of the whole truth of the origin of the "Zinoviev Letter," and equally we may be sure that it will continue to keep this information to itself.

The moral that Labour can draw from this account is that MacDonald having omitted, or failed, to destroy the "Secret Service," the latter quickly mastered and, in the end, destroyed him; and did so with greater zest and energy, since temperamentally it is bound to side with the enemies of the Movement of which MacDonald is titular leader.

It is a well-known fact that political Secret Services and political police organisations consist, in overwhelming proportion, of men belonging to the most extreme and ignorant sections of reactionary obscurantist opinion; and, at the present moment, of course, contain a large element of the flotsam and jetsam left

rotting upon our shores by the moral backwash of the "Great War." In our own country and under our present system, such men inevitably are bitter enemies of the workers and their aspirations, even before taking on the dirty job of spying upon them. But, as their work is both lazy and lucrative, and because all political police institutions must become corrupt and callous owing to the infected medium in which they work, they feel no aversion from helping to support the crimes and cruelties inseparable from the exercise of political reaction's oppressive and repressive activities. There is, therefore, no reason whatever to delude ourselves with the idea that the organisations in this country are cleaner than those abroad, that, in fact, our own branch of it is honest, loyal, upright, not venal nor cruel, merely because it happens to be British.

And because of all this, it may perhaps be permitted to ask what was the actual reason working in the mind of MacDonald, his attitude as Prime Minister towards the Labour Movement, for not having destroyed, or at least broken, the power for evil of a political instrument whose admitted object of existence is to work against the spread of the ideas and activities of this Movement? He could have abolished it, had he chosen, by one stroke of an administrative pen, and without fear or compunction; for, in this case at any rate, he would have had all decent public opinion with him, irrespective of political party, both within and without Parliament.

It is little consolation for Socialists to reflect that MacDonald's failure to deal with the Secret Service brought about his own downfall and discredited his own reputation, because on this occasion the institution justified its existence, twice over, in official eyes, and thereby has acquired an even greater hold on the esteem and appreciation of present Ministers. On the contrary, what we have now more reason to expect is that Secret Service spies already are preparing some new, equally dramatic, and equally mendacious, "exposure," against the next crisis that may arise fraught with real importance to the Labour Movement.

Chosen extracts from the material carried off by the Special Branch officers from the Communist Party's headquarters in King Street last October, have been prepared for issue as a "White Paper" or official document, to affect the public mind with

the idea of Communist wickedness, and so, no doubt, to help to prejudice the case against the miners.

But, with the recollection in its mind of the recent "Zinoviev Letter" forgery, which so powerfully helped to place the present Government in power, coupled with the fact that when the Special Branch search premises the elementary public safeguard of giving receipts for the documents carried off, or of requiring these originals to be signed or initialed by a representative of the party raided, is never carried out, the intelligent section of the public is not likely to attach great credit or importance to any such publication. It is, indeed, a scandal, opening doors to their widest possibilities—nay, certainties—of fraud and deception by "political police agents," that this primary precaution for the safety of the individual (and of the public!) is not insisted upon by the guardians of our judicial system. The "liberty of the subject" is pure mockery so long as the present practice prevails, and each one of us, at any moment, is at the mercy of police spies, who, once they have obtained a search warrant, can "plant" as many compromising documents upon our premises as they please.

This may seem strong language to some, but most of us who have taken any active interest in Russian affairs since the end of the war can supply one or two personal instances of the baseness and corruption with which this detestable system has already affected British "agents."

Meanwhile, British workers will do well, through their various political and industrial organisations, to force from their Parliamentary leaders an unequivocal undertaking to sweep away the whole apparatus of "Secret Service" at the earliest opportunity, and an open acknowledgment that they realise the fact of its existence as the conscious and willing tool of Labour's enemies.

Moreover, they should refuse for one moment to listen to any specious argument for its retention, even in modified form, after Labour's return to political power, as a weapon of defence against possible "unconstitutional" activities of their political enemies; remembering that untrustworthy reports, false evidence, and unjust (and unjustifiable) prosecutions, are unavoidable accompaniments of any such system, which can but serve to prejudice and discredit any administration.

The World of Labour

	PAGE
FINLAND : Trade Union Congress	498
NORWAY : General Lock-out	498
LABOUR AND SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL : Proposed Unity Conference	499
JAPAN : Workers' and Peasants' Party	500

FINLAND

Trade Union Congress

THE Annual Congress of the Finnish Trade Unions took place at Helsingfors from May 3 to 8. There were seventy-five delegates present, of which seventeen were reported to be Social-Democrats (see *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, April, 1926, p. 249). Most of the business was concerned with the questions brought forward by this section, which has since declared its intention of working for the realisation of its views within the Federation. Thus the threatened split has not occurred.

After much discussion, the decision previously taken to affiliate to the R.I.L.U. was formally rescinded, and it was decided to affiliate to neither International. The Congress declared itself in favour of an international conference to discuss a united Trade Union International, and declared its support of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

The new National Committee was empowered to send delegates to the International Labour Conference at Geneva.

A motion on "political neutrality" was carried, which forbids any union or branch to affiliate to a political party, or to support it financially, or to carry out work which "properly belongs to political parties."

Finally, the National Committee was elected, consisting of thirty members, with the result that it included ten Social-Democrats, one of whom was appointed chairman.

NORWAY

General Lock-Out

THERE is to be observed in Norway a typical "crisis of stabilisation," with the familiar concomitants of reduction of the working-class standard of living and unemployment and acute class-struggle. The method adopted has been deflation of the currency. During the later half of 1925 the krone fell from 27.5 to 23.5 to the £, and this appreciation has since continued, though more slowly. Prices fell to a certain extent, and

unemployment increased, and in the spring approached a total of 50,000, roughly 25 per cent. of the whole working class.

The conclusion of new collective agreements in several industries at the end of March gave opportunity for an attack on wages, which was generally taken up. The sawmill and chemical workers agreed to 10s. reductions. The demands in other industries were greater, however, and included the reduction of holidays. No agreement could be reached, and the disputes went before the State Arbitration Court, which gave a decision which left hours and holidays unchanged, but proposed reductions of wages in the building trade by 12 per cent., in mining 14 per cent., and in the metal, textile and leather industries, 17 per cent. Further, new agreements were to be concluded in August in accordance with the cost-of-living figures. The employers regard the decision as satisfactory, and most of the Trade Union leaders advised acceptance. The voting of the workers, however, showed a two-thirds majority against.

Accordingly a lock-out in the industries concerned began on April 24. About 35,000 workers were at once affected, and the number increased during the subsequent weeks. The workers' position was strengthened by the inclusion of the shipping industry in the dispute, and by the agreement existing among the Scandinavian Trade Unions for mutual support. It was disastrously weakened however, by the unemployment, which had been heavy for months past, and the aggressive behaviour of the State. Accordingly, when the Arbitration Court met after a month, agreement was soon reached upon the basis of the new recommendations. These involved practically all the terms of its original findings except that providing for further adjustments of wages in August. These were to be postponed to February, 1927. The agreement was concluded on June 9, when the lock-out came to an end.

LABOUR AND SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

Proposed Unity Commission

At a meeting of the Executive of the Labour and Socialist International at Zurich on April 11, Mr. Brockway, for the I.L.P., moved the following resolution :—

That in view of the urgent need of working class solidarity against Capitalist and Imperialist reaction and the menace of Fascism in Europe, the Executive of the Labour and Socialist International should suggest a joint conference to the Executive of the Third International with the object of exploring the possibilities of the formation of an all-inclusive International.

The reasons given officially by the I.L.P. for putting forward this proposal were as follows :—

- (1) The desirability of solidarity against capitalist reaction.
- (2) The Communist Party of Russia has repeatedly shown its readiness to modify its policy in accordance with changed circumstances, e.g., N.E.P. The "thesis" of the Third International was adopted under the influence of the revolutionary psychology of the After-War period. The "realism" of the

Communist Party should face the changed circumstances and recognise that "armed revolution" is not the "inevitable" method.

(3) Tomsy's recent speech on Trade Union Unity shows a modification in attitude on the Industrial side of the International.

(4) Zinovief and the extremist leaders of the Third International have recently lost influence in Russia.

(5) There have been signs of a modification of Communist policy in many European countries and in increasing tendency to concentrate upon immediate issues, instead of the "armed revolution."

(6) British Communists have recently indicated that their conception of "armed revolution" is not a minority armed rising, but action by a Socialist Government to suppress any resistance by the possessing classes.

(7) It is imperative to bridge the gulf between Russia and the rest of Europe. Her isolated position is very dangerous. Just as it is important to bring her within the comity of nations, so it is important to bring her in close contact with the general labour and Socialist movement.

(8) Action on behalf of the Socialist prisoners in Russia and in support of political freedom there is likely to be more successful through consultation than by criticism hurled across division.

(9) It would clarify the position to get the Third International to declare its attitude. If insistence upon the "inevitability" of armed revolution and the necessity of preparing for it is maintained, the democratic parties would be in a stronger position to resist Communist affiliation nationally.

The I.L.P. suggested that the proposed conference should be unconditional, and that the L.S.I. should voice the questions of

(1) the view that armed conflict is inevitable; (2) the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) Communist views on the use of Parliamentary action; (4) the imprisonment of Social-Democrats, &c., in Russia; (5) the "disintegrating effect of Communist policies within the political and industrial movements in practically every country."

The proposal of the I.L.P. was further that the "basis for the formation of an all-inclusive International should be freedom of affiliated sections to act according to the particular political, social and economic circumstances which they have to face."

The resolution, which was opposed by Mr. Cramp for the British Labour Party, was lost by 247 votes to 3.

JAPAN

The Workers' and Peasants' Party in Japan

JAPAN has passed through a long, protracted economic crisis which started with the financial crisis of March, 1920, and which was followed by an industrial crisis. In addition there came the disastrous earthquake and fire in September, 1923, which destroyed financial organs together with the wealth and industries of Tokio and Yokohama, amounting to over five milliard yen. This disastrous blow to the economic life of the country set back its financial and economic recovery for several years. This is shown by the continued adverse balance of Japan's foreign trade. In 1923 imports exceeded exports by 534 million yen, in 1924 by 646 million yen; but in

1925 the unfavourable trade balance had decreased to 260 million yen as a result of the depreciation in the value of the yen. In the meantime, however, the yen has again risen, which will reduce the possibilities of export.

All the parliamentary parties are afraid of the new elections under the new election law, according to which the number of the electors is increased from three millions to twelve millions, which means that the workers and peasants who previously had no vote will now exercise the franchise.

The present members of Parliament who were returned by means of election bribery and corrupt election campaigns have very little chance of being re-elected. Nevertheless they wish to cling to power under all circumstances. While fighting among themselves, these corrupt parties have formed a solid united front against the workers and peasants, and all of them voted for the laws for the suppression of the workers and peasants. Under such circumstances the workers and peasants are awakening to the necessity of defending themselves. In addition to their trade unions they have formed the Workers' and Peasants' Party (Rodo Nomin To).

This Workers' and Peasants' Party was preceded some months ago by the Peasants' and Workers' Party (Nomin Rodo To). The latter party, however, had a very short life, namely, three hours. It was suppressed by the Government under article 8 of the Public Peace Police Law. The new Party was formed on March 5, 1926. In the Organisation Committee of the old Party centrist unions were more strongly represented along with Left Wing sympathisers. But in the new party the Right and Centre have an absolute majority.

On March 5 there was held the inauguration conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party, at which it was decided:

(1) The Workers' and Peasants' Party aims at emancipating the proletarian class, both politically, in accordance with the existing conditions of the country.

(2) The Workers' and Peasants' Party aims at reforming by legal means: the existing system regarding land, industry and distribution of wealth.

(3) The Workers' and Peasants' Party aims at supplanting bourgeois parties which represent the interests of the privileged class and reforming fundamentally the present Parliament.

The programme of the Party contain eighteen points, among them being: abolition of all anti-proletarian laws and all laws against colonial people; freedom for Press, speech and organisation, and the right to strike; reduction of armaments and reform of the military system; abolition of customs tariffs and taxes on articles of consumption and of daily necessity, and introduction of high progressive taxation on property; people's diplomacy; establishment of right to cultivate land; minimum wages; prohibition of night work and work in dangerous trades for women and children; revision of factory, mines and seamen's laws, &c.; abolition of all measures restricting women in the selection of their occupation; insurance against unemployment, sickness and accidents, &c.

The Party rules provide for individual membership and also collective affiliation. In regard to the membership qualification two proposals were submitted. The first proposal provided for the exclusion of all members of four Left organisations, until the party membership amounted to over 200,000. The second proposal provided for the acceptance of members by local organisations, and in cases of dispute the decision to rest with the Executive. The second proposal was adopted by one vote which constituted a success for the Left Wing.

The Party contribution is sixty sen, of which the half goes to the Central Executive Committee and the other half to the local organisation.

On April 30 there commenced the formation of local groups, which is proceeding with great success. As all the existing parties are deeply compromised by the cases of corruption which have led to the most scandalous scenes in Parliament in the last few days, the new Party finds a favourable soil. The growth of the Workers' and Peasants' Party is frightening the Government and the capitalists, and the Government has therefore already declared in the Press that, if the Communist elements in the Party gain the upper hand, the Government will suppress it.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE WORKERS' THEATRE.

The New Spirit in the European Theatre : 1920-1924. By Huntly Carter. Benn. 25s.

The Drama in Adult Education. Adult Education Committee Report No. 6. Stationery Office. 1s.

THE Revolt in the theatre is growing. Dissatisfaction with the old commercial professional theatre is widespread : and in recent years a remarkable number of experimental movements towards a new theatre have developed in England. These movements cover a wide range from liberal philanthropic types to the movement for an independent workers' theatre which is expressed by Rutland Boughton and Huntly Carter. Through all can be discerned a revolt against the suppression of life by existing social conditions and the existing theatre.

But what is to be the character of the new theatre ? On this there is no agreement ; and discussion rages.

The two books here selected for review may serve as signposts of the new movement in the theatre.

The Government Committee Report is evidence that the State machine has considered the new developing social movement of sufficient importance for a Committee of typical W.E.A. leaders to be set the task of reporting how to guide the movement in safe channels.

The revolutionary outlook of the pioneers in the world of the theatre is expressed in the book of Huntly Carter, whose work is known to **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** readers. A review of Huntly Carter's book has already appeared in this journal : but this review, in raising certain questions of criticism, did not give any picture of the actual achievement of Huntly Carter's work, nor did it give any positive outlook on the question of the theatre. It may, therefore, still be of value to return to the question.

* * * *

The theatre suffers heavily under the bourgeois regime. Other arts, like painting and poetry, still struggle on under capitalism, though in a very consumptive condition, fighting for air in odd corners and groups, growing more and more detached from life, confined in range and turned in upon the individual, and searching desperately for new sources of inspiration. But the theatre depends for its existence on a great collective life and feeling, and Capitalism kills and stifles all collective life. All that survives is a prostitution of the theatre for corrupt propaganda, of the same type as the capitalist Press, under the control of business magnates for making profits. Nothing else is allowed on a large scale under capitalism. The only alternative is the tiny handful of attempts of coteries of individual intellectuals, divorced from mass life and expressing only their own peculiarities, and starved continually for lack of funds.

The trustification of the theatre, the complete transformation of the theatre into an industry for making dividends, in which human emotions are exploited simply on the basis of what is most cheaply and easily exploitable,

is powerfully exposed (with special attention to the war theatre) by Huntly Carter : as, indeed, it was exposed by Wagner in his day, and the process has gone very much further since. Monster rents, interlocking syndicates (linked up through their directors with allied industries of dressmaking, refreshments, &c.), extravagant productions, star salaries, multiple touring companies, &c., have made the theatre, like the Press, completely a monopoly of big capital, with autocratic control in the hands of a few millionaires. The few older manifestations, which had still some contact with the life of the people—like the old “barnstormers,” melodramas, local low comedians and circuses—have vanished more and more completely before the devouring advance of the trust and the standardised production to uniform pattern in every capitalist country in the world.

The abdication of the State in the sphere of the theatre is seen at its most complete in those countries where capitalism is strongest and most anarchic, England and America, where the whole range of drama is left entirely in the hands of private speculators. The State only intervenes as Censor, to prevent the production of social and popular plays which might arouse genuine feeling and endanger class-rule (*e.g.*, Hauptmann’s “Weavers,” &c.).

The trust theatre aims, not at drawing out the emotion and expression of the audience, but at stupefying, deadening and doping. A gulf is drawn between the illuminated stage and the vast auditorium of atomised individuals, whose only function is to pay for their tickets and sit to the end, with chocolates (at a profit) to keep them quiet. No powerful feeling can be permitted ; everything must preferably be “light.” No living, interesting subjects or issues are permitted ; only the most stale subjects and archaic, reactionary sentiments are permitted, centring round patriotism, the home, the career, romantic love and so forth, and giving place increasingly to dumb spectacle. Like all capitalist institutions, the capitalist theatre is built on the passivity of the masses. Its most developed expression is the music hall, which seeks to bemuse the spectators with a jumble of contradictory sensations in rapid succession.

It is sometimes said that the productions of the trust theatre represent “What the Public Wants” ; and under this impression many artists and would-be innovators of the theatre, instead of coming out into the open to fight, shrink into themselves and their coteries. But this conception is completely false. As in the case of the capitalist Press, the catchword “What the Public Wants” is foul hypocrisy. The heavy capital expenditure, as well as organising facilities, required for large-scale theatrical production under present conditions, rule out any commensurable alternative to what the trust magnates choose to produce. Therefore the pretence of “competition” is humbug. As in all capitalist institutions, the masses have to adapt themselves to what is provided and make the best of it. But this no more means that existing theatrical productions represent “What the Public Wants,” than that stuffy, stinking houses, shoddy clothes or adulterated food and drink represent “What the Public Wants.” Between a less sumptuous and more sumptuous spectacular production of the same type, the public, not being fools, will choose the more sumptuous. But this does not mean that powerful mass drama, reflecting the real emotions and feelings of the people, and arising

out of their struggle, would not out-draw in a moment the tedious drivel of the existing stage. Only such production would require the power and resources of the workers' state. If by a miracle any approach to such drama were to appear under existing conditions, it would be banned at once by the capitalist state as incompatible with its existence. The Russian revolutionary film, "The Cruiser Potemkin" (the story of the mutiny in the Black Sea Fleet in 1905), which has been acclaimed by all the art critics—including, incidentally, the critic of the *Morning Post*, as also by the Fascist Douglas Fairbanks—as artistically the finest film yet produced, was shown for a few weeks in Germany and at once drew crowds and queues without precedent. It has now been banned by the German Government, and will certainly not be seen in England.

* * *

The hypocrisy of the capitalist state in relation to the theatre is well illustrated by the Government Committee Report. This Government Committee of amiable philanthropists is unable and afraid to touch the real questions of the theatre. They say :—

(1) The professional theatre organised on a commercial basis is a subject with which we are unable to deal (p. 200.).

(2) We considered from the first that the question of a national theatre and municipal theatres involved so many difficult issues, and might lead to so much controversy, that we could not attempt to consider them within the limits of this Report (p. 214.).

Thus the two basic questions of the theatre, (1) the trust theatre as it is, and (2) the question of a national theatre are expressly excluded from their view. All that remains for them is to enumerate a series of philanthropic and other experiments that are taking place, and patronisingly refer to their "educational value" provided they keep clear of "propaganda" (p. 160.).

The detailed exposure of the trust theatre in Huntly Carter's book is a very valuable piece of work, although he confines himself to the more limited theme of the war and post-war conquest of the theatre by the theatrical "octopi," and their exploitation of cheap emotion for profit, and does not go into the more basic questions of the whole position of the theatre in capitalist society. The revolutionary conception which he reaches in the latter portion of his book appears as not yet completely worked out, and his war-time notes of the first part of the book bear the appearance sometimes of having been written at an earlier period, and containing conceptions which he would probably no longer hold. Thus he criticises the war-time theatre from the position that the existing capitalist state (the organ of the trusts) should have saved the theatre from the trusts and taken it over under the Ministry of Propaganda to "ennoble" the "spiritual" purpose of the imperialist war (which was simply a slaughterous, wasteful activity of the trusts that any "ennobling" could only make smell worse). Here it is clear that the conception of a true "national" or social theatre to which he is working, *i.e.*, representing the masses of the nation, is appearing in an early uncritical form. He says :—

These trusts had acquired size and power through the neglect of the independent bodies to combine and organise in opposition to them, and the English one owing to the neglect of the Government to take over the theatre

by special legislation and to organise it in the highest interest of the public in war-time (p. 163).

The nation was not getting the assistance it deserved from its artists by systematically mixing them with every public undertaking, and employing them to appeal to the best instincts by dexterously throwing over many of the home activities a fine flavour of noble purpose. . . This fight was left to one or two bodies of enthusiasts like the "Fight For Right" organisation, that sought to make known the spiritual consequences of the war, and to rouse men and women to take advantage of the spiritual advantages of the struggle. They saw the danger of England sinking so low in the mire of degrading material issues that many years would be required for its recovery (p. 54).

These traces of old confusions are a blemish that weaken the strength of his critical case ; nevertheless his exhaustive and documented exposure of the actual workings of the trust theatre during and after the war constitute a strong piece of revolutionary propaganda.



In reaction against the Capitalist Theatre, a whole series of schools of Reformers have arisen. These reformers have seen that the situation of the theatre was sick, but did not concern themselves deeply with the social causes of that sickness, nor with the necessary social conditions of a living theatre. They have sought to find a remedy for the theatre from inside the theatre itself. Some have sought to change the subject-matter of plays or the dramatic method, others the production or acting, others the technique, architecture or scenery, others to revive old plays from past ages. There has been the literary school, who have sought to assimilate the drama to literature, introducing the discussion of ideas, social institutions, politics, ethics, philosophy : representatives of this have been Ibsen, Shaw, Strindberg, Brieux, Galsworthy. Others again have sought to find the way forward by innovations in technique, in the structure of the stage and theatre, in scenery and setting, in crowd effects or in mingling of actors and audience : such have been Reinhardt, Gordon Craig, William Poel, Gémier or Marinetti. Others have sought to introduce mysticism, symbolism or religion, as with Yeats, Maeterlinck, Claudel or Toller. Some, like Craig, have grown so hopeless of the existing theatre and the possibility of its reform that they have wanted to destroy it and replace it by marionettes.

But all these schools of Reformers, despite the important results they have achieved in many directions, could not solve the problem of the theatre, because they could not get down to the root of it. They could not affect the main stream of the existing trust theatre, which held society, the public and the acting profession in its grip. Compared with this, all their combined work was no more than a trickle, lacking the conditions of vital relationship of authors, actors and audience which alone makes great drama possible. Most of the new, experimental work had to be performed with great difficulty through small, independent, advanced theatres or play-producing societies, or occasionally in a few European countries with a limited State subsidy or through the capricious support of some rich man. The new movements and societies were always precarious for lack of funds and soon vanishing, or, if successful, usually degenerating in a few years into conventional business con-

cerns. The attempts of the Reformers wilted under the conditions of capitalist society. Both in London and Paris repeated attempts to found and maintain a single modern artistic or experimental theatre have been vain. Occasionally, some isolated new idea or author or play would be taken up by the business managers, but without representing any real change. Thus Shaw, now that his ideas are obsolete in his old plays or conservative and religious in his new, is set up on a pedestal with Shakespeare; and the more reactionary tendencies of Central European expressionism and symbolism, as with Toller and Capek, are taken up and made a vogue. But the main trend of the business theatre is completely unaffected.

This isolation and impotence of the Reformers reacts harmfully upon their work. Cut off from the mass, they have no genuine independent basis of their own from which to challenge capitalism. Therefore, their work turns in on itself, and becomes confined to the limited range of the individual intellectual, his doubts, fears, hopes, religions, scepticisms and despairs; the outlook is the narrow outlook of the "educated" classes; the emotional content weak and watery; the whole appeal limited. Instead of breaking the limits of the capitalist theatre, the "advanced theatre" becomes more exclusive, esoteric and cut off from the people; it even seeks to make a virtue of necessity and forms "300 societies" and the like.

Another group of Reformers, seeing the futility of this and the necessity of living popular contact, tries to break an entirely different path. They seek to make contact with "the people," to "bring the drama to the people." These are the democratisers. These have accomplished a tremendous volume of work, especially in Germany (the "Peoples' Theatres"), but also in England (the "Old Vic.," various civic and repertory theatres, the Arts League of Service, Lena Ashwell Players, &c.). All these testify to the ready audience, once the paralysing influence of the bourgeois stalls is left behind, for Shakespeare and first-class drama. But the aim of the democratisers is in fact limited. They seek to bring a ready-made "theatre" to "the people," and their distinctive character is the aim to bring "good" drama within reach of cheap prices. It is impossible to escape the atmosphere of liberal philanthropy that runs through the greater part of this work. The Government Committee, which is of course in full (verbal) sympathy with the democratisers, so long as there is no danger of drawing on public funds, defines their conception of a "People's Theatre" as—

to present the great masterpieces of our language at prices which will bring them within reach of the very poor, in fact to found a People's Theatre (p. 26).

Along with this process goes the formation of many types of amateur societies, some of which achieve important pioneering work, but most of which, even where extending to the workers, are dominated by bourgeois liberal, clerical and charitable organisers, and also confine themselves to the aim of bringing "good drama" to "the people."

The new theatre of the future is not likely to arise from the efforts of the democratisers. They have seized on an all-important truth in discovering that a genuine social basis is an essential condition for any new theatre that is to live, but they have not discovered that new social basis, nor could they owing to the limitations from which they start. To them "the people" is still the un-

differentiated mass under capitalism, and in particular "the very poor," to whom they are the bringers of light and culture ; the "community" that is to be the new social basis of the theatre is to consist of the mixture of classes under capitalism. They still start from the essential liberal conception that the mixture of classes under capitalism can provide the basis of a genuine social, spiritual and cultural community. The whole conception is false. Where the classes are mixed under capitalism, there neither unity nor sincerity is possible, but only snobbery, philanthropy and pseudo-culture. The new theatre is not a ready-made good thing to be brought to the people by the harbingers of culture ; on the contrary capitalism and its representatives are incapable of producing it, or any theatre, and only try to pass off as their own the products of past ages ; the real new theatre can only come from the people, from their struggle and from their power. As Huntly Carter declares :—

It should be said that although this sort of "Art for the People" rests on good intentions, it is not altogether a good thing. What is needed is "Art and Drama by the People" themselves, and not by deputies (p. 114).

And again—

We are told that the theatre must regenerate the workers. This is a mistake. The workers are to be liberated to freest expression by the theatre (p. 275).

In other words, the working class is and can be the only social basis and creative force of the new theatre, which shall replace the capitalist theatre. Until the reformers recognise this, they can only run to seed. This is the revolutionary conception of the theatre, which is sharply marked off from that of the reformers.

* * * *

The revolutionary conception of the theatre sees in the social conditions of capitalism the causes of the sickness of the theatre under capitalism. Only the breaking of the bonds which divide men into exploiters and exploited can finally create the community in which the theatre can exist. Only the working-class power can smash the rule of the trust theatre, and mobilise the necessary resources, theatrical equipment, buildings, authors, plays, producers, as well as enlist the co-operation of the masses, so as to make new theatrical creation possible. The workers, by their conditions of life, by their solidarity and common struggle, are drawn together in common consciousness, thus alone realising the first condition of drama. Already the efforts of groups of workers towards theatrical expression, under however limited conditions, are the first nucleus of the future workers' theatre.

Huntly Carter, who reviews with very great wealth of detail and interest the work of the reformers in the European theatre during and since the war, finally adopts without hesitation the revolutionary view that the only force which can conquer the capitalist theatre and create a new theatre is the working class. This view is strongly reinforced by the experience of the Russian Workers' Revolution, which has not only carried forward theatrical development with unparalleled energy, extensiveness and freshness, but has also drawn in workers and peasants all over the country into the first beginnings of a mass theatrical movement. The account of these developments is one of the most interesting sections of the book.

At the same time he brings into review the recent developments that have taken place in England towards a "Labour" theatre. These are still in the majority of cases very far from any approach to a real working-class theatre. While recognising the value of every genuine effort and experiment, he criticises the policy pursued by such bodies as the I.L.P. or London Labour Drama Association, which do not attempt to base themselves on working-class independence, but in practice follow the liberal line of the Democratizers. He says :—

The workers themselves should be the interpreters of this movement. They should be left free as far as possible to dig out of themselves forms of art and drama which might serve the useful purpose of revitalising existing forms. But the present organisers of the workers' theatre movement do not seem to appreciate this point. Apparently, the I.L.P. are anxious to attract all comers and to imitate any methods. They seek to have headquarters in London, to federate with any and every drama society and music choir, and to follow in the footsteps of middle-class organisations (p. 274).

And on the question of outlook he says :—

The academic and conventional people of the theatre re-dream the old dream of the regeneration of the theatre. There may be something good in this. They form ever-widening groups, community and other. But it must be recognised that they seek inspiration from an exhausted subject and technique. It is true that the war has given them a consciousness of democracy; it has introduced them to a new theory of morals—namely, the unrighteousness of war—and it has touched them with realism or a sense of life values. Still, on the whole they are not on the main path of the revolution of the theatre. They are on the path of its evolution along conventional lines (p. 278).

The revolutionary conception which Huntly Carter reaches in the last portion of his book is naturally no more than a first approach to the question. Much remains to be filled in, and the transition to a revolutionary outlook is not yet complete, as many forms of expression betray. In particular, the question of the necessary path of development to the workers' theatre is hardly considered. He makes no distinction between what can be done in the present period, and what can only be done after the conquest of power, thus leaving the suggestion that the whole development to a workers' theatre might take place under capitalism by a sudden outburst of working-class theatrical effort. Such a suggestion would be not only false, but dangerous in the extreme, because it would at once make for a separation of the workers' theatre movement into a dilettante movement apart from the revolutionary struggle. It is obvious that the full development to a workers' theatre can only take place after the conquest of power, because only then are the objective conditions—control of economic resources—available, and the social consciousness of the workers widely awakened. But this does not mean that important first beginnings cannot be made in the present period, which would already have great value in assisting the struggle for power.

The problems of the present period, as well as many questions arising in connection with the conception of a workers' theatre, need attention in a future work. The groups that are already forming require assistance, both theoretical and practical. One of the most urgent questions is the question of repertoire. The existing so-called "advanced" plays are nearly all unusable

from a working-class point of view, and the new plays have not yet come, nor will they be likely to come for some time, as they can only arise, not individually, but from the development of the workers' theatre itself. The groups will have in the first place to develop their own plays from the stories of the workers' struggle, and particularly from vivid episodes in English working-class history or from current events. Fine sketches could already be developed from the stories of Chartism. Or the present miners' struggle could be presented episodically with powerful effect. In the same way sketches could be developed of the Empire, the coming of the exploiters, the struggle for freedom, thus arousing a living sense of international solidarity in all participating.

Again, there are questions of production, of stage, of scenery, of relations of actors to the audience, etc. Huntly Carter touches on many of the developments that are taking place in these directions, but does not bring his own view to bear on them in the majority of cases, being content to describe, without attempting to analyse them from a revolutionary standpoint. Here also is ground for future work for him and others interested to do.

All these are questions for subsequent working out. What is achieved in the present book is, in the first place, a survey of modern tendencies in the theatre, and in the second place, on the basis of this, the positive enunciation of the principle of a workers' theatre. On these lines, it is to be hoped that Huntly Carter and many others will carry out further work. For what is certain is that the workers' theatre has a future before it which will leave the existing capitalist theatre a mocked-at memory of the past, and that the working class and the working class alone can save the theatre.

R. P. D.

THE INDIAN PEASANT THROUGH OFFICIAL SPECTACLES

The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt. By Malcolm Lyall Darling, I.C.S. (Oxford University Press, 1925.)

THE peasant question in India, the problems bound up with the economic exploitation of the millions of agricultural workers and peasants that form the majority of the population of Great Britain's most profitable colony, will be of decisive importance in the near future. As in Russia, so in India, the last word will rest with the peasants. Naturally, therefore, one turns eagerly to the voluminous literature of British rule in India to learn something of the life of the peasant, of his economic position and social and political aspirations and of the trend of development during the last half century.

The result is a scanty harvest, but an illuminating revelation of British interests in India. The peasant practically does not come into the picture at all. Land revenue, famine, the economics of agriculture and the procedure of administration form the chief concerns of British officialdom, only a minute handful of books and most of fairly recent date, like Dr. Mann's study of life and labour in a Deccan village, are devoted to the questions we have mentioned. Among these the book here under review will rank as one of the foremost.

Superficially the book is extremely attractive. Though primarily a study of agricultural debt, it deals also with the life of the peasant. It has been compiled with great thoroughness in the collection of data. At the same time it is written in a very attractive style, and it is full of sidelights on village life. As the ex-Governor of the Punjab remarks in the preface, the Punjab peasant is a "fascinating subject."

Closer examination, however, reveals the limitations of even the most enlightened of bureaucrats. The Government official cannot transcend the limits of officialdom. Even the view of the peasant is from the outside and the description of the different races savours of the painstaking catalogue of a natural historian faced with new genera and species. What the peasant thinks is clearly not evidence, and it would never be guessed from this book that the Amritsar massacre took place in the Punjab, or that the Punjab was the centre of the Akali movement and of political and religious upheaval. There are actually two mentions of the Akali movement, one of which is interesting as suggesting its economic basis, the other referring to it as a "political danger of prosperity."

As a matter of fact in its main thesis the book can only be condemned as worthless and a typical example of either unconscious or deeply designed Government propaganda. The central thesis is to exhibit the blessings of British government, and to prove that improvidence and debt is the cause of Indian poverty and not landlordism or Government exploitation.

This attitude is expressed with all the benevolent insolence of the official. Thus we read :—

As in the Sungli villages, there was not a word of gratitude to Government. On the contrary, "Look how Government has scored," they said, "the district used to pay one lakh of land revenue and now it pays a score." . . . The attitude is characteristic of the times and recalls the age at which the adolescent boy is tempted to deny all obligation to his parents."

A prominent part of the book is taken up with fervent praise of the benefits introduced by the Government canal irrigation schemes which have been the basis for the development of the three "canal colonies." The author has to admit, however, that "there was nothing new in the idea of irrigation by canal. The Mughals had done it in the Southern Punjab 300 years before." Still he delights to draw the contrast between the West Punjab, where "life is the immemorial life of India, primitive, isolated and fatalistic," and the canal colonies where—

it is the new life brought in by the Pax Britannica, prosperous, progressive and modern.

Some explanation of this admiration may be found in the following statement :—

In 1921-22, a normal year, a net profit of Rs. 169 lakhs or over £1,000,000 was made by Government upon the canals serving the three major colonies and representing a dividend of 22 per cent. upon the capital outlay." (P. 131.)

It is not unwarrantable to see in this also an explanation of the exaggerated importance ascribed to debt. The idea of the British Government is to capture the peasant from the clutches of the moneylender so that its own exploitation may be more efficiently conducted. Mr. Darling's especial "guru" is Malthus,

and he quotes him with relish from beginning to end of the book. In one place, in a footnote, he himself admits that :—

Since 1868 population has increased by 22 per cent. and cultivation by 50 per cent. (P. 232.)

Yet, true to officialdom, he never ceases to stress that *over-population* is the cause of Indian poverty. He quotes Malthus' words and declares, "the root cause of India's poverty could hardly be better expressed." He says, again :—

In spite of want population multiplies. In Europe we may talk of the survival of the fittest (though modern legislation is doing its best to prove it a lie), but in India it is time to speak of the survival of the least unfit. And so we arrive at the secret of India's poverty, over-population, improvidence and disease.

In his preface his admission of the role of Government apologist is equally clear. "If this book establishes anything," he says, "it is that such poverty as exists in the Punjab has little to do with the activities of Government." Hence a summary rejection of the idea that any part is played by the burden of land revenue (which, by the way, amounts to 47 million rupees per annum from a population of 20 millions, a higher amount per head than in any other province where the Zamindari system of land tenure prevails. Bengal with more than twice the population pays only 29 million rupees in land revenue). Hence also entire neglect of any study of landlordism and complete concentration on the evils of borrowing. It rather suggests going into a slum area in Great Britain and ascribing the poverty of the people to their visits to the pawn-broker. It may not be out of place to notice also that the peasants are mainly Muslims, while the moneylenders are Hindus, and to foment this difference while diverting attention from the landlords and the Government would not be against the traditions of British rule.

One cannot escape the conclusion that even the eulogy of co-operation is a piece with the rest of the book. The Government co-operative banks are being run with the best of philanthropic intentions, like all the actions of the British Government in India, but here again the motive behind is exploitation of the prosperous Punjab for the benefit of the Government instead of the moneylender. Further, the Punjab is a valuable reservoir of men for the Indian army and of food materials for abroad and hence the wish to see it scientifically developed. It only remains to add one little sidelight on agricultural wages.

In the Western Punjab we saw that Rs. 5 a month was all that a man could expect. Here, and in the colony generally, he gets twice that amount and good clothing as well." (P. 159.)

Five rupees is less than seven and sixpence. What a vista of super-profits would be opened up if only all India could be cultivated by thrifty agricultural labourers hired at 15s. a month !

C.P.D.



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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS

The Test of Bournemouth

J. R. CAMPBELL

Another Stage in the Miners' Struggle

A. HORNER

British Labour and India

CLEMENS DUTT

Fascist Imperialism

RALPH FOX

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - -	Page 515
<i>THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS</i>	
The Test of Bournemouth - - - -	„ 525
<i>By J. R. CAMPBELL</i>	
Another Stage in the Miners' Struggle -	„ 534
<i>By A. HORNER</i>	
British Labour and India - - - -	„ 544
<i>By CLEMENS DUTT</i>	
Fascist Imperialism - - - - -	„ 553
<i>By RALPH FOX</i>	
Course of Economic Development in the United States	„ 559
<i>By Earl Browder</i>	
The World of Labour - - - - -	„ 569
<i>Anglo-Russian Miners' Conference—France—Tunis.</i>	
Book Review - - - - -	„ 573
India in Perspective - - - - -	S.S.

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NOTES of the MONTH

The Trades Union Congress—Scarborough and the Left—The Failure of the General Council—Where Scarborough Fell Short—Speeches Without Action—Evasion—Masses Without Leadership—The Lesson of the General Strike—No Evasion This Time—The Needs of the Struggle—The Miners—The New Capitalist Offensive—The Tasks of Bournemouth.

THE Bournemouth Trades Union Congress has to face the record of the past twelve months—the most critical events in the history of British Trade Unionism. Since the Scarborough Congress last year, with its mixture of aspirations and evasions, the working-class movement has been through the fire of battle. The easy Left aspirations of Scarborough have been put to the test. The claims to Left leadership have been put to the test. The result has been a new and more advanced form of Black Friday—the capitulation of May 12. It took the Trade Union Movement four years to recover from and learn the lesson of Black Friday—the lesson of class unity. No such delay can now be afforded to learn the lesson of May 12—the lesson of conflict with the State and the lesson of revolutionary leadership. The situation is that the combined employers' and government's attack is heavier and more concentrated than ever before. The miners have fought alone for nearly one-third of a year at terrible cost, and by their fight have saved the working class movement from the worst immediate effects of May 12. The Bournemouth Congress must at once set to work to recover the lost ground, to repair the mistakes made and rebuild the ranks, to face the whole situation in a courageous and realist spirit without evasion, to pass clearer and stronger decisions than Scarborough and enforce them, to fight for new leadership, and to mark without a doubt the path ahead. The whole Trade Union machine, and its power to adapt itself to modern conditions, is now on trial before the working class ; and the pace of events to-day does not allow of any slow and gradual adaptation.

WHY did the Scarborough Congress, with all its aspirations to the Left, fail to effect any basic change to the Left? The answer to this question will provide the guiding line for Bournemouth. If the Scarborough resolutions are examined, it will be found that they have left scarcely any trace in actual Trade Union policy. Where are the factory committees which the Congress decided to set up? Where is the advance to International Unity, on which such strong instructions were given? Where is the scheme for General Council powers which the General Council was instructed to prepare and submit to a Special Conference? Where is the campaign against Imperialism or the delegations of assistance to the colonial workers? All these resolutions have remained on paper. On the other hand, the issues of action which were not dealt with have been thrown into merciless relief by events. The test of action, which the Congress refused to discuss and refused to prepare for, came at the appointed date, and found the movement unprepared, despite all the good will and desire for action. The necessity for common action, the necessity for a common defence of standards was freely spoken of and applauded; but no serious attempt was made to consider the conditions and tasks of such common action, or the work of preparation. In consequence the Scarborough Congress remains as a monument of the Leftward will of the working class; but it was not the achievement of a Leftward policy by the Trade Unions. Instead it represented no more than a yielding to mass pressure by a leadership which did not change.

THE General Council elected at the Scarborough Congress was out of sympathy with the decisions of the Congress. At a time when the whole working-class movement was moving rapidly to the Left, and this pressure was so strong as even to register itself through the machinery of the Congress in the decisions and resolutions passed, a General Council was elected which was actually more to the Right than preceding it. No fact could illustrate more clearly the monstrously unrepresentative character of the existing Trade Union bureaucratic machinery. Had there existed a real Congress directly elected by the whole organised working-class movement, and had that

Congress been able in its turn to elect by free vote a real leadership for the coming struggles and expressing its outlook, the history of the next twelve months would have been different. But, instead, the General Council is elected on a virtual basis of seniority "above politics," in which even the very limited field of nominal choice left to the Congress is politically irrelevant, and in consequence is incapable of reflecting the changes and developments of outlook of the movement. For this reason it was inevitable that the General Council should ignore or override in practice every resolution of the Congress which was not to its taste. To complain of the General Council failing to carry out the policy of Scarborough is as irrelevant as to complain of Baldwin and Churchill failing to carry out the policy of Socialism. What is needed is that the General Council, which has conspicuously forfeited confidence, should be changed.

BUT the failure of Scarborough goes further than the question of the character of the General Council which it elected. The failure goes to the root of the resolutions and discussions themselves. In a recent article Trotsky has pointed out that the more revolutionary in principle a resolution was at Scarborough, the more easily it was carried; but the closer it came to an even elementary task of action, the stronger was the opposition. International Unity with the Communist-led Trade Unions of Russia was carried unanimously by the same delegates who a few weeks later were voting the expulsion of Communist trade unionists at home from the Labour Movement. The break up of the capitalist Empire and the freeing of the subject nationalities even to the right of secession was carried by 3,082,000 to 79,000. But the formation of factory committees, and even that only in principle, was only carried by 2,456,000 to 1,218,000. And the one positive proposal for future action, the placing of powers in the hands of the General Council, was not carried at all. Thus the move to the Left was in practice a show move to the Left, reflecting the undoubted movement of working-class opinion, but sterilised and neutralised by the skilful opportunist leadership who allowed no real change in actual policy. In consequence, the sequel of Scarborough by Liverpool, with its victory of extreme reaction and

conspicuous collapse of the Left Wing, was not a contradiction of Scarborough, but its completion.

MOST conspicuously is this the case in the questions of action. The Scarborough Congress made no attempt to face the actual struggle. The chairman's speech made a powerful appeal in favour of united action in defence of existing standards, which was vigorously applauded. He said that the limit of concession had been reached, that no further concessions in wages and hours would be made by the Trade Unions, but that united action as had been taken on Red Friday a month before should be repeated, and that full powers should be given to the General Council. The speech was applauded: but the applause died away, leaving no trace behind. No proposal was placed by the General Council before the Congress. No discussion was held; no item of the agenda was devoted to the question; no preparations were considered; no decision was reached. The Congress, which had time to consider and pass a hundred and one resolutions from the Sunday Opening of Cinemas to the Competition of Service Bands, which had time to discuss and debate at length the problem of new Trade Union Headquarters and the petty official jealousies thereby raised, had no time to consider the central issue facing the Trade Unions—the capitalist offensive and the attack next May.

ONE solitary item in all the voluminous proceedings of the Congress, one item of seven lines appears, devoted to the question of "United Action." It reads now with all the irony of history:

UNITED ACTION

In reference to paragraph 66 Mr. E. Joseph (Tailors and Garment Workers) asked if the General Council, in view of the certainty of a mass attack of the capitalist class next May, had taken any steps, or what steps they intended to take to resist that attack. The President said that this was merely a report of what had been done. What they would do in resisting that attack would be reported to Congress in due order.

(Scarborough Congress Report, p. 391).

That "due order" never came. The Congress dispersed without

having considered the question of reaching any decision for the guidance of future policy. In view of the certainty of the approaching struggle, in view of the knowledge that Red Friday was only a postponement, that the Government had openly declared its intention in granting the subsidy only to fight next May, and that the Government was openly making preparations, this failure even to attempt to face the issues, to tackle the work of preparation and to lay down a clear policy was nothing less than a cowardly evasion of the real tasks of the Congress.

THE General Strike experience was only the inevitable sequel of this. The will for common action, the working-class pressure which continued and increased up to May, combined with the Government determination to provoke a conflict, compelled its outbreak. The fact of the General Strike represents the advance of the movement since Black Friday, and is itself the guarantee of further advance. But the credit of the achievement of the General Strike cannot lie with the leadership, which neither expected nor wanted it. In his article on the General Strike Otto Bauer, the spokesman of the Second International, speculates why the reformist leaders should have called a General Strike, to which many of them had expressed an opposition in principle. He concludes that it was to avoid the universal attack and opprobrium which had followed Black Friday. This is probably correct, and an illuminating self-picture of the outlook of the Second International, which replaces honest leadership by such-like double-dealing with the masses. But objectively, this explanation simply means that the working-class advance and pressure since Black Friday compelled the General Strike in spite of the leaders. What, however, a general mass will cannot supply—organisation, preparation, the best utilisation of forces, tactics and strategy—this precisely was lacking. In other words, precisely leadership was lacking.

WHY did the leadership refuse to prepare for the General Strike? Why did they (General Council, Labour Party and Independent Labour Party alike) refuse to believe in the inevitability of the struggle up to the last, despite

the open declarations and preparations of the Government? Why did they, even after the calling of the General Strike, give away the position beforehand in secret negotiations to the Government, thus strengthening the Government and stiffening its demands? Why did they abandon the defence of wages and hours, to which they were pledged, without submitting the position to the Conference, and only secretly informing the Government of their abandonment of the position? Why did they refuse to conduct the strike in order to win it, prevent workers from striking, use their authority to save every strategic position for the Government, refuse international aid, and devote their propaganda to inculcating loyalty to the Government, the leader of the enemy forces? Why did they call off the strike without guarantees for the miners or other workers? Why did they subsequently desert the miners and refuse them the aid they asked? All these and many other questions will be asked; but there is in fact no honest answer to them. The failure to lead the General Strike was not an isolated event any more than the failure of Black Friday five years before. It was the inevitable sequel of the failure to lead at Scarborough six months before, when the only resolutions of policy that were passed came from below, from the Communists and Minority Movement, and the General Council and would-be Left leaders had no leadership to offer; of the failure to carry out the Scarborough decisions; of the failure to prepare during the nine months; all culminating in the failure of May 12. And the moral of this failure is that it is not enough to press through a policy of the General Strike, of unity and class action and constructive working-class advance, only for all the efforts and sacrifice to be squandered in the issue by those who do not believe in them; it is necessary also to achieve a leadership which will wield these class weapons, believing in them, and fight to win.

EVERY effort will be made to burke and confuse effective discussion on the General Strike. Unless special arrangements are made, the agenda of the Congress is not so constructed as to allow of satisfactory discussion and settling of a real issue. On the report of the General Council, the discussion is fixed on the past, turns into a congeries of cross-views, questions,

information, recriminations or excuses, and has for its only issue the acceptance or reference back of the section of the report in question. On the resolutions which have been very usefully put in by several unions on the principle of a General Strike, the discussion necessarily turns on future principle without any clear present reference. But what is needed is a combination of past and future, not simply an approval or disapproval of the actions of the General Council or the principle of a General Strike, but an analysis of the past experience and the lessons learnt and a demonstration of the future line. Just as at Scarborough everything could be discussed except Red Friday, the Nine Months and the coming struggle, so at Bournemouth everything is likely to be discussed except the real lessons of the General Strike, and the consequent next stage of the fight and new tactics of trade unionism. Pleas will be raised for the burial of the past, and for the avoidance of personalities. But it is not a question of the past, and it is not a question of personalities. It is a question of the future, and of the future of the whole Trade Union Movement. Only out of the lessons of the General Strike can the future line be decided. A clear verdict must be reached, and a clear line for the future given.

THE General Strike has brought the Trade Union Movement face to face with the issues of mass action. All the experience of the past, all the driving force of events, has led with inescapable compulsion to the necessity of mass action. The alternative to facing this is the surrender and capitulation of the Trade Union Movement, the succession of sectional defeats and the successive reduction of wages and worsening of conditions. But mass action raises new needs and tasks for which the movement was completely unprepared. It raises political issues; and the constitutionalism, legalism, and pacifism of the existing leadership stands in the way of facing these. By raising political issues it necessitates that the Labour Party shall fight plainly in unison with the Trade Unions on the basis of the class struggle; but the Labour Party is travelling fast away in an opposite direction, adopting programmes completely incompatible with the Trade Union struggle, and endeavouring to exclude Trade Union delegates who take their stand on the basis of the class struggle. It necessitates

that the movement shall be organised on a unified centralised basis, with a leading and controlling General Council, with factory committees at the bottom and with strengthened Trades Councils or Councils of Action as the local units. It necessitates a leadership which shall not shrink before the political and constitutional issues raised by mass action, or expect to solve the conflicts of capitalist decline by the old methods of Trade Union bargaining, but shall face the character of the present period, and lead forward to direct attacks on capitalist ownership and control, eventually to lead to the direct attack on capitalist class power itself. All this line of development, and the immediate tasks thereby raised, confront the Trades Union Congress at Bournemouth.

IT is possible that the miners' struggle may even still be in progress when the Trades Union Congress meets. If that should be so, then that issue overpowers every other, and in fact, gathers into itself every other. So long as the miners are still able to keep up the fight without breaking, so long there is still time and urgency for the Trade Unions to make every effort to repair the ground and place themselves by the side of the miners with the weapons of the embargo and the financial levy. Bournemouth will be tested and judged by its relation to the miners' struggle. But it is possible that, owing to the failure and black-legging of the other Unions, the miners' struggle will be in danger of ending in a disastrous settlement. In that case the leaders of capitulation in the Trade Union Movement will at once endeavour to blame the miners' fight for what is the consequence of their own surrender, to argue the folly of fighting and the impossibility of resisting wage-cuts, and the necessity of co-operating with the capitalists in the present economic crisis. The exact opposite is the case. If the miners go down, a heavier attack will centre on all the other workers, as in 1921-2. The Trade Unions cannot escape the struggle, unless the workers are all to submit to starvation conditions, which in its turn will not solve the economic crisis, but will only intensify it. The capitulation of May 12 will not have meant avoidance of the struggle, but only the strengthening and encouraging of the Government's attack; the struggle is in front.

THE attack this time goes beyond the attack of 1921-2 in that it is both economic and political in character. The price levels in the export industries still make indispensable from the point of view of capitalism a further wages and hours attack, as the statements of all the capitalist spokesmen clearly enough reveal, in order to recapture the export trades which are the necessary basis of capitalist accumulation and cannot be replaced by a few secondary luxury trades. But this continued attack in the basic industries where trade unionism is traditionally strong necessarily transforms the Trade Unions from the old line of co-operation to the new path of class struggle. Red Friday and Scarborough were the signals of this transformation to the bourgeoisie, who thereon concentrated all efforts upon inflicting the defeat of May 12. Once, however, that defeat has been inflicted with the aid of the old-time leadership, they can no longer risk a resurrection of trade unionism with a clearer policy and a fighting leadership, ready to act on the lessons of May 12. Therefore the moment for the shackling of trade unionism is now, from the point of view of the bourgeoisie. The repetition of the General Strike must be made impossible, the machinery of the Trade Unions must be brought under the control of the State, and all spontaneous unofficial action of the workers checked. Hence the new legislation to control strike ballots, make strike funds seizable, prohibit unofficial strikes, stop mass picketing, &c. The Trade Unions are being shackled, prior to the victory of a genuine class-struggle Left within them. And the reformist leaders, by their advocacy of the repudiation of the General Strike, &c., are assisting in this process. At the same time the attack is international in its scope; not only are the conditions of the workers in other countries simultaneously attacked, but from the moment of May 12 the open concentration of the campaign against the Soviet Union begins (speeches of Churchill and Birkenhead, the British Note of June 12, Pilsudski in Poland).

THIS is the situation which the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress has to face. It can only be faced by stronger Trade Union action and preparation, advancing not retreating, united action, international unity and a fighting

leadership. The placing of full powers and responsibility in the hands of the General Council, which is now proposed by several of the larger Unions, must be carried this time. A Commission needs to be set up to go into the whole question of Trade Union organisation and policy in the present period, and prepare a comprehensive scheme of reorganisation with a time limit, which can be voted on by the whole Trade Union movement and then put through integrally without concession to the blocking of sectional interests. International unity, after the conspicuous failure of Amsterdam in the present crisis, needs to be carried forward, not only by the strengthening of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the Trade Union movements now supporting it, but by the definite convening of the projected world conference of all Trade Union movements desirous of effective international Trade Union unity. The Government attack of Trade Union rights must be met by a decision of united resistance, and a clear proclamation of that decision. Relations with the Labour Party should be frankly faced; the existing dualism must be ended, and the Labour Party has to be brought on to the path of the class struggle alongside the Trade Unions in a single policy; instead of the present shackling of Trade Union effort and disrupting of Trade Union solidarity and discipline to meet the demands of reformist parliamentarism. Trade Unions and Labour Party should be united in a single economic and political struggle against the whole existing capitalist machine, and for the establishment of a real Workers' Government responsible to the working class. Finally, the question of leadership has to be clearly raised: even if at this Congress new leadership cannot yet be won, the fight for new leadership, going beyond the existing "Rights" and "Lefts" of the General Council, the necessity for a completely new leadership, arising directly from the present workers' struggle and responsible only to its needs, must be unmistakably proclaimed already at this Congress as the objective of the real Left Wing. The Bournemouth Congress can only carry forward the position from where Scarborough left it, by facing the whole lessons of the intervening events and the present situation, by tackling directly the struggle in front, and by adopting much stronger and more concrete measures of preparation and of action.

R. P. D.

THE TEST OF BOURNEMOUTH

By J. R. CAMPBELL

THE Trades Union Congress, which meets this year at Bournemouth, will be called upon to face the difficult situation which now confronts the Labour Movement consequent on the collapse of the General Strike. The Congress itself will be largely composed of delegates who were elected by the rank and file before the General Strike, and whose views on the lessons which require to be drawn from that event were not known to the rank and file at the time of their election.

Never in the whole of its history has the Congress met in such critical circumstances, and the delegates to conference are carrying a heavy responsibility. How far the events of the General Strike have affected the outlook of the delegates remains to be seen. That they have hurled the mass of the workers to the Left is undeniable. The Congress must reckon with this fact. To our mind four questions confront the conference. Two of them: (1) Anglo-Russian Unity, and (2) the future of trade unionism, are on the agenda, the others: (3) the conduct of the General Council during the General Strike, and (4) aid for the Miners, must be discussed.

The miners' lock-out will be continuing for some time, and the delegates to Congress will have to face the question of aid for the miners. Congress has itself no power to initiate any industrial action or to levy affiliated unions without the consent of the executives of its affiliated unions. Nevertheless, it has a considerable moral authority, and a declaration in favour of the embargo and of a levy, followed by a consultation by the General Council with the executives concerned, would be fruitful of results.

There are two questions involved in the mining dispute on which the Congress, in addition to giving aid, must give a decision. Are the miners justified in resisting *any* reductions in wages? Is the attack on the miners the preliminary to an attack on the whole working class? Rank and filers may think that the answer to those questions is self-evidently yes, and that it is a waste of time for the Trades Union Congress to discuss them. It must be

realised however that the report of the General Council on the General Strike has already been published, even if its publication had not official approval.

Leaving aside the purple passages with which Mr. John Bromley embellished the General Council's report in the *Locomotive Journal* it is quite clear that the General Council believed that the miners were and are wrong in refusing all offers of settlement based upon a reduction in wages. This viewpoint of the General Council is not shared by the rank and file trade unionists, and the Congress ought to say so. This is no mere academic question. The miners' wages were already below pre-war, and the body which incarnates the leadership of the British Trade Union Movement, says to them that they ought to make a compromise on the basis of still lower wages, provided they get guarantees regarding the reorganisation of the mining industry on capitalist lines.

If this policy is regarded as the official policy of the unions, then it creates a very serious situation. The rank and file of the unions cannot be expected to carry on the drab, unrequited work of building the unions on the basis of such a policy. If the Trade Union Congress desires a development and strengthening of trade unionism it must repudiate the policy of reduced wages which the General Council tried to induce the miners to accept.

The Congress must also make its position clear on the significance of the mining dispute as a whole. Is this merely an isolated attack on the miners or is it the preliminary to an attack on the rest of the workers? It is obviously the latter. At the moment the employers are preparing fresh wage attacks. The Government is preparing legislation to reduce the whole trade union movement to impotence. The General Council when it left the miners to their fate, abandoned not only the miners, but the workers' struggle against wage reductions. The Congress, in being asked to give more effective assistance to the miners, is not being asked to engage in an act of sympathetic generosity. It is being asked to take all measures to defend the trade union movement as a whole.

An opportunity must be taken by the delegates to force the General Council to defend its tactics during the General Strike.

It is true that the General Council was authorised to conduct the General Strike, not by the Trades Union Congress but by a conference of trade union executives and has not yet reported back to them. The General Council is, however, an organ of the Trades Union Congress, and the Congress is entitled to discuss its policy.

The Scarborough Trades Union Congress was most emphatic in its desire to see the capitalist offensive against the working class arrested. How has the General Council acted in the interval? Three questions of ordinary trade union preparation were before the Council. The application of the resolution on workshop committees, passed by the Scarborough T.U.C., the question of greater powers remitted to them from the same Congress and the question of a trade union co-operative alliance. After the Congress the formation of the O.M.S. and the development of Government strike-breaking machinery, and the enrolment of special constables revealed the seriousness of the Government's preparation and raised the question of the need for a workers' defence corps.

What is the record of the General Council on these questions? (1) Nothing was done with regard to the resolution on workshop committees; (2) the General Council decided not to ask for further powers; (3) the discussions on a T.U.-Co-operative Alliance broke down; (4) the question of a defence force is said (Mr. Brailsford in the *New Leader*) to have been discussed and nothing was done. The result was that while the Government utilised the period of the truce for preparation, the General Council made no active preparations at all.

The wage policy of the General Council also requires reviewing. On February 26 their industrial committee had declared against any reduction in wages, lengthening of hours, or district agreements. In April, they refused to make a similar declaration. (See the *Locomotive Journal* for July.) Before the General Strike and in recommending the Samuel Memorandum, they tried to get the miners to accept lower wages. This attitude was a clear violation of the entire spirit of the deliberations at Scarborough, and the conference ought to decisively condemn it.

If it is claimed in reply that it was the miners who by their "stubborn" attitude on wage reductions let the General Council

down, the answer is quite clear. The Government provoked the strike because they knew (1) that the General Council was not prepared to back the miners in a struggle against all reductions in wages; (2) that the leaders of the General Council did not believe in the weapon of the General Strike and would call the strike off at the earliest possible opportunity. The Government also believed that the rank and file would not respond to the strike call, that the strike would end in a débâcle which would involve the miners, and the way would be cleared for a reduction in wages all round.

The Government were correct in their estimate of the General Council, but wrong in regard to the miners and the rank and file workers. When the General Council capitulated the employers pressed forward to attack wages all round. The firm resistance of the rank and file workers and the fact that the miners were still fighting arrested the offensive for the moment. The General Council had let the workers down. The miners' resistance, has, for the moment, saved the whole working class. The Congress must face this fact and condemn the policy of the General Council, not merely during the strike, but during its entire term of office since Scarborough.

With regard to future policy the issues are sharply raised at the Congress. The Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers' resolution condemns the policy of "never again," asserts the meritability of mass strikes, and outlines a series of measures of T.U. reorganisation which are necessary for the future. Those measures include: (1) a campaign for a 100 per cent. trade unionism; (2) the formation of factory committees; (3) the affiliation of Trades Councils to the T.U.C.; (4) steps towards a T.U. Co-operative alliance; and (5) expediting amalgamation. The constructive part of the resolution is narrowly trade unionist and does not adequately deal with the tasks confronting the Labour Movement in a period when the capitalist attack is intensifying. Nevertheless, the resolution throws down a definite challenge to "never again," and the measures of trade union reorganisation proposed constitute a distinct step in advance.

It is necessary for the Trade Union Movement to repudiate this policy of "never again" as applied to mass strikes, for the policy of "never again" is not merely a challenge to the Com-

munists and extremists in the trade union movement, it is a challenge to the right of the working class to defend itself. Since 1921 we have had a series of mass strikes or threats of strikes culminating in the General Strike itself. These mass strikes were not accidents. They were not due to the machinations of "extremists" for the extremists were in a hopeless minority. They were due to the need for the working class to defend itself and the futility of the old weapon of the sectional strike for this purpose. Dare the "never-againers" argue that the workers will never have to defend their standards again, dare they declare that the workers can defend themselves adequately by the sectional strikes. If not, what is the sense of talking about "never again"?

But, it is said, mass strikes come up against the Government, and in effect are a struggle against the Government which rallies the middle class to its side. Therefore, a mass strike cannot be successful. This simply means that the "never-againers" hold that in the present period the workers can derive no moral, political, or material advantages by defending their standards of life. If this is so, what is the use of trade unionism at all. It is agreed that sectional strikes have failed, that the workers have been forced to adopt the weapon of the mass strike. The mass strike aligns the Labour Movement against the Government. But, say the "never againers," the Government is impregnable. Mass strikes cannot succeed. What is the moral of this argument? Obviously the moral is "What's the use of anything? Nothing." Hardly a motto on which to develop the Trade Union Movement.

The fact that a mass strike brings in the Government in opposition to the Labour Movement applies to all mass strikes without exception. For example, it is to Mr. Cramp of the N.U.R. that we owe the phrase "never again." Suppose the railway companies demand a reduction in wages. They inform the National Wages Board that they were keenly disappointed at the results of their last application for a reduction in wages. That since the last award the coal strike has caused them considerable losses and that wages ought to come down. Suppose the Wage Board makes an award unfavourable to the workers, what can Mr. Cramp, the "never againer" do. He can, of course, recommend acceptance. If that is what "never again" really means

then the sooner we are told so plainly the better for all concerned. If he advocates resistance or is forced by rank and file pressure to do so and call a strike, will the Government behave better than it did during the General Strike? Not at all. It said during the General Strike: "This strike is unconstitutional and we will smash it." It would say during a railway strike: "Of course, this is only an industrial dispute, but the railways are a vital service and must be kept going," and *the same strike-breaking machinery will be mobilised in either case*. The alternatives before the workers in the present period are therefore (1) capitulation; (2) futile sectional strikes; or (3) mass strikes which bring in the Government. In the period of capitalist decline any effort on the part of the workers to defend themselves will bring the Labour Movement face to face with the capitalist state. A recognition of these facts will lead to the complete and final defeat of the policy of "never again" and the initiation of a series of measures designed to bring the Trade Union Movement up to a greater measure of solidarity and efficiency in view of the tasks ahead.

The fact that a mass strike brings the workers up against the Government merely means that in the present period the capitalist class and its bulwark the capitalist state, if they are to survive, must attack the working class. This fact must be faced.

The question of the powers of the General Council are going to be raised at the Congress in several ways.

The N.U.D.A.W. asks the General Council to reconsider its decision of February 4, 1926, not to seek further powers. The A.E.U. and the N.A.F.T.A. have resolutions demanding greater powers for the General Council, which are specified in detail.

On the other hand, the Plasterers have a resolution, demanding that before sympathetic action can be taken in future the unions should (1) have time to discuss the question at issue, and (2) take a ballot of their members. The latter resolution simply means that the idea of creating a centralised trade union leadership shall be abandoned, for it is obvious to anyone that if those suggestions are adopted the possibilities of getting sympathetic action are absolutely nil. The idea that the General Council, representing the whole movement should, in a crisis, adapt itself to the exigencies of the hundred and one different union constitutions in Great

Britain is too absurd for words. Obviously the individual unions have to adapt their constitutions to the needs of a centralised leadership.

The resolutions of the A.E.U. and N.A.F.T.A. ought to be carried. That there are many difficulties in the way of creating a centralised leadership in the Trade Union Movement may be admitted. Without such a centralised leadership, however (composed of different personnel from that dominating the General Council at present), the Trade Union Movement is doomed. Difficulties must be openly stated, examined by the whole movement and overcome. To raise difficulties in order to overcome them is one thing, but to raise them merely as an excuse for doing nothing is cowardly sabotage, and the workers will know how to deal with those who favour a policy of sabotage in the trade union movement.

Anglo-Russian Unity, and the struggle for a united Trade Union Movement will come before the conference, perhaps in an acute form. It is an open secret that Anglo-Russian Trade Union relations have not been of the best recently, owing to the criticisms levelled by the Central Council of the Russian Unions against the British General Council on account of its conduct in the General Strike. At the last meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee held in Paris, the British representatives protested to the Russians and asked them to withdraw their declaration. The Russians refused to do so and have been supported in this by their Central Council. The action of the British delegates at Paris, on the other hand, was endorsed by the British General Council. The Anglo-Russian Committee is meeting again in Berlin shortly and the meeting is bound to be a critical one. Any British decision on the question is bound to come up at the Congress for ratification, and the delegates would be wise to remember certain facts, which are of greater importance than the question of say, whether the Russian criticism of the General Council is half so bitter as that of the British rank and file.

Has the need for International Trade Union Unity grown greater since Scarborough? Undoubtedly it has. The events of the General Strike and the miners' lock out have demonstrated the importance of International Trade Union Unity. The splendid

assistance of the Russian Unions first to the General Strike and then to the miners (refused by the General Council) has shown the value of international solidarity as did the short embargo struggle carried out by the International Transport Workers during the General Strike.

On the other hand, the pouring in of "black" coal reveals the absolute lack of principle of the leaders of the Amsterdam Unions and the extent of the road to be travelled before International Unity is reached. In these circumstances it would be utterly traitorous for anyone to suggest abandoning the alliance with the Russian Unions for international unity in favour of a closer alliance against international unity with the Amsterdam Unions. The fact that every delegate to the conference must face is that the Russian assistance has created a mass support for international unity, and woe betide those who try to break up, on any excuse, the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Alliance.

In this respect the figures of the Minority Conference, which is going to be held on August 28, is symptomatic of the spirit of the rank and file. At a moment when the trade union branch funds are absolutely exhausted, at least 500 delegates will be present at the second Minority Conference held this year. Many of those delegates are only able to be present through the personal sacrifices of the rank and file, whose spirit is unbroken, and whose will to unity cannot be thwarted.

The question of changing the personnel of the General Council will not be before the T.U.C. in an acute form this year. The old lists of nominations, made by the executives of the unions before the General Strike, will be voted upon by the delegates. The question is, however, before the rank and file. The Minority Conference will consider ways and means of organising the Left forces in the unions around a real fighting policy, of securing greater rank and file representation at the T.U.C., and of securing the election of the General Council in future by the rank and file of the unions.

A reorganised trade union movement must not be put into palsied hands.

The task of the Bournemouth Conference is to condemn the calling off of the General Strike, lend all possible assistance to the

miners, push forward with national and international unity, and prepare the workers for the struggle.

The capitalist class are preparing anti-trade union legislation. They are preparing to attack the workers all round. If the Bournemouth Conference refuses to undertake preparation, its failure will be as unwarrantable an example of folly as the Trade Union Movement has ever witnessed, and the rank and file will know how to deal with those responsible.

Since writing the above the General Council's report has been issued. An appeal is made to delegates not to discuss the General Strike. The grounds are, (1) the General Council is reporting back to a conference of Executives; (2) the conference has been postponed by arrangement with the M.F.G.B. for the duration of the coal lock-out.

The reply to this obviously is, (1) that the General Council is an organ of the T.U.C. as well as the Conference of Executives; (2) a discussion of the General Strike can only injure the miners provided the General Council are going to attack the miners and allege that only their stubbornness prevented a reasonable settlement, but the whole experience of the mining dispute gives the lie to this assertion which can only injure those who spread it; (3) the General Council's attack on the miners has already been broadcasted.

To refuse to discuss the General Strike, draw its lessons and reorganise the Trade Union movement in accordance with those lessons, is suicidal. The Trade Union movement cannot afford to drift for another year without taking stock of its position. To refuse to learn the lessons of our struggles is to court disaster. The T.U.C. must assert its rights as the controlling body of the General Council.

ANOTHER STAGE IN THE MINERS' STRUGGLE

By A. HORNER

SINCE May 1 the British People have witnessed the picture of the power and machinery of a co-called democratic State being utilised nakedly and unashamedly in the interests of the coal owners, whilst the last six weeks have shown that this activity has not lessened in consequence of the General Strike having been called off, but, on the contrary, has increased.

The coalowners themselves have maintained an almost unbroken silence, confident, as they have every right to be, in the inclination and ability of Capitalism's General Staff, the British Cabinet, to look after their interests, and to exert every possible endeavour to secure the defeat of the miners. The Government, in their endeavours to realise this objective, have pursued an offensive and defensive course simultaneously, seeking by every means to weaken the effect of the strike by securing substitute coal supplies, and to break down the miners' resistance by preventing adequate food supplies reaching the dependents of the locked-out workers. The sources from which they have been able to secure fuel to carry on, reveal the tragic weakness of the working-class organisations of this and other countries.

The miners themselves are in this connection not without blame, in so far as they have provided through the working of outcrop coal a certain quantity of strike breaking material. This work is always in the beginning carried on with the very laudable idea of supplying those on strike, but experience has shown that it quickly develops into a means of getting a livelihood during the strike or lock-out. The quantity of coal secured from this source is on the whole trifling, and very little is transferred from the area in which it is produced, but it has served to considerably minimise the effect of the struggle by partially meeting the needs of such cities as Sheffield, thus permitting the imported coal to be concentrated in towns and cities far removed from the mining districts.

Moreover, it has been made the excuse for giving permission to more damaging practices than it is in itself, and by breaking down the morale of the men, and in part giving a semblance of justification to the handling of Black Coal by railway and dock workers, it has had very damaging results.

Another means of supply within the country has been through the filling and transference of inferior slack or small coal, which has been retained on colliery surfaces because in normal times it is unsaleable, but which during this period of shortage has served to fill a very awkward gap in a critical period. This coal has been freely removed, and this is not due to blackleg work on the part of the members of the Miners' Federation, but is another indication of the dangers of the existence of craft or other sectional unions in the mining or any other industry. The work of filling this coal has in practically all known cases been performed by colliery officials rendered superfluous during the stoppage as far as their usual tasks are concerned.

These practices within the country have undoubtedly served those who, in seeking the defeat of the miners, were anxious to use any pretext to justify them assisting the Government by the handling of foreign Black Coal. For it is only by the importation of foreign coal that Capitalism has been able to secure the means to save itself from defeat. The petty supplies from inside have never at any time touched the problem facing British industry, so that, if the miners are defeated, Black Coal from abroad will be the main cause of such defeat, and the responsibility will be upon the workers responsible.

The Emergency Powers Act is used to further the offensive and defensive aims of Capitalism. When the miners, in answer to the gibes of law-abiding Thomas, who sneers at them because they do not by force prevent out-cropping and surface filling, seek to stop these practices the heavy hand of the Law is introduced and men have been imprisoned by the hundred. Even peaceful picketing and mere popular demonstrations are prevented under E.P.A. owing to the clause that there must be no interference with the fuel supplies of the country. Thus does Capitalism feed its industries with the means of life. Thus are the enemies of the working-class assisted by organised and blackleg labour in-

discriminately to drive the miners down into harder work, for a longer time, for less wages.

It is unfortunate that the discovery of a past traitor must always reveal a future enemy. When the General Council betrayed the miners, its members had perforce to prevent the miners from winning in order to secure justification in the eyes of their own men. There being no neutrality in the Class Struggle the traitors were bound to turn assassins of their previous allies in their own defence. Having made prophecies of a miners' defeat, they must now assist events to prove that they were right.

The offensive tactics of the Government have been principally aimed at starving the miners into submission. In this they have been assisted by the refusal of the trade unions generally to levy themselves systematically in aid of the miners. Of course, there has been ample evidence of sympathy from the rank and file in the contributions they have made to miners' choirs and other means through which assistance is being sought. All this, however, has been in the nature of charity to beggars and not contributions from allies to keep the army in the field for the protection of the common interests of the workers in every industry.

Boards of Guardians, Council Authorities, &c., have all been intimidated if they have shown a tendency to treat the miners with even the semblance of fairness. Labour Boards have been threatened and refused loans to continue relief, where they have sought to give sufficient to maintain life in the bodies of the miners or their dependents. Wherever demonstrations are made against this treatment, even in the most orderly fashion, the police have been used, and one may assume if necessary the armed forces of the Crown will be there to prevent pressure being brought to bear. Thus, since May 12, the miners have been forced to witness complete concord between the capitalist forces for the purpose of securing their defeat, and on Labour's side wholesale betrayal and callous neglect calculated to give victory to the enemy.

Only the miners congregated together as they are in communities could have resisted such a combination of forces, only a body of men with a long experience of struggle would have the morale to endure in the way these men, women and children have.

Only one glimmer of light has shown itself and that has been the wonderful practical demonstration of solidarity made by our Russian brothers. Without their assistance our kitchens would long since have closed, without their support, the help given inside Britain would not have kept the miners from starvation. The Russians have literally saved lives and those lives many are prepared now to give back in the work of overthrowing Capitalism, as our comrades have done.

Latterly great pressure has been brought to bear upon the workers in the Midland counties, by means of the importation of blacklegs from outside, and the threats of victimisation after the settlement of local men if they refused to return to work. The conditions upon which work has been offered have been in many cases such as to tempt many who under ordinary strike conditions would have remained loyal trade unionists. Concentration upon these areas has been the watchword of the Capitalist forces. Press propaganda of a special kind based upon local advantages of separation from the M.F.G.B., the introduction of scores of Fascisti students from Birmingham and the provision of police in tremendous numbers to protect the blacklegs, all these methods have figured in the tactics of the enemy, playing all the time for an official breakaway from the M.F.G.B., by a settlement for a return to work on a district agreement entered into locally. If this occurred it would, of course, mean the expulsion of such a district from the Federation, which in turn would lead to the complete break up of the national organisation.

Therefore, whilst it is true that the owners have succeeded in procuring a certain quantity of coal, they have not succeeded in realising their real objective, and at the moment of writing the M.F.G.B. remains intact. This, after all, is the main consideration in deciding any course of action, for if the weapon of struggle is rendered futile the achievement of any objectives becomes a dream.

The consciousness of isolation, the free handling of Black Coal from abroad, the drift back to work in an unauthorised fashion in the most prosperous districts (though this has not been so to any extent in such counties as Yorkshire), the fear of break-aways, all these have had a cumulative effect upon the leaders who up to recent days have so magnificently sustained the fight. The intro-

duction of the Eight Hours Act by the Government has been responsible for making the wage offers seem less appalling, and the resistance to a return to work has in consequence in some quarters lessened.

There can be no doubt that the Executive of the M.F.G.B. have been looking for a way out of the impasse, and that long search for friends whom they expected to find has made them less particular than they used to be when sympathy is demonstrated from any quarter. Thus, when the Bishops made their gesture of concern, the E.C. clutched as drowning men have a habit of doing at a straw, and found when they tested the value of such assistance that, like the straw, it could not bear weight. The proposals upon which the Church leaders were prepared to stump the country, except for the four months' subsidy period, would not need any stumping to secure, for they were, in fact (after the expiration of the subsidy period) the coalowners' proposals, and as such were acceptable to their rightful father. The Bishops were only foster-fathers for the coalowners' child.

The clauses, it is true, have been cleverly drawn up to look like the miners' offspring, but a little examination will quickly show their true character. Clause 1 says that the miners are to be permitted to return to work on the April conditions, wages and hours, and that there is to be a National Settlement. If Clause 1 was the only clause there would be no need to continue to fight for the *status quo*, for that indeed is the *status quo*—"Not a Penny Off, Not a Minute On." In such circumstances the Bishops' proposals would be redundant, but no one has pretended that the miners' programme and these proposals are identical; on the contrary, all have agreed that the acceptance of the Bishops' proposals involved the desertion of the fight for the retention of the April conditions.

The agreement we should be asked to sign, as a condition of the industry receiving a further four months' subsidy, will not be for a period of the same duration. No one contemplates a four months' agreement, rather is it expected that there will be an endeavour to force two years or even longer as the period of the next agreement. In this event we are to be tied for the duration of such agreement, without guarantees of any settled wages after the subsidy period. Now we know what subsidy was paid in the various districts when

work terminated, and what will be the effect of its cessation. In certain districts up to 4s. 7d. per ton was paid, and no district was exempt from some assistance. If this subsidy is taken away and the industry is to pay such wages as are economically possible, then unless some new factor enters into the problem, the workers will have wage reductions equal in extent to the subsidy. So, if no new resources are introduced, we are definitely in a position to know that wages will drop in some districts not by pennies, but by pounds per man per week.

The guarantee of a National Agreement in Clause 1 is in the nature of a phrase, meaning something totally different from what we have meant when we talk of a National Settlement. The Coal Commission interpretation is given to the phrase, that is to say—varying district minimums fixed nationally. Now what the miners have been fighting for is not the shadow but the substance, viz., “A National Minimum percentage.” Unless this is secured hours will definitely enter into the picture whether they are outside the settlement or not, for wages will be so low in certain districts under the conditions outlined as to make a demand by the men for the eight-hour day irresistible.

The Eastern Area, for instance, will be in receipt of decent wages for seven hours, whilst Wales, Lancs, Durham and Scotland will find wages so low as to be inadequate to provide the bare means of life. Hence there will be great pressure exercised in the badly hit districts to drive the men on to an eight-hours basis as a means of cancelling the advantage of the prosperous areas. Once this has been done these so-called prosperous areas will in their turn be forced to resort to the same foolish temporary remedy in order to retain their position of advantage, and the last condition for all will be worse than the first.

The suggestion has been made that there shall be fixed a national percentage at a level low enough to be possible of payment even in the worst districts. This proposal is, of course, the same thing as the previous one only reversed, for wages will in fact be as divergent owing to the operations of the agreement, as if we had unashamed district agreements, and the results in breaking up the unity of the M.F.G.B., will be exactly the same. The unity of action we hope to ultimately secure must be based upon unity of

experience, and, as far as possible, of conditions. The question of hours is in the lap of a National Minimum Percentage of the same dimensions as was paid when we ceased work, and that must be guaranteed for the period of any agreement we may be asked to sign.

The advocates of the Bishops' proposals point, however, to the clauses dealing with reorganisation, and suggest that herein is to be found the new factor to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of the subsidy. Reorganisation, this is to be the panacea for all the ills of the mining industry. First coal is to be sold in a fashion and at such a price as will suffice in a considerable measure to wipe out the deficit. The coal factors are to be eliminated and middlemen of all kinds abolished, so that the largest possible share of the value of the product shall be returned to the mining industry. This will, we have the right to assume, cut out the profits made by these people, but its result upon the financial resources of the industry will be infinitesimal.

There are, it is true, vague theories which are now being investigated by a Royal Commission in order to discover whether it is possible to charge an arbitrary price to the consumer by some method of price control. On the surface, it appears to be a futile hope, for on the international market no effective control is possible, and it is inconceivable that British Capitalism will agree to embody in its finished products of iron and steel, &c., coal at a price more than is paid by iron and steel competitors abroad. To do so would be to eliminate this trade from the world's markets. It may be possible to increase the price to the working-class consumer, but this course is hardly desirable, and even so the increased income due to these tightening-up processes on the selling side will be far from enough to fill the gap.

In any case, it is difficult to see how such methods can benefit the exporting districts which are the chief sufferers. It appears to me to be only calculated to bring such results as are possible to those districts which are already relatively prosperous. This, in its turn, will be bound to widen the present differences between the districts of the M.F.G.B., and in consequence, if it is permitted, it will hurry the process of disintegration of that body. To increase foreign prices for coal without regard to the competing prices obtaining abroad, is bound, unless costs of production can be

raised in these countries, to force the British coal seller out of the market. The whole idea seems based on the assumption that Capitalism is going to obligingly commit suicide in our interests, thus saving us the trouble of destroying it.

The reorganisation proposals apply to reforms within the industry, such as the inclusion of the bye-product industry in the ascertainment of the mining industry. This, if carried out, would, it is true, provide a few coppers per ton, but that would hardly affect very materially the situation. The real proposals for reorganisation, based upon the introduction of Ford methods into mining, are very likely to reduce costs to a considerable extent.

The Government and the coalowners together say work longer and for less pay. The reorganisation proposals of the Coal Commission say work more intensively. They do not say pay less wages to the same number of men, but pay less men wages. In other words, they call for the introduction of all the known labour-saving devices into the industry for the purpose of making redundant men previously necessary. The men themselves will have something to say when it comes to securing their co-operation in turning their own mates on to the streets to starve.

Will these economies fill the gap? It is true it may go a certain way in the direction named, but it will only succeed to the extent that it can transfer wages out of one man's pocket into that of another and this implies a real reduction of wages to the workmen as a whole, even could the deficiency be made up by this means, which is, of course, not possible. The new factor of reorganisation, therefore, can only in a small way meet the situation, and then when it does become operative, it is only an alternative form of wage reduction. This will in its turn create considerable unemployment, and there will be in consequence dangers of local wage-cutting arising from competition on the labour market.

The Bishops' proposals are, therefore, after the interim period, the same as the coalowners' proposals, plus the increased income and reduced costs due to reorganisation. The workmen rightly refused to be inveigled into acceptance of these proposals, in spite of the M.F.G.B. Conference recommendation. The Bishops have been plainly told that their good intentions are appreciated but the men's answer must be accepted.

A National Conference was held on August 16 and 17, and when the delegates met to consider the next steps, in view of the result of the districts' vote, they had before them three courses which they could pursue. Firstly, they could give the E.C. powers to negotiate the best settlement possible, on the distinct understanding that such a step involved the giving up of the *status quo* position. Even if all the defeatist rumours were true and break-aways of very serious dimensions had taken place, such a step to say the least was ill-advised, and was likely to encourage the coal-owners and the Government in the belief that if they waited a little longer the Miners' Federation would fall to pieces in consequence of district settlements made without the permission of the National body. The other course possible was to restate the *status quo* position and to take no new action to resist the attempts to nullify the strike by the production of Black Coal at home and the importation of foreign coal, and to rest content with the ineffective methods which had been pursued up to the time of the Conference.

This purely negative proposal was bound to defeat its own objective owing to the further break-aways which were bound to be the outcome of inaction. If these break-aways did grow, the then *status quo* would be impossible of realisation.

The third line of procedure possible was to persist in the fight for wages, hours, and conditions as they existed on April 30, and to develop a new offensive policy in order to achieve this. This was clearly the line necessary from the point of view of the rank and file when they rejected the Bishops' proposals. The steps in this direction advocated at the Conference were :—

- (1) To withdraw safety men, at least in places where their presence is taken advantage of to produce Black Coal.
- (2) To stop all outcropping immediately.
- (3) To prosecute an intensive propaganda campaign in the districts ; in order to prevent coal being produced by blacklegs, directed from the Central Office.
- (4) To organise demonstrations at the ports, and to send deputations to railway and dock workers' branches, with a

view to persuading these men to desist from the handling of coal produced at home or imported from abroad.

The railway and dock workers are suffering very keenly in consequence of the continuation of the miners' strike, and it is in their interests to assist to bring it to a successful conclusion as quickly as possible. Until it is terminated there is no prospect of regular work, and in many cases work at all until the mining industry again starts to produce.

- (5) To approach the General Council again with a view to securing their agreement to the collection of money through a definite levy upon the members of all Unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress.

After two days' discussion of these alternatives, it was ultimately agreed by a small majority, that the E.C. should meet the coalowners or the Government in order to hear from them the terms they were prepared to offer on a National basis. Such offer to be reported back to a Delegate Conference for approval or rejection.

At the time of writing this is the position. The miners have demonstrated a weakness, which should not, however, be over-estimated by the enemy. The temper of the delegates was of such a character as to be a warning to those who may seek to take advantage of the apparent weakness by attempting to impose conditions of peace.

The miners have not yet agreed to compromise the *status quo*, and will quickly be roused to new efforts on the slightest irritation through any attempt to presume that they are impotent to defend themselves. Meanwhile, all the steps necessary to impede the production of blackleg coal are to be taken, together with a new drive through the T.U.C. for funds to carry on the fight to victory.

Greater solidarity is necessary now than at any period of the struggle.

BRITISH LABOUR AND INDIA

By CLEMENS DUTT

The United Front of British Imperialism

THE recent debate on Indian affairs in the House of Commons, and the interchange of remarks between Lords Birkenhead and Olivier in the House of Lords, emphasises one thing at least, and that is, that the British Labour movement has so far exercised singularly little influence on the policy of British imperialism.

British imperialism has all along pursued a logical and un-wavering policy. Throughout the difficult post-war period in India it has kept a level head and has astutely adopted exactly those measures best calculated to develop exploitation, to prevent and suppress revolt, and to safeguard its conquest and investments. The political concessions of the Government of India Act made certain of the support of the big capitalists and landlords, and now the series of economic concessions of the last few years, of which the appointment of the Textile Tariff Board is only the latest example, has further split away the middle bourgeoisie from the intransigent nationalist movement, and thus, for the time being, deprived the latter of any capacity to harm. The difficult and dangerous process of turning India into a manufacturing country like Canada is being proceeded with on the firm basis of a partnership of British and Indian capital in the exploitation of the Indian masses, a partnership in which the British senior partner with five times as much capital invested has a correspondingly preponderant share in control.

This policy of British imperialism reflects exclusively capitalist interests, but it has not met with any serious criticism from the British Labour movement. The political leadership of the latter grew up under Liberal tuition and accepted in its entirety the Liberal policy of condemning imperialism in words and supporting it in practice.

Even the verbal condemnation of imperialism concerned only superficial aspects and not fundamentals. The reality of exploi-

tation as the necessary basis of the Empire went unchallenged, while denunciation expended itself on harsh methods of rule and the lack of democratic forms. Thus, from before the war until the present day, there is a history of effective co-operation between British capitalism and British labour in the maintenance and extension of the Empire. This united front of British labour and British imperialism has only become more prominent with the advent of the Labour Party to office, and with the growth of the British Empire's threat to working-class standards at home.

The Attitude of the Labour Party to India

The characteristic feature of the India debate as described below takes its place a part of the whole record of Labour imperialism. The official attitude of the Labour Party to the Empire since the war has been defined in the speech made in October, 1922, by Sidney Webb, at the time Chairman of the Labour Party. He declared :

“The British Empire has disappeared since the Irish Treaty, and has become a British Commonwealth of Nations . . . The Labour Party cordially welcomed the change and adopted it as its policy with regard to the Empire.”

This propaganda of the “Commonwealth of Nations” as a disguise for the finance-capital octopus of British imperialism has been pursued vigorously since 1922. It has not escaped criticism by the rank and file, but it is still unreputed.

If the British Labour movement regards the Empire as a Commonwealth of Nations it is bound to oppose any movement which seeks to change by unconstitutional means the relationship between the units making up the Commonwealth. In fact, it is found that the official Labour policy has been to condemn movements for national freedom where they threaten to disrupt the bonds of Empire. With regard to India it is only necessary to quote the illuminating resolution of the National Joint Council, the forerunner of the Trades Union Congress General Council, passed in February, 1922, at the height of the crisis due to Gandhi's non-co-operation movement.

While realising the necessity of preserving order in India, the Council deplores the political arrests . . ., but also deplores no less the action of the non-co-operators in boycotting these Parliamentary institutions recently conferred upon India by which grievances should be ventilated and wrongs redressed.

The resolution is primarily an assurance to British capitalism of full support in the task of "preserving order," *i.e.*, suppressing a revolt of the exploited masses, and secondly, an admonition to the Indian nationalists that they should confine their agitation within the limits prescribed by the British Government.

The consciously imperialist character of the Labour Party leadership was nakedly exposed during the short period of the Labour Government. It was a period of complete betrayal of all the old declarations of sympathy with the oppressed peoples of the British Empire, and of all the pledges of assistance and reforms that had been made in deference to working-class opinion. It demonstrated to the full the complete subservience of the official Labour Party leadership to the dictates of capitalist policy. The Empire was "carried on" and the Labour Party joined the Liberal and Conservative "pact" for "continuity" in imperial policy.

The Considered Judgment of all Parties

The tradition thus inaugurated has been loyally maintained. There has been no effective criticism by Labour of the Conservative administration of India, and in view of the Labour heritage of the Bengal Ordinance, of the imprisonment of Communists, and of government by certification (the Vice-regal prerogative of overriding the Legislative Assembly) there could not very well be any.

Last year Lord Birkenhead's speech, as Secretary of State for India, went unchallenged in the House of Lords. In the subsequent debate in the House of Commons also, neither the Labour Party nor the Liberal Party offered any real opposition to his threats and talk of the sharp edge of the sword. He was able to say in a later speech without any subsequent contradiction: .

The policy of the Government in relation to India was accepted without question, almost without criticism, in the House of Commons. Colonel Wedgwood and Mr. MacDonald accepted the broad principles upon which my speech has been framed. Therefore, I can say to my Indian critics that that which I said in the House of Lords represents not only the considered policy of a party, but the considered and deliberate judgment of all parties in the British nation.

The same thing was to be observed this year. The most

characteristic feature of the rather dull and lifeless debate on Indian affairs in the House of Commons (the only one held during the year and nearly omitted this time, as being a waste of time) was, of course, the complete absence of any real criticism by the official Labour Opposition.

A very little Difference of Opinion

Earl Winterton, Under-Secretary of State for India, in his rôle as apologist for the government in the House of Commons, could present his picture of the state of India under British rule in tones of the greatest complacency, sure that he had nothing to fear in the debate that followed. Colonel Wedgwood, the Labour front bench representative, might indeed have spoken as a Conservative. The British Labour Party, in its character of official opposition, has less criticism of die-hard Tory administration than ever the Liberals had before it. Lord Winterton could not help remarking on this at the conclusion of the debate. He declared:

It is a tribute to the success with which the administration of the Government of India has been carried on that there has been practically no serious criticism of the administration. That certainly would not have been the case three or four years ago. I am glad to say that there has been growing up, and I think it most important that there should grow up, a tradition that discussions on Indian policy, like discussions on foreign policy, should be conducted on a non-party basis. *There is really very little difference of opinion between His Majesty's Government and the Secretary of State and the leaders, at any rate, of the Party opposite.*

There could not be a more damning indictment of a party which is supposed to be fighting in the British parliament for the interests of the working class, yet there has been no repudiation of this assertion, while on the other hand, there is every evidence of its truth. A particular example is the case of the Bengal Ordinance. The official Labour Party dare not denounce, even in the form of insincere parliamentary opposition, the continuance of this crime against Liberal principles. To the few back-benchers who raised the matter in the debate, Lord Winterton was able to reply:

If their case is as strong as they represent it to be, it would be their duty to ask their leaders to move a Vote of Censure on His Majesty's Government and the Secretary of State. We have had no condemnation from the Front Bench opposite of the Ordinance from the time

it first came into operation until to-day ; and for a very good reason that the policy underlying the Ordinance, and underlying the whole method of dealing with the situation in Bengal, was accepted by the late Government and by the late Secretary of State for India, Lord Olivier.

Lord Winterton's Satisfaction

As for the speech of Lord Winterton, it was permeated with a spirit of undisguised satisfaction. It was true that he had to speak of the "menace" of the present communal tension, but that did not disturb his complacency. There was no need for the sabre-rattling indulged in by Lord Birkenhead last year, no need for threats to Indian politicians warning them not to sulk but to join hands with British rule in working the reforms. The concession policy of Great Britain has achieved its intended aim of "rallying the moderates," and the noble lord was able to report that "the political history of India of the past nine months has been that of the progressive disintegration of the Swaraj Party." With this remark should be coupled the comment made with great satisfaction that "the personal relations between the Government representatives and the non-official members, not even excluding the Swarajists, have been marked by the cordiality which has increasingly characterised them during the past two years." The Government is naturally pleased by the growing approach to the model shown by the British House of Commons of sham fight and social fraternisation of political opponents.

The question of labour conditions in India was dismissed in a few words. The Trade Union Act is mentioned as intended "to foster the growth of a healthy Trade Union movement." As the term "healthy" in the mouths of these spokesmen of capitalism invariably means servile (note, for instance, the contrary characterisation of Bengal, which Lord Winterton declared to "have enhanced its reputation for exhibiting definitely pathological conditions politically"), it can be accepted that the Government is satisfied with the fetters that have been forged for circumscribing trade union action, especially in view of the announcement that the Act is shortly to be followed by a further Bill providing machinery for compulsory arbitration in labour disputes.

The remaining reference to labour amounted to the statements, made in order to answer in advance possible criticisms of existing conditions, that no such thing as a standard of life existed in India, and that, therefore, no comparison with foreign standards could be made (!) and that "at present the will to take advantage of better conditions does not always exist."

The Labour Party Echo

Such then was the Government pronouncement. How was it met by the representatives of the British working class? The first spokesman for the opposition, presumably the representative of the Labour front bench, was Colonel Wedgwood. He began with a compliment to Lord Winterton, whom he said "gradually approaches our point of view," and he continued with a panegyric of the new Viceroy that sounds amazing even in the records of Labour imperialism. He declared:—

Lord Irwin is perhaps an ideal man to have as Viceroy. He is not merely democratic but also has that vein of religious sincerity which is able to make at the present time so profound an appeal in a land such as India. He is a man to whom religion comes only second to pride in our country's traditions.

That is exactly the sort of control and guidance that India wants at the present time.

This is the Labour Party estimate of a man who, as a member of the House of Commons, had distinguished himself only as a reactionary Conservative, and a faithful henchman of his party.

Another section of Colonel Wedgwood's speech dealt with the possibility of a Labour Party being formed in the Assembly after the next election. His statement is interesting as it exposes only too bluntly one aspect of the significance of the propaganda on this subject which has been carried on by British and Indian Labour politicians. He said:—

I cannot help thinking and hoping that the mere emergence of a Labour Party will quicken interest in the better use of the Assembly. This will do more to break down the boycott of the Assembly, and the evasion of responsibility, than any form of Government pressure or expostulation.

This is in the exact spirit of the National Joint Council's admonition to the non-co-operators of four years ago, quoted above. Both also contain ludicrous misstatements. The one speaks

of "redressing wrongs" through the Indian legislatures. The Swarajist majorities have now had a surfeit of passing unavailing resolutions. The other speaks of the "evasion of responsibility." The cry of the Nationalists is, "give us even only a little responsibility and we will co-operate!"

Colonel Wedgwood acts as a hardly-masked representative of imperialism. He wants the revolutionary Indian workers to act like the British labour-aristocracy and to pin their faith to parliamentary leaders who bargain and compromise in the sham legislatures, keeping within the constitutional limits allowed by the Imperialist power. Like the British Government he wants the Labour movement kept within "healthy" limits. When he went on in the debate to suggest that the Government should try to increase the prestige and popularity of the Assembly by awarding its members the title of "Honourable," even Lord Winterton could not forbear interrupting with the remark that "the suggestion struck me as a curious one to come from those benches," and he asked whether Colonel Wedgwood spoke on behalf of his party.

Col. Wedgwood accepted with pleasure Lord Winterton's description of India as "now under prosperous conditions," and he concluded his speech with an exhortation to "unite the princes and the British Government in showing to the world an example of what India can do in establishing freedom under the British flag."

The other contributions to the debate need not be discussed here. A few of the Labour representatives did make some honest criticism of details of British rule in India (for instance, as regards the Bengal Ordinance), and did attempt to call attention to Labour conditions. But the official view of the Labour Party is that put forward by Colonel Wedgwood.

Effect of Labour Imperialism in India

This official view-point has an extensive hold. The Labour Party in its resolution on India at the Liverpool Conference, last year, of course subscribed to the doctrine of a "British Commonwealth of Nations," and favoured the "free and equal partnership" of India with other members within it.

The Empire Policy Committee of the I.L.P. issued its report on *Socialism and the Empire* last March. Here again the policy favoured is "not a destructive one of breaking up the Empire but a constructive one seeking to develop it into a real Commonwealth of Nations." In the case of the non-self-governing parts of the Empire "the ultimate goal is self-government, but that goal is not immediately attainable."

Even the nominally left-wing leaders of the I.L.P. not infrequently find occasion to make declarations of support for the Empire. Wheatley supports it because "within the British Empire we have a nucleus of unity." Kirkwood, during the Preference debate, June 12, 1925, declared:

I am all out for cementing the British Empire.

Maxton, in the debate on the Trade Facilities Bill, March 2, 1926, announced:

What we want to do is to build up a great Empire that shall house and develop a free people. That is an object we on these benches can share with any honourable member in this House.

The effect of this united front of Labour with imperialism is, of course, to create an intense distrust of the whole British working class among the revolutionary nationalists and masses of workers and peasants in the exploited territories of the British Empire. Indian Nationalists declare themselves disillusioned in the hopes they had based on the Labour Party, undeceived by "the ignoble record of the first Labour administration," and they add, "nor is there any certainty of better results even with Labour in a majority."—(*Bombay Chronicle*, September 19, 1925).

This situation has not been changed by the resolution of the Scarborough Congress of the Trades Union Congress last year. That resolution made considerable stir, for it meant that for the first time a leading organisation of British Labour declared for a complete break with the traditions of Labour imperialism. But the break was only in words, and has not been followed by any break in action.

The Time for Action

The Scarborough resolution was passed under pressure of rank and file opinion. It is a good indication that the old imperialist ideology is having to give way before the objective facts of the

threat to the British working class that the British Empire in fact represents. The basis for Labour imperialism has been undermined.

The old ideology persists among the working-class leaders that came into power under different conditions, it persists also among the petty bourgeois types that are far removed from the workers' struggle. But it is significant that the question of the Empire is a central question for the rank and file movement which includes all of what is vaguely termed the Left Wing.

The Trades Union Congress has declared its opposition to Labour imperialism. The task now is to translate this opposition into terms of action. It has been seen that in India the characteristic feature of recent development has been the closer union of British and Indian capital. That must be answered by the closer union of British and Indian labour. What is wanted now are not formulas or resolutions supporting the International Labour Office, or Imperial Preference, or denial of admission to goods made under "sweated" conditions, but practical concrete steps for the association and co-operation in action of the Labour movements in all parts of the Empire, and the development of a joint struggle against the combined forces of British imperialism.

FASCIST IMPERIALISM

By RALPH FOX

I. *The Aims of Fascist Imperialism*

FASCISM has recently discovered that the domestic virtues are not enough. In order to fulfil its mission it must expand beyond its own frontiers and regenerate the world. The *Corriere d'Italia* writes: "We have won the national battle, but this success cannot be final unless it is completed by victory on all fronts. A longer and more difficult battle is upon us now—that against the foreigner. Fascism is expanding its lungs. After the phase of national reassertion, it is putting itself forward as a universal, critical and reconstructive element."

That sounds good, and might even be construed as mere harmless, hot-headed idealism. But your Fascist is a practical person, and when he says he is going to expand he means it quite literally. The first step towards this assertion of Italy beyond her own frontiers is the creation of a "colonial conscience" in the Italian people by decreeing April 21, the anniversary of the foundation of Rome, as Colonial Day. And this is the meaning of Colonial Day, according to the Fascist paper *Impero*:—

"The meaning of this Colonial Day must be haughtily declared to other nations. They must learn across the frontier that Italy will not make war in any dilettante spirit, but because she is ready to undertake it in order to realise her colonial aspirations."

Maurizio Rava has written an interesting article on Italy's colonial policy in the *Rivista Coloniale* for April. "Until the present day," he writes, "we have remained shut out from the profitable colonial banquet." But that is to be put right now, for "Between State and State there is but one invincible law: that of force. And to be strong, it is necessary above all to possess a clear colonial consciousness."

So much for the philosophy of the new Imperialism. Its aims are concrete in accordance therewith. The Italians look towards Abyssinia, to Tunis, and to the Straits of Gibraltar, that is to Tangier. Italian policy in the past has been criminally careless. Abyssinia "was lost inside Italy," Kassala, the key to the Sudan

and its rich cotton lands, "was almost forced upon the stupefied English." "In the same way we have allowed others to occupy Tunis which was almost an Italian province, where 67,000 Italians lived, and no Frenchmen, 120 kilometres from Cape Granitola, in Sicily, and where is rising a menace to our southern coasts, the formidable base of Bizerta."

Rava concludes with an obvious reference to Abyssinia. "Above all, Italy demands that when the Powers shall decide upon the inevitable changes in the map, in Africa where numerous vague zones still exist, 'no man's lands' simply surrounded by lines of colour on the atlas, those nations who are already rich must not try, as in the past, to further increase their place in the sun.

"It would be a useless and perilous attempt.

"A warning to those who, beyond the Alps and beyond the sea, are watching us."

A second article by Francesco Coppola puts the question of Tangier and the Riff quite clearly. It appeared in the *Tribuna* for June 15. With regard to Morocco the writer distinguishes two aspects: "the local and colonial, that of the internal division of the zones, and the Mediterranean aspect, that of the security and liberty of the western gate of the Mediterranean. One can question to what degree Italy, in the former treaties, has disinterested herself from the first aspect of the question. On the other hand one can in no case suppose that she would have at any moment renounced, even in the slightest way, her fullest rights as regards the second aspect of the question: that of the Mediterranean."

In other words France and Spain may divide up Morocco as they will, provided the balance of power is not disturbed in the Mediterranean. That is, provided France is not provided with naval bases on the Mediterranean coast enabling her to command the Straits of Gibraltar. As regards the Straits—Spain holds her position by right of nature, England by an ancient act of force, but to-day "any attempt to install there yet another great naval and military power like France, that is a thing that Italy, if she does not wish to become a prisoner, absolutely cannot consent to without obtaining concrete and local compensation which gives her full assurance of the security and liberty of her traffic, whether in war or peace."

II. Fascist Diplomacy, 1923-6

Here in the fullest and clearest form, from the mouths of a variety of responsible spokesmen, are the aims of Fascist Imperialism declared. Nor have they remained mere words. For three years the Italian diplomats have been working on these lines for the above-mentioned ends. Only this year, however, have they struck openly.

Mussolini's triumphal progress to Libya was meant to be the signal to the rest of the world that Italy considered her time was now come. The noisy demonstration of Fascist arms and trumpets in North Africa was immediately followed by the joint Anglo-Italian note to Abyssinia, agreed upon by Mussolini and Chamberlain at Rapallo last year. It did not meet with a favourable reception, and the obviously Italian influences at work in the phrasing of the notes have brought a storm of abuse on the pathetic Chamberlain, who had allowed the robust realism of the Fascists to supersede the more crapulous and involved pretences of the old diplomacy.

Finally, the secret agreement between Spain and Italy, whose existence has just been made known, has joined together the two Latin dictatorships in an alliance designed to press their policy upon the powers. What that policy is we already know from the quotations given in the first part of this article. Tangier is to become entirely Spanish so that France may be excluded from a commanding position at the entry of the Mediterranean. Italy is to be supported in her desire to acquire Tunis and the lion's share of Abyssinia.

III. The Abyssinian Question

In 1896, at Adowa on the frontiers of Abyssinia, "Roman valour" met with a crushing defeat when the legions of Crispi, that man before his time, were annihilated by the bold warriors of the Ethiopian king. The Emperor Menelik promptly denounced the Treaty of Ucciali (1889) which had asserted a shadowy Italian protectorate over his realms and so impressed the robber powers by his firm determination that in his active lifetime none of them dare lift a finger.

But in May, 1906, the old lion had an apoplectic fit and was left paralysed. England, France and Italy lost no time, and in

July concluded the Tripartite Convention and presented it to the Emperor. It contained the usual statement that the powers desired to maintain the independence of Abyssinia and defined their "spheres of influence." Menelik, sick and dying, replied that he was glad to note the declaration and added, "But let it be understood that this arrangement in no way limits what we consider our sovereign rights."

Not until he was on his deathbed, two years later, did Menelik give permission for the French to construct a railway from Jibuti to Addis Ababa, "The New Flower," his capital. Even after his death, in 1908, with the country given up to the strife and intrigue of the feudal chiefs, the British and Italian concessions remained a dead letter, largely no doubt owing to the pressure of other events—the Tripolitan War, the Balkan War, and in 1914 the Great War.

Nevertheless, in 1916, a British Mission visited Lake Tsana, the source of the Blue Nile and a sacred spot to the Abyssinian Christian Church, but the government of the Regent refused to come to any agreement for the construction of a barrage.

Meanwhile, helped by the railway, French influence steadily gained ground. After the war a creature of theirs, the Ras Tafari, was made Regent, and afterwards "King of Kings," and the independent State of Abyssinia was admitted a full member of the League of Nations. In short the fly was actually given a position of honour inside the spider's parlour. But unfortunately, colonial wars in Morocco and Syria have taken away France's attention from the victim, and England and Italy have been able to steal a march on their rival.

England has found the question of the Sudan a vital one owing to the post-war rivalry with the United States which has made dependence on that country's cotton crop an intolerable position. The construction of the barrage at Lake Tsana would undoubtedly greatly increase the prosperity of the Sudan, or rather of the shareholders in the Sudan Plantations' Syndicate. Italy hopes to construct a railway through the heart of the Abyssinian plateau, connecting up her colonies of Somaliland and Eritrea and giving her virtual control of Abyssinia. France, who has been left entirely out of consideration in these arrangements,

not unnaturally protests, and hypocritically but cleverly uses against her rivals the fact of Abyssinia's membership of the League.

IV. *The Latin Bloc in the Mediterranean*

The text of the Spanish-Italian treaty is not known, but its objects are. Quite frankly it means that Italy will give her support to Spain in the division of the Riff and in Primo de Rivera's demand for Tangier. How the Italians expect to force Tunis from the French we can only surmise.

It is worth while, however, to recall that though the French occupied Tunis in 1881 only in 1896 did Italy recognise their occupation. Since then the Italian population has continued to increase rapidly and the French to remain stationary.

At the back of all Italy's talk of Empire is the fact that the economic position of the country, though not yet serious, gives rise to considerable misgivings. Emigration to North Africa would solve many problems, and a colonial war or two would no doubt give a fillip to heavy industry and finance-capital, while drowning any internal rumours as the first cracks appear in the ship of the Fascist State.

Yet Italy has no intention of fighting France. By manœuvring with Spain inside the League, which Mussolini clearly recognises for what it is, an Imperialist organisation for dividing up the spheres for exploitation without the necessity for armed conflict, he hopes to force France into consenting to a redistribution of territory in Africa. He may well succeed, for the revolt in Syria has reached alarming proportions and France knows quite well that England and Italy regard themselves as her natural heirs in that quarter.

The question of the war debts, as well as that of Syria, makes England a malevolent neutral so far as France is concerned. In desperation she is turning to Germany, and Poincaré is doubtless cherishing hopes that he will be able to play off England at Geneva by secretly supporting Germany's claims for the restoration of her colonies.

This Franco-German Alliance is already becoming a reality. The two powers are actively intriguing against England in Arabia, France has promised to reduce the Rhineland occupation forces,

and any day now may see the completion of the great anti-British Continental Steel Cartel in which French and German capital will play the leading rôle.

The completion of the Italian-Spanish Treaty has hastened things too much for the liking of the British Imperialists. It means that Britain must play a lone hand between the Franco-German and the Italian-Spanish blocs at Geneva. England needs Italy's co-operation in the Mediterranean and North Africa, but Italy as a leading power, actively and relentlessly pursuing a policy of her own, is another matter. For Italy's great weapon is that she can break up the League if she so desires, and that neither France nor Britain desire.

The Latin diplomatists will need to play their hand carefully at Geneva, or they may drive England against her will into the arms of France and Germany as the only alternative to dissolving the League. But with careful manœuvring on their part this should be avoided and Italy's desire attained—the rearrangement of the map of Africa.

Out of all this welter of intrigue one thing is certain—there will sooner or later be another colonial war added to those already in progress. It will not be the fault of Imperialism if that "little" war does not later lead to something bigger. Lastly, the cynic may meditate that at least one result will be the re-emergence of Germany as a great western power, and maybe also as a colonial power.

COURSE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

By EARL BROWDER

THE dominating position occupied in world economics by the United States makes it essential, in judging possibilities of world developments, to take as a most important factor a detailed examination of the trends of development in America. There are two principal phases of American economic tendencies : (a) relation of U.S. economy to world production and the world market; and (b) changes in the internal structure of American capitalism. Of the two, the latter has been the least studied, although it may be questioned which is the more important at this time.

Production has continued upward in the first half of 1926. Expectations of a depression, freely expressed at the beginning of the year, have given way to optimistic statements. During the middle of July, the Secretary of the Treasury, Mellon, stated that in the view of the Government the business outlook is bright. Freight-loadings for the year to June 19 increased by 640,000 carloads over last year's record. Gross earnings of fifteen principal railways in the first week of July increased 7.9 per cent. Stocks of the Steel Corporation and General Motors advanced to new high levels. Average prices of twenty representative railroad stocks on July 17 were 115.44 compared with last year's average of 99.16 ; for twenty leading industrial stocks in the same period the increase was to 158.81 from 134.58. General index of the Department of Commerce for manufacturing production to the end of April showed an increase over last year from 130 to 133, while trade index increased 4 points. Production of pig iron increased from an index of 127 to 135, and steel ingots from 142 to 163. Production of bituminous coal increased 15 per cent. over 1925. Automobile production increased by 19 per cent., building construction by 20 per cent., electrical power production by 12 per cent., income of public utilities by 12 per cent. It may be confidently

stated, particularly when the crises in Europe and Great Britain are taken into calculation, that the United States has considerably strengthened its economic position in the world market, and promises to continue its upward course in the immediate future.

II

That change in the internal structure of American economics which is most closely related to the position of the U.S. in world economy, is reflected in foreign trade and export of capital. It takes the form of enormous absorption of European securities, and the transformation of foreign trade from its previous condition, in which raw materials predominated in exports and manufactures in imports, to the opposite condition where exports are predominantly manufactures and imports are predominantly raw materials. All these characteristics are sharply accentuated in the first months of 1926, as shown by the following figures:—

Imports, first four months, compared with 1925:—

Crude materials	..	..	..	increased	34.9 per cent.
Foodstuffs, crude	..	..	..	„	13.5 per cent.
Manufactured foods	..	..	..	decreased	11.7 per cent.
Semi-manufactures	..	..	..	increased	7.9 per cent.
Manufactures, finished	..	..	..	„	8.3 per cent.
Grand total	..	..	..	„	16.7 per cent.

Exports:—

Crude materials	..	..	..	decreased	32.1 per cent.
Foodstuffs, crude	..	..	..	„	45.8 per cent.
Manufactured foods	..	..	..	„	16.6 per cent.
Semi-manufactures	..	..	..	„	10.4 per cent.
Finished manufactures	..	..	..	<i>increased</i>	14.7 per cent.
Grand total	..	..	..	decreased	9.4 per cent.

During the same period, new securities of foreign Governments floated in America increased over 1925 by 35.4 per cent., while domestic new incorporations increased by 95.5 per cent. These figures disclose that America's position as the creditor of the world is changing, not alone the relation between raw materials and manufactures in exports and imports, but is also producing already a tendency for imports to increase at the expense of exports—a tendency the classical expression of which is Great Britain's constant passive balance of trade.

III

Forecasts of economic depression in the United States during 1926 have been largely based upon the judgment that building construction and automobile production (two main pillars of American prosperity) had reached the saturation point, while the enormous expansion of instalment-purchase credits and the intensification of the agrarian crisis furnished two important subsidiary weak points in the present upward development (e.g., see *Workers' Monthly*, July, pp. 402-3, and *Annalist*, almost any issue during past year; also both majority and minority theses of *Workers' Party* in December, 1924). These forecasts, which were so dramatically falsified by the events of 1925 and the first half of 1926, were in error fundamentally, in that they failed to take into account the shift in the internal structure of American capitalism. This internal shifting process, while it gave rise to innumerable partial crises, and may be considered basic to the very serious agrarian crisis, is an absolute necessity for American capitalism, because it constitutes the adjustment to its new position in the world. Thus it may be said that these partial crises, instead of presaging a deep general crisis in the near future, are on the contrary the very means by which American capitalist production proceeds to new expansions. While it is undoubtedly true that thereby American capitalism, far from solving its internal contradictions, is rather intensifying them, and preparing for a colossal crash in the future, it is a great mistake to suppose that these partial crises betoken an immediately impending general crisis.

IV

Examination in detail of the building construction industry will expose the nature of the error which calculated upon an immediate collapse. It has been assumed that the expansion of this industry was based upon the necessity to overcome the shortage caused by lack of building operations during the war period. The claim has been put forth for the past three years that this hypothetical war shortage having been overcome, building operations must slow down and become "normal" (normal in the sense of resuming the pre-war ratio of construction per head of population). The most typical study of the building industry from this point

of view is the article in the July, 1925, issue of the *Monthly Labour Review* of the U.S. Department of Labour, written by H. B. Byer (see also *Workers' Monthly*, July, 1926, where this assumption appears as a basic to a forecast of industrial depression). It is precisely this assumption of a "normal" ratio of building to population, based upon pre-war standards, which vitiated all such calculations. The "normal" rate of building in the U.S. has undergone a revolution since the war, and particularly since 1920.

The principal fact in raising the norm of building has been the unexampled rate of accumulation of surplus values in the form of new capital. This enormous accumulation since 1920 has not primarily been invested in industrial plant. Rather it is developing in the direction forecast in the remarkable book of Jack London's, *The Iron Heel*—gigantic public works, roads, engineering projects, and a completely new level of housing for the upper classes. Town and country club houses for the rich, for example, reached the figure of \$370 millions in 1924, and the movement in this direction is only beginning. Amusement buildings, theatres, etc., accounted for \$250 millions. New hotels of enormous size are being erected in hundreds of cities. The construction bill for garages to house the 17 million motor cars of the upper and middle classes, runs into a figure of about \$200 millions (\$165 millions in 1923). Civic improvements on the grand scale are constantly being announced; for example, the Chicago project, which includes straightening the Chicago River, building the Great South Water Street boulevard, and the new system of railroad terminals, with the widening of La Salle Street down town, alone runs into hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition to the normal increase of population, there is the large shift from the country to the city, which has multiplied the demand for the new building. Also the industrialisation of the south has created an entirely new field of building expansion, not only in industrial plant, but in every other phase of building, in all of which the south was extremely backward. The character of housing facilities in and about the great cities is being entirely changed; in the cities a whole system of large apartment houses is springing up; while accompanying this there is a movement of large masses into the suburbs with the development of transporta-

tion, and thousands of new small communities are being created which involve not only new residence building, but also the whole complex of schools, municipal buildings, club houses, shops, etc., that go with American upper and middle-class communities. Add to all these factors, and many others not mentioned that accompany such accumulations of surplus values as those in the hands of the American bourgeoisie, the further fact that industrial plant extension, hitherto below the pre-war norm, is again beginning to expand so that it is now the greatest item in the building programme, and it becomes clear that all the old ideas of returning to a pre-war "normal" of building operations is a false basis for predicting the future of the building industry.

It is therefore not surprising to find that the first four months of 1926, far from registering a retrenchment in building operations, showed a large increase over 1925. Now building contracts in this period increased in values, for commercial buildings, 35.4 per cent.; industrial buildings, 59.3 per cent.; residential buildings, 16.8 per cent.; public works and utilities, 15.9 per cent.; semi-public buildings, 4.2 per cent.; while the only category to register a decrease was educational buildings, which was less by 11.9 per cent. The increase in total of all building contracts was 19.9 per cent., which is at the rate of more than one billion dollars increase for the year.

V

In the case of the automobile industry, it is not so easy to locate definitely the source of error which falsified all predictions of a slump in 1926. With 17 million automobiles already in use in the United States the industry increased its production in the first four months of 1926 by 18.9 per cent., with 1,421,742 new passenger cars, not to mention 175,586 new trucks. The General Motor Company (next to Ford, the largest, and producing one-third of all cars) announced in July this year vast new developments of their plant out of earnings, totalling \$40 millions out of its cash reserves of \$190 millions. Shares of stock in this corporation, which only a few years ago contained a large proportion of "water," are now quoted at more than 50 per cent. above par. All of which fails to indicate an immediate collapse in prospect.

The question of the automobile industry is closely bound up with the problem of the instalment-purchase system, in which automobiles make up four-fifths of the total credits involved. In the absence of detailed investigations in the subject it can only be offered as a conjecture that previous estimates of the "saturation point" of instalment-purchase credits have been placed upon too narrow a basis. Another partial explanation of the continued expansion of the automobile industry is found in the greater increase of exports, which in the first four months of 1926 increased over the previous year by 24.7 per cent. for assembled cars, and 33.8 per cent. for parts and accessories. Whatever the complete explanation may be, it remains a fact that, belying the forecasts of collapse, the automobile industry is making a new high record in 1926.

VI

There remains the agrarian crisis. Contrary to the other "weak points" in American economics considered above, the agrarian crisis has developed with an intensity beyond expectations. Agriculture in the United States is in a very difficult situation, which becomes more and more aggravated. A few figures will illustrate the scope of the crisis as it developed in the first four months of 1926.

Decrease in receipts of grain in principal markets, compared with same period of 1925: Wheat, 6.7 per cent.; corn, 4.1 per cent.; oats, 17.2 per cent.; barley, 23.6 per cent.; rye, 32.4 per cent.

Decrease in exports: Wheat, 69.5 per cent.; wheat flour, 33.2 per cent.; barley, 46.1 per cent.; rye, 85.8 per cent. Corn and oats exports increased, due to exceedingly sharp decrease in prices.

Movement of cattle in primary markets decreased 11.4 per cent., although exports increased 8.6 per cent. as a result of price reductions. Hog receipts decreased 18.5 per cent., while export of pork decreased 4.2 per cent.

Price index of farm products fell from an average of 147 for 1925, to 140 in April, 1926, almost 5 per cent.

During the chronic crisis that has affected agriculture since 1920, there has been a progressive shrinking of the equipment of the industry as a whole. The census of live stock of 1925, compared

with that of 1920, showed a decrease in the number of head of cattle amounting to 7.6 per cent., while the number of head of swine decreased by 12.6 per cent. This shrinkage undoubtedly continues into 1926, as the heaviest decrease previously was precisely in the stock used for breeding purposes.

Space forbids a detailed analysis of the specific American features of the agrarian crisis. Suffice it to point out two main aspects of its special American face : (a) Agricultural production has been brought more completely under the conditions of capitalist production than anywhere else, in that it produces primarily for the market and only incidentally for farm consumption; but, in contrast with manufacturing industry, it has been found impossible to develop mass production—the technique of agriculture has lagged far behind that of manufacture. (b) Producing primarily for the market, which in the last analysis means for the world market, especially for American agriculture, it finds constantly increasing difficulty in competing in this world market against countries with lower costs of production, while even the available foreign markets are narrowed by the tendency of growing exports of manufactures to create a counter movement of imports of foodstuffs. Inextricably caught in the teeth of these contradictions, American agriculture is doomed to continued deflation and shrinkage in a ratio dependent in large degree upon the expansion of city industries.

Here is undoubtedly the point of greatest immediate weakness in the social system of the United States, and will be the storm centre of political life for some years. It presents a major contradiction of American capitalism, the consequences of which are revolutionary in their implications. But this is the long-time view of the matter so far as concerns *economic upheavals*, in the system as a whole within the next few years. For the present, it is precisely through placing the burdens of its contradictions upon agriculture that manufacturing industry is escaping the immediate consequences of these contradictions for itself. In the immediate expansion of city industries, one of the necessary consequences for capitalism in America is just this, the reduction of agriculture to a lower level in the economic system than it has hitherto occupied. This is the conscious programme of American capitalism.

VII

Deep-going internal changes are not confined to the shift in relationship between agriculture and industry. Just as 1920 marks the point when agriculture ceases to expand even at its former rate, which was less than that of industry, and the line of development of the two principal branches of production take different directions, so also occurs a tremendously important internal change of structure within manufacturing industry itself at this time. This latter has to deal with the relation between the volume of production and the volume of the working force—the numbers of the industrial working class.

It has been true for the whole of the period for which statistics are available that manufacturing production has on the whole increased at a faster rate than the number of workers involved, just as manufacturing has expanded at a greater rate than agriculture. In the period conveniently marked by the year 1920 this difference in degree became a difference in essence—the difference in quantity became a difference in quality—and the truly enormous expansion of manufacturing production began to be accompanied by a positive reduction in the number of workers employed. This tendency has also continued into the year 1926.

A few brief figures will illustrate this point. The census of manufactures for 1919 shows the number of workers engaged in manufacture as 9,096,372; in 1923 this has fallen to 8,763,233, a loss of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. During the same period of four years, in spite of the large drop in prices which obscures the full extent of the expansion of production, the value added in the process of manufacture had increased from 25,041 million dollars to 25,853 million dollars, or more than 3 per cent. increase.

This divergence obtains a more dramatic expression in a comparison between 1920 and 1925. For this period we have no census figures as yet, but the comparison can be obtained from other sources. The *U.S. Commerce Reports* index of production, 1920 being equal to 100, had reached in October, 1925, the figure of 132. Employment of workers, on the contrary, sharply declined, average employment for the year 1920 being represented by an index figure of 109.9, declines by October, 1925, to the figure of 90.8. Expressed in percentages, this shows that:—

From 1920 to 1925 the number of workers engaged in manufacture decreased by 17.4 per cent., while in the same period production increased by 32 per cent.

VIII

The foregoing is, of course, but a sketchy outline of the structural changes going on inside the American economic system. They accompany the new position occupied in the world-system of capitalism by the United States, in part as cause and in part as effect. These facts are essential to an understanding of the changing social and political phenomena, because they furnish the economic basis for these changes. In particular do they assist in an understanding of the development of the "new American forms" of class collaboration, of the corruption of the trade union bureaucracy and the upper strata of the workers, which are becoming known to the Labour movements of the world because of the frantic efforts of employers everywhere to "import" the American methods, to "Americanise" the trade unions in the various countries.

Step by step with the development of the economic tendencies described above, was developed the new system of class collaboration. Detailed examination of this correlation belongs to another article, but can be indicated in a few facts and dates thus: In 1921 the foundation of the first Labour banks; 1922, inauguration of the B. & O. plan; 1923, the manifesto of the American Federation of Labour at its Portland Congress in favour of collaboration with the employers for increased production and "industrial democracy," accompanied by the declaration of war against the Left Wing and Communists; 1924, the linking up of the A.F. of L. with the War Department of the Government through "Labour" representation in the management of military training camps, together with the active expansion of the Pan-American Federation as the agent of American imperialist interests in Latin America; 1925, the Atlantic City Congress declaration of the "new wages policy" followed by William Green, President of the A.F. of L., appearing before the Conference of the Taylor Society of Efficiency Engineers to publicly seal the compact between the Labour unions and the employers through the medium of production experts.

The relation between these developments of trade union policy and the economic changes in the system of production are obvious.

It is beyond the scope of this article to attempt any systematic conclusions from the facts set forth. It suffices for the moment to point out that, although hitherto too little attention has been paid to them, they promise, when given closer and more detailed study, to greatly assist our American revolutionary organisations as well as the entire Communist International, in forming a more precise estimation of the course of economic development, and as a consequence a more fruitful programme of action.

The World of Labour

INTERNATIONAL : Anglo-Russian Miners' Conference	..	..	569
FRANCE : Socialist Party Conference	..	..	569
Communist Party Conference	..	..	570
TUNIS : Trade Union Movement	..	..	572

INTERNATIONAL

Anglo-Russian Miners' Conference

A MEETING of representatives of the miners of Great Britain and the Soviet Union took place in Berlin on July 7. The following official report was issued :—

The representatives of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, Messrs. Cook and Richardson, and of the Russian Miners' Union, Messrs. Schwarz and Akulov, held a discussion in Berlin on July 7, 1926, during which further support for the British miners was considered.

The meeting accepted the report of A. J. Cook, the Secretary of the British Miners' Federation, on the situation of the strike, the preparedness of the miners to face a continuation of the struggle, and on the adverse financial situation. There followed a short financial report by Richardson. The meeting accepted the report of Schwarz, representing the Russian Miners' Union, on the campaign of support which had been pursued in the Soviet Union, and on the possibilities of further support for the British Miners from the Soviet Trade Unions. The meeting unanimously passed a decision to address an appeal to the workers of all countries for financial support for the British Miners.

Both the British and the Russian representatives considered it necessary that the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee should be called together immediately. It was also considered desirable that an Anglo-Russian Miners' Committee should be set up, to maintain connection between the two countries, and ultimately to secure the admission of the Russian Miners' Union to the Miners' International. The representatives of the miners of both countries promise to report back to their organisations, and to do everything in their power to carry out the aforementioned decisions.

(Signed) S. SCHWARZ. J. AKULOV. W. P. RICHARDSON. A. J. COOK.

The appeal decided on was issued on the same day and it emphasises that the struggle of the British miners is of the greatest importance as it concerns not themselves alone but very directly the miners and thus all other workers of Europe and even of the whole world.

FRANCE

Socialist Party Conference

THE Annual Conference of the French Socialist Party was held from May 23 to 26 at Clermont-Ferrand. The number of members was stated to be over 110,000, an increase of 20,000 during the year.

After an indecisive debate on the first day on the League of Nations, and a short discussion on colonial policy, the remaining time was devoted to considering the domestic and particularly the parliamentary policy of the Party. The difficult position of the Party has led to the development of a fairly strong right-wing opposition led by Renaudel, and a small left-wing group led by Maurin. At the congress the support for the majority was overwhelming, though the right wing has greater influence among the deputies. The new Permanent Administrative Committee contains twenty-three members of the majority, eight of the Right, and two of the Left.

The decisions are summed up in the resolution passed on the last day of the Conference, against the opposition of both smaller sections. This confirms the decisions of the two extraordinary conferences which declared against participation in the Ministry, but proceeds :—

Nevertheless, the Party remains resolved to renew this endeavour to collaborate with any government which, while fighting reaction, works towards restoring the financial situation of France without yielding to the resistance of capitalist forces, without unjustly burdening labour and without ever forgetting that the general interest depends on the fuller realisation day by day of the claims of the working class.

This support will be given according to the decisions of the Grenoble Congress (February, 1925), *i.e.* :—

Without renouncing its independence, without being tied by any permanent pact to other parties or to the government itself, and without the connections and relations, indispensable in practice, ever assuming even in appearance, the character of organic co-operation.

This action must be conducted with a view to obtaining a capital levy, stabilisation of the currency, peace in Morocco, the transfer to the League of Nations of the mandate in Syria, the reduction of the term of military service, the introduction of social insurance.

The resolution, however, also permits of a policy of vigorous opposition, and calls for discipline in the Party generally and in the parliamentary group in the observance of Party decisions. A reference is made to "contrary attractions which are trying to influence the Party in order to disrupt it," and the participation of groups of members in committees for "united front" purposes is explicitly condemned.

The discussion on the League of Nations, which centred round the position of Paul-Boncour, gave rise to sharp differences of opinion, which were further discussed at a meeting of the Committee on July 18.

A motion put forward by Zyromski proposed to withdraw the permission accorded to Paul-Boncour to accept from the Government a delegate's mandate to the League of Nations. This was defeated by a motion proposed by Blum, which refers the matter to the Executive of the International. An addendum instructing the French delegates to vote against such permission was carried, whereupon Renaudel resigned his position of delegate to the Executive of the International.

Communist Party Congress

The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of France took place at Lille, from June 20 to 26, after a day's conference on organisational questions. Fraternal delegates were present from the E.C.C.I. and

from the German, Italian, Czechoslovakian and British Communist Parties.

The membership was reported to be approximately 50,000, a decrease on the previous year.

The Reports of the Executive and the Report on the National and International situation given by Semard, the Secretary, sum up the matter of the discussions.

The Reports state that since the war the structure of French capitalism has changed considerably. Industrialisation has increased greatly through the demands of the war and the reconstruction period, the acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine, &c. With this development the importance of large industry, particularly the heavy industry, has increased, and that of small industry, and of the petit-bourgeoisie generally, declined. These changes are still proceeding and are aided by the continued fall of the franc. The proletariat has increased in numbers and concentration, and now includes some three millions of foreign-born workers.

As a consequence the class struggle is increasing in intensity, the working class and large sections of the impoverished petit-bourgeoisie are being driven to the left, while other sections are providing membership for the Fascisti. These changes show themselves in the parliamentary field, where, as in Britain, the support of the Liberal parties is being transferred to the Socialist Party, which, while still enjoying much working-class support, is becoming steadily a party of the petit-bourgeoisie.

The financial crisis is creating a very difficult situation for the French bourgeoisie who try at once to avoid falling victim to Anglo-American financiers, and to escape from the revolutionary possibilities which will follow a successful attempt at stabilisation. Such stabilisation is inevitable, probably as the result of a "Dawes plan" for France, and the consequences, an economic crisis, unemployment, attempted abrogation of the eight-hour day, &c., will require the strong reactionary Government which the bourgeoisie is now trying to form. The difficulties of the bourgeoisie are increased by the continuance of fighting in Morocco and Syria, the beginning of a separatist movement in Alsace-Lorraine, and the resistance of the workers to the steady fall in their standard of living, which has shown itself during the past months in the many local strikes, &c.

In this situation the Communist Party has had to record both success and failure. The fall in membership while partly due to isolation from the working-class and faults of over-centralisation and mechanical reorganisation, &c., is also partly due to the elimination of those who lost courage in the campaign against the Morocco war. It is admitted that the Party has not gained sufficiently from the move to the left of the workers and peasants, which has benefited the Socialist Party primarily, and this is due mainly to faulty United Front tactics, *e.g.*, the unacceptable proposals for a united campaign against the Morocco war. This and similar faults were reviewed and corrected by the Executive Conference of December 1 and 2, 1925, and the resulting "Letter to the Members of the Party." The Party has generally underestimated the strength of the Socialist Party, which still retains much working-class support. A further weakness in the Communist Party derives from the inadequate fusion of the two generations of workers of which it is composed.

The attitude of the Party towards the situation, and its future lines of action, are laid down in the political resolution. The main tasks are :—

(1) The creation for the first time in France of a mass Trade Union organisation, and its adaptation to the recent changes among the French proletariat; (2) the propaganda for the "Workers' and Peasants' Government," as necessary for the solution of the financial crisis; (3) the attraction of allies (neutralisation of the petit-bourgeoisie).

On organisation, the factory group is recognised and approved as the basic organisation of the Party, but the necessity of street or area groups is also stressed, and the larger districts are to approximate more closely to the State administrative areas. On the faults committed by the Party, due largely to excessive preoccupation with internal affairs, the resolution approves of the "letter to the Members of the Party," and considers that the necessary corrections have been made. The struggle against the "Right" which supports Souvarine, &c., is to be continued, but at the same time no lapse into the "left" errors condemned by the Conference of December 1 and 2 is to be allowed.

The resolution further deals in detail with fraction work generally, trade union, co-operative, peasant and colonial work, party education, and the new Executive Committee.

TUNIS

Trade Union Movement

UNTIL 1924 the trade unions of Tunis were small bodies affiliated to the French C.G.T., and admitting almost only white workers, railwaymen, clerks, &c. After the dockers' strike at Bizerta during that year, when in spite of the rule of a democratic Herriot government, machine guns were employed in putting down the strike movement, some organisation of native workers began. By the end of the year the membership claimed was 10,000, organised in thirty-six unions. They were subjected to minor persecution throughout, but when in January, 1925, a big strike led by Tunis Trade Union Federation (C.G.T.T.) began in the cement works of Hammanlif and Potinville, the Governor intervened and arrested the six principal leaders, five natives and one Frenchman. After remaining in prison ten months they were charged with having tried to organise trade unions in Tunis—

following communist lines, but in keeping with national tendencies, in which, with few exceptions, Mohammedan workers alone took part. These trade unions were to be directed from the C.G.T.T., with headquarters in Tunis. Telephonic communication was to be established with the centre, whence the signal was to be given for a general strike, which in the opinion of the accused would provide occasion for a bloody upheaval . . .

The accused were sentenced to expulsion from Tunis for periods of five to fifteen years.

BOOK REVIEW

INDIA IN PERSPECTIVE

Modern India. By R. Palme Dutt. (Sunshine Publishing House, Bombay, 1926. Price Rs. 2.12.)

MY friend Palme Dutt has at last started the right type of political literature for India. The European reader has hitherto looked in vain to have a proper perspective of Indian political demands and leadership that can intelligently explain the wondrous phenomenon of a country of 320 million people unwillingly submitting to a foreign rule that scarcely maintains 100,000 foreign troops in India. Palme Dutt explains in his book how it is done, and why it has been possible. To make it a complete guide, I should have liked to see some telling statistical tables added as appendix. However, there are sufficient figures quoted by the author in the contents of the book to prove his case.

For forty years my Indian compatriots have struggled for "freedom," all the time marching in the wrong lane. They were seriously following the advice and teachings of their masters in the hope of thereby discovering a way to defeat and overthrow the masters! It was not any genuine native assemblage of Indians that developed into the Indian National Congress. The entire concept of the first Congress was official and British, though the personnel was Indian. It was Lord Dufferin, the reputed diplomat of Imperial Britain, the Viceroy of India, and the Conqueror of Burmah, who first devised the scheme of a "safety valve" for periodical escapement of anglicised Indian opinion, as political ebullitions of a western type were bound to bubble in the hearts of English educated Indians who were necessary to act as handmaids of British Imperialism in India, where numerically the British were badly handicapped. Lord Dufferin discussed his plan with David Hume who "enjoyed the confidence" of Indian public men, and thus the Indian (?) National Congress was conceived and its first session was held. From time to time other members of Imperial Bureaucracy who "won public confidence," such as Sir Henry Cotton and Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Yale (a Calcutta merchant), and Mr. Norton, a Madras barrister, remained for years as guiding heads of the Indian Congress.

All the early Congress resolutions are pitiable attempts to apply the doctrines of Macaulay, Bright or Adam Smith to India in order to uplift her peasantry and teeming millions whose average income per head barely reached three halfpence per day! The Congress took pride in the British National Anthem, every fresh University graduate with a touch of political ambition had a walk-over seat in its annual session, as a "delegate" from somewhere, where the people of "somewhere" were never troubled to elect any delegate. The presidential speeches, invariably read out and not delivered, and lasting over two or three hours with considerable oratorical gifts, were amazing annual performances of attempts at reconciling the assertion of British Rule in India as the hand of Divine Providence for the ultimate uplifting of humanity in

the whole world, with a list of grievances arising out of the "satanical" rule of a foreign and unfeeling oppressor.

All the political literature one had of India were these presidential speeches, and all the statistics were only general figures of the country's wealth and trade abstracted from speeches or publications of Finance Members of the Viceroy's Government. The advent of Gandhism gave a metaphysical leaven to this "loyal and aristocratic" expression, interspersed with scattered revolutionary phraseology. Even Tilak's fire had died out after his political contact with Annie Besant and George Lansbury. The Swarajist school for a time promised to shed permanently the philosophy of the Imperialist ruler from the politics of the people, and the advent of the Trade Union Congress movement at last brought to light the statistics that really mattered, viz., the actual earnings of peasants and workers engaged in newly planted industries.

As a reaction the old aristocratic Congress mentality gathered its forces outside the Congress, and curiously enough they have found strong support from members of the British Labour Party. Sir Tejbahdur Sapru, Sir Sankaran Nair, Sir Ali Iman, the Rt. Hon. Srinivasva Sastri (who openly formed the Indian Liberal Party, and set about the old job of giving to India a place in the sun through and within the British Empire as a *sine qua non* condition) find respect, friendship, and complete co-operation from the leading members of the British Labour Party who interest themselves in Indian matters.

Under fear of isolation, the Swaraj politicians are beginning to retrace their steps. At this juncture, I consider Comrade Dutt's book as a clarion call, both to British Socialists and to the Indian politicians, and Dutt writes as Dutt alone can write. There are one or two imperfections in the data quoted, but on the whole his little book builds a safe plank between India and the world's proletarian struggle for mass freedom. It seems strange that one needs to be told that India's freedom must first mean the freedom of the largest numbers of Indians, viz. : India's masses, her peasantry and workers, and that freedom essentially should be social and economic and not mere political illusions. Our Indian leaders have several times understood this to be so, but they have a vain dream that once they overthrow the foreign yoke, by some nebulous scheme of Dominion rule or Swaraj within the Empire, they would soon procure mass freedom for the peasants and workers. In the first place they have not realised that any effective overthrow of "foreign yoke" can never be achieved without mass strength behind it, and secondly that if they did succeed, even partially, they too like the "political aristocrats" of all lands will be the rulers over the masses, denying to the masses their social and economic freedom, and anxious to preserve the "Law and Order," which accepts and respects the rights of property of the few even if that means the many must remain propertyless.

I appeal to my Indian friends who mean well, not to take umbrage at Dutt's clear and analytical criticism, but to welcome it heartily and sincerely. I should like some Indian political philanthropist to come forward and to order a cheap popular edition of the book under his or her guarantee to the publishers, and to see that a few hundred thousand young Indian students of both sexes get this valuable political textbook. We want political science and

not patriotic emotion if we are to free the exploited masses in the oriental world. I hope the Indian Trade Union Congress will get this book translated accurately in the principal vernacular languages, viz. : Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Mahrathi and Gujrati, and see to it that some educated person makes it his or her business to read and explain the contents of this book to the peasants and workers speaking these different languages. Within two or three years a new mass psychology can be developed in India by this process, and the people of India can be heartened into taking action, where Gandhi failed and Das gave up.

I should also appeal to my British Socialist and Parliamentary friends to cease from misleading my poor countrymen in India, and from giving to the British public a false interpretation of Socialistic aims. Genuinely and absolutely equal rights for Indians within the British Empire, in a capitalist world, are impossible, for if this miracle did happen, the Indians by their overwhelming numbers will soon become the dominant factor in the Empire on the basis of capitalist Democracy. The maintenance of British rule in India must inevitably mean an impossibility of any serious disarmament programme for Britain, and consequently for the rest of Europe who must remain in dread of the total imperial forces of the world-wide British Empire. The Empire in India must mean continuity of Tory and Liberal policy of interference in Egypt, Turkey, Palestine, Persia, Afghanistan, North West Frontier of India, Nepal, Bhutan, and China. Ramsay MacDonald realised it—and quite rightly so—as soon as he had his first interview with His Majesty about the possibility of his taking office as the Prime Minister of the Emperor of India.

Several British Socialists—including our venerable friend George Lansbury—are out for a wonderful scheme for Home Rule for India within the Empire, with the military and foreign policy in the hands of Britain. How will this work out? Indian capitalist politicians will prohibit by law or by unworkable duties, imports of Japanese textiles, for instance, or exports of Indian cotton to Japan or of jute or oil seeds to Scotland, America, Germany, and Italy. These foreign countries will not only complain to Britain, but may adopt retaliatory economic measures detrimental to the workers of Britain. Is Britain to go to war with these foreign powers, or is the Viceroy to lead his army to the Council room in India, disperse the Indian Councillors, establish a military dictatorship, and reverse the above laws?

The Indian Councillors, in order to help Indian shareholders and directors, may create obstacles—and they are not foolish enough not to use their powers thus—in the way British shipping companies trading in Indian cargoes, British coal companies owning mines in Bengal, British textile companies owning jute or cotton mills in India, or with Taylor Brothers taking away gold from India. Is the Viceroy then to protect British merchants by unconstitutionally vetoing all the Indian Bills, or by using his military power?

Comrade Lansbury's Home Rule Bill for India introduced in Parliament gives power to the villagers themselves to construct their water-works, water-ways, roads, hospitals, and establish universal education, mothers' pensions, old age pensions, compensations, &c., but all the income that the

Viceroy will be compelled to hand over for the above purposes will be about £12,000,000 for about 280,000,000 people, or about 10d. per head, per year.

Is it not perfectly clear that no genuine Socialist can support Imperialism in any form? A false plea is sometimes put forward that Imperialism is also a mild and limited form of Internationalism. This is untrue, it is really prohibitive of fair and even-handed Internationalism. British Imperialism in India must mean a different attitude by Indians towards Britain from what it would be towards France, or America, or China or Russia. If this is not so, why plead for a centralised imperial foreign policy?

Let us hope Comrade Dutt's book will be made available for readers in Great Britain, America, and Europe, and will be the forerunner of a new political literature on British Imperialism, and on the genuine economic and social rights to freedom of India's peasants and workers as opposed to those of war-lords, land-lords, and industrial magnates and merchant princes or other princes. I again beg of all readers of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY* to receive Palme Dutt's book with a warm welcome, without peevishness against its outspokenness as a critic.

S. S.



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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

BOURNEMOUTH AND MARGATE

The Bournemouth Congress

L. V. B.

A Message

HARRY POLLITT

Margate and the Left Wing

JOSEPH SOUTHALL

Empire and Socialism in Australia

P. R. S.

Where is Canada Heading For?

MAURICE SPECTOR

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - - - -	Page 579
<i>BOURNEMOUTH AND MARGATE</i>		
The Bournemouth Congress	- - - - -	„ 594
	<i>By L. V. B.</i>	
A Message	- - - - -	„ 605
	<i>By HARRY POLLITT</i>	
Margate and the Left Wing	- - - - -	„ 607
	<i>By JOSEPH SOUTHALL</i>	
Empire and Socialism in Australia	- - - - -	„ 613
	<i>By P. R. S.</i>	
Where is Canada Heading For?	- - - - -	„ 621
	<i>By MAURICE SPECTOR</i>	
Welsh Art and the Revolutionary Idea	- - - - -	„ 629
	<i>By BYRON WELSH</i>	
The World of Labour	- - - - -	„ 632
The Anglo-Russian Committee		
Book Review	- - - - -	„ 638
The Government as Strike-Breaker		<i>E. B.</i>

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NOTES of the MONTH

The Labour Conferences—The Government Campaign—Working-Class Disorganisation—Fruits of May 12—The Sequel of Treachery—The Retreat at Bournemouth—Leaders or Workers?—Suppressing Opposition—A “Quiet” Congress—Absent Voices—The Congress and the Miners—A Question and Answer—The General Strike—Dethroning the Congress—Pacts and Pledges—The Miners’ Rôle—Dangers to Unity—Margate—Labour Party and Trade Unions—Minority and Majority

BOTH the Labour Conferences this year, the Trades Union Congress at Bournemouth and the Labour Party Conference at Margate, are being held under the shadow of the miners’ fight. At the present time there are two issues of dominating importance in the Labour Movement—the Miners’ Lock-out and the General Strike. The first is an immediate practical issue, on which the fate of the working class in this country and abroad depends more than it has ever done before on the fight of any section. The second is an even deeper all-embracing issue, on which turns the future, the policy and the leadership of the whole movement. Yet neither of these two issues, admittedly overshadowing every other in importance, has been dealt with at the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress ; and the machinery of discipline has actually been employed to prevent their even being raised in any effective way. This is a very significant fact, and it is worth while inquiring into the reason. By their relation to these two issues (which are in the last resort a single issue) the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress and the Margate Labour Party Conference will be judged.

THE situation confronting these two Labour Conferences is a very urgent one. The direct Government and employers’ attack on the workers is stronger than it has ever been. The attack on wages is open ; the attack on hours is open ; the attack on working-class organisation is open. Hundreds of

the best working-class fighters are in prison ; thousands of others are victimised. One-quarter of the organised workers are being driven into the abyss, and are fighting step by step against desperate odds, while the rest of the workers are compelled to look on helplessly and do service for the enemy. Encouraged by the inactivity of the Labour Movement, the Government and the coal-owners are raising their terms every week. The first fruit of the reaction at Bournemouth has been the immediate hardening of the Government's demands, and backing for the most extreme terms of the coalowners. The attack is spreading to the whole sphere of working-class legislation and organisation ; abroad, war has begun on China, and war preparations against the Soviet Union are in full swing.

IN the face of this situation what is the organised working-class movement doing ? What steps are being taken to meet the attack ? The answer is a terrible one. The workers are left as helpless as if they had no organisation. The machine of the working-class movement is being used, not against the capitalist enemy, not to help the miners, not to organise the action of the workers for practical aid, but against the miners, to prevent (under cover of a thin film of philanthropy) effective aid to the miners, to disorganise the workers and compel them to blackleg, to broadcast attacks on the miners and propaganda for defeat, to unite with the Government in suppressing and gagging the revolutionary workers, and to prevent the issues being raised and faced. The workers are compelled to carry millions of tons of blackleg coal. Under the flag of the Amsterdam International and the Trade Union General Council seven and a-half million tons of coal have been brought into the country to crush the miners, from America, France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, outweighing a hundredfold the tiny fragments of financial help. Even financial assistance is left to the dribblets of voluntary charitable collections, as if there were no organised movement ; with the result that at the end of nineteen weeks Cook could declare that the whole of the British trade union movement had not raised the equivalent of one penny a week per member, and that a one per cent. levy for one week would have been worth more than all the nineteen weeks' voluntary

collections. Not only the Russian trade unionists, whose sacrifice and class-loyalty shames and humiliates the movement of every other country, but even other trade union movements like the Austrian levy themselves for the British miners : but the British movement is not levied. And the contribution of the leaders of the movement to the miners consists of wholesale and calumniating attacks (on the lines of the notorious General Council Report) spread broadcast through the capitalist Press and propaganda for defeat under cover of friendly offices of negotiation.

WHAT does this position mean ? It means that the fruit of the capitulation on May 12 is being reaped. The reformist-democratic trade union leaders, having once abandoned the working-class struggle and the miners in deference to the " Constitution," can no longer maintain even the appearance of leading the working-class struggle. They are driven to a more and more open united front with the Government against the workers : not only the open Right Wing leaders, who have always been the unconcealed allies of the Government, but the ordinary moderate Centrist opportunist leaders, who in a different situation may reflect a working-class tide as at Scarborough, and even the would-be Left leaders, who, having failed to face the issues of the actual fight, are compelled to go the whole way with the Right and to eat their own words of their past. They are all in the same boat now ; they can only save themselves by the defeat of the working class ; the victory of the working class or even the re-emergence of the working-class fight would destroy their positions ; they can only justify their policy by the defeat of the miners ; and they can only maintain their hold by the repression of the working-class movement.

IN an article in last month's issue of this journal the opposition leader of the miners, Arthur Horner, wrote : " It is unfortunate that the discovery of a past traitor must always reveal a future enemy. When the General Council betrayed the miners its members had perforce to prevent the miners from winning in order to secure justification in the eyes of their own men. There being no neutrality in the class struggle, the traitors were bound to turn

assassins of their previous allies in their own defence. Having made prophecies of a miners' defeat, they must now assist events to prove that they were right." This is a strong statement, but it does not overstate the facts of what has been happening during the past four months. Blackleg coal, the refusal of effective financial assistance, the open attacks and calumnies on the miners, all these gifts from the General Council to the miners are links in a single chain ; and the suppression (with Government aid and co-operation) of opposition expression at the Bournemouth Congress, which will be succeeded by attempts at direct expulsion at Margate, are only the consistent culmination of this policy. The Bournemouth Congress was the inevitable sequel of May 12.

FOR it is not only on the question of the miners that the reversal revealed by the Bournemouth Congress is taking place, although this is to-day the decisive test issue which gathers up all the rest. It covers every question of policy and the whole internal politics of the working-class movement. Where the chairman of the Scarborough Congress proclaimed the aim of the overthrow of capitalism, the chairman of the Bournemouth Congress places before the Trade Union Movement the aim of "a scientific wage policy." (As if such a phrase could have any meaning amid the crumbling standards of the capitalist decline ! Well might *The Times* applaud the new wisdom, and declare that "on lines such as these, but never by means of a general strike, trade unionism can best safeguard the economic interests of its members.") Where last year Tomskey was applauded as no fraternal delegate has ever been applauded before or since, while he uttered the sentiments of class struggle and working-class solidarity, to-day he is not only excluded by the Conservative Government, but execrated by the General Council for remaining true to those same principles where others have abandoned them. The Anglo-Russian Committee, which was the pivot of the new policy, is now sabotaged and frowned upon, and the General Council would break it if they dared at the very moment when the Russian workers have shown in practice the true meaning of international comradeship, while the only outcome of the expensive Amsterdam International in the hour of trial has been blackleg coal and usury.

And it is typical of the reversal of rôles that has taken place that Purcell, the former leader of the fight for international unity, should have to appear at this Congress in the unhappy rôle of opposing a proposition for a World Trade Union Conference of both Internationals. Similarly on the question of powers for the General Council, where last year the principle was assumed and remitted to the General Council to prepare a scheme and report, this year even a proposal for investigation was heavily defeated, so great was the fear of the remotest possibility of the repetition of May and its obligations.

THE Bournemouth Congress has been described as a swing to the Right of the working class after the sobering experience of the General Strike. If by this is meant that a heavy blow has been dealt to the movement by the treachery of May 12, and that the Right Wing leaders are in consequence very strongly in the saddle, then this is correct. But if it is meant that the expressions of these Right Wing leaders may be taken as representative of the trend of working-class feeling, then it is certainly not correct. The stubborn continuance of the miners' fight in the face of a hundred-fronted attack, menace, betrayal, privation, calumny, trickery and even the weakening of their own leaders, is alone evidence to the contrary. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the other workers would fall short of the miners if they were not paralysed by their organisations. Every spontaneous expression and every conference shows the contrary. Why have the district Trades Councils Conferences, organised by the General Council itself on the eve of Bournemouth, turned against the General Council's intention, and in place of the official resolution passed unanimous resolutions for the levy and the embargo? Why have the *Daily Herald* reports of these conferences suppressed all mention of these resolutions, which were passed against the platform, not only in heavily mining areas like Lancashire and Cheshire, but in non-mining areas like the London district? The General Council Report to the Congress showed that in 1925-6 trade union membership had at last begun again to increase, for the first time since 1921, since Black Friday, and exactly coincident with Red Friday, with the re-emergence of a militant policy—thus demonstrating

once again that "safe," "conservative," *i.e.* treacherous, policies kill trade unionism, and only a fighting policy strengthens it, that is, corresponds to the needs and wishes of the workers. The leap forward of the Labour vote at every by-election since the General Strike teaches the same lesson. The Minority Movement Conference just before the Congress, uniting delegates of 956,000 trade unionists, and thus actually surpassing every previous record, despite utter impoverishment, imprisonment, persecution and every obstacle, is even stronger evidence of the current of feeling, activity and sacrifice. What took place at Bournemouth was not the retreat of the working class, but the retreat of the reformist trade union machine.

A REFORMIST leadership can act within certain limits but only within those limits. In a period of capitalist prosperity it can win concessions for the workers by a mixture of bargaining, bluff, and small conflicts. In the early stages of a revolutionary period, when class antagonisms are deepening and the easy concessions and gains run dry and the current begun to move the other way, it can still maintain hold for a bit by uttering the phrases of the new period, by throwing out a "Left" colour, by speaking of the struggles in front, the overthrow of capitalism and working-class unity. But as soon as the struggle develops to a serious point, to the actual confrontation of class forces, inevitably bringing into play the Capitalist State as the leader and organiser of the capitalist forces, from that moment the reformist leadership is helpless and can only throw up the sponge. It cannot organise and unify the working-class forces on its side under a working-class General Staff to meet and fight the Capitalist State, because to do that would be to destroy its whole basis of so-called democracy, reformism, parliamentarism and the rest, and leave the way straightforward to revolution and the working-class conquest of power as the only final issue. Therefore, it prefers surrender, however abject, humiliating and destructive of its whole old claim of reforms and the protection of wages. But this does not mean that the struggle comes to an end. The economic conditions continue ; the class antagonisms increase ; the struggle goes on in one shape or another, and the workers press forward more than

ever. From this point the reformist leadership can only maintain its position by the suppression of the workers : parallel with increasing government persecution and imprisonment goes the hardening of the reformist machine, the prohibition of discussion, the stifling of news, the expulsion of militant workers and organisations, and eventual splitting of the movement. This is the process which has taken place in German Social Democracy, and which visibly threatens the British movement, as shown in the signs of Liverpool, Bournemouth and Margate. And for this reason, Bournemouth is not simply a swing back of the pendulum after Scarborough, but is a perfectly consequent succeeding stage in advance, with the deflation of the so-called Left, and the deepening of the real issues. But it is a stage of extreme danger for the movement, when the old leadership is already discredited, but the new leadership is not yet strong enough to replace it, and the old leadership still continues to maintain itself by its hold on the machine.

WHAT happened at Bournemouth? It is said that it was a "quiet," "thoughtful," "reflective" Congress. And so it was, no doubt—with the exception of that one incident "without precedent in the history of Congress," when the storm in the working class outside broke loose for a moment in the quiet halls of the fashionable watering-place, and the hot human anger and disgust of the miners and other working-class delegates at the sight of Bromley, overwhelmed for a short time all the workings of the machine. But this was only a momentary scene, a short incalculable surging up of the swell beneath : the arrangements were in order ; the voting was safe ; the control of speakers was secure ; even the miners' votes had been suitably tied up by their leaders' pact. So the chairman could quietly come out, in the midst of the miners' struggle, with his Gospel of Reformism :—

The Trade Unions to-day are as much a part of the life of the community as the Law Courts or Parliament itself.

(Does the State send tanks against the Law Courts or pass laws to declare Parliament illegal?) But if we look a little closer at the Congress, it is impossible not to notice one or two things.

IN the first place, the leading voices of the Opposition were absent. The leader of the Minority Movement, Pollitt, who has led the Opposition at each Congress for the past four years, was otherwise engaged—in prison. It is true that his sentence was within five days of expiry, and the slightest pressure could have certainly secured his release in time. The General Council was, however, satisfied with forwarding a formal request to the Home Secretary, which was immediately met with a negative ; and there the matter was allowed to rest, no protest even being proposed. This was already a very favourable situation for a “ quiet,” “ thoughtful,” “ reflective ” Congress. The other leading voice of Opposition would have come, it was known, from the spokesman of the largest trade union movement in the world, Tomsy, who would have voiced the sentiments of the workers without fear or favour, from the vantage point of fraternal delegate such as the Chair could not easily have stifled. Here again, however, the kindly Government stepped in to shield the General Council from the storm, and the arm of the Capitalist State came into play to keep out Tomsy from corrupting the British workers with the dangerous weapon of the truth. The General Council passed a formal protest ; but *The Times* maliciously let the cat out of the bag when it said :—

The action of the Home Office will relieve the General Council from a rather embarrassing position. . . . There will be a secret sense of satisfaction that Tomsy will not be able to deliver the peculiar kind of “ fraternal ” speech which it is believed he had in contemplation for the occasion.

After all, the hand of the law has already been active with E.P.A. sentences for workers in this country who have dared to criticise the General Council. And has not the Horthy Butcher Government in Hungary done the same for its own Social Democrats against their Opposition—resulting in a singularly “ quiet,” “ thoughtful,” and “ reflective ” Labour Movement in that country ?

IN the next place, when it comes to the debates, we find that what was left undone by the Government in the way of silencing Opposition and stifling debate, was ably completed by the General Council and the Chair. What happened to the two issues that supremely mattered for the Congress—the Miners’ Struggle and the General Strike ? The miners’ struggle was dealt with by an

official resolution, not on the issues of the fight, not on the methods of effective aid, but—of self-congratulation of the other Unions on their “generous financial assistance” (“high appreciation of the generous financial assistance, both national and international, which has been afforded to the miners”), and urging all citizens to “subscribe to the utmost.” This resolution, which was nothing less than an insult to the miners in battle, as the putting up of Bromley to second it showed, was the sole contribution allowed to be made by the Congress, or even allowed to be discussed by the Congress, to the greatest battle in progress of the whole working-class movement.

WAS it the case that there was no Opposition, or the Opposition had no proposals to offer, on this question? On the contrary. Not only were the demands of the levy and the embargo known and backed all over the country, including at the Conferences organised by the General Council itself; but in addition one of the Unions at the Congress, the Woodworkers, desired to bring forward an amendment in favour of the levy. This amendment was not even allowed to be proposed. Not a single Opposition speaker was allowed to speak in the discussion. The whole issue was completely suppressed. The only speaker who could have broken through the boycott would have been the miners’ representative, since it would have been impossible to suppress one speaker on their behalf in a resolution nominally being adopted for their sake: but the official of the miners chosen for the purpose completely failed to do his duty, and did not even voice the policy of the Miners’ Federation—the demand for the levy and the embargo. On the question of the embargo the following passage is instructive:—

A. G. Tompkins (N.A.F.T.A.): “What steps has the General Council taken to get the Amsterdam International to hold an inquiry into the possibility of preventing black coal coming into Britain?”

Pugh (Chairman): “That does not arise in this part of the Report.”

Tompkins: “On what part does it arise?”

Pugh: “I am afraid I cannot tell you.”

This historic interchange deserves to stand alongside the similar passage already quoted last month from the Scarborough Congress, when the question of “preparation for next May” was similarly

raised by a persistent delegate, and relegated by the President to its "due order" in the Congress—which never came.

EVEN more illuminating is the treatment of the issue of the General Strike. The danger here was too great to trust to any chairman's ruling for protection. It was necessary to rule out the whole issue beforehand. This was accordingly done. In preparing the Agenda, the General Council ruled that the issue of the General Strike could not arise. What could be simpler? It only remains to rule, when the next really serious issue develops, threatening the whole position of the General Council, that the Trades Union Congress need not arise. And in point of fact this is precisely what has been done. For the General Council, in order to substantiate its ruling, declared two grounds. First, that the General Council is only responsible to report on the General Strike to the Conference of Trade Union Executives. Second, that by the June Pact with the miners no discussion is to take place until the Conference, which is not to take place until after the ending of the mining dispute.

THESE pleas are so flimsy that they would not be worth discussing as pleas, if it were not for the serious issues that they raise. The first means that the General Council no longer regards itself as responsible to the Trades Union Congress. This was explicitly ruled.

Tanner (A.E.U.): "Are you ruling that this Congress cannot instruct the General Council to submit a report to the Congress, and that the Conference of Executives is more authoritative than this Congress?"

Pugh (President): "On this subject, undoubtedly."

Thus there swims into view this new body, the Conference of Executives, as a kind of House of Lords, Second Chamber, Privy Council or Higher Authority, to which the mandarins can retire when they feel doubtful of their position in the Congress. The Minority Movement will need to look to this issue and fight it, if they are not to find that, when the time comes that they may have stormed and won the open field, the enemy will only have retired to his second line, backed by the fortresses of permanent officialism and the myriad constitutions of the different Unions

(as indeed happened in the famous Socialist conquest of Congress in the early 'nineties, which dissolved into thin air before the fortresses of officialism in the separate Unions). The supremacy of Congress is the first condition of even the possibility of working-class control in the Labour Movement, already difficult enough owing to the unrepresentative and bureaucratic character of the Congress.

THE second plea raises no less serious issues. It implies that a private agreement of a handful of officials can rule out any issue from discussion and override the powers of Congress. What right has any group of officials to make such an agreement of mutual censorship, and still more, what right have they to come forward to the Congress and plead this private bargain as an "honourable undertaking" which prevents discussion? The General Council was very emphatic at the Congress about this "honourable undertaking" ("the Council was committed to an honourable undertaking, and meant to stand by it."—Pugh). They did not, however, show any similar concern about a prior honourable undertaking on the subject of miners' wages. In fact the only meaning of the new honourable undertaking is that it is incurred in order to wipe out all memory—or at least public mention—of the violation of the first. However, the General Council is so conspicuously an authority on nice points of honour that its plea may be left to it with the sole comment that, when honour begins to be noisily mentioned in politics, there is usually something dirty afoot. But, stripped of the honour, the plea remains that a private bargain of officials is to have the power to cover up any "undesirable" issue from Congress. And, taken together, the two pleas mean that henceforth the trade union bureaucracy desires to be only responsible to the trade union bureaucracy.

IN this connection it is impossible not to note the fatally mistaken rôle of the miners' representatives at the Congress. The June Pact was bad enough, which surrendered every right in return for—nothing. But it was worse, after the ex-

perience of the intervening months, the Bromley attack and all, to accept the General Council's claptrap at face value and regard themselves as still bound by it. The grim fact resulted that the miners, and the miners alone, saved the General Council. Cook has since declared that he "personally regrets" the Pact. He has declared that, had he been free to speak, what Tomsky said would have been mild compared to what he would have had to say about the General Council. These declarations are worse than useless after his actual rôle at the Congress. The fact remains that at the Congress, where it is the duty of every worker to say plainly what he sees and understands, Tomsky did his duty and spoke (throwing to hell the tinsel etiquette of fraternal delegates—which was the only reply the General Council could make to him—and breaking through the Government barrier with his message), while Cook, who was present, with every opportunity, and the Congress at his feet, did not speak what was in his mind, but intervened only as the instrument of the General Council to protect it. Cook's intervention directly saved the General Council. Immediately after his intervention, with no further discussion allowed, the vote was taken. There is every reason to believe that, had the miners fought, they would have carried with them the majority of the Congress. This historic failure was the decisive point of the Congress, and it will have heavy results for the working-class movement. It is not possible to combine loyalty to official treachery with loyalty to the working class. Only when this false conception of unity, which poisons and disorganises the movement and leaves every treachery to fester has been thrown aside once and for all, and absolute loyalty to the working class put first (as Tomsky has shown the way), only then can the working-class movement become strong, healthy and genuinely united.

FOR the most important fact about the policy of suppression and false unity, as it has shown itself at Bournemouth and is likely to show itself at Margate, is that it does not unite the movement, but shatters and divides it. Its first effect is to paralyse the movement in action, as has been shown over the miners' struggle—that is, to destroy the only unity that matters, the unity of the working class in action for the sake of a lying and insincere

unity of a handful of leaders in words. Its second effect is to create stagnation, disillusionment, reaction and decay within the movement, such as followed Black Friday, and lead to a drift away from organisation and disbelief in all leadership. Its third effect, as the inevitable accompaniment of suppression and the stifling of revolutionary expression, is to lead to expulsions, first of individuals, then of sections of local organisations, and then, eventually, of national organisations, as the sole means of maintaining power in the hands of the discredited reformist leadership. This is the process that has happened on the Continent, and that is hanging over the British movement, and has already begun in the Labour Party, where the political issues involved are most clearly brought out. And for this reason the issue of expulsion is the most decisive issue at Margate, because it gathers into itself all the others. The issue of expulsion gathers into itself the whole issue of Reformism versus the working class.

AT Margate the policy of expulsion by the Right Wing Labour Party Executive of Left Wing militant working-class sections and individuals, begun at Edinburgh four years ago, reaches a new stage which will have to be approved or disapproved by the Conference. In the first place, the actual exclusion of elected working-class delegates, often with long records of service in the Labour Movement and absolute unquestioned loyalty to the working class (the case of Vaughan of Bethnal Green, the former Labour Mayor and one of the builders of the Trade Union and Labour Movement in East London, may be taken as a test case) will be attempted. If the Conference approves this, then the Labour Party will have taken a definite step to the break with the old basis of working-class solidarity on which and for the sake of which the Labour Party was built up (it is the Labour Party Right Wing that has changed, not Vaughan, Tom Mann, &c., who remain Socialists and working-class fighters with exactly the same principles as they proclaimed and stood up for from the beginning when they built up the movement) and to its transformation to a Liberal-democratic or People's Party, like the old Liberal Party, and inevitably to meet the same fate. In the second place, the expulsion of local Labour parties, again

including some of the oldest and strongest local movements which helped to bring into existence the Labour Party, has been begun, and will have to be approved or disapproved. This is directly splitting the movement: since the local Labour parties are expelled, not for disloyalty to working-class solidarity, but for refusing to split up their solidarity; and the sequel is that the Labour Party Executive endeavours to set up rival minority local Labour organisations in the area, seeking to draw away trade union branches from the original unitary body, and thus breaking up from outside what was a united local movement. This is sabotage and strike-breaking work, exactly parallel to the achievements of May 12. If the Conference approves this, then the next step will be the exclusion of national trade union organisations.

BUT it is not only in the Labour Party that the question of exclusion arises. It inevitably arises also in the trade unions. It is sometimes said that the attempts at exclusion represent an interference of "politicians" with the Labour Movement. The intention of this, namely, that the breaking up policy represents an incursion of liberal bourgeois politics into the working-class movement, is correct; but the formulation is not correct. It is not "politics" that breaks up the working-class movement (there can be no working-class movement without politics), but Reformism, *i.e.*, the denial of the working-class struggle. And Reformism exists equally in the trade union leadership as in the Labour Party leadership. Reformism necessarily opposes the working-class struggle at every crisis, placing first loyalty to the capitalist state, and therefore has to resort to suppression and exclusions. And the first signs of this have begun to appear in the trade unions, in the attempts forcibly to prevent affiliation to the Minority Movement (a body with absolutely legitimate trade union aims, and working solely by constitutional, trade union means), the expulsion of individuals connected with it, the refusal of funds to affiliated branches, and the attempt to break up affiliated trades councils by commandeering secessions. This policy, typically begun in one of the autocratic General Workers' Unions—whose constitutional methods are a byword—has now been apparently approved by the General Council.

IN what is certainly the most significant sentence spoken at the Trades Union Congress, the representative of the General Council, A. Conley, in defence of the General Council's policy of disapproving the affiliation of trades councils to the Minority Movement, said :—

“ If the Council had agreed to this affiliation, within a short time the Minority Movement would become the majority.”—(*Daily Herald* report, 8-9-26.)

This sentence raises the whole perspective in front of the Trade Union Movement. Let every trade unionist ponder the future policy it implies. The General Council freely admits that the new forces of class struggle, represented by the Minority Movement, and already organising one-quarter of the trade union movement, are the forces of the future: that is, unless forcible measures are taken, will “ within a short time ” become the majority. What conclusion does the General Council draw? To recognise that they and their policy are becoming a discredited minority, and to make way for the forces of the future? Or at any rate to accept defeat within the working class, as they have accepted victory? On the contrary. Their conclusion is that they must employ forcible measures, vetoes, prohibitions, disaffiliations, split and smash the movement if necessary—to what end? To keep themselves in power. This is the policy of Social Democracy in Britain, as on the Continent. This is the policy in the Trade Unions, as in the Labour Party. But in Britain the process is still at a relatively early stage, although it is following the familiar path: there is still time to fight it. The revealing sentence of the General Council should give hope and confidence to the forces of class struggle, no less than it reveals the danger. Let the forces of the working class fight, hold firmly together, in the Labour Party as in the Trade Unions, in the period of machine suppression and attempted splits that is in front, without either weakening or giving way, and they can keep unbroken, despite all the attempts against them, and can and will win the leadership of the working class.

R. P. D.

THE BOURNEMOUTH CONGRESS

A Turning-point in the Labour Movement

By L. V. B.

THREE stages may be distinguished in the proceedings of the Trades Union Congress at Bournemouth. The first stage (lasting the first day) was the pronouncement of a complete programme of surrender to capitalism in the presidential speech of Mr. Pugh. No discussion of responsibility for the collapse of last May; no word of sympathy for the miners; no word of solidarity with Russia. Instead, the definition of trade unions as an "institution" of capitalist society, with their properly appointed and defined sphere (as much a part of the life of the community as the Law Courts or Parliament itself), and the suggestion that they ought to give up quarrelling with that other institution, the capitalist, but rather sit down peaceably and work out together some other method of "distributing spending power" than "the traditional policy and methods," *i.e.*, than strikes.

This speech had the effect intended; it crushed and depressed Congress for the rest of the day. Small wonder that Congress refused to discuss the case of Havelock Wilson's union, which had acted literally on Mr. Pugh's principles and refused to obey the call for the General Strike. Small wonder, too, that discussion should arise, just as in the good old days of Liberal trade unionism, over an unreal issue: that equality of unemployment benefit for men and women was to be rejected by the T.U.C. on the pretext that only single and not married women were mentioned in the resolution submitted. An unreal discussion, with tongue in cheek, and at the end of it the "previous question." Anything to get out of discussing real issues; while hundreds upon hundreds of the delegates sat silent, stupefied by Pugh's speech.

This was to be expected. One's chief regret is that the small Communist and Minority Movement fraction did not make up its mind to break in rudely, even at this early stage, and dissipate

the spell. They had an opportunity on the introduction to the General Council's report, and experience even at Scarborough showed that nowadays it is only the Revolutionary Wing of the Congress who can make an adequate fight against the Right Wing.

On Tuesday the Congress reached the second stage, one which lasted until Thursday morning. Put in a nutshell, it was the stage when the Congress was awakened by the resolute onslaught of the small Minority Group, and an increasing volume of support built up hourly for a real Left Wing lead. In defiance often of majorities and officials, without the advantage of long experience at Congresses and of the consequent quickness to seize on opportunities afforded by rules, without a knowledge of the niceties of Parliamentary debate in which the old leadership excels, this group really succeeded, by its collective effort and resolution, in making its mark on the Congress. The names of the doughty little band deserve record—Horner (S.W.M.F.), Tanner (A.E.U.), Elsbury (Tailors and Garment Workers), Strain (A.S.W.), Chandler (A.S.L.E. and F.), Loeber (N.U.R.), Tomkins (N.A.F.T.A.), McLauchlan (General Ironfitters), Bradshaw (Bolton Weavers).

They began at the very outset, on the section of the General Council's report dealing with amalgamations, demanding why the Council had not enlisted mass support for the policy of amalgamation by a mass campaign through trades councils, why they had done nothing to prove to the workers the practical value of "one shop, one union" by carrying out the Scarborough resolution about the establishment of factory committees, what they were going to do to press the amalgamation upon those unions who were sabotaging. The purely formal and evasive replies of the General Council, in contrast with the note of opposition, only made the Congress more wide-awake. Had the Minority Group taken full advantage of their opportunity and pressed their criticism home to a "reference back," the effect would have been still more definite.

In the discussion on industrial unionism there was the now familiar spectacle: on one side, a resolution (coming originally from the Minority Group in the Furnishing Trades) pressing for amalgamation and instructing the General Council to summon

conferences in every industry; on the other, a "frightfully Left" resolution proclaiming the one big union as the only real salvation and sponsored by all the best reactionaries, both of the craft and of the general labour unions, for obvious reasons. Although there were only Tomkins and Cook on one side, and Dukes (N.U.G.M.W.), Naylor (L.S.C.), Beard (W.U.), Shinwell and Bevin on the other, and notwithstanding the fact that (just as at Scarborough) the former "Left Wing" of the General Council remained silent, the Minority resolution was adopted by a substantial majority—2,164,000 against 1,658,000, thereby making a distinct advance on Scarborough. Bevin had made an "appeal" to the supporters of both resolutions to withdraw them; but Tomkins refused to fall into the trap. The M.M. had a clear justification of its policy of continuing the fight and not capitulating before the reactionary leaders.

The vote of 738,000 against interference by the General Council in the perfectly constitutional work of the Minority Movement within the trade unions and trades councils surprised most delegates by its size. Particularly when we bear in mind that the holders of nearly a million votes abstained (738,000 against 2,710,000 in a Congress representing 4,300,000), it is clear that even a Congress consisting more than half of trade union officials was markedly reluctant to give its endorsement to unmitigated reaction. It was scarcely to be expected that even "Left" trade union officials would support the Minority Movement itself as they would support its policy; their vote, however, was a definite encouragement for the former.

Again it was most noticeable that the General Council, through their spokesman, Conley, did their utmost to avoid a political discussion on this question. It was equally noticeable that Congress maintained the silence of the grave when Hutchison, the wretched delegate of the American Federation of Labour, blurted straight out what Pugh had merely suggested the day before: that "we have no objection to a man being a member of the capitalist class so long as he does not object to our organising the workers"; that "we realise that we must always have what you might term the capitalist"; that "our objects are the same as yours—to better the conditions of the working people." These slogans of class

collaboration, which had had such a depressing effect the day before, simply evaporated in the atmosphere kindled by the Minority Group's attack.

The revolutionary group kept up the pressure on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. The "Back to the Unions" campaign, initiated to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the I.F.T.U., gave Mrs. Bradshaw an opportunity to remind the Congress that there were millions of workers organised in the R.I.L.U. whom it was equally important to bring into the campaign. The General Council's emergency resolution against E.P.A. as "a violation of the traditions of the country," and Miss Wilkinson's attempt to score off the General Council by complaining of its "mild" terms, suffered equally under the acid test of class introduced by Elsbury, who declared that it was in accordance with the *best* British traditions to oppress the workers, and that the reply should not be a protest but a Workers' Defence Corps. When Section "B" of the report was reached the next day—"Powers of the General Council"—it was the Communist delegates Horner and Loeber who reminded the Congress that the General Council had utterly failed to prepare the workers for May, and that the miners' leaders had no right to come to a pact with the General Council in suppressing discussion on their conduct of a struggle which affected every worker and not only the miners. Finally, when the resolutions on the question of the General Council's powers were being discussed—one asking for enlarged powers immediately and the other for an investigation, but both obviously based upon the same original proposals carried by the Minority Groups in the A.E.U. and N.U.D.A.W.—it was the Minority delegates alone (Tomkins and McLauchlan) who fought for immediate action, while Hallsworth, who had tried to steer an independent line but honestly to fight the Right Wing big guns (Bevin, Clynes, Cramp), who rose to oppose both resolutions, was forced in effect away from his own position and towards the M.M. policy.

The result was striking. Only 848,000 votes could be mustered for a definitely Minority resolution as against a resolution which was less threatening of immediate action; but 1,404,000 votes were recorded for the second resolution as against 2,573,000—

whereas at Scarborough, after a long discussion, the question had simply been referred to the General Council *without dissent*. Once again, twelve months' work by the Minority Movement had been justified by results, even if those results did not directly accrue to its own benefit. Once again an advance had been made on Scarborough, notwithstanding external difficulties (notably the complete silence of the former "Lefts" on the General Council).

The third stage of the Congress began on Thursday morning. It was marked, in a nutshell, by a much more open and insolent policy on the part of the Right Wing, supported by a section of the delegates (the trade union organisers and officials who constitute the bulk of the general workers' delegations). Instead of the Right Wing being weakened towards the end of the Congress, as happened at Scarborough, it was strengthened; the difference being that the "Left" members of the General Council at Scarborough had ventured (after the votes for membership of the Council had been handed in) to support the lead of the Minority Group, whereas at Bournemouth, not only did the "Lefts" retire altogether, or actually take the side of the Right (*e.g.*, Bromley on the miners, Purcell on international unity), but *A. J. Cook himself threw in his lot with the General Council at the crucial moment*. Yet while this regrouping of forces amongst the leaders bewildered the delegates and allowed the Right Wing to gain several victories, there are still sufficient signs that the bulk of the Congress remained *Left* to the end.

Thursday began with a vigorous attack by the Minority Group on the crucial section of the General Council's report—its reference to the mining lock-out and the General Strike (the Council apparently thinks that by calling it a "National Strike" it can prevent three million workers from learning that they were fighting the capitalist class and not the "nation"). Tanner, moving the reference back, declared, amidst growing applause and excitement, that the miners' leaders had been trapped into a bad bargain by the General Council; that the workers were entitled to know what preparations had been made for the General Strike, why the Council had refused to reaffirm their support of the miners' slogans, why they had assumed that no better terms were available than the Samuel Memorandum, and why no guarantee had been

obtained for the workers against victimisation. He and Loeber both roundly told the General Council that the workers called them cowards and traitors.

Pugh, secure in his knowledge of the unholy compact made with the miners' leaders, replied with a ruling which astonished even reactionaries in the Congress—that the General Council had drawn their powers for the General Strike only from the Conference of Trade Union Executives on May 1, and consequently were answerable to them alone; moreover, that even if Congress referred back this section of the report this could have no effect upon the decision of the General Council. Brown (Civil Servants) and Naylor (Compositors) opposed this ruling strongly, winning the applause of a large section of Congress, and support for Tanner's motion (standing in the name of the A.E.U.) was obviously widespread—when Cook intervened with a passionate appeal “not to endanger the position of a million miners” and to oppose the reference back. The vehemence of the appeal turned the Congress (even though it had known earlier of the miners' leaders' compact, it had not expected such an open alliance with the General Council), despite the protests of the Minority Group, and the vote for the reference back went down to the “iron ration” which the Minority Group could command—775,000 against 3,098,000.

Elsewhere we shall have to consider at greater length the peculiar tactics adopted by Cook, and to make up our minds whether the advantages of “hiding” the General Council's report on the General Strike (which has already been published by Mr. Bromley), and of having the General Council on the side of the miners (a doubtful privilege after the lesson of May 12), outweighed the disadvantages of losing an unparalleled opportunity of exposing them before the workers, and of supporting at the moment when they could at last be called to account the very men who had been denounced by Cook after the surrender of May 12. Here it is necessary to note that the 775,000 of the Minority vote, like the 738,000 received previously, was without the miners' 800,000. Had this vote been cast for the reference back, instead of against it, the voting would have been 1,575,000 against 2,298,000, a comparatively narrow minority which might easily have been turned into a majority by the moral effect of a fighting

lead from the miners, and particularly from A. J. Cook. There can be little question, therefore, about the direct responsibility of the miners' leaders, and of A. J. Cook as their most influential figure (inside and outside the M.F.G.B.), for the undoubted strengthening of the Right Wing which resulted from their action.

The effect was not immediately observable owing to the Congress method of procedure. The first section of the Council's "International" report dealt with conditions in the shipyards, Walker (Iron and Steel Trades) moving a resolution for the imposition of tariffs on metals and metal goods produced by sweated labour abroad. The prominent leaders (Right and "Left") took good care not to participate in this discussion. If they had done so against the resolution it could only have been on the platform of international trade union unity as the alternative, *i.e.*, shoulder to shoulder with the Minority delegates, Strain and Tomkins. To support the resolution, on the other hand, would have meant to ruin their Parliamentary chances as opponents of the Tory policy of Protection. The Congress was therefore left free to reject the motion by 2,134,000 to 1,067,000. One interesting feature of the discussion was the repeated references to the Dawes Plan as a capitalist weapon against the workers, showing that the resolution passed at Scarborough last year was not merely a "safe" declaration of Leftness, as some writers think, but genuinely founded upon the bitter experience of the British workers.

The remainder of the discussion on the international report—particularly after a striking fraternal address from Chaman Lal (All-India T.U.C.), in which he declared, "Let the Empire be wrecked, it is not worth saving, if it means keeping millions in slavery"—was equally of little value to the Right Wing. This was principally due to the aggressive line taken by the Minority Group, attacking paragraph after paragraph of the report. On Canton (where it shielded British Imperialism against the charge of suppressing the Chinese Labour Movement), on the question of sending a delegation to the Far East (where Mrs. Bradshaw demanded that Bevin should live up to his words last year about its necessity), on the question of the International Labour Office (where the suggestion was made that Russia's labour conditions might not conform to those "advocated" by the I.L.O., and again

where the recommendation was made that the British movement should continue to support it, despite its encouragement of the Italian Fascisti).

But the Right Wing had their revenge in their imposition of Mr. Bromley, of all people, upon the Congress as a seconder of a pious resolution supporting the miners. The part played by Mr. Bromley's "accidental" disclosure of the General Council's memorandum attacking the miners, in helping the owners to secure a breakaway in the Midlands, was too recent even for the most conservative delegates. What happened at the Congress—the hour's scene, the "Red Flag," the adjournment, the re-imposition of Mr. Bromley as a matter of discipline—is well known. It is worth recording that, when Mr. Bromley had the audacity to speak of the miners' "little homes broken up," indignant voices told him: "Cut that out!" And it is essential to draw the moral that *the authority which enabled the General Council to carry their point of view through Congress (including the suppression of the Minority delegates who wanted to demand the levy and the embargo) was rebuilt and confirmed by the miners' leaders themselves by their action earlier in the day.*

For most of the remainder of the Congress the General Council were enabled to carry their point of view without difficulty. Further support of the I.L.O., support of the General Council's reply to Tomsky's message, support of the mineowners' advertisement in the *Daily Herald*, rejection without discussion of the affiliation of trade councils to the T.U.C.—all these decisions were adopted almost by acclamation, the Minority delegates being in nearly every case shouted down by the block of reactionary officials representing the general labour unions, while the remainder of the delegates did not venture to reply. Nevertheless, the continuing Left tendency made itself felt on two occasions—on Friday and Saturday mornings, when possibly it was a night's rest in each case that made the atmosphere of the Congress somewhat more peaceful. In each case it was solely and entirely the Minority delegates who took the lead.

The first occasion was on the section of the international report dealing with Anglo-Russian relations. Horner, Elsbury, and Tanner denounced the attempts to suggest Russian affiliation to

the I.F.T.U. as the aim and object of the Anglo-Russian Committee, to shift responsibility for no meeting between the Russian unions and Amsterdam from the General Council to the Russians themselves, and cover up the Council's inaction for a whole year. Strain was howled down when attempting to contrast the General Council's complaint of Tomsky's "discourtesy" with their unspeakable refusal of the Russian workers' money during the General Strike. Purcell replied, half-apologetic and half-shamefaced, but wholly surrendering to Amsterdam in the memorable declaration that the Russians should help us to get the I.F.T.U. "remodelled" by entering it. Purcell treated the R.I.L.U. as non-existent. Bromley followed this up by a violent attack on the R.I.L.U. in the best Amsterdam vein, accusing it of disruption, splitting, &c. Indeed, so definite was the conversion of these erstwhile champions of the Russian unions that that skilful weathercock, Mr. Shinwell, judged the time opportune for an attack on the very first principles of trade union unity (while accepting it "in general") which for its vulgarity and sheer reaction was unparalleled for the last four years.

Yet the Congress showed its real face by adopting the resolution in general terms, regretting the small measure of unity achieved so far, moved by Elsbury, by 2,959,000 votes (against 814,000), and by casting 1,237,000 votes (against 2,416,000) for the A.E.U. amendment, moved by Tanner, which demanded a conference between the I.F.T.U. and the R.I.L.U. as a step towards world unity.

The other occasion was in the discussion (on Saturday morning) on an emergency resolution on China, moved by Horner for the Miners' Federation. The resolution itself was not too well worded, and it concentrated entirely on one aspect—the Japanese support of Chang-Tso-Lin against Soviet Russia; but it was discussed on the very morning on which the *Daily Herald* printed the Canton Government's note of protest against the landing of British troops on its territory: and it was clear that, whatever the content of the resolution, its rejection would mean support of Imperialism. No doubt that was the reason, as well as the sense of greater freedom to speak what was really in his mind, which prompted Mr. Ammon (Post Office Workers, and formerly Financial Secretary to the

Admiralty) to attack the resolution again in a singularly vulgar and brutal speech, in which he denounced the resolution as "another method of stirring up sympathy with Russia." It was nevertheless adopted by a large majority.

With this we can close our review of the third and final stage of the Bournemouth Congress, except for the remark that the voting for members of the General Council showed that the miners' leaders, in defiance of logic, had voted (probably on the same morning) against the very leaders whom politically they had supported on the question of discussing responsibility for May 12. Pugh, who received 3,543,000 votes at Scarborough, received only 2,930,000, while a rival, Hickin, rose from 440,000 to 1,638,000. Hicks and Purcell, who received 3,188,000 and 3,510,000 at Scarborough, sank to 2,310,000 and 2,303,000 at Bournemouth, while they were closely pressed by Wolstencroft with 2,050,000 (at Scarborough their nearest rival had had 772,000 votes). Hallsworth (N.U.D.A.W.) increased his vote from 986,000 to 2,853,000, thereby soundly beating the sitting member, Leslie (Shop Assistants), whose vote rose only from 1,214,000 to 1,399,000. Elvin (Clerks), who fell from 1,905,000 to 1,851,000, was closely pressed by Palmer (Insurance Workers), who rose from 898,000 to 1,675,000. While it must be remembered that these block votes, traditionally chattered and bargained over for weeks prior to the Congress, could least of all be affected by its proceedings, the fact remains that for the first time in the history of the General Council a number of members had a reminder, however imperfect, that the workers will one day visit the responsibility for collapse and surrender upon leaders who play them false.

An account of the Trades Union Congress would not be complete without some attempt to cast up accounts, however briefly, and without prejudice to a fuller summing-up later.

- (i) The Congress, for all its make-up and its reverence for trade union discipline, was a Left Congress and not a Right one. On important questions—industrial unionism, powers of the General Council, the rejection of Protection, the substantial vote for a conference between the I.F.T.U. and R.I.L.U.—

it went even further than Scarborough. The General Strike, it was obvious, had taught some profound lessons.

- (ii) The essential difference between Scarborough and Bournemouth, so far as the leaders were concerned, was that, instead of adopting a purely *passive* tolerance of the Minority Group's revolutionary lead, the former "Lefts" on the General Council threw in their lot actively with the Right. Here, too, it may be said that the "lesson"—of running away from responsibility for leading the workers against capitalism—which Purcell, Hicks and Co. had begun to learn after Red Friday they completed after the General Strike.
- (iii) The Right Wing reactionaries had been just as aggressive and organised at Scarborough as they were at Bournemouth. But now twelve months of unchallenged power, the necessities of the General Strike, and the "unholy pact" with Cook gave them, if anything, still more assurance and lack of reserve in stating their case for class collaboration and against vigorous advancement of the class struggle, even though it meant flouting Congress.
- (iv) Notwithstanding the organised obstruction by the miners on Thursday, their vote against several members of the old General Council on principle, and Cook's afterthoughts in the *Herald* on Friday ("personally, I think, we made a mistake"), the fact remains that it was the miners' leaders who assumed direct responsibility for maintaining the General Council in such authority that all the votes and afterthoughts were made a farce. Cook, as the most active spirit amongst the officials, bears direct responsibility.
- (v) The one hope of a new leadership, fit to be trusted by the workers, lies in the organisation of a powerful Minority Movement in the unions, with the steel core of an active, determined and clear-sighted Communist Party running through it.

A MESSAGE

By HARRY POLLITT

[All our readers will join us in regretting that Comrade Harry Pollitt was prevented from attending the Trades Union Congress, so that this year we are unable to present an account from him. On his release from prison he sent the following message to THE LABOUR MONTHLY.—ED.]

WITHIN twenty-four hours of shedding the distinguishing marks of the broad arrow I am asked to write a short message for THE LABOUR MONTHLY. I cannot do better than to ask its readers and critics at the present stage of the working-class movement to reflect upon what has been the central theme of THE LABOUR MONTHLY since its inception, and to examine it in the light of the tremendous happenings of this year, culminating in the General Strike, and finally, as a result of the colossal betrayal by the existing Trade Union leadership, in the isolation of the miners.

The central theme has been the rapid disintegration of capitalism and in particular the rapid and permanent decline of Britain, and the new political problems arising therefrom both for the capitalist and working class.

From this has been shown the inevitability of an increased capitalist attack upon the workers' standards of existence and the smashing of the reformist illusion of a steady peaceful progress of an all-in Labour Movement catering in its "broadmindedness" for all classes.

It has been repeatedly shown that the working class can no longer succeed against the capitalists by the old sectional methods of struggle and isolation into water-tight compartments of an "industrial" movement and a "parliamentary" movement; but that the struggle must be a united one on the part of the whole working class or defeats and setbacks are inevitable.

From time to time I have heard prominent Labour leaders declare that the writers of THE LABOUR MONTHLY "were only a set of intellectuals who knew nothing about working-class conditions or policy." It is a very apt comment on the aversion of the official element to carry out policy as a result of a close analysis of objective

conditions that these same leaders have been responsible for leading the workers to the terrible situation they find themselves in to-day.

In particular does one recall at this juncture the attempts of **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** to make the so-called "Left" leaders face up to the situation, warning them that if they were not prepared to fight the reformists and place their trust in the revolutionary class-consciousness of the masses that they too would have to share in any debacle that came along.

In this connection I think I cannot do better than to give the thoughts that ran in my mind immediately I heard in prison that the General Strike had been called. I thought then of a series of articles in **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** in 1924 in which Comrades Purcell, Hutchinson, Cook, Lawther, Williams, Bromley, and Hicks took part, and what a difference there would, and could have been in the whole official direction of the Movement if these comrades had then been prepared to organise their forces definitely, and fight for the realisation of the new policy upon which there was at least a common agreement.

That was, a common struggle, workshop organisation, extension of the scope of the Trades Councils, and the creation of a more powerful General Council. But the campaign of this "Left" bloc stopped at article writing. The result is known to all. When the call came the workers responded to a man, but the existing leadership failed, and in the moment of failure there was no difference between the Rights and the Lefts.

This was a complete justification of the whole attitude of **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** right from its inception. This, as I see the position, completes a kind of first phase in the task that the **MONTHLY** has in hand, and now it is more necessary than ever that it should receive a wide support from the active workers, particularly in the Trade Unions and Labour Parties in order that as a result of its work, not only will there be a continuance of its revolutionary working-class lead, but that out of these ranks the new leadership, the supreme need of the moment and Movement, can be developed.

MARGATE AND THE LEFT WING

By JOSEPH SOUTHALL

THE supreme issue before the Margate Conference is not how can Labour capture votes or seize the reins of government, but how can the soul of Labour be saved from the deadly grip of the party machine ; for we must never forget that the cause of Labour is a thing immeasurably greater than the Labour Party, which is but a means to an end, and that it is quite possible for the means to be so misused as to defeat the end. There is, indeed, among us a powerful and dangerous tendency towards a policy of gaining the whole world at the cost of losing our own soul. If Labour should again pursue this path we shall find as we found in 1924 that we lose all together.

I write from a standpoint unfamiliar perhaps in the pages of *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, viz., that of an absolute pacifist, a disciple rather of Tolstoy than of Lenin, one who would not under any circumstances kill any human being nor indulge the passion of hate, but who from that point of view strongly supports the Left Wing Movement and believes the time is ripe to speak out plainly and firmly.

The heroism of the miners, the justice of their cause, and the unusual strength and sincerity of their leaders fill us with hope ; but we must not forget that even this tremendous conflict is but an incident in the struggle between Humanity and Mammon, which always holds within it the possibility, if not the probability, of another world war or massacre too hideous to describe. All whose eyes are open can see this grim spectre as yet on the horizon, but advancing day by day and threatening a horror in which all the splendid treasures of the past together with our hopes of the future would go down in one common ruin.

Against this menace the British Labour Party presented until 1923 a formidable barrier, but by the end of 1924 a pseudo-Labour Government had shattered this defence, for by a series of surrenders almost unparalleled in our history it had in the short period of nine months pretty completely destroyed the work of as

many years. Consider for a moment what had been the position of the Labour Party before 1924 and what was left of it afterwards and we shall find the change sufficiently alarming.

Broadly speaking, before 1924 Labour stood for a policy of justice and peace, for revision of the Treaty of Versailles, for no indemnities, for disarmament and friendship with Russia, and, at home, for redress of the grievances of civil servants, police strikers and others, and for the capital levy.

Swiftly and cynically, stroke upon stroke, 1924 wiped it all out. Amid banquets and garden parties, ceremonies and obsequious bowings (to the infinite amusement of the aristocracy), we played at being imperial statesmen and gentlemen. With gunboats to China, coercion in India, militarism in Egypt, bombs in Irak, insults to Russia, the Dawes Plan for Germany, naval demonstrations for the education of France and the re-establishment of the Versailles Treaty our foreign policy went full steam astern; while at home the capital levy was quietly buried, the profiteers left undisturbed, the police strikers sent empty away, and worst of all Campbell, the Communist, prosecuted for sedition—thus giving a lead to Joynton-Hicks.

In a word, Labour's land of promise had become a devastated area. Labour had literally been knocked into a cocked hat. Those who did this are the leaders who will brook no criticism and admit no sort of popular control over their actions. And with this ghastly record of militarism and imperialism behind him MacDonald, the builder of new cruisers, the sponsor of new squadrons of bombing machines, goes to the Liverpool Conference as the white angel of persuasion, the apostle of the ballot-box. The whole capitalist Press, Tory and Liberal, die-hard and die-easy, was then howling to Labour to cast out the Communists, and the Right Wing, ever ready to co-operate with imperialism, persuaded the conference to act on the advice of its enemies. Whereupon the Tory Home Secretary, with a joyful whoop, pounced on the twelve Communists and, following MacDonald's example, prosecuted them for sedition.

In surveying our deplorable position we asked ourselves in vain, What is there now to separate our great leaders from the Tory Party? For it became only too evident that the old Victorian Radical was far in advance of the Right Wing of Labour. From

that time till now the Baldwin Government has, on almost every subject of controversy, pointed triumphantly to the example of "your own leader, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald." Nor is further evidence lacking to show unity and collaboration between Lib-Labs and Toryism. The prosecution of the twelve Communists is the unmistakable sequel to the infamous Liverpool decision, and the publication of carefully selected extracts from the raided documents has been gleefully welcomed by our Right Wing, who are not ashamed to quote from them and use them as weapons against their critics, thus making themselves accessories after the fact of the raid.

The exclusion of Tomsy from the Trades Union Congress seems uncommonly like an act of protection extended to the reactionary element there in its desperate effort to escape examination and criticism. The failure to support the miners in an effective manner and the ignominious termination of the great strike are fresh in our memories, though investigation of the facts is studiously avoided.

Indeed, it is notable that whenever a Labour conference threatens to examine the causes of failure there always happens to be at that moment some critical event, some delicate negotiation, that imperatively demands a policy of "hush" in order that "unity" may be preserved (outwardly) undisturbed by "re-criminations."

Thus it comes about that, while the strongest denunciations of our leaders are freely expressed in private conversation, no public action is taken even to modify, much less to terminate, their fatal sway. The arrogance of these leaders grows with success, and they set themselves steadily to drive out of the party every honest critic, every sincere and capable advocate of the people's cause, whether Communist or not, so that an obedient and docile organisation of hewers of wood and drawers of water may minister to the honour and glory of an official caste carrying on a sham fight with the approval or connivance of their nominal opponents.

If I have rightly stated the case then it is to meet this situation and deal with it courageously and wisely that the Left Wing Movement comes into being, and we may expect a shower of abuse and misrepresentation in what we have to do, abuse in which the

captured part of the Labour Press will be ably assisted by its capitalist allies and confrères.

The industriously circulated lie that the Communist Party is arming for civil war and desires a bloody revolution has already poisoned the minds of great numbers of well-meaning but shallow persons who are too intellectually idle to examine the case for themselves.

It may therefore be well to recall the actual authoritative statement by J. R. Campbell, the editor of the Communist organ, the *Workers' Weekly*, made not for the first time at the trial on November 20, 1925. I quote from *The Times* report :—

He would be sorry if the jury thought the Communist Party was an organisation of gunmen such as the Fascisti or the Ulster Volunteers. Was it suggested that in 1925, with 5,000 organised Communists in England, any one of them was mad enough or optimistic enough to suggest that they should commence a struggle for taking the power from the Government? They were contending, with regard to force that wherever it appeared in the documents there were conditions mentioned that it might be necessary to break the resistance of a privileged minority to the workers' majority in Parliament.

This authentic statement is substantiated by the fact that all the raiders and the spies of the Government have been unable to produce so much as a toy pistol found in Communist hands. The wicked suggestions put forward at Liverpool are thus refuted.

It thus becomes a matter of first-class importance that justice shall be done to the Communists and it is not a question whether we individually agree with all their theories or like their methods of advocacy. It is essentially a matter of elementary right as opposed to sheer bigotry and pharisaism. To represent the issue as being one between a pacific Labour Party and a bloody-minded Communist Party is either to be stupid and ignorant or else to be mendacious, and very much the same is true of the talk about the "dictation of Moscow," which is no worse than dictation from Amsterdam. The great reason, I suppose, for holding the Third International in Moscow is that only there can Communists be safe from arrest or assassination. If we cannot be just to our fellow workers then Winston Churchill's bitter taunt holds true that Labour is not fit to govern.

But the real offence of the Communists is their fearless exposure of reaction inside the Labour Party and the necessity of

stifling this exposure, if possible, for the reasons I have already indicated. For this purpose any and every device will be used, the latest being a musty old rule that a subject once discussed and decided must not be raised again for three years, so that, however great a wrong may have been done, however much new light may have been shed on the matter, the deadlock must hold. Only a dying party can be bound in this way and strangled with its own red tape. Means must be found to set the conference free, though reaction will fight hard to prevent it.

And what then? Is it too much to demand that those who murmur in private shall pluck up courage and come out into the open? Is it not our bounden duty to call on all those who realise the deadly peril of the present leadership not to hang back for fear of frowns or disfavour, but to afford that lead to which an eager rank and file would give the true response, as they gave it to the great strike? Let their example inspire us.

We know the difficulties that stand in the way of speaking out. One is a candidate for Parliament, another is a propagandist whose livelihood depends upon the favour of those in authority in the party, another hopes to be a secretary or under-secretary and yet another has received favours in the past for which he must show gratitude—and so forth, till all with one voice cry, "I pray thee have me excused."

But if those in prominent positions hold back how can the humbler and inconspicuous members of the Party be rallied for the assault, or what other prospect is there before us but futility whether in office or in opposition? To have another Government acting on the avowed policy of doing evil that good may come, of practising that in office which we denounced in opposition, would give the *coup de grâce* to what yet remains of sincerity in our camp.

For the very obvious collaboration between the Labour Imperialists and the Tory Imperialists, the declarations of the former that all we need is another Labour Government and never again a general strike, leave no room for doubt that what is contemplated is the continuation of the Westminster Farce (commonly called Parliamentary Government), which, carried on hitherto between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, will, now that poor 'Dee has committed suicide, be continued in the same spirit with a new comedian,

the piece being renamed *Tweedledum v. MacTweedledee*. And when all the honesty and truth are banished from among us, when the Labour Party has become an organisation of place-hunters, there will be nothing else for it but to begin our labours all over again.

Is it for this that we spend our time, our thought, our health, that we rise early and sit up late and eat the bread of sorrows?

In view of such a prospect I would then, in all humility, appeal to any who may read these lines to consider whether the occasion does not demand some energetic action even outside the routine of custom and etiquette, remembering that, as the whole is greater than the part, the fate that so evidently hangs over us would make our individual labours or departmental interests of no avail. An easy, unreasoned optimism, a Micawber-like trust that something will turn up, is the straight road to ruin, and we have an awful warning in the fate of that party that drifted along with the motto "Wait and see."

I submit then that we need fearless speaking out as regards our present leadership, whose folly or worse hides itself under the pretence that we must appear to be united and content though we are not so, a pretence that deceives no one among our opponents and only discourages and bewilders our own rank and file. And if we are told that such matters should not be discussed in public, the answer is that there is far too much secrecy already and that the light of day is the only thing to cleanse the Party of the diseases that grow and flourish in darkness. If these matters are not dealt with openly experience proves that they will not be dealt with at all.

The usual dark hints about Communist intrigue will no doubt be uttered to scare the timid, and all who oppose our opportunists will be represented as being the cat's-paws of the wily Muscovite, for it has been discovered that the red bogey can be quite as effective at a Labour conference as in a general election. So that it will be necessary to show that British Socialists are not quite such blind noodles as to be unable to see without the aid of Russian spectacles the difference between a ballot-box and a cruiser.

In spite of the great mass of inertia it should be possible for courage and wisdom even at Margate to make a breach in the thick blank walls of reaction.

EMPIRE AND SOCIALISM IN AUSTRALIA

By P. R. S.

AUSTRALIA has had more experience of "Labour Governments" than any country in the world. Some people may expect it to follow from this that Australia is also the most socialist country in the world ; but (alas for democratic illusions) facts are obstinate things, and the reality is that nothing more than the fringe of the Socialist problem has been touched by Labour-in-Office-and-Power in the Antipodes.

What is meant by Socialism ? In the most widely agreed-upon terms surely, the substitution of collective or community ownership and control for private ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange. Concretely this must involve the expropriation of the capitalists and landlords, either directly or indirectly, gradually or suddenly, by fair means or foul ; but in any case their expropriation—he who will not face this central socialist doctrine is only playing with a vague idea.

Australian Labour-Socialist politicians are playing with a vague idea. For two generations and more they have advocated Socialism, reform, equality, democracy, the ballot box, and so on. For nearly a whole generation they have successfully persuaded "50 per cent. of the electorate plus one" to vote consistently enough for them and their socialist programme, and in every State and the Commonwealth they have been given the opportunity time after time to tinker with society to their heart's desire. At the present time five of the six States have a Labour Government. In Queensland Labour has just been returned to office for the fifth consecutive term.

And the result ? Admittedly many ameliorations of social injustice, many beneficent and humane measures such as old age pensions, unemployment insurance, extended educational and hospital facilities, abolition of capital punishment ; certain "advanced" political experiments, such as compulsory universal franchise, the referendum, the abolition of Upper Houses ; certain desultory and not always successful attempts at establishing state

enterprises in competition with private enterprise ; certain curious " reforms " such as Compulsory Military Service, Protection, and Government Lotteries ; on the whole an energetic and quite " progressive " record of legislation, even if offset by instances of personal opportunism and corruption, and by certain unforgettable administrative acts of repression against workers on strike.

On the whole a satisfactory record, from the reformers' point of view. At least a record much more humane than Toryism could ever hope to produce, even in a period of steady economic advance and natural prosperity such as Australia has enjoyed for many years.

But what of Socialism ? What of the magnificent " Objective " of the Australian Labour Party, viz., " socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange ? " What of getting to grips with the capitalists and landlords ? What of the abolition of tribute-paying and the exploitation of man by man ? What of the ownership of industry and agriculture by those engaged in production ? The answer is, that if these things mean Socialism, then Socialism does not come into the picture at all where " Constitutional " Labour rules.

There are two simple explanations of the failure of Australian Labour to get down to the brass tacks of Socialism. The first is the vagueness of outlook which characterises all reformists, utopians, and idealists. In Australia the poetic fancies of Rousseau, Ruskin, Henry James, and the Fabian Society have had a great vogue. Labour politicians in Australia, being geographically somewhat remote from the main currents of world thought, are still bursting with ideas of absolute steady progress. The second excuse which might be offered for them is that, even given the will to get concretely to grips with Capitalism, they cannot see the enemy because he is 13,000 miles away over the horizon—mostly round about Lombard Street, E.C., to be precise.

" Cutting the Painter "

The correspondence relating to the appointment of Governors of the Australian States (White Paper 2683), recently published, includes a letter signed by the five Labour Premiers of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, and

Tasmania, urging that the office of State Governor should be filled by distinguished Australian citizens, instead of by Imperial nominees as at present. This may rightly be interpreted, within limits, as a further tendency to weaken the political nexus between the Mother Country and her Daughter—a final step towards complete political autonomy.

But the limits to this interpretation appear in the following passage in the letter composed by these five remarkable Labour Premiers :—

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that our attitude in this matter is entirely consistent with the feeling of the greatest loyalty to His Majesty's throne and person, and a desire to strengthen to the utmost extent within our power the bonds of Empire Unity.

“The Bonds of Empire Unity !” An unconsciously exact phrase, the full implications of which these sycophantic Labour-Imperialists do not even vaguely realise. They will urge, in gracious language, the weakening of the political nexus between Motherland and Daughter, but they dare not even consider cutting the economic umbilical cord which binds Sydney to Lombard Street. They will tinker with vague political formulae, such as the Right of Dominions to Complete Self-Government, but the concrete economic task of freeing the Australian workers and farmers from the domination of Imperial finance Capital is utterly beyond them. Yet until Australian Labour squarely faces the facts behind “Empire Unity,” in other words until Australian producers cease paying dividend-tribute to Imperial investors, the heart of the socialist problem is not even being approached in this democratic Arcadia.

British “Interest” in Australia

The “Bonds of Empire Unity” which Australian Labour Premiers are so anxious to strengthen are loan-bonds and debentures issued on the London Stock Exchange. According to the *Economist* (March 19, 1926) the total Public Debt of Australia, Commonwealth and Six States, now stands at the colossal figure of £1,025,263,514—over a thousand million pounds for a population not as great as that of London ! The *Economist* adds the following dry comment :—

At the rate at which the debts are growing, the total interest charge will reach £50,000,000 per annum within two or three years.

Truly Australia is a happy hunting-ground for coupon-clippers, a very bright jewel in the Imperial crown.

The Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia (1925) gives the following figures showing the steady growth of the borrowing habit (page 406):—

Per Capita Increase in Total Public Debt.

YEAR						AMOUNT PER HEAD
						£
1920	..	..	..	..	..	145
1921	..	..	..	..	..	151
1922	..	..	..	..	..	158
1923	..	..	..	..	..	159
1924	..	..	..	..	..	164

At the same time the rate of interest paid has been steadily raised (page 373):—

Average for All Loans : Commonwealth Debt Only

YEAR						RATE OF INTEREST		
						£	s.	d.
1920	..	..	..	..	..	4	13	7
1921	..	..	..	..	..	4	17	1
1922	..	..	..	..	..	4	19	9
1923	..	..	..	..	..	4	19	3
1924	..	..	..	..	..	5	9	1

The extent to which London financiers have benefited from the increased total borrowed plus the rising rate of interest is indicated in the following figures (page 374):—

Commonwealth Public Debt Only : Interest Payable in London

YEAR						AMOUNT
						£
1920	..	..	..	..	..	5,546,055
1921	..	..	..	..	..	5,993,884
1922	..	..	..	..	..	6,677,781
1923	..	..	..	..	..	6,413,668
1924	..	..	..	..	..	7,258,400

These figures exclude the interest on loans to the States, which is given at a round total figure of £28,000,000 (page 404) of which at least £16,000,000 are paid to investors in London.

In recent years a vague endeavour has been made by Labour and other politicians in Australia to counter this process of tribute-paying abroad. Acting under some obscure patriotic impulse, they have pursued the policy of floating internal loans as a supplement to external borrowing. In other words, they are trying

to replace Shylock abroad with Shylock at home, so "keeping the money in the country." The Commonwealth statistician estimates that, by 1924, the "Australian proportion" of the total indebtedness of the States had grown to two-fifths.

The Alert Yankees

But what really lies behind the recent great increase in internal borrowing is revealed clearly enough in the following cutting from a Sydney newspaper :—

So anxious are American financiers to "get a leg in" in Australia that it is rumoured that move is afoot to take up a big parcel of the Commonwealth Five Million Loan at 5½ per cent. now open for subscription. During the past eighteen months several representatives of America's biggest banking concerns have visited Australia and conferred with Federal and State Treasurers. On present indications local investors will have to lose no time in making application if they desire to participate in the loan.

In other words, internal borrowing means giving Wall Street speculators a chance to buy up big parcels of loans on the Australian market ; a thing difficult to accomplish when the loans are floated in London. The "Labour" loan policy means supplementing the yoke of British Imperial financiers with that of American and a few home-grown capitalists.

On occasions the drift towards America becomes openly evident, as in the celebrated flotations of loans in Wall Street by the Governments of Queensland (£4,421,167), Tasmania (£144,015), and the Commonwealth (£15,000,000) ; to the great wringing of hands in Lombard Street, as is shown by a gloomy comment in the *Stock Exchange Gazette* (July 2, 1925) :—

The arrangement under which three-fourths of the Australian Loan for £20,000,000 was offered in New York and eagerly snapped up on its appearance there, is a matter of something more than ordinary importance. . . . It must be confessed that there is a certain amount of misgiving in the City at Colonial borrowing thus going to the United States. The Canadian market has for years been lost to us ; and if Australia is to turn its eyes to New York for a part of its borrowings, the effects will not be good for British trade. But we must cut our coat according to the cloth at our command, and it is quite a debatable point whether the savings of the country at the present juncture are sufficient to meet the demands for Capital from the Colonies and other countries abroad.

Further causes for "misgiving" in the City may be found in the fact that imports from the U.S.A. into Australia have increased from 18.27 per cent. of the total in 1922 to 24.58 per cent. in 1924; while imports from Britain have decreased during the same period from 51.43 per cent. to 45.24 per cent. of the total—this despite elaborate Empire Preference rebates on British goods, which amounted in 1924 to £7,700,000. Incidentally Henry Ford is proceeding with the erection of two huge manufacturing plants in Australia, at a capital outlay of over two million pounds. And last year the American Fleet visited Australia, where it was welcomed with fulsome eulogies by politicians of all parties.

All this only proves that, if the grip of British Imperialist Capitalism is being weakened on Australia, the fact is due to American rivalry rather than to any socialist action by Labour-in-politics. Either through ignorance or short-sighted folly the Australian Labour Party is conniving at the extension of world capitalist exploitation of the Australian workers and farmers. Instead of one financial yoke to get rid of, there are now two. Soon these two will be of equal weight. Beside this crushing fact the footling political reforms of democracy at work appear most tremendously insignificant.

Finance Capital in Land

The Public Debt is, of course, only one obvious and direct method of levying tribute. Finance capital finds multifarious ways of keeping the coupon-clippers busy. There is, for example, an invitingly profitable scope for British investors in Australian shipping and trading companies, not to mention Australian industrial and mining enterprises; and the extent to which this set of bondholders takes it out of the hide of the Australian workers and farmers will never be accurately estimated until business secrecy is abolished, and Labour research carried out intensively—ideas not likely to occur to the backwoods "statesmen" of the Australian Labour Party.

Even when all this tale is told, there still remains the stunning fact that practically the whole of rural Australia (and Australia is predominantly rural) is owned, directly or indirectly, and exploited by London financiers, who are virtually landlords, drawing their

“rent” in the shape of dividends, either from “Pastoral” joint-stock companies, which conduct vast cattle and sheep stations as business enterprises ; or from banks and mortgage and investment companies, which get control of small holdings in periods of drought or glut.

The former process is simple and direct enough, as ordinary business undertakings go ; but the process of squeezing interest on mortgages from the small farmers is far more subtle and damnable. It is estimated that in many agricultural, dairying, and fruit-growing districts 97 per cent. of the farmers are “mortgaged up to the eyes.” During a drought they go to the bank, or an insurance company, or a mortgage investment company, and pledge their land for money to buy fodder for cattle or to meet instalment payments on machinery, or to buy food for their families. When the drought breaks, and the land produces in plenty, a glut makes prices fall—and the mortgage is renewed. When the next drought comes, as inevitably it does, a second mortgage is taken ; and so on in an endless pilgrimage of despair.

The Commonwealth statistician has computed that no less than £122,341,469 has been loaned on mortgage in Australia by life assurance companies only. Joint-stock bank “advances” he computes at £149,575,272 in 1920, rising to £198,750,775 in 1924. These appalling figures are by no means exhaustive, but merely indicative of the process by which the small farmers are virtually being expropriated by the coupon-clippers of a far country. For practically all this Shylockian finance-capital is of English origin.

The Path to Socialism

Sooner or later a genuinely revolutionary socialist policy will be formulated in Australia, based on an alliance of the industrial workers and small farmers against all capitalist exploiters, whether Imperial, American, or home-grown. Sooner or later the Australian workers and farmers will have to combine in self-defence for the repudiation of the gargantuan Public Debt and for the repudiation of mortgages (for such is the Australian variant of the “land-for-the-peasants” slogan). This is a fearsome word, repudiation, and nice people do not use it ; but sooner or later a

limit will come to the exploitation of Australian Labour, industrial and rural, by the operation of that thoroughly characteristic Imperial phenomenon—Finance Capital.

The important point is that the Australian workers and farmers are exploited by precisely the same set of capitalists. The absentee "rentier" is landlord and bourgeois combined. And this set of capitalists is at present for the most part an integral section of the ruling class in Britain, namely the direct exploiters of British Labour.

A genuine socialist policy for Australia, therefore, involves the closest possible contact with the British working-class movement, as well as with the colonial revolt in other parts of the Empire ; for in each case the offensive must logically be directed against the same set of parasites.

How far this analysis will be complicated by the Americanisation of Australia is a matter which cannot here be decided, but in any case Australian Labour has no hope of developing a socialist policy without considering the general movements of World Capitalism. Nor can ameliorative legislation be called Socialism if it leaves the central problem unattacked.

In Australia Labour-in-Politics has funk'd the job of expropriating the expropriators. After years of office it has nothing to show except pettifogging reforms, and it has actually condoned and encouraged the dominance of Finance Capital in its area of control.

Is there any guarantee that in Britain politicians of the same school of thought will do otherwise ?

WHERE IS CANADA HEADING FOR?

The "Constitutional Issue"

By MAURICE SPECTOR

THE former premier, Mackenzie King, was talking in the House. The grandson of the "Little Rebel," William Lyon Mackenzie, whose short-lived insurrection of 1837 had been instrumental in forcing so-called "responsible government" from Downing Street, had just been given a taste of "irresponsible government" and was swallowing hard. Beaten on the question of the Customs Scandal involving his Cabinet, he had advised His Excellency the Governor-General to dissolve Parliament. Instead Baron Byng called upon the willing Tory leader, Meighen, to form a government. An unprecedented course of conduct this, King complains, for the Crown to refuse dissolution to its ministerial adviser. There has been nothing like it in Great Britain for the last hundred years—or are we to understand that Canada has reverted to the status of a Crown Colony? "Are you trying to start a rebellion?" shouts a Tory back-bencher. "No," comes King's heroic retort, "I am trying to prevent one."

But can he? Can King or anybody else stop the political and social forces at work for the separation of Canada from the Empire? Is Canada heading for another but more important and large-scale "Rebellion of 1837?" Certain it is that the Dominion has run into the biggest "constitutional crisis" in its history—a crisis that may well mark a turning point in relations with the Empire. The action of the Governor-General in refusing dissolution to King only to grant this privilege to the Conservative leader sixty-five hours later, has forced the issue of Canadian "status" well into the foreground of a general election. The revelations of the Customs Scandal, the immediate cause of King's downfall, fades into relative insignificance. It is common knowledge that both capitalist parties are corrupt. Both, according to the evidence submitted before the Investigating Commission, had accepted contributions to their election funds from the liquor manufacturers. However Meighen may deny there is any "constitutional issue" at all, and

however much Mackenzie King and his timid followers interpret the crisis in terms of Gladstonian parliamentary tradition, the point at stake is fundamentally the status of Canada as a Dominion.

On this question of self-determination, Lord Byng has helpfully put a stop to the confusion of tendency with accomplished fact, and vindicated the position of the "extremists." "Lord Byng," writes the well-known British student of colonial development, Professor Keith, "in refusing the dissolution of the Parliament, has challenged effectively the doctrine of the equality of status of the Dominions and the United Kingdom and has relegated Canada decisively to the colonial status she had believed she had outgrown." Neither in fact nor in international law, were Great Britain and Canada ever equals. The British North America Act, which is the constitution of Canada, is an act of the Imperial Parliament and can only be amended by that authority. The interpretation of that Act and Constitution lies in the last analysis not with the Supreme Court of Canada but with the Privy Council in London, as when it declared the Lemieux (Industrial Disputes Investigation) Act *ultra vires* of the Dominion Government. Canada can declare neither war nor peace. When Great Britain is at war, Canada is liable to be automatically treated as a belligerent by powers at war with England. The Governor-General is not only head of the State but a commissioner dispatched from London to report on Canadian matters.

That Byng's intervention was not accidental but bears the earmarks of a Downing Street policy of imperial self-assertion against centrifugal tendencies is furthermore attested by some recent Australian experiences. Not long ago a memorandum was signed by every state in Australia except Victoria asking the Dominions' Secretary Amery to consider appointing local men in place of imperial products, to the posts of State Governor. Downing Street's reply was that as the matter was not unanimous it had better stand over. A few months ago the Governor of New South Wales deliberately refused the advice of his ministers to sanction the appointment of a sufficient number of labour senators to the Upper House to have given the Labour Government a complete majority. A direct appeal to Downing Street brought the reply that the action of the King's representative was above criticism. Apparently

England is not going to loosen the bonds of Empire more than she is compelled to. The "wretched colonies" are no longer regarded in Disraeli's phrase, "as a millstone around England's neck." They are of immense strategic, political and commercial value. Imperial influence was brought to bear against Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1911, when his autonomist leanings caused him to refuse to accept wholly Churchill's views on building Dreadnoughts for Imperial service. The tendency of Canada towards separatism since the conclusion of the war has far outstripped the pace of Laurier's days, and the position of the Empire is far more precarious than it ever was then.

Among the Dominions, it is Canada particularly which confronts the British Foreign Office with the problem of the waning British and rising American Empire. "The far-flung British Empire," said Sir Auckland Geddes, former British Ambassador to Washington in his Page Memorial lecture (1924) "has yielded the leadership of the world in many respects to the compact empire of the United States. The Dominions look upon the government of Washington as of their own generation . . . and Washington with its inviting eyes looks back on them . . ." Some time ago, the U.S. Department of Commerce published a review of the extent of the American investment in Canada, which stated that "economically and socially Canada may be considered as the northern extension of the United States and our trade with Canada is in many respects more like domestic trade than our trade with other countries." Between 1915 and 1922 the British investment remained stationary while the United States increased their investment six-fold. Now one-fourth of all American investments are in Canada. In the eight years ending 1922, only 2 per cent. of Canada's borrowings were from Great Britain, but 33 per cent. were from the U.S. Some 1,200 American branch factories have been established in the Dominion (fostered, ironically enough, by the very preferential tariff that was to bind Canada closer to Imperial Britain). The U.S. own a third of all the industries and producing mines of the Dominion and at the present rate of economic penetration it is just a question of time when the U.S. capitalists become majority stockholders in Canadian economic enterprise. This growing American influence was admitted on the Canadian side,

when Frederick Hudd, Canadian Trade Commissioner in the U.S. and special delegate to the Pan-American Congress in New York last year, declared that "Canada is an integral part of economic America. The commercial, economic and strategic problems common to us all furnish indestructible grounds for enduring and permanent co-operation. There is no problem too difficult for the countries of Latin America and North America to solve provided they stand together as a United States of the American Continent."

Another separatist factor is the increasing industrialisation of the Dominion (accelerated in marked degree by the war and since 1920 by the aid of American capital). Neither Canadian Liberals nor Conservatives are prepared to adopt economic policies to meet the requirements of British industry for a greater market overseas. At the Imperial Conference of 1923, British diplomacy failed to "put over" such preference, emigration, and capital export policies as would keep Britain the industrial centre of the Empire and the Dominions, chiefly producers of primary products. Mackenzie King continually emphasised that Canada was the second largest manufacturing country in the Empire. As for the Tories, who politically parade as the ultra loyalists—their is a policy of economic nationalism and protection which opposes even the present preferential arrangement with Britain.

The unsatisfactory internal economic position of the country since the war has also helped to cool imperial ardour. The fifteen years prior to the war were years of exceeding prosperity for the Canadian bourgeoisie. Immigrants flowed in by hundreds of thousands. The third transcontinental railway was in the course of construction. Taxation was low. Military expenditure only amounted to twelve out of 130 million dollars of federal revenue. The war came. Immigration stopped. The heavily over-capitalised transcontinental systems went bankrupt and had to be centralised in a government-owned system with a deficit of a hundred million dollars a year. The increased military expenditure saddled the country with a *huge war debt*. Tens of thousands of Canadians actually began to leave the country. The result of this economic slump has been to strain the never-robust structure of Canadian Confederation to the breaking point. Secessionist tendencies have

arisen both in the Maritime Provinces in the extreme East and in the grain producing provinces of the West. Both sections are dissatisfied with the results of Confederation, complaining of exploitation at the hands of the manufacturing-financial interests of Central Canada (Ontario and Quebec).

This post-war situation in which Canada finds itself—British imperial decline, industrialisation, American penetration, dragging economic development, has naturally made her very cautious of imperial commitments. When Admiral Jellicoe semi-officially proposes that Canada should contribute 36 million dollars a year towards the maintenance of the Imperial Navy and provide a squadron of four cruisers at an annual cost of maintenance of four million dollars more, there is no visible enthusiasm. All sorts of embarrassing queries arise, particularly in Quebec. After all, what real community of interests in matters of foreign policy does there exist between Great Britain and Canada? Is Canada interested in India or the Suez Canal? "Our imperial policy," exclaims the French-Canadian nationalist Bourassa in the House, "I ask any honourable member of the House, have we the same interests in Irak or Mosul as the oil hunters of England have? That Europe should be reaping the results of a policy of national hatred and economic rivalry is no wonder, but why impose upon this country the consequences of that policy?" Take the possibility inherent in the Locarno Pact of an Anglo-French conflict. Is French-speaking Quebec, which was so indifferent about the war with Germany, likely to be more interested in fighting France?

How this growing feeling of the separation of interests manifests itself may be gathered from the recent manoeuvres of the leading capitalist politicians. It will be remembered that when, during the Chanak crisis, Lloyd George attempted to embroil the Dominion in a war with Turkey he was sharply rebuffed by the King Government. Meighen, leader of the Tory Opposition, thereupon derided the separatism of the Government and claimed that he would have replied to Downing Street's appeal for war-preparedness with a proud, "Ready, Aye Ready." Meighen's jingo speech, added to his imperialist war record generally, gave further impetus to the political suicide of his Party in Quebec which at the last elections returned three Conservatives out of a possible sixty. After this

debacle, political expediency led Meighen to change his tune. In the now famous Hamilton "keynote" speech, he declared his "belief that it would be best that not only Parliament should be called upon but that the decision of the government, which, of course, would have to be given promptly, should be submitted to the judgment of the people before troops leave our shore." Meighen's speech was not taken too seriously in London, which realised that he was proposing a khaki election with his own fine Italian hand disfranchising the "alien-born" section of the electorate to make the country safe for the Empire. Still it was a sign of the times that Meighen should even be forced to pretend a new orientation. When J. S. Woodsworth, the labour representative, subsequently moved his resolution that "in the opinion of this House, Canada should refuse to accept responsibility for the complications arising from the foreign policy of the United Kingdom," he was viciously assailed by a few Tory back-benchers but was received in silence by the official party leaders, who thereby admitted he was giving expression to an increasing body of Dominion public opinion.

Meanwhile there was the approaching Imperial Conference at which the chief topic of discussion, according to the *Morning Post*, was to be imperial foreign policy, particularly the questions of "imperial defence" and Locarno. In anticipation of this agenda, King proceeded to move a resolution: "That for the acceptance of any treaty, convention or agreement involving military or economic sanctions, the approval of the Parliament of Canada should be secured." He went on to remind the House that such a resolution would be in harmony with the position taken by Canada at the last Imperial Conference, that the Dominions should be free to negotiate treaties specifically affecting their interests and not "involving the interests of the Empire as a whole." The commercial treaty the Dominion signed with Belgium shortly after was similarly negotiated by Canadian plenipotentiaries. Before the country was committed to the obligations of the Treaty of Locarno, he urged, Parliament should be given the opportunity of deciding for or against its ratification. The resolution carried without division, a development that did not escape the attention of the French press. The *Quotidien* at any rate wrote that "hitherto the great Anglo-

Saxon communities have held themselves bound by negotiations carried on by the British Foreign Office. Canada's decision has every prospect of establishing a precedent throughout the Empire, for Australia is clearly separatist in matters of international politics and South Africa shows a similar mentality in discussing the problem of a flag for the Union. At the Imperial Conference . . . the Dominion governments must make clear their policies in regard to Locarno and other questions."

But the problems of "imperial defence" and Locarno are precisely what cause so much disquiet in the Dominions. In Australia the leader of the Opposition, Charlton, attacked the Treaty, and Bruce, the Premier, did not defend it very zealously. The Irish Free State is cold towards it. Herzog of South Africa shows scant sympathy. In India the government disallowed a resolution introduced disapproving it. It is not a very pleasant prospect for England to have the Dominion Parliaments publicly discussing her foreign treaties with perhaps the chance of openly rejecting them. Under these circumstances, Meighen is decidedly preferable to King. To refuse dissolution to the latter in order to grant it to Meighen, was to hand over the election machinery to the Tories. (In Canada the party in office appoints the returning officers.) The British Press has been quite cynical about the importance of this control of election machinery, explaining that Canadian politics are characterised by graft and corruption and that is the reason for Mackenzie King's outburst of resentment that Baron Byng should have taken the machinery out of reach of his grasp. Byng has thereby practically put himself at the head of the Conservative Party whose victory would, for the time at least, be more conducive to British imperial interests. King as a liberal capitalist politician and "constitutionalist," is, of course, very timid of attacking Byng directly. He throws the blame for the Governor-General's intervention on the misleading advice of Arthur Meighen. But a prominent Liberal, Principal Grant of Upper Canada College, has given utterance to the inner feelings of the anti-conservative rank-and-file when he says with respect to Byng's intervention "that if he gets away with it it will set a constitutional precedent. If not, it brings the office of Governor-General nearer to an end."

There is undoubtedly a constitutional issue in this Election. But the issue is not merely—why did Lord Byng refuse the advice of the late Premier and accept the advice of dissolution from the present Premier? The issue is—why is Lord Byng here at all to govern as the appointee and representative of an outside power? Why is Canada still in leading strings? In other words, the constitutional issue is the issue of the constitution. This is an issue on which the workers must take up a position. They are vitally affected by the regime of the British North America Act. It does matter to the workers whether the country in which they carry on their struggle for freedom from wage-slavery is a colony or whether it has achieved its complete sovereignty. The workers are confronted not only with capitalism but with the ramifications of capitalist-imperialism. Not only are they interested that they shall not be the pawns of British foreign policy and imperialist wars, but that the concessions they wring in the way of immediate social legislation shall not be at the mercy of the British North America Act, or the interpretation of its powers and jurisdiction by the Privy Council in London. The Senate killed the Old Age Pensions Bill that was passed through the House of Commons. But assuming that it had carried it, the right of the Federal Government to pass such legislation might still have been questioned on appeal to the Privy Council. Despite all statements to the contrary, Canada is still a colony of Great Britain, a part of the British Empire, one of the greatest machines in the world for the exploitation of the working class and coloured peoples. That is why the Labour Party, in its Ontario Section at least, takes a position in favour of the complete self-determination and sovereignty of Canada and why the Left wing of the Labour Party, headed by the Communists, takes a more specific position for the annulment of the British North America Act, the separation of Canada from the Empire, and Canadian Independence.

WELSH ART AND THE REVOLUTIONARY IDEA

By BYRON WELSH

THE Welsh National Eisteddfod of 1926 was held in the South amid the cries of half-fed children, soup kitchens, and the grumblings of a half-starved proletariat. Next year it will be held in the North amid the poverty of the agricultural workers. But whether it is held in the North or in the South, the poets and dramatists of Wales see not the social milieu. They are only concerned with their "art." Their "art" is above the battle, above the clash of Capital and Labour.

The winner of the chair, the greatest honour of the year among Welsh artistic circles, was a young man from Pontardawe, a poverty-stricken area right in the midst of the industrial chaos of South Wales. But the young artist forgot the ugliness of his native locality, for the theme was "The Monk." And when we saw this on the programme we could not help thinking of what Henri Barbusse once said to Anatole France: "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 labouring masses." The intellectuals in this case preferred the bankruptcy of middle-class ideology to furthering the cause of suffering humanity.

It was in and about the year 1760 that the Industrial Revolution broke in among the labouring masses of England. A few decades later Wales found itself struggling for its life blood in the mad vortex of capitalist desires. The disease of capitalism spread till Wales, like every other country, was devastated. Our ancient mountains became living cemeteries, and the beautiful hills and dales became little private hells, and the subjugation and oppression of the masses went on alongside the elevation of a

few soulless individuals. But Wales grew rich, and that was enough. Mammon must have its art. So our present Welsh artists believe with Oscar Wilde that the nineteenth century was created by Balzac, and they wisely leave it alone, and turn their faces instead to nobler and higher themes. Consequently an ode on mediæval monkery is far better for the minds of young Wales than an ode on the execution of Dick Penderyn or the deportation of John Frost. Wales must needs create nationalists by turning the minds of the young people away from the class struggle, and disseminate and popularise amongst the people an institution and a personality that were for centuries barriers to progress and formidable bulwarks of reaction.

The ode, like every other one by Welsh artists, is beautifully put out. Its form is superb, but its content, like the theme, is decadent and reactionary. Reading this ode by this young poet of Wales, one's mind instantly thought of the Young Germany Movement of 1848. The spectacle of the German masses groaning under the tyranny of capitalist autocracy nearly killed Heinrich Heine. And let the reader who intends reading this winning ode of 1926 ponder over these words of Heine: "I know not if I deserve that a laurel wreath should one day be laid on my coffin. Poetry, dearly as I have loved it, has always been to me but a divine plaything. I have never attached any great value to poetical fame, and I trouble myself very little whether people praise my verses or blame them. But lay on my coffin a sword, for I was a brave soldier in the *Liberation War of Humanity*." Writing at the same time and belonging to the same movement was another young man destined to become famous in the annals of art. His name was Richard Wagner. "I will destroy even the very memory and trace of this delirious order of things, which, pieced together out of force, falsehood, trouble, tears, sorrow, suffering, need, deceit, hypocrisy, and crime, is shut up in its own reeking atmosphere, and never receives a breath of pure air, to which no ray of pure joy ever penetrates." That fire burnt in Germany in 1848. Wales has not yet seen the glow in the sky.

And, reader, let us turn to the drama. The Welsh drama belongs exclusively to Wales. No other nation seems to be anxious to translate the dramatic masterpieces of old Gwalia. The Welsh

artists live in isolation; they are original. Going through their works one looks in vain for the influence of a Leonid Andreyev, a Brieux, or a Toller. We are sure that the ambitious Miss Davies will never make another Hjalman Bergstrom, or the respectable Mr. Hughes another Gerhart Hauptmann. Too far removed from the proletariat, and far too busy in consuming the surplus wealth, these dramatists have no love for the modern industrial struggle. They remain at home in suburbia creating fictitious characters who convey to all the world the metaphysical travail of their authors. We do not know how old Mr. Caradoc Evans is, but we are sure that he has not visited South Wales for the last century and a half. His *Taffy* marked the high-water mark of the decadence in Welsh art. And this year's winner in the National Eisteddfod goes the same way. Whilst the Welsh people are struggling to live, the author of *The Sling* is lost in metaphysical abstractions concerning the love of a man for his dead wife.

Yet Wales has a grievance. For a hundred and twenty years Welsh life has been on the decline. The rural areas are devastated. The country "rustics" migrate to the coal-mining valleys. And to-day these valleys are in the throes of a life-and-death struggle. But the Welsh National Eisteddfod ruled by the Welsh middle class turn down that phase of life (the basis of their art), and by the use of high-sounding poems and dramas appeal to the youth of Wales to resurrect the spirit of Nationalism. Their nationalism is based upon national exploitation, and their art simply *Mammonart*.

Old Baumert (jumps up beside himself with excitement): "Both skin and clothing. It's true, it's true! Here I stand, Robert Baumert, master weaver of Kaschbach. Who can bring anything against me? I've been an honest working man all my life long an' look at me now! What they've made of me! Stretched on the rack day after day." (He holds out his arms.) "Feel that! Skin and bone! You villains all, you brood of hell!" (He sinks down on a chair, weeping with rage and despair.)

Wales to-day is crying for another Hauptmann. Yet in the midst of all the poverty and squalor of the Welsh hills the Welsh artists remain—spineless.

The World of Labour

THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMMITTEE

The Paris Meeting

AFTER exchange of correspondence, the Anglo-Russian Committee met in Paris on July 30 and 31. The suggestion was first made in a telegram sent by the All-Russian Council of Trade Unions to the Secretary of the Trades Union Congress on June 29, as follows:—

In connection with the General Council's decision, we once more put the question of assisting the miners.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. proposes to convoke as soon as possible the Anglo-Russian Committee in order to help the British miners. The bitter struggle of all the bourgeois forces makes the convocation particularly imperative. . . .

A reply was sent on the same day, promising to discuss the matter, and in reply to a further telegram from the All-Russian Council, the General Council sent on July 17 a telegram agreeing to the meeting, and suggesting that it should take place on July 26 at Paris. It was later announced that the General Council proposed that the meeting should discuss the question of international unity.

The conference eventually began on July 30, the General Council being represented by Messrs. Pugh, Citrine, Findlay, Hicks and Purcell, and the All-Russian Council by Messrs. Andreyev, Melnitchansky, Lepse, Dogadov and Schwarz.

No report has yet been made public on the British side, but the report delivered by the Russian representatives has been published (see *International Press Correspondence*, English Edition, Nos. 58 and 60, August 26 and September 2).

From this it is clear that the Russian representatives put forward four suggestions for the agenda of the conference, viz.: (1) Assistance for the British miners; (2) An increased effort for the unification of the International Trade Union Movement; (3) A decision concerning the danger of war; (4) A declaration emphasising the necessity for the continued existence of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

The British delegates, however, refused to discuss these questions before they had dealt with the Declaration of the Central Council of the Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R., published in *Pravda*, on June 8 (see *Workers' Weekly*, July 16), and had induced the Central Council to withdraw the criticisms of the General Council contained in the Declaration. They further stated that they could not agree to any discussion of assistance for the British miners, as the constitution of the Anglo-Russian Committee does not allow such a question to be considered.

Finally the Russian delegation issued a formal statement of its attitude, as follows:—

Having regard to the fact that the British delegation refuses to discuss the questions placed before the Anglo-Russian Committee by the Russian delegation, and that it declares that its General Council must first be informed concerning the results of the exchange of opinions at the present conference of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the Russian delegation will report this to the Central Council of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union:—

(1) We express our deepest regret that the British comrades hasten their departure although a number of most important practical tasks lie before the Anglo-Russian Committee for discussion.

(2) We stand for the maintenance of the Anglo-Russian Committee, particularly in the present moment when the offensive of capital against the working class is intensifying and the danger of new wars is becoming ever more real. We hold that the existence and activity of the Anglo-Russian Committee in such a situation will be of the greatest advantage to the working class.

(3) We consider, however, the refusal of the British delegation to discuss the extremely important practical questions concerning the organisation of support for the British miners which have been placed before the Anglo-Russian Committee by us to be incorrect.

(4) We declare at the same time in the name of the Central Council of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union that the Russian Unions, despite all this, will continue to support the fighting workers in Great Britain.

On the next day the Russian delegation put forward a resolution embodying their proposals, but the British delegation declared that they could not agree to any practical decisions, and made the following report:—

The British delegates raised the question of the declaration issued by the Central Council of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union concerning the policy of the British General Council during the recent national strike.

The British delegates stressed categorically that the General Council would not grant anyone the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the British Trade Union Movement and demanded that the above-mentioned declaration be withdrawn and that for the future an agreement be made concerning this question.

This question was debated at great length, without, however, any decision being arrived at. The British delegates therefore pointed out that they were not in a situation to examine the other questions before they had reported upon the discussion to the General Council.

The question of the conflict in the British mining industry was raised. The British delegates explained the steps taken by the General Council to organise international assistance for the miners. They expressed also their deepest satisfaction with the noble financial support of the miners on the part of the Russian trade union movement and undertook to present the General Council with any practical proposals that the Russian delegates might make with regard to further support.

With regard to the general international situation, the committee was unanimously of the opinion that the creation of international unity in the trade union movement was urgently necessary, and that the British and Russian movements are determined to continue their work to obtain this end.

The Russian delegation then added a paragraph to its official statement, as follows:—

Further, the declaration of the Russian delegation was heard, that in their opinion the declaration of the Central Council of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union could not be regarded as an interference on the part of the Russian unions in the affairs of the British trade union movement, and that they, the Russian delegates, did not consider it possible to discuss the declaration of the Central Council of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Union at the Conference of the Anglo-Russian Committee without receiving the permission of the Central Council to do so. The main instructions which the Russian delegates received from their Central Council were to raise the question of the support of the British miners in the Anglo-Russian Committee. This, however, could, unfortunately, not be done because, according to the declaration of the British delegation, the latter was not empowered to do so by the General Council.

The question of a future meeting was left undecided.

The Berlin Meeting

In view of the indecisive character of the Paris discussion, a new meeting was arranged, and took place at Berlin on August 23-25. The members of the Committee present were Messrs. Pugh, Citrine, Findlay, Hicks, Swales, Andreyev, Melnitchansky, Lepse, Schwarz and Ugarov. The invitations to the meeting again contained the suggestion that the principal subject of discussion should be assistance for the British miners, and the Russian report to the Soviet Central Council (see *Workers' Weekly*, September 10) shows that the British delegation again objected to this. After some discussion, however, the British delegates withdrew their objection.

The Russian representatives reported first on the general situation, and put forward proposals for practical measures. They pointed out the enormous international significance of the miners' struggle against the British State and the united front of world capitalism, on the one hand, and the almost complete isolation of the miners in their struggle, on the other hand. They proposed:—

- (1) The Anglo-Russian Committee should express appreciation of the miners' heroic determination.
- (2) Increase of aid by workers of whole world essential for miners' victory.
- (3) Coal and transport workers of all countries should place immediate embargo on transportation of coal for use against British miners.
- (4) The delegates of British General Council should bring before the latter body question of operating the embargo.
- (5) Appeal to the International Transport Workers' Federation to undertake practical carrying out of embargo outside England.
- (6) Appeal to separate trade unions to assist the embargo.
- (7) Appeal to miners of all countries not to produce scab coal.
- (8) Condemnation of passivity and delay of the Amsterdam International and Miners' International in organising aid.
- (9) The British General Council should appeal to Amsterdam and the Soviet Central Council to the R.I.L.U. for increased aid.
- (10) Issue of a special manifesto calling for increased aid.

(11) British General Council should conduct energetic campaign amongst trade unions for collections for the miners.

(12) Accept with satisfaction Soviet Central Council statement of determination of Russian workers to render all possible aid.

(13) Both sides to bring before their General Councils the voluntary establishment by the trade unions of a one per cent. levy.

(14) The British General Council should appeal to the Labour Party to demand that the Government stop supporting the mineowners.

The British delegation disagreed with these proposals, on the grounds, among others, that they had been considered already and adopted as far as practicable, and that the attempt to carry them out would do more harm than good. They issued a statement saying:—

The British representatives have already frequently stated that they are ready to examine and report to their own trade union centre any practical proposal coming from the Russian trade unions and which could extend the steps already taken and the efforts made by those charged with conducting same.

The resolution does not do this, and its proposals in respect to the various organisations mentioned in it, if they were to be accepted by the Anglo-Russian Committee, would not give any additional practical effect whatsoever, and would also not give the desired aid to the British miners, but on the contrary, at the present would be harmful for the cause of the miners as the result of international complications which might thereby be evoked.

In respect to the proposed condemnation of the I.F.T.U. (Amsterdam) for its supposed inactivity, the British delegates are of the opinion that this item is outside the jurisdiction of the Anglo-Russian Committee, and also that they cannot give their signature to such decisions.

The question of an embargo on coal imported to England has been thoroughly examined both from the national and international aspect by the competent organs, and the Anglo-Russian Committee has not means at its disposal for putting into force such a policy, while the proposed manifesto to the organs indicated would be correctly estimated as an absolutely unjustified interference.

Success of possible financial aid has already been thoroughly investigated, and all steps have been taken for fully utilising the national and international apparatus for this object. The resolution does not envisage anything at all that is new or that is capable of giving greater results.

The British Labour Party during the entire mining conflict has shown its readiness in all possible cases to utilise the moment for a struggle against the position of the British Government. It has all the time been in close contact with the Miners' Federation for this purpose.

If the Anglo-Russian Committee were to take upon itself powers which do not belong to it, this, as has already been indicated, would be looked upon as interference, and would neither bring practical aid to the miners, nor aid to the cause of International Unity.

Therefore the British representatives cannot agree to a joint acceptance of the resolution, but at the same time will report to their General Council about it.

To this statement the Russian delegation issued a reply explaining the object of their proposals, condemning the failure of the General Council to exert all its influence, and emphasising the danger to the cause of Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity of the attitude taken up by the British delegation.

The following is an extract from this reply of the Russian delegation:—

The arguments put forward by the representatives of the General Council against our project that our proposals have already been conducted by the General Council and are not practical, is only a new attempt of the British Delegation to refuse in substance practical discussion of the question of aid to the British miners in the Anglo-Russian Committee; for the General Council has not once spoken in favour of conducting the embargo and has not recommended this measure to the transport unions of Great Britain and to the International Federation of Transport Workers as a means for aiding the miners.

The General Council has not utilised all its influence and authority, either within England for organising regular material aid for the miners, or in the way of a determined demand that the Amsterdam International organise aid on an international scale. The General Council has not once insistently demanded that the Labour Party demands that the Conservative Government refuse support to the owners.

In such a situation, to declare that our proposals are already out of date actually means scotching the proposals of the A.U.C.T.U. for drawing up measures for aid to the British miners on the part of the Anglo-Russian Committee.

In exactly the same way, while entirely objecting to our project, the British Delegation did not bring forward a single proposal of its own for joint discussion of the question of aiding miners placed upon the agenda.

All this once more only goes to show the absolute non-desire of the General Council Delegation for the Anglo-Russian Committee to act or to draw up any measure for increasing support to the miners.

The attempt of the British Delegation to interpret the discussion of aid to the miners and action towards this end by the Anglo-Russian Committee as exceeding the competence of the Anglo-Russian Committee is only a new attempt to bring about a rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee and a new blow at the friendship and unity of the English and Russian Trade Union Movements.

The whole idea of organising the Anglo-Russian Committee was that it be an organ of the Trades Union Movement of the two countries for a struggle for the unity of the World Trade Union Movement and a struggle against the capitalist offensive on the working class.

It therefore follows that the Anglo-Russian Committee cannot fail to be concerned with such a tremendous event as a lock-out of the British miners and cannot fail to come to the aid of the miners with its own measures.

No agreement was reached after a discussion lasting one and a-half days.

The second point on the agenda was the question of international unity. The British delegation made first a formal statement putting forward no proposals. The Russian delegation proposed the summoning of a general conference between the I.F.T.U. and the R.I.L.U. together with unaffiliated bodies, but the British delegates objected on the ground that the proposal was absolutely new to them. Finally, the following resolution was passed unanimously:—

■ The Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Committee, at its Fourth Session, held in Berlin on August 23, 24, 25, 1926, having considered the International situation and the task of the working class arising from this situation, unani-
mously confirms the necessity of more decisive steps for the international unity

of the International Trade Union Movement and the creation of a single International of Trade Unions.

The present meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee observes with regret that the attempt to reach unity by means of summoning a conference of the I.F.T.U. with the A.U.C.T.U., made at the Berlin meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee in December, 1925, did not meet with success in view of the disinclination of the I.F.T.U. to agree to the summoning of such a conference with Russian unions without preliminary conditions.

Despite this the Anglo-Russian Committee will continue with still greater energy to insist on the establishment of real unity on the International Trade Union Movement.

As a first and substantial step in this direction the Anglo-Russian Committee confirms its decision taken at the Berlin Conference, according to which the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress should immediately fulfil the obligation undertaken by the Anglo-Russian Conference, and afterwards ratified by the General Council and the British Trades Union Congress, namely, the obligation to call, upon its own initiative and under its observation, a preliminary conference without any restrictive conditions, between the I.F.T.U. and the Russian unions.

The Anglo-Russian Committee recommends the General Council of the British Trades Union Congress to summon this conference not later than the end of October.

BOOK REVIEW

THE GOVERNMENT AS STRIKE BREAKER

General Strikes and Road Transport. By George Glasgow. With a Foreword by the Right Hon. D. Lloyd George, O.M., P.C., M.P., &c. (Geoffrey Bles, Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, London.)

MR. LLOYD GEORGE was troubled when he heard that Mr. George Glasgow was writing this book : Was it wise to make public the details of the Government's preparations to break a strike ? He finally came down on the side of publicity because he thought that it would create a general recognition of the efficacy of road transport for this purpose : in other words, that it would give the trade union leader who does not like general strikes some meat for his argument that a general strike must necessarily be a failure. Mr. George Glasgow tries to produce the same effect—the impression of a wonderfully well-organised system entirely taking the place of all previous systems, and making mere workers an unnecessary luxury in the life of the community.

The result is that the book contains numbers of details of organisation, complete with the names of the illustrious gentry who sat on every conceivable committee, but only gives an occasional indication of the actual results of their deliberations. When the author does break into statistics the truth grins through.

The Liverpool Haulage Committee, for example, worked hard—one member worked himself to a breakdown in health—and organised return loads as well as outward loads. Result : during the period of the strike 6,596 tons were moved by road, and 3,297 tons by rail (total outward, 9,893 tons) ; and “in all, including the return loads arranged for, 10,000 tons of goods, mainly food, were transported.” Hardly an imposing total for Liverpool ! And the return loads would have just about filled a medium-sized barge. Generalisations about the completely successful working of the whole scheme, which are scattered through his pages, appear unable to withstand statistical examination.

So far as the actual record of results achieved goes, the book merely tells us what we all knew : that a nucleus passenger service was kept going, mainly with gentlemen blacklegs, and that a small quantity of goods was moved. The hold-up was not absolutely watertight, but Mr. Glasgow cannot prove that it was a sieve.

The book, however, conveys one definite message to the workers—the necessity of organisation. From 1919 (and even before the end of the war, Mr. Lloyd George tells us) the strike-breaking organisation has been permanently in existence and has been steadily developed. “It has become a regular feature of Government administration, and the Labour Party, for instance, knows all about it.” Mr. MacDonald's Government knew about it and were prepared to use it. Yet not a single step was taken to organise the workers to *beat* the Government's organisation.

After the appointment of the Samuel Commission, which was to give semi-legal authority for the proposed wage reductions, the Government altered what had been more or less of a paper scheme into a fighting organisation. Commissioners and their staffs were appointed in September, 1925. They immediately got down to the question of *local* organisation. The Road Commissioners, for example, appointed road officers and chairman of haulage committees in each of the large number of areas within each division. In one division, we are told, the organisation was complete by the end of November, 1925, and preparatory meetings were held in December. A conference on Road Transport was held in January, 1926, and detailed instructions were elaborated during January and February. Further conferences were held in March and further details introduced into the organisation. In March also, we are told, the responsible members were asked to keep the dates April 27 and 28 free ; and the final meetings were in fact held on those dates. Thus by the time the General Council issued its call a detailed local organisation existed throughout the whole country, whose purpose it was to break the strike. As one reads these details the inactivity of the General Council stands out more and more clearly. The work done by the Trades Councils was wonderful ; but it was wonderful because we are thinking of the rapidity with which they got to work and the relatively great initiative shown by them in contrast with the lack of initiative shown by the General Council. If there had been three weeks even of definite preparation, if there had been some definite scheme to work to, the Trades Councils could have been functioning from the first instead of gradually picking up their bearings and working out in the middle of the emergency plans which were largely necessary in order to get over the troubles caused by the lack of centralised direction.

As a contribution to the preparation of such a scheme some of the details given in the book, and especially the few maps showing divisions and lines of communication which were found to be necessary for the Government's dispatch riders, may prove useful to the working class ; but its main lesson is the value of preparedness.

E. B.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- The Present Economic Revolution in the United States.* By Thomas Nission Carter, Professor of Political Economy, Harvard University. (Allen and Unwin, 10s. 6d.)
- "Our" *Land and How to Make It So.* By James Dundas White, LL.D., Ex-M.P. (C. W. Daniel Co., 6d.)
- Philosophy from a Worker.* By Maxwell Cappendale. (25 cents.)
- Will Lloyd George Supplant Ramsay MacDonald?* By Joseph Burgess, the pioneer of Independent Labour. (Joseph Burgess Publication Depot. Trade Agents: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent, & Co., 3s.)
- The End of Laissez Faire.* By John Maynard Keynes. (Hogarth Press, 2s.)
- Les Bourreaux.* By Henri Barbusse. (Ernest Flammarion, Paris, 10 francs.)
- Must Britain Travel the Moscow Road?* By Norman Angell. (Noel Douglas, 5s.)
- Company Unions.* By Robert W. Dunn, with Conclusions by W. Z. Foster. (Trade Union Educational League, 25 cents.)
- Russian Workers and Workshops in 1926.* By William Z. Foster. (Trade Union Educational League, 25 cents.)
- The Evolution of Modern Capitalism.* By J. A. Hobson. (Walter Scott Publishing Co., 7s. 6d.)
- To-day and To-morrow.* By Henry Ford, in collaboration with Samuel Crowther. Being a continuation of *My Life and Work*. (William Heinemann, 12s. 6d.)
- A Peaceful Revolution—The Gateway to a Greater Britain.* By Oswald Wildridge. (Reprinted from the *Northern Daily Telegraph*, June 7-14, 1926. The C. W. Daniel Co., 6d.)
- Mammon.* By J. G. Sinclair. (John George Sinclair, 1s.)
- Towards a Full-Grown Man.* Being the Clifford Lecture for 1926. By Basil A. Yeaxlee, O.B.E., Ph.D. (The Brotherhood Movement (Incorporated), 6d.)
- The Politics of Grace.* By George M. Ll. Davies. (The Fellowship of Reconciliation, 6d.)
- Federation Finance and Its Relation to Industrial Activity.* By R. Coppock, General Secretary, N.F.B.T.O. (N.F.B.T.O., 1d.)
- The Political Meaning of the Great Strike.* By J. T. Murphy. (Communist Party, 1s. 6d.)
- The American Coal Miners' Struggle for Industrial Status.* By Arthur E. Suffern. (Allen and Unwin, 10s.)
- The Spokesman's Secretary.* Being the Letters of Mame to Mom. By Upton Sinclair. (Upton Sinclair, 1.25 dols.)
- A Short History of the British Workers.* By R. W. Postgate. (The Plebs League, 1s. 6d.)



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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

Notes of the Month

THE MINERS AND THE NEW PHASE

Forward to Victory

ARTHUR HORNER

From Liverpool to Margate

Dr. ROBERT DUNSTAN

Pharaoh in Downing Street

W. N. EWER

Mexico To-day

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VOLUME 8 NOVEMBER, 1926 NUMBER 11

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - -	- Page 643
<i>THE MINERS AND THE NEW PHASE</i>		
Forward to Victory	- - - - -	„ 657
<i>By ARTHUR HORNER</i>		
From Liverpool to Margate	- - -	„ 665
<i>By DR. ROBERT DUNSTAN</i>		
Pharaoh in Downing Street	- - -	„ 673
<i>By W. N. EWER</i>		
Mexico To-day	- - - - -	„ 681
<i>By EUGEN VARGA</i>		
How Come These Traitors ?	- - -	„ 691
<i>By RUTLAND BOUGHTON</i>		
The Results of the Canadian Elections	- -	„ 697
<i>By STEWART SMITH</i>		
The World of Labour	- - - - -	„ 702
<i>Trade Unionism in the Balkans</i>		

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NOTES of the MONTH

*The Miners' Decision—Margate Contrasts—Confessions of Impotence—
General Election No Alternative—Disbelief in the Workers—The
Future of the General Strike—Reformist Policy—Industrial
Peace—What is Labour Party Policy?—The True Lesson
of Breakdown — British Capitalist Crisis — Political
Weakening—The Steel Pact—Miners' Opportunity—
The Advance in China—International Solidarity
—The Imperial Conference—The Scarborough
Conference—The Miners Lead the Way.*

THE decision of the October 7 Miners' Delegate Conference has transformed the situation. In the midst of confusion, doubt, hesitation, back-stabbing, and disastrous negotiation it has sounded again the clear call to resist and, instead of weakening, to intensify the struggle. Like the May 12 decision of the miners to go forward, it is the answer of the working class alike to the capitalist attack and to the betrayals of the yellow leaders. The decision this time is all the more noticeable in that it was reached without even the miners' own leaders, against their guidance and to their surprise : it was, in Cook's own words, a decision of "the rank and file without any guidance from the Executive." In other words, it was the voice of the working class sounding more clearly and distinctly than ever before, and showing once again how far the will of the working class is already in front of the whole existing leadership. This will, whatever the outcome of the immediate struggle, cannot be broken ; it is already the foretaste of the future revolutionary will which is destined to triumph over every obstacle. The spirit of the miners will inevitably spread to the other workers, as they find themselves faced with the same conditions. The struggle, which is to-day waged with such determination in the face of suffering and sacrifice to resist the capitalist attack, can only develop into the struggle, with even greater tenacity and steadfastness, to break the power of capitalism and establish the power of the working class.

IN marked contrast was the spirit at the Margate Conference, where the Right Wing leadership who had broken the General Strike and abandoned the miners were in control. Here impotence, pessimism and disillusion were the order of the day. Absolute passivity was maintained and enforced in face of the workers' most desperate struggle. The miners' appeal for help was ruled out even to be placed before the Conference. The miners were assailed as blind fools, endangering "British civilisation," because they dared to resist a starvation wage. In place of paying any heed to the actual struggle of the miners for a living wage, in which struggle is gathered up the future of the working class, the Conference preferred, under the facile leadership of the Independent Labour Party—always ready to replace the real struggle by a paper scheme—to adopt a solemn resolution, in the best approved bureaucratic fashion, for an "inquiry" into the question of a living wage. No doubt, when the last of the workers are completely driven down under the capitalist low-wage stabilisation, with the assistance of the Labour Party and I.L.P. leaders pleading the necessity of recognising economic facts and the folly of resistance, the "scheme" resulting from the "inquiry" will be ready to be pigeon-holed.

WE cannot overthrow capitalism." "In a resourceful, resilient industrial community like our own, we cannot subvert or overthrow, we must supersede, capitalism." This statement from the chairman's address was the keynote of the lead given at the Margate Conference. From this premise all else follows. From this follows the impossibility of struggle, the condemnation of the miners, the praise of industrial peace, the praise of the good employer, and the worship of the American Moloch as the model for Labour. The whole tactics, the whole propaganda, of the Labour Party is based upon the impregnability of capitalism.

I know now, and many of my colleagues know now, that the May business did not assist the miners at all. . . . The General Strike failed because the resources of the country were—and are—stronger than the resources of the Trade Unions.

In this revealing sentence of the chairman of the Labour Party (writing in *Answers*) is expressed, not only the philosophy of the

Right Wing, but also of those industrial "Left Wing" leaders who lived in easy phrases of industrial solidarity and power without facing for a moment the real conditions of conflict with the capitalist State, and who, therefore, after the first taste, are now in full retreat and blowing the trumpet of Parliamentarism to hide their retreat.

THE preaching of Parliamentarism as an alternative, which has now become fashionable with so many one-time revolutionaries, does not mean that Parliament is believed in as a means to Socialism. It only means that the power of the working class is not believed in. This, and not the hypothetical possibilities of Parliament, is the real crux. When the typical Labour Party leader says, "I refuse to help the miners, because I believe in the next general election," the part of his sentence that matters is not his opinion about the next general election, but his refusal to help the miners. If a sincere working-class fighter were still, let us suppose, in spite of everything to retain a lingering belief in the results of the next general election, to believe, that is to say, that a Government composed of MacDonald, Thomas, Clynes and Haldane would make a striking difference in the administration of affairs, it would never occur to him to make this a reason for not helping the miners; he would want *also* to help the miners. There is no doubt that the workers will take advantage of all the opportunities that are open to them at the next general election to strike a blow at the capitalists. But this makes no difference to the realities of the present struggle. The retreat of so many one-time "Left" leaders, as of the whole reformist leadership, to sole and unabashed Parliamentarism as the lesson of 1926 is not an advance in the working-class struggle, but a retreat from the working-class struggle.

IN point of fact, when the workers have declared aloud their impotence to overthrow the capitalists, the capitalists are not likely thereupon at once to present them with Socialism on a golden plate. On the contrary the capitalists would be very much more likely, if once they had satisfied themselves that these spokesmen really expressed the working class, to give a hearty laugh

that they had ever let themselves get so anxious over nothing, and then to proceed equably with a few useful measures such as the strengthening of the Second Chamber and the reform of the trade union laws. But the argument from the impotence of the working class to overthrow the capitalists to the conclusion of Parliamentaryism as the only weapon is exactly an argument of this type. And it is upon this conviction of the impotence of the working class that the whole philosophy of the Labour Party leadership is based, and the whole tactics follow that were presented at Margate. It is from this that follows their extreme hatred towards the Communists (so much so that a member of the Executive naïvely declared that the Executive spent half their time fighting the Communists), because the Communists still believe in the possibility of the working-class struggle, and, therefore, the workers are increasingly inclined to listen to them.

IT is important to note the treatment of the general strike at the Margate Conference, because the general strike is the turning point for the whole leadership, and the events of the general strike and the miners' struggle have forced into the open the whole policy of the reformist leadership more clearly than ever before, and compelled them to show themselves in their true colours as the full counterpart of German Social Democracy. "The Communist Party and Minority Movement still believe in the general strike. The Labour Party looks with confidence to the general election." Here, in this concluding passage of the chairman's address, the general strike is definitely and explicitly disclaimed. On the other hand, in the address of the chairman of the Trades Union Congress, the general strike was explicitly declared to be retained by the Labour Movement as a weapon for future use. It is true that the declaration was so hedged round with reservations and limitations that it was obvious the supposed retention of the weapon was intended to be a purely ornamental hanging up on the wall to point to in answer to awkward questions with a polite fiction of possible use. But the nominal opposition remains. The Labour leadership in one aspect declares the general strike is retained. The same Labour leadership in another aspect declares the general strike is abandoned. Which is it to be?

THIS question of the future of the general strike has got to be faced and answered by the reformist leadership, because it is the cardinal question on which the future of the Labour Movement turns. They cannot have it both ways : at one time using militant phrases about future general strikes, like the chairman of the General Council in America, at another time denouncing the whole conception as an invention of the Communist devil. If they mean general strikes, then they have got to prepare for them ; phrase-making is no use. To talk of general strikes and not to face the conditions of conflict with the capitalist State is to play with words and endeavour to fool the Movement a second time. On the other hand, if they do not mean general strikes and explicitly rule them out beforehand, in accordance with the wishes of His Majesty's Government and the lawyers, then they have to face the fact that all effective strike action and struggle under modern conditions, even for the most limited defensive purposes, is ruled out, all sympathetic action is ruled out, and all political strike action or war-resistance (as contemplated in the unanimous resolution of the Margate Conference) is also ruled out. There remains nothing but submission and hanging on the favour of the employers. It is the value of the Margate Labour Party Conference that this necessary consequence of Right Wing policy was even more clearly and shamelessly brought out than at the Trades Union Congress.

THE Margate Labour Party Conference showed the logical consequence of the policy of the Right Wing, of the policy of May 12. That consequence is and can only be submission all along the line, passivity in the face of attack, acceptance of the capitalist schemes of economic reconstruction at the expense of wages, and surrender in every actual struggle, always in the name of mythical future Parliamentary hopes. It was, therefore, not irrelevant or out of place that the chairman of the Conference should have concentrated attention on the aim of industrial peace. Industrial peace has no meaning in relation to the modern policy of capitalism or to the actual situation of the workers save as a policy of complete submission, lowering of

standards and unconcealed treachery in face of renewed and intensified capitalist attack. The union of Havelock Wilson and the chairman of the Labour Party Conference in preaching industrial peace at the present moment is a sufficiently ugly sign of the trend of direction. Industrial peace is now established as the official policy of the reformist leadership, as in Germany, and as in America. This is the working out of May 12.

ON the eve of the Margate Conference the chairman of the Labour Party wrote in one of the Rothermere journals :—

Our unions can do good work by discrediting the theory that each and every employer under heaven is an " enemy of the working classes." There are bad employers in this country as in every other country. But I have met many good ones in my time. A large proportion of the great industrial concerns of Britain are run under the best of Trade Union conditions, where everything possible is done for the workers, and where directors, overseers and managers have risen from the ranks. No progress is to be made along the lines of being suspicious of everybody and everything and stigmatising men as " enemies," some of whom are as honest and upright and anxious to do the right thing as we are ourselves.

If this kind of rubbish occurred in an Economic League pamphlet or a Primrose dame's oration, it would not be worth wasting time on. But when this kind of thing appears under the signature of the chairman of the Labour Party, it is necessary to ask what the Labour Party exists for, whether it has any aims or programme at all in relation to employers as a whole (apart from whether they are " good " or " bad "), and whether there is any discipline for its leadership and official representatives to stick to its programme. And it is necessary to ask the membership of the Labour Party, including the members of the Labour Party Executive : first, whether this kind of expression and policy represents their views ; second, if it does not represent their views, whether they are satisfied that it should go out uncorrected and widely circulated from the responsible leaders and official representatives of the Party (as is continually happening) ; and third, if they are not satisfied that it should so go out, what steps they propose to take about it.

DOES the situation justify this complete passivity and pessimism of the future of the working-class struggle, which was the dominant note of Margate? On the contrary. Not only does the reality of the miners' struggle make an immediate duty and obligation, whatever the position ; but more than that, the facts which lie behind the miners' struggle and of which it is the expression, the actual situation of capitalism to-day, should give the most tremendous impetus and energy to working-class attack now more than ever. The very facts of the breakdown of capitalism, which are made the basis of pleas of facing economic realities and accepting cuts in wages, should lead the whole Labour Movement to the exact opposite conclusion, to the necessity of pressing home the fight now more than ever, and, so far from accepting cuts in wages as an inevitable necessity, endeavouring instead to raise the fight to the revolutionary issues which are the sole answer to the so-called economic realities. The breakdown of capitalism in Britain has increased, and not diminished, with the events of the past few years and above all of the present year. But the reformist leadership, instead of recognising the position and drawing the revolutionary conclusion, have in growing panic at the situation forgotten all their Socialism and given themselves up to the illusory task of endeavouring to patch up capitalism, to the destruction and stagnation of the working-class struggle.

ECONOMICALLY the destruction of the whole foundations of British capitalism has gone further than ever. The falling national revenue, raising the prospect of a deficit, shows this ; and still more so does the tremendous advance in the adverse balance of trade. The year 1925 had already reached an extreme record in this respect ; but against the figure of 273 million pounds for the first nine months of last year, this year shows already 316 millions for the same period. If for 1925 it was only with extreme difficulty, and in the face of considerable scepticism, that the Board of Trade argued there still remained an extremely small surplus for new investment abroad (£28 millions against £63 millions in 1924 and £153 millions in 1925), how much more clear is it that there can only have been a reversal and actual stoppage and diminution of foreign investment in 1926, resulting

at once in a weakening of the world position, reacting against exports and weakening the hold on the Empire. To the capitalist outlook all this is sufficiently explained in the crime of working-class resistance to the coal lock-out. But the coal dispute is itself only a link in the chain, although a very big one, and not a primary cause. In April, the month before the dispute, the adverse balance was at its highest record of any month for three years. The class struggle, resulting from the economic decline, has inevitably accelerated the decline. The effects of the coal stoppage on industry, and the failure of foreign coal to cope with more than a fraction of the loss, with the consequent growingly powerful position of the miners' united stand, despite the failure of action of the other workers, has been clearly shown in the Labour Research Department White Paper, which has been widely quoted. The loss of the general strike and coal dispute is varyingly estimated at three to five hundred millions. If before the dispute capitalist industry could not see its way to pay a living wage, how much less is it likely after these losses ; and therefore how much longer will the reformist leaders follow the wild-goose chase of endeavouring to find a compromise on wages acceptable to capitalism ?

POLITICALLY the weakening of the British bourgeoisie is no less obvious. The concentration of attention and forces on the home struggle has weakened and paralysed their action abroad, and the international situation during the past six months has registered a series of defeats for British capitalism. The Locarno scheme, in so far as it represented the aim of a European balance of power under British hegemony by the introduction of Germany as a counterweight to France, has suffered shipwreck because in the intervening period what has developed has been, in place of a hegemony of Britain over a balance of France and Germany, instead a bloc of France and Germany, both economic and political, with the point very visibly directed against Britain. The Steel Pact raises the prospect of a new Continental system, to enter which would be to admit defeat, and to remain outside raises problems of competition beyond the power of existing British organisation and conditions. It is characteristic of reformist blindness that they have hailed the Steel Pact as the beginning

of the era of international capitalism, wiping out the old contradictions, instead of seeing it for what it is—a new power-grouping raising world antagonisms to the most intense degree: the beginning of European Continental consolidation outside the Soviet Union against America, with England uneasily poised between, and still endeavouring to build upon the shaking foundation of the Empire.

THE attempt to answer by the approach to the German business men is not likely to reach success, because the conditions preclude effective economic co-operation. Germany, in order to give effect to the existing stabilisation, which is still only maintained by successive new foreign loans and credits, will need to make a tremendous expansion of exports, in order to pay both the rising Dawes requirements and the accumulating interest on foreign loans (amounting already, according to the official figures, to 5,500 million marks since 1924). But at present there is still an excess of imports, which means that foreign indebtedness is still increasing, and payment has not yet in fact begun; so that when this is to be reversed, and payment begun, the flood of new exports on the world market will have to be very great indeed. But British capitalism is equally faced with the necessity of a rapid expansion of exports as the condition of stabilisation; and unless this is achieved the present artificial situation of high imports cannot be maintained, and the existing deceitful prosperity of certain home and luxury industries will fall alongside the export industries. Effective agreement in this situation cannot be reached, as there is no basis for such a productive union as there is in the Franco-German bloc. British capitalism, therefore, has no hesitation in rejecting the German overtures to come inside the bloc and be rationed, but knows at the same time that the taking up of competition in face of the modern organised French and German industry can only be attempted on the basis of driving down the workers.

BUT it is just here that the protracted continuance of the coal struggle, wholly unexpected to the bourgeoisie, who had thought first that they had had it finished in May when they had settled the General Council, and then again that

they had got it finished in July when they had got the Bishops to draw the miners' leaders away from the slogan, and then again that they had got it finished in September when they had set the Churchill-MacDonald trap and the Executive had walked in, but every time they were defeated by the working class, by the miners themselves—it is just this that has upset all their plans. Their plans necessitated the reduction of the miners' wages as the preliminary to the reduction of other wages. It is not a question of the "pig-headed backwardness" of the coalowners, as the reformists still try to imagine in order to hide the real character of the class struggle. The coalowners could never have held out so long if they had not had the banks and the Government—that is, the organised power of capitalism—behind them. The cost of the struggle already far exceeds the total capital value of the mines, thus clearly showing the political character of the struggle of capitalism as a whole, led by the Government against the working class. But the continuance of the struggle leads now to a desperately serious situation, because it has facilitated the formation of the Franco-German bloc which it was intended to fight, leaves open to it the unchecked invasion of markets, and at the same time by the enforced dependence on the increasingly limited available foreign coal throws British capitalism into a dependent position just when the maximum freedom of action is needed to meet the new international situation. And for this reason the miners can feel the more confident in the correctness of their decision to make every effort to hold out still and to intensify the struggle when the pressure of forces makes it likely that the Government will be compelled to abandon its waiting attitude and endeavour to bring the struggle rapidly to an end.

THE anti-Soviet offensive, which was an integral part of the Locarno foreign policy and the programme of the Baldwin Government, has hung fire because of the contradictions of the European States it was endeavoured to combine, although the drawing of Germany into the League and the establishment of control of Poland through the Pilsudski coup constitute partial successes which still hold dangerous possibilities. The attempted Baltic bloc has broken down in face of the Soviet

neutrality advances, and the Soviet-Lithuanian Treaty marks its failure. Most important of all, in China British capitalism has received its heaviest setback in the world situation. The advance of the national revolutionary forces raises for the first time the visible hope of a united, nationally free China, bringing the development of four hundred millions outside the orbit of imperialism to stand side by side with the one hundred and forty millions of the Soviet Union (forming together one-third of the human race) and raising incalculable reactions throughout Asia. The British schemes and propositions of large-scale armed intervention have so far foundered repeatedly on the rock of the antagonisms of the principal Powers concerned, Japan showing signs at present of aiming at the role of the Asiatic Power and leader in distinction from British militarism, and the United States tranquilly looking on at the decline of the hitherto dominant British interests in China, and on the basis of its superior industrial strength pursuing the role of peaceful penetration under the familiar flag of freedom of trade and sympathy to national aspirations.

THIS situation in China may change. The very success of the national revolutionary forces may combine the Powers in an attempt at united material and armed intervention, as before in Russia. It is necessary to be on guard against this. But up to the present the limited action of the British has been ineffective ; the murderous excesses of the gunboats and naval squadron have not been able to change the political position save to stimulate the national enthusiasm ; while the generals successively bribed by British pay have broken down repeatedly through the passing over of their troops and the hostility of the population. The ground already won makes certain the eventual success of the Chinese national struggle, however hard the battles in front. The miners and the Kuomintang can look to one another with pride as allies in a common fight well fought. The sympathy and readiness of the workers in Britain can help to safeguard the rapid advance of the Chinese anti-imperialist struggle without the disaster of a ruinous and barbarous interventionist war, the danger of which is still great. But how can this readiness find expression ? Not through the Margate method of submission, of waiting for the

next election two years after the intervention is over (like waiting for the miners to be starved) ; but only through the method of class struggle, through the class strength of the workers, the way that the miners have shown. The success of Canton to win equal rights for the Chinese (so much so that the Labour Party has had to send greetings to the Kuomintang, in which body the Communists are freely enrolled as a party), where all the Peking diplomacy has accomplished nothing, shows once again the same lesson, the lesson of the only language that the imperialists and bourgeoisie pay heed to—the language of mass-strength and action.

FORCED to give ground in Europe and in China, the British bourgeoisie look increasingly to the Empire as a means of rebuilding their position. But here also the same causes which weaken their situation at home and internationally weaken also their hold upon the Empire. The Imperial Conference throws into relief the problem of the white Dominions — the white garrisons of twenty millions, or one-eightieth of the world's population who have seized one-seventh of the world's surface and now endeavour to hold it in their own exclusive right against the overcrowded rest of the world. Between these and the home bourgeoisie, by the inexorable process of capitalist development, increasing division now arises. The ties which still hold them to the home bourgeoisie are partly financial and partly strategic. The bulk of investments and new supply of capital has been almost exclusively a British monopoly in the past, resulting in annual tribute and a lion's share of their trade for Britain ; while their defence has been maintained by their powerful protector's Navy, to the cost of which their contributions have been extremely small. But both these functions now weaken with the weakening position of Britain. The supply of capital is no longer abundant to meet their needs ; for six months the maintenance of the gold standard made necessary even an embargo on colonial loans, and Britain had to agree to their going to the stronger American money market. In the same way the British Navy since Washington has had to abandon its supremacy and admit the equality of the American Navy. Thus a more powerful protector is in view. In Canada American penetration has already outstripped the old British hold,

while the strategic argument is all in favour of America ; the Governor Byng election and return of Mackenzie King, openly acclaimed by the Wall Street Press as their candidate, has underlined this. South Africa, with the large subject population four-fifths of the whole and awakening Africa in the background, is still dependent ; but the return of Hertzog shows the tendency. Alone Australia and New Zealand, wholly dependent on the British Navy for maintenance in the vast territories they can neither occupy themselves nor protect by their own strength against the overcrowded millions of Asia, remain fully " loyal " ; but even here the tumultuous reception to the visit of the American Navy shows the new possibilities. All these changing relations reflect themselves in the ever-changing web of diplomatic fictions under which the British bourgeoisie try to conceal their weakening grip.

FINALLY, at home the continued weakening of the Liberal Party, the party of ascendant capitalism, and the strengthening of Right Wing Conservatism, the party of extreme class war in the capitalist decline, is the obvious character of the present period. The final resignation of the last Liberal leader does not, indeed, affect in any way, but serves to accentuate, the actual situation, and it is significant that the last foundering of the old Liberal Party should have happened directly and without concealment on the rock of the general strike—that is, of the class-war. The Liberal Party breaks in two : the Right Wing goes home to Conservatism, registering the passing over of capitalism from advance to decline ; the Left Wing is only able to continue to exist as a manoeuvring distracting element on the edge of Labour. It is true that the Labour Right Wing and the Liberal remnant are endeavouring and will endeavour to revive Liberalism in the coming period and may even form a Government ; but the revival is entirely without roots in the period of capitalist decline, can only endeavour to build itself unsteadily upon the basis of the working-class movement, and is therefore completely unstable. The real trend of the bourgeoisie is shown unmistakably in the Scarborough Conference, where the thin veneer of politeness and pseudo-culture disappears at once as soon as their possessions are threatened, and the cave psychology of panic brutality comes out, showing

the consciousness of their weakness. The remove of England from civil war and white terror is already extremely thin ; and if the working-class movement does not awaken to the position and prepare for it in time, the awakening will come under very much more unfavourable conditions.

WHAT is the conclusion of this survey of the situation ? Of the two conferences, the Margate Conference of the Labour Party and the Miners' Delegate Conference of October 7, which has shown the truer way forward for the working class in actual relation to existing conditions and tendencies ? There can be no question of the answer. The way of Margate is the way that the Baldwin Government, the constitutionalists, the lawyers, the bankers, the business men and the capitalist Press want the Labour Movement to go : the way of submission, the way of recognising economic (capitalist economic) realities, the way of reductions of wages and of stabilisation, the way of moderate constitutionalism and patriotic imperialism, the way of industrial peace and sectional division, all under a nimbus of rosy Parliamentary illusions. The way of the miners offers no rosy illusions ; it is a way of very hard struggle and sacrifice ; but it is a way that does fight the capitalist attack, that does fight the whole policy of stabilisation on the backs of the workers, that does raise the open and unconcealed anger and opposition of the whole capitalist class, and that does offer the real way forward for the united working class. Where does the way of Margate lead ? It leads to lower wages and longer hours, to poverty without recovery, for the stabilisation on the basis of capitalism can only be illusory and intensify every economic problem, to intensified international competition and the certainty of war. The way of the miners leads, through hard and difficult present struggle, through heavy privation, but privation in the cause of the struggle and not for the salvation of the profiteers, to the real fight against capitalism, to the unification of the working class at home and internationally, to the conquest of power, to the realisation of Socialism, to the real solution of the problems and hardships of the present epoch. There can be no question which way the working class will choose.

R. P. D.

FORWARD TO VICTORY

By ARTHUR HORNER

THE Mining dispute is still the central fact in the economic life of Great Britain. Notwithstanding all the manoeuvres, well intentioned and otherwise, that have taken place, the problem remains unsolved and apparently insoluble. For twenty-six weeks the basic industry of these islands has stood still, affecting in its passivity every phase of the country's economic existence. If we turn to the Coal Commission Report (page 3) we find the following summary of the tremendous part which coal production plays in Great Britain :—

The paramount importance of the coal mining industry in the economic and social life of this country is a commonplace, and it is unnecessary for us to dwell upon it. With the exception of agriculture, to which it is a close second, the industry employs more men than any other : not less than one-twelfth of our population is directly dependent upon it. It is the foundation of our iron and steel, ship-building and engineering trades, and indeed of our whole industrial life. The value of its product is in the neighbourhood of £250,000,000 a year. It provides one-tenth of our exports in value, and about four-fifths of them in volume. By furnishing outward cargo for a large amount of shipping, it cheapens freights for the imports on which we all depend for our vital needs.

This quotation makes clear the extent of the casualties that must have been sustained by all departments of capitalist production. The coal mining industry and many other industries also are now employing relatively very few men, and all industries dependent on coal are falling under a creeping paralysis. During the months from May to August, coal to the value of £12,663,115 has been imported, whilst none has been exported. Ships are leaving the country loaded with costly ballast, to return with the food, &c., we all need, paying increased freightage charges in the process.

Despite, however, the awful cost of its continuance, the lock-out of the miners is still maintained, and whilst capitalism in general groans under the burden of its class obligations, it is careful not to complain openly against the coalowners, lest by so doing a class weakness is demonstrated. At the same time British capitalists are

conscious that, if only the miners can be defeated outright, there is every reason to believe that the attacks which are prepared against their own workers will result in victory. Rightly or wrongly the miners are regarded by the whole of capitalist forces in this country as the shock troops of the British working class, and this battle is looked upon in every phase of capitalist production as the first onslaught of a general attack, to be followed, if successful, by a series of further onslaughts on a much wider front. Only thus can be explained the mutual forbearance and sacrifice inside the ranks of the whole capitalist class, only by this means is it possible to explain how a large number of mutually antagonistic and destructive elements can find common ground in support of a single section. Increased taxation due to unemployment, exorbitant prices for inferior fuel and other commodities, expensive plant lying idle and depreciating rapidly in value, the balance of trade upset for years, the increased tempo towards collapse, all these matter nothing so long as the coalowners emerge victorious from the struggle which they have entered upon as the representatives of capitalism as a whole.

The miners, face to face with such well-directed centralised opposition, have suffered tremendously from the conflict. Semi-starvation, E.P.A., and threats of ejection from their homes, all these have left their mark on these glorious working-class fighters. Undaunted, they have been proudly conscious of the representative character of the part they were called upon to play. Nevertheless, right from the beginning, opposition has been shown by the officials of the other working-class organisations, whose members the miners were also defending in the course of their own struggle. Even during the nine days of the General Strike the activities of the General Council were centred on finding a way out through the sacrifice of the miners' standard of living, rather than upon forcing a way to victory by securing sacrifices from the enemy.

Since then, cowardice has reached its logical next step, which is treachery. Those who find all sorts of constitutional barriers to justify their refusal to enforce a levy, have not hesitated to overthrow the elementary principles of Trade Unionism by handling coal produced by blacklegs at home and abroad. The workers in

the transport industry would have more willingly agreed to give money to assist the miners to victory than to have assisted the coalowners by enabling them to prolong the stoppage, which to so large an extent aggravates their own miserable economic conditions. At the Margate Conference, Thomas pointed to the 200,000 railwaymen on short time and the 40,000 railwaymen unemployed as a reason for inability to help the miners. The facts he adduces are not an argument for refusing assistance but provide the most imperative reason why the railwaymen should throw their whole weight into the struggle on behalf of the miners. Neither the railwaymen nor the transport workers have been given the opportunity to say yea or nay. The agreements made after the Strike, condemning the railway and transport workers to turn cannibals, to steal their bread off the miners' tables, were made without consent or even consultation with the workers affected. The question of whether or not they are prepared to pay a levy is rigorously kept away from them. Wherever the opportunity has been given to the workers to ballot, the levy has been forthcoming, as in the case of the A.S.W. and the Postal Workers. Bournemouth and Margate will stand out as the places where the workers were forced into disgrace, through false and treacherous leadership.

This situation outside the miners' ranks has had its natural corollary within them. When treachery becomes common then it ceases to appear a crime. If Thomas and the rest can live in honour and glory, what is there to prevent Spencer, Hodges, &c., attempting to imitate them with the same prospects of capitalist flattery as reward? "Like clings to like," and the internal betrayers only required the encouragement of the apparent success of their bigger brothers outside to reveal themselves in their true characters. The M.F.G.B. officials have been aware of the danger from the beginning, but until now have taken no effective steps to combat it. The immunity from attack secured by the General Council after the General Strike, mainly possible because of the action of the M.F.G.B. in entering into a bargain for the hushing up of treachery, must have given these people grounds for anticipating similarly generous treatment for themselves. If Thomas, Bromley, &c., had been called to the bar and exposed before the whole working class they would have received the retribution they

deserved, and Spencer, &c., would have held off in fear of similar exposure and punishment—for traitors are always cowards.

The General Council's report, which is really an open attack upon the miners, is quoted in every part of the minefields, particularly in the Black areas. The miners' failure to reply allows their case to go by default and this slanderous document to pass for truth. The miners' only hope after the collapse of the General Strike was to secure a change of working-class leadership, and this could only have been brought about by an exposure of the attitude and actions of these leaders during and after the struggle. By providing a shield for treachery, the M.F.G.B. contributed to their own isolation, and encouraged potential traitors inside to go and do likewise.

The miners have literally folded their arms and turned the other cheek to each succeeding blow. They have observed the Law and conformed to rules and Union constitutions in face of the most violent attacks by the State, and callous use of constitutional Trade Union discipline to suppress the eagerness of the rank and file to come to the miners' assistance. Internally, though reaction plotted its downfall, the M.F.G.B. has religiously refrained from interfering in the affairs of any district, for although from the outside it may appear that the M.F.G.B. is all powerful, it is, in fact, only a combination of voluntarily affiliated autonomous bodies, which may withdraw from association at any time. The only means by which victory could have been achieved in these circumstances was through the depositing of all power in the central body, and the direct appeal to the rank and file of the other Unions, together with the careful discussion of plans to counter the effects of laws passed to safeguard the coalowners and to destroy the Miners' Federation. Month after month passed and none of these things were done, and as is always bound to be the case where action is face to face with inaction, action has the advantage.

Numberless endeavours there have been to find a way out of the dilemma. The present deadlock can never be attributed to lack of willingness to negotiate, or to lack of variety in means of approach. All methods have been tried : first to accept a reduction in wages, then to agree to accept a National Agreement which would not contain a national minimum percentage, which is the outstanding

attribute of any such agreement ; finally not to place a bar to a discussion on the question of longer hours, and even to accept compulsory arbitration with the Coal Commission's Report as terms of reference. The church leaders, politicians of every party, except the Communist Party, ex-coal-commissioners, in fact every section from Trade Union leaders to Prime Ministers have been given the job of go-betweens, and all have been incapable of finding a solution to the conundrum ; which, simply stated, is " How can capitalism be retained whilst permitting the workers even a minimum of decent conditions of existence ? " The truth is that there is no answer possible. Capitalism or comfort, one may choose between them, but to secure the penny and the bun is impossible.

The miners' task, by this statement of the position, may not appear less difficult of accomplishment, but it is certainly more simple to understand. If economic conditions under capitalism will not permit the retention of any of the conditions that the miners have fought and suffered to maintain, then the task before us is to work for the overthrow of the system, as the only means of realising our objectives. How ? MacDonald and Williams suggested at Margate that the miners should go back on any terms and await the coming of a Labour Government. The question, they said, is purely political.

What a joke this is to try to play upon men who have fought for twenty-six weeks against the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracy allied with the most ruthless capitalist Government of recent times. Wait, for how long ? Even when the Labour Government comes, it will not stand for revolution, and failing that, the harsh economic facts will remain unchanged, and therefore they will be no nearer to a solution.

If not back to work, what other course is there ? The centre section says, fold arms and wait until something happens. It is a terrible risk to take. Nothing can come for our advantage unless we go and fetch it. If we remain passive the enemy does not. Every weak spot is a place where the opponent can display his relative strength. Bribes, threats, starvation, suppression by the State forces, treachery inside, and false friends without, all these combined will destroy us if we merely watch and wait. There is

only one way now to victory, and that lies forward. The men have said that they agree with this course, whatever the consequences to themselves. This struggle has never been one to discover the section which is ethically right, it has from the beginning been one to discover which possessed the most might. Great power lies to our hand, if we will but use it.

The first step must be to concentrate all power in the hands of the M.F.G.B. Men like Spencer must be prevented from doing further damage, for no section of the organisation can give way without injuring the whole. The E.C. must be told that the power is given them to use and not to hold in passivity. Every weak section of the front must have reserves rushed up to fill the gaps already made, and to prevent further breaches. No further assistance must be rendered to the mineowners by the safeguarding of the pits from fire or water. Sections may suffer afterwards in consequence of this drastic step, but unless we win this struggle we will all go down into terrible poverty for a long time to come.

The rank and file of the Unions must be directly approached with a request to refuse to handle Black Coal, and those remaining at work to agree to levy themselves in the branches for all affected by refusing to blackleg, and for the miners' dependants. What is needed now is courage. Courage now, in face of a clear realisation of the nature and size of the task, can win not only for the miners but for all workers. Will the miners' leaders now at last give up their attitude of passivity, and face the struggle as they would face War? For this is war of the most brutal kind, and women and children are its victims.

It may be argued that it is now too late; if so, the delay can in no wise be attributed to the rank and file, for they have repeatedly urged this course for months, and it is only the complete bankruptcy of negotiatory tactics which has permitted them at last to secure acceptance for their policy. It is not too late to fight even now, in view of the terrible alternatives. The break-up of the Federation as far as all future effective work is concerned, that is the alternative to a struggle of a more intensive character. The owners demand that we hand over our weapon of struggle. They will only allow a return to work if we abandon all our means of recovery from the blows they intend to deal us now. To surrender will

enable capitalism to discover new strength for the eking out of its miserable existence, and while it continues to exist, progressively worsening conditions of living are bound to be the workers' lot in every industry.

The result of the Districts' vote on the South Wales proposals for intensifying the struggle has come late, but better late than never.

On August 16, at the M.F.G.B. Conference held in London, these intensification proposals were advocated and rejected in favour of giving plenary powers to the Executive Council to make an offer of wage reductions. Again, on two later occasions since, the same proposals have been put forward and rejected without reference to the opinions of the rank and file of the miners. However, a phase of the struggle has been reached when retreat in order is no longer possible, to surrender now involves a complete rout ; there is only one pathway out of the dilemma and that lies forward. It is only possible to go forward if the miners can hew their way through governmental regulations and Union constitutions. Both are at present in the hands of enemies who utilise the machinery for the purpose of defeating the miners. The men in the black areas must be appealed to in spite of the sabotage of reactionary miners' officials in these districts who have given qualified support to the breakaways, though in certain districts it should be said the officials have remained loyal and worked heroically in an endeavour to stop the rout. That this course holds out possibilities of success will be seen from the results of the Nottinghamshire vote, which is largely the direct result of the efforts of A. J. Cook and others who have entered that coalfield. In just the same fashion the workers in the transport industries must be asked to refuse to handle black coal, in spite of the barriers set up by bureaucracy in these organisations. *The miners must appeal to loyalty over the heads of disloyalty.* Moreover, a levy must be got, even if we have to go to each individual district or union branch to secure it. The M.F.G.B., too, must not defy the district vote by refusing to call out Safety Men. Delay in prosecuting the full policy expressed in the resolution is weakness of a most dangerous character. If the officials cannot honestly carry out their instructions they should say so in order that the workers may decide upon the

next steps. The approach to Shirkey is foredoomed to failure, and the M.F.G.B. Executive know it. His policy is already well known to be that of an ally of the coalowners. He has declared his readiness to organise a blackleg safety service. The M.F.G.B. Executive in interviewing Shirkey is simply shirking the issue in the hope that the delay thus secured will give time for something to turn up which will make the application of the policy unnecessary. The workers of the minefields must inform the Executive in no uncertain manner that when they say they desire a withdrawal of safety men they mean it. False sentiment now is criminal in face of the ruthless punishment and starvation which is being enforced upon the workers. Steps must be taken which will cause the greatest possible damage to the resources of the enemy. This is the only method by which they can be brought to their knees. We have reached a stage when we cannot retreat, and when the only pathway to victory lies over the dead body of a murderous and discredited system.

FROM LIVERPOOL TO MARGATE

The Labour Party Conferences

By Dr. ROBERT DUNSTAN

(Communist Candidate for West Birmingham)

CALCULATING politicians consciously reckon on the short-lived memories of their followers, and so it is well to step back to the Liverpool Conference of 1925 and to jog the minds of the far too placid and trustful rank and file of the Labour Party. "Liverpool" will always stand out in the history of the working-class movement of this country, for there the Liberalising Right Wing of the Party aimed what they hoped would be their final blow at the Communist section of the Movement. The Communists were to be thrown out of the Party bag and baggage, not because they were not Socialists or that they intrigued with the open enemies of the workers, but as a goodwill offering to the well-to-do elements of the Labour Party and as a sop to the sentiments and voting strength of the middle classes. At all costs these had to be appeased, and so the most active and virile part of the Movement was excommunicated to improve the electoral chances of Labour politicians seeking office, pelf and place.

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

It is recorded that Mr. James Ramsay MacDonald dominated the Conference, and he received as a part of his reward the tumultuous applause of the capitalist Press. This "wise statesman," lean and hungry for office, learned in the stratagems of political leadership, attained his ends by fraudulently lifting from the Thesis of the Third International a short passage, tearing it from its context and falsely charging the Communists with advocating "heavy civil war." This wolf in sheep's clothing was the man of peace and high ideals, and his credulous followers were easily duped by this outstanding charlatan, who when in office did not hesitate to threaten the Egyptians, coerce the Indian workers, build aero-

planes and cruisers and to send a British gunboat to aid the master class of Canton against the workers of that Eastern city. Yet in the face of this damning record this right honourable gentleman had the barefaced audacity to decry the use of force and by artfulness to falsify the position of the Communists in order that he might with more security play the part of "the lackey of capitalism" within the Labour Movement.

Machiavellian Tactics

In this game he was well supported by Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Secretary of the Party, and there is no better illustration of the smart methods of the Right Wing than this gentleman's action over the Communist resolution adopted by the Conference. When this was under discussion some prominent trade union delegates pointed out that the right of trade unions to select any of their members might be interfered with. Up gets the suave Mr. Henderson to protest that this was not so, saying :—

This resolution excludes no one. What they were doing was appealing to them . . . when electing delegates to National or local Labour Party Conferences to refrain from something—

this something being not to select Communists, otherwise entitled, to represent their organisations at any Party conference. This crafty dodge would have aroused the envy of Machiavelli himself. For the object of this foxy Henderson manoeuvre was to secure the acceptance of the resolution and to leave its application to the officials of Eccleston Square; and did not the great teacher of subtlety write that :—

The Prince should not be bound by his promise after the object for which it was given had been attained ?—(*The Prince*, ch. xviii.)

It is true that this convenient advice was given to ruling princes, but it can be followed by political rulers with advantage, and Mr. Henderson, having obtained his objective with true Machiavellian cunning, cast the promise aside and aided by his officials proceeded, without authority, to strain and enlarge the scope of the resolution so as to exclude Communist delegates and to disaffiliate Labour parties which refused to split the unity of the Movement. It is not too much to say that this action is the greatest piece of sharp practice which these past-masters in the art of trickery have achieved.

The Tory-Lib.-Lab. Party

Apart from the exclusion of the Communists the main feature of the Liverpool Conference was the blind acceptance by the delegates of the official policy tabled in a series of resolutions, entitled "A Co-ordinated Policy of National Reconstruction and Reform." A high-sounding title no doubt ; and "how they loved these grandiloquent words,"¹ which covered so effectively the Liberalisation of the Party programme ! "Reconstruction and Reform": compare this with the old programme of 1918, "Labour and the New Social Order," which, however timid, was at least an expression of Socialist endeavour and did challenge the capitalist order of society. In the comparison is to be seen the retreat of the Labour Party, marching with bands and banners, led by untrustworthy leaders, to align itself with the "democratic" Tories and Liberal defenders of the old order. If this be doubted, consider what Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, the ex-editor of the *Daily Herald*, a man of keen insight and one who has reason to rue the strength and influence of the Communist Party, predicted in an interview granted to a widely read capitalist paper, in which he said :—

. . . within the next twenty years there will be two parties only and two new ones. Conservatism—that is, the old Tory Party—will disappear. The two parties of the future, as I see them, will be a party that will consist of a large portion of the present Labour Party, the Liberal Party and a certain number of the young open-minded Tories. The other Party will be the COMMUNISTS.—(The Star.)

Here is the acme of MacDonaldisms and a warning of the end of the present Labour Party if it continues under the leadership of its Right Wing reformist politicians.

An Ass in a Lion's Skin

It is clear that the resolutions adopted by the Liverpool Conference can only be likened to the manifestoes and slogans of the old Liberal Party, crying "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform," venerated, to make them sightly to shallow-minded Socialists, with a few catch phrases culled from the Socialistic teachings of the past.

Alas, the Labour Party came from Liverpool an ass decked out in a lion's skin, but the brayings of its leaders showed too clearly

¹ Mr. MacDonald's sneer at the Thesis of the Third International.

its asinine qualities, and its official antics in and out of Parliament, varied at times by rumblings from the nether end, were only capable making the hyaenas of capitalism split their sides with laughter.

The Road to Ruin

There is no need to dwell at length on the stirring but unhappy history of the twelve months from Liverpool to Margate. After the reactionary victory at the 1925 Conference, the Government and the master class knew that they had nothing to fear from the Labour leaders, and that they could turn their attention to crushing the trade union movement, which was prepared to stand behind the miners in their struggle. The Communist Party was at once attacked, its leaders arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned for sedition, the main charge being based on the bold call of the Party to the armed forces of the Crown not to shoot down the workers in case of industrial strife. The Cabinet knew that in the event of a mining lock-out and a general strike that they would, in spite of the O.M.S. and other blacklegging organisations, have to rely upon the use of armed force to overawe the masses and defeat the rebellious workers. The courageous challenge of the Communists aimed a blow at the very base of their strength, and so they at once attacked the only part of the Labour Movement that had the intelligence and boldness to call upon all workers, in and out of the army, to act together and support one another.

Against this and other moves of the Government to anticipate the coming of the industrial crisis the leadership of the Labour Party did nothing. The reformist leaders, both of the Party and of the trade unions, failed to make any serious preparation ; they merely sat tight and hoped against hope that their failure would not be exposed and that the Cabinet would again climb down and buy off the trouble by continuing the subsidy to the mining industry.

Mr. Baldwin and his Ministers were, however, well aware of the weakness and incapacity of the leadership of the workers, and they challenged the issue in May, 1926. Whilst the rank and file responded to the call of their reluctant and irresolute leaders no real fight was put up in or out of Parliament against the capitalist offensive. Messrs. MacDonald and Thomas held the field, and far

from leading they did all they could to limit the force of the industrial blow of the workers. They sabotaged the fight and entered into secret intrigues and negotiations with the capitalist politicians, and finally, much to their own satisfaction, they effected a complete surrender and callously left the miners to their fate. In this treacherous action they have never been repudiated by the Labour Party, and though there has been much private criticism and here and there a vague stirring of the back-benchers there has been no open denunciation or condemnation of their conduct, and in the face of the events at the Liverpool Conference no more than this blind acquiescence could have been expected. The road from Liverpool led direct to the shameful surrender at Ecclestone Square. And so to Margate.

The Renegade

The Margate Conference: what does it mean for the Labour Movement? The chairman, Mr. Robert Williams, gave the answer to this question, as far as the Right Wing official leadership is concerned, by his defeatist speech, but the well-organised and effective fight put up by the Left Wing and Communist delegates, ruthlessly voted down as they were by the machine, raises a real hope that the Labour Party may yet be saved from MacDonaldism.

The chairman's speech should be read in conjunction with his article published in that intellectual journal appropriately enough called—*Answers*. Throughout the voice was the voice of Williams, but the words were the words of MacDonald. The revolutionary, who a few years ago wanted to plant the Red Flag on Buckingham Palace and displayed in the Albert Hall with self-appraisal the Red Star order of the Russian revolution, has now ratted and become a renegade. He now declares that "the Labour Party is a Constitutional Party," and after stating, no doubt with truth, that he wished he could "forget all about the General Strike" said that the "Labour Party do not think that the way to prepare the way to industrial or international peace is to prepare for war." Can he have forgotten that his leader, of whom he now says, "I am one of those who think it will be a good day for the people of this land when Ramsay MacDonald and a Labour Cabinet will be back in office," was responsible for making preparation for industrial

and international war when he built the death-dealing cruisers and increased the air forces of this country? When will the delegates to a Labour Conference recognise the humbug and hypocrisy of their leaders?

No doubt Mr. Williams would like to forget the strike and the miners—he has an uneasy conscience, for his and his leader's conduct will not bear examination—but he might have spared the miners his insulting reference to their heroic struggle, and his insults should never be forgotten or forgiven. Listen to the apostate saying :—

They (the miners) may be likened to the sightless Samson feeling for the grip of the pillars of the temple, the crashing of which may engulf this thing we call British civilisation.

Mr. Williams may now defend the Constitution and praise British "civilisation" to his heart's content, but he could have better applied his biblical knowledge and likened the Labour Movement under its present leadership to Samson dallying with the harlot Delilah of the capitalist Philistines, and so losing his strength, his sight and his, till then, successful struggle with his enemies.

The Seeker after Office

This speech of Mr. Williams, so much admired by the Philistine Press, gave the line to the whole Conference as far as the all-powerful platform was concerned. It is clear that Mr. MacDonald is preparing again to take office without an independent majority in the House of Commons, and to rely upon the assistance of the Liberals and any "open-minded young Tories" who may join his standard. This plan of his is in no way precluded by the so-called pledge, given under pressure, that there should be "no coalition," and we are faced with the prospect of another MacDonald Government and a policy of "continuity" in the affairs of the Empire and in the administration of the capitalist system at home. There is at least this satisfaction in the outlook: that another term of "Labour" Government such as we had in 1924 will open the eyes of the workers and cure them once and for all of any belief in their present leaders. To gain and continue in

office Mr. MacDonald must keep himself free from becoming entangled in any policy likely to bring him into serious conflict with the Liberals, and so he poured scorn upon the I.L.P. resolution for "Socialism in our time," describing it as "political jerry-building of a high order," but he graciously said he had no objection to an inquiry as long as it did not interfere with more important work, and he knows how easily an inquiry can be manipulated by the astute party bosses. And, be it noted, Mr. MacDonald occupied his seat at the Conference as a delegate of the I.L.P.

The Steam-Roller

After the defeatist speech of the chairman, so unedifying in its nature that even the *Daily Herald* was moved to protest, the Conference settled down to be ironed flat by the block-vote steam-roller driven by MacDonald and the Party's officials. It took five days to complete the job, and at the end the surface was almost as flat as could be desired. Down and under went the attempt to secure unity by the re-admission of the Communists, a small bump is visible where the roller went over the opposition to the insulting and useless mining resolution, an unsightly crease marks the place of birth control upon the surface, and a crack or so appeared through one of which Mr. Ponsonby dropped his highly inconvenient resolution on the manufacture of armaments. The Left Wing opposition, ably led, had never a chance, and in spite of the undoubted superiority in debate the machine regularly and ruthlessly registered the massed block-vote of the Right Wing nuclei. In the election of the new Executive there was, however, a bad break—for the worms turned, looked up, and refused to have Mr. Robert Williams at any price, and so he was made to swallow the bitter and by no means tonic pill of his rejection.

Votes ! Votes ! Give us Votes !

The whole philosophy of the present managers of the Party is well summed up in the concluding words of Mr. Williams in *Answers*, where he writes :—

When I was asked . . . the other day by a well-known man whose sympathies are with Labour what it was that the political Labour Movement in this country most required, I answered in one

word—"Votes." And we both laughed. But I had to admit that the only way was to decide upon policies and methods which would win votes.

Principles be blown! we want votes. Where are they, and what can we offer for them so that my lord and master MacDonald may again be Premier? This is the true interpretation of the above-quoted passage. The Liberalised policy adopted at Liverpool last year was directed to this end and now we have added this year the new "Labour land policy."

There was no pretence made at Margate that this policy was devised with any other object than the securing of votes in the county divisions. Landlords, farmers, and labourers are to be appealed to to support the Labour land scheme, seeing that it compensates the landed interests at an unknown but substantial figure, promises the farmers that they "need fear nothing from the change," and weeps over the evil condition of the land workers without offering any substantial relief. This policy has been lifted bodily from Mr. Lloyd George's *Green Book*, and where it differs the alteration is by no means to the credit of those responsible for this weak and mean programme. The so-called land policy merely puts the crowning stone into the Liverpool programme of "National Reconstruction and Reform," and shows clearly that the Labour Party has abandoned its Socialist teachings and is prepared to buy off the class war and surrender to the enemy.

The "Red Flag"

The Margate Conference ended in a significant way. The chairman, after a tearful reference to his defeat, called, according to plan, for "Auld Lang Syne" lest worse befel, and this was sung, Mr. MacDonald adding his tuneful voice to the performance; then from the body of the hall came the strains of the "Red Flag," and this was taken up generally by the Conference, but Mr. MacDonald stood mute and mum. He would no doubt have sung the loyal and Constitutional anthem "God Save the King," but on no account the English revolutionary hymn.

PHARAOH IN DOWNING STREET

By W. N. EWER

PHARAOH, as Lincoln Steffens rightly insists in *Moses in Red*, was an essential factor—as essential as Moses himself—in the making of the Jewish Revolution and of the Jewish nation.

The Jews do not to-day, as they should, recognise the Egyptian king as one of their national heroes. The Christian Church does not pay due homage to Judas—without whom there had been no Crucifixion and so, presumably, no Salvation of the World. Even the Bolsheviks, who should know better, have not as yet set up a statue of Mr. Churchill on the boulevards of Moscow.

But I still have hopes of the Kuomintang. I still hope that when the inevitable *denkmal*, “soaring aloft some fifty braccia,” commemorates, in Canton or in Peking, the establishment of the Chinese Workers’ Republic, there will be found in it some niche recording the part played in the consummation of the great work by Sir Austen Chamberlain, Sir Reginald Stubbs, Inspector Everson and numerous other Englishmen.

At present, I am afraid, our English Pharaoh, like his Egyptian prototype, gets nothing but abuse for his loyal fulfilment of his historical function. Yet he, like the Egyptian, deserves at any rate our pity, if not our homage.

Like the Pharaoh of Memphis (or may be it was Luxor), the Pharaoh of Downing Street is an estimable gentleman in a muddle-headed panic, defending the only civilisation he understands against dark forces threatening its destruction.

The earlier Pharaoh stood for all the respectabilities, all the culture, all the economic efficiencies, for the sanctity of the law and of treaties (albeit unequal treaties), for the prestige of the *sahib-log*. He saw them threatened by a mob of mutinous Asiatics, incited by a little gang of extremists (the worst of all being a notorious criminal and, of course, a Jew). He saw a perfectly unreasonable nationalist agitation, putting forward perfectly

preposterous demands, probably financed by Midianite gold. He found himself, when he opposed them, smitten by the strangest and most unpleasant plagues. He wavered irresolutely between conciliating these pestilent foreign workmen and—under the influence of die-hards, who pointed out the dangers of weakness—adopting a policy of iron firmness. And so, bewildered and irresolute, ill-advised and ill-informed, he drifted through plague after plague until the Red Sea overwhelmed him and his hosts.

It is just so with our Downing Street Pharaohs and this astonishing Chinese Puzzle to which they cannot see any solution.

A year or so ago, apart from geographical and terminological complications, it seemed comparatively simple.

All that was needed was firmness. The Anglo-Chinese who were clamouring for bloodshed in Shanghai, for the bombardment of Canton, for a march on Peking, must be calmed down. Such things were impossible, since no other Power would consent to them, and, moreover, they were quite unnecessary. There was no need to get excited. Quiet firmness was all that was needed : a little display of force perhaps to emphasise the firmness. But if we kept our heads, showed the Chinese that we would not be intimidated, that we would not yield a single point to threats or agitation, then everything would right itself. The Chinese would tire of Bolshevik agitation, the supplies of Russian gold would dry up, and then, since the whole movement was artificially fomented by a few students and a few hireling propagandists, all would be well again, and the Chinese would once more realise that England was their best friend.

True, there was still the civil war. There was Feng in the North, actually in control of Peking. But Chang Tso-lin (" a good man : the strong man China needs ") would soon push him out. There was Canton in the South. But after all the Cantonese troops were only a " rag-tag and bobtail army." The " Government " was unstable ; firmly handled, it would not be very troublesome. It had climbed down at once in 1924 when the MacDonald Government had threatened to bombard Canton if the Fascist " Merchant Volunteers " were interfered with. When Chang Tso-lin had settled with Feng he could easily finish off Canton. Then we could make some vague and not very serious concessions in the

matter of tariffs to the new Government at Peking, and settle down comfortably as before.

Thus Pharaoh, not in the least anticipating plagues. All his information pointed to it. It did not occur to him that his information was derived from sources whose judgment of the new China was about as valuable and about as well-founded as that of the average member of the Carlton Club on Poplar or the Rhondda Valley.

Firmness enough had been shown. The Shanghai shooting in May had been followed up by the "Shakee massacre" in June, and by the machine-gunning of Hankow in July. Pharaoh waited for the results to show themselves.

They did show themselves, emphatically and immediately, but in a quite unexpected fashion. The boycott of British trade shut down more firmly than ever at Shanghai and Canton. Pharaoh hardened his heart and secured the suppression of the report of the Commission appointed by the Diplomatic Corps to investigate the Shanghai shootings. It was a curiously stupid move. The truth, of course, leaked out; and the effect was to convince the Chinese that England, far more than any other foreign Power, was the particular and determined enemy of the national movement.

Japan, it may be noted, was even now "getting out from under." Better informed than the British, better understanding the Chinese, not obsessed by any delusions of racial superiority, they were beginning to sum up the situation. Chinese nationalism, they saw, was at any rate a possible winner. It must not be hopelessly antagonised. It must even be persuaded that Japan was a friend. So, and so only, it might be possible to consolidate Japanese influence in Manchuria and to exact its "independence" when the time came as the *quid pro quo* for benevolent neutrality. Japan set herself, with much success, to persuade the Chinese to forget that it was a murder by a Japanese foreman which had started the Shanghai trouble. She began to pose as the champion of China, the advocate of the abolition of extra-territoriality.

The wrath of the Chinese began to concentrate more and more upon Great Britain. It was the British who had done all the killing at Shanghai, at Shameen, and at Hankow. It was the British who had threatened to bombard Wanhsien (an earlier

exploit, in 1924, of that same *Cockchafer* which *did* bombard the city this year) and Canton. It was the British who were carrying on a ferocious anti-national propaganda (their local newspapers contrasting sharply with the American and Japanese). It was the British who were prominent in every anti-national intrigue and activity.

British psychology added to the British difficulties. For of all the Imperialist peoples who are in contact—and so generally in conflict with the Chinese—the British are at once the most race-conscious and the most caste-conscious. The French are notoriously colour-blind and incurably petty-bourgeois. The Japanese are themselves a yellow race. The Germans, chastened by the war and lacking in gunboats, have abandoned their former arrogance. The American still combines the psychology of the missionary with the psychology of the bagman. But the British are above all things, gentlemen : and they pay the penalty for it. The British communities are plentifully sprinkled with the products of Eton and “the House,” of Osborne and Dartmouth, of Sandhurst or “the shop.” And those who are not of the enchanted circle wish they were and do their best to imitate the real thing. So to the Chinese, as to all “lesser breeds without the law” their attitude is one of an intolerable superiority. In their bullying as in their patronage they are Olympian, unswervingly convinced of their own rectitude, never doubting that “they are the people.” Nor can they ever understand what hatreds this breeds in those who face it.

This gentleman-business—as Ambassador Gerard might have called it—does not stimulate understanding. And Pharaoh, just because he is a gentleman, has never understood—until too late, plagues have forced some glimmering of comprehension into him.

He could not understand what was happening in China. It was clear to him that it was all a Bolshevik plot : that the Canton government was—in the well-bred, polished phraseology of the Governor of Hong Kong—a “regime imposed from without and supported by mercenaries” ; that, in Sir Austen’s phrase it was an “extremist faction, under blindly anti-British Communist influences, whose lawless actions disgusted all sections of the Chinese people.”

Incurably blind, incredibly ill-informed, bewildered by the changing tangle of Chinese politics, the British Government turned this way and that seeking a remedy for the troubles that had come on them. Their premises and their objects were simple enough. The Nationalist Movement was a Moscow plot against the British Empire. The struggle in China was part of their secular war as children of light with the dark forces of the Kremlin. Therefore, one of two things. Either Great Britain must herself enter the field against the Nationalists and their Russian allies : or she must—in accordance with a respectable tradition—find someone to do the work for her.

The Hong Kong and Shanghai junkers, eagerly supported by a large section of the home Press, were for the simple, direct solution. Canton by its boycott strikes, was bleeding Hong Kong to death. Therefore, the British Fleet should blow Canton into the river. What else was the British fleet for ?

Simple and direct. But the unhappy men in Downing Street realised that this simplicity and directness—well enough half a century ago—were impossible in a sadly changed world. Other Powers—notably America and Japan—would not stand for the blowing to pieces of a profitable market. Single-handed intervention would bring such a crop of diplomatic troubles that it was out of the question. The other powers—as Mr. Amery indiscreetly admitted—were sounded as to the possibility of joint intervention. They refused flatly. Hong Kong had to content itself with soft words from Sir Austen and with a loan of £3,000,000 from Mr. Amery.

Direct intervention being barred by the veto of Tokio and Washington there remained the other plan of finding an ally. But here again was a tangle of trouble. Chang Tso-lin was the obvious first choice. But Chang, approached in the summer of 1925, had made demands quite incapable of fulfilment. Open subsidies to White Generals were no longer feasible. Money was not squanderable as in the days of Denikin. Chang had gladly intimidated Shanghai, shot trade union leaders, broken up trade unions, suppressed the strike movement. But he would not march against Feng and the Kuominchun, let alone against Canton, without heavy subsidies. So during the summer he sulked. And

the name of Wu Pei-fu began to be mentioned again. By the autumn, Wu, who had fled, broken and solitary after his defeat by Chang, appeared again on the Yang-tse, miraculously revived, disposing of money and munitions. He had had no official support, of course, but he had had unofficial encouragement from official quarters. And it is pretty certain that he had had financial aid from quarters which had been loath to back Chang because he was a protégé of the Japanese, but which had always been more than friendly to Wu.

In the north the game became amazingly complex. And official eyes, still hypnotised by the fiction that Peking was the capital, were fixed on the north; though in the south the quiet economic struggle between Canton and Hong Kong went relentlessly forward. The only spectacular interlude there was an expedition against Canton directed from the British colony by the semi-brigand Chen Chiung-ming. He took Swatow, whereat the Hong Kong clubs thrilled to the belief that the end of Canton was near. But by November his army was in fragments and he himself of no further account. And the boycott went on.

If the south was undramatic, the north was all drama. Every day brought a new development, an advance, a retreat, an assassination, a conspiracy. Even the Japanese were bewildered. The main events were Chang's advance, his sudden recoil in November; the mutiny of his troops; his almost-overthrow; his rescue from destruction by the aid of 20,000 Japanese troops; his new advance.

By the spring, a policy seemed clear. Through all the tangle was one visible fact. Feng Yu-hsiang's Kuominchun forces, national in spirit, in close and friendly relations with Soviet Russia must be smashed. Chang and Wu together could do it. And then they could deal with the Cantonese.

With infinite pains Chang and Wu were persuaded to forget old hatreds, to combine to "exterminate Bolshevism." "When Wu Pei-fu talks about exterminating," wrote one enthusiastic chronicler, "he means it literally." By April they had driven the Kuominchun from Peking. By June it seemed safe that Wu should turn his attention to the south, leaving Chang to deal with the Kuominchun who still held the Hankow pass. A "reinsurance"

arrangement safeguarded Shanghai by establishing Sun Chuan-fang as War Lord of the five Eastern provinces.

Pharaoh began to flatter himself that his policy was succeeding. Then suddenly everything began to go wrong again. Instead of Wu marching victoriously to Canton, the Cantonese, having completed their preparations, struck swiftly northward into Wu's territory. The Kuominchun vanished from the Hankow pass : abandoned their base at Kalgan. An apparent victory—until it became clear that this was no retreat, but a remarkable strategical move. They had left Chang to kick his heels in and around Peking, or to return to Mukden and ruminate on the collapse of his currency while they, shifting their base to Pao-tu, turned southward into Shensi to aid the southern Kuomintang in the conquest of Central China.

At a stroke all the intriguing of a year went for nothing. Chang became of no consequence, while in Peking futile diplomats faced a shadow government while the fate of China was being settled in the Yang-tse valley.

The plague was spreading with a vengeance. The red flag with the sun on a blue ground in its corner—Sun Yat-sen's flag, known from Yunnan to the Great Wall—flew in Hunan, in Kwei-chow, in Kiang-si, in Hupeh, in Honan, in Shensi, in Szechwan. China was going red under the eyes of a diplomatic corps stranded impotently in Peking. Wu faded into ruin. Sun Chuan-fang was a doubtful factor. Chang, under strong pressure from Tokio, showed signs of an intention to content himself with holding Manchuria and leaving China to go its own way. And Hong Kong was bleeding to death.

Pharaoh, plague-smitten as never before, began to behave in the manner of his kind. Since the opposition was proving too powerful he would buy it off. Since hostility was proving unprofitable and a fruitful source of plagues, he would try friendship—or the appearance of friendship. The diplomatic calculations got to work. Perhaps if the game against Chinese nationalism were given up as lost the game against Soviet Russia might still be won. Perhaps Canton, in return for recognition, for restoration of trade, for an industrial loan, in short for the by no means valueless consideration of British friendship, would break with Soviet

Russia, would send Borodin and his fellows packing, would replace them by British advisers. Perhaps, if we befriended, instead of opposing, the national movement we might make of it a barrier against Bolshevism, an ally of British Imperialism.

“ And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said unto them I have sinned this time : the Lord is righteous and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail : and I will let you go and ye shall stay no longer.”

“ But as for thee and thy servants,” came Moses’ answer, “ I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God.”

Moses was right. Pharaoh could not change his nature : he and his servants. He might plan a policy of conciliation : but he could not carry it out. Economic facts, the class antagonism of Egyptian exploiters and Jewish exploited, were too strong for him. Or, if you prefer the Bible phrase, he “ hardened his heart again he and his servants, neither would he let the children of Israel go.”

History will repeat itself. The fundamental antagonism will be too strong for the subtlest diplomacy. Mr. Lampson may go East determined to make peace with the Chinese nationalists and to swing them into alliance against Russia. But, clever diplomat though he is, he is bound to fail. For the interests of the British in China are quite definitely opposed to the interests of Chinese nationalism ; and the interests of Russia are quite as definitely linked with them. That is the determining economic fact. If Pharaoh is to make friends with the children of Israel, he must make his peace with Jehovah, which means that he must throw over Osiris and Isis and Thoth, and quarrel with those “ servants ” who are his masters. If Mr. Lampson is to succeed in his policy he must side with the Chinese against the Hong Kong and Shanghai junkers : he must throw over the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and the Chambers of Commerce, and the clubs and Eton and Oxford, and the captain of the “ Cockchafer,” which is absurd.

Therefore Mr. Lampson will fail : and the plagues will begin again.

Poor Pharaoh. Bewildered and plague-stricken he is drifting steadily to the Red Sea.

MEXICO TO-DAY

By E. VARGA

THERE are but few countries to-day which are so interesting to us as Mexico, both as regards social and foreign politics. It is the only country, except South China, where there is in a certain sense a regime of workers and peasants. It is a country which is howled down by the capitalist Press all over the world as a Bolshevik land.

This "bolshevism," which we shall deal with further on in detail, is the natural reaction against a system of land robbery which has been carried on for centuries, and has led to the soil of Mexico gradually concentrating in the hands of a very small group of exploiters, whilst those who actually till the ground have been left literally without a vestige of land owned by themselves. The history of Mexico is the history of robbery of land from the natives, and it was not until the agrarian revolution of 1910-1923 that a certain change began to make itself felt. The solution of the problem is, however, still far distant. The agrarian history of Mexico may serve as example of the whole agrarian history of South America.

Besides the agrarian question, Mexico has another problem of special importance, its struggle against the Imperialism of the United States. American capital presses forward unceasingly into Mexico, and the predatory corruption of whatever group of the ruling class holds government power facilitates in every possible way this advance. The struggle against American Imperialism is thus closely bound up with the struggle of the workers and peasants against the large landowners and the church. A struggle against American Imperialism signifies—so far as we can judge by the scanty material at our disposal—a simultaneous struggle against the large landowning class and the bourgeoisie of Mexico itself. It seems as if Mexico is either to be finally transformed into an American colony by the United States, or the close connection between American capital and native exploitation will lead to an anti-capitalist upheaval in the country. In a certain sense the situation is analogous to that in China.

The Agrarian Question in Mexico

Mexico is a thinly populated country. In 1910 its population counted 15 million souls inhabiting an area of approximately 2 million square kilometres, or 7·2 persons per square km.

Mexico is about as large as Germany, France, Spain, England and Italy all together, and yet there is a land famine there such as is known scarcely anywhere else in the world. Here there are two points to be taken into consideration. In the first place, the density of the population varies greatly. In the central districts, for instance in the state of Mexico, the density is 41 per square km., whilst in the dry regions of the north-west the number of inhabitants sinks under 1 per square km. This is to be accounted for by the great differences in the fertility of the soil. Only 8 per cent. is suitable for tillage. A report issued for 1910 shows that of a total area of 491 million acres, 300 millions are uncultivable, and of the rest 120 million acres are pasture land.

Although the technique of tillage is still very backward in many parts of Mexico, the area capable of cultivation would fully suffice to cover the needs of the population were the land not completely in the hands of a small number of large landowners. The landownership statistics compiled for the individual states in 1910 show that even where the conditions are most favourable, in California (Mexican California), only 11·8 per cent. of the families engaged in agricultural labour own land of their own, 88 per cent. owning no land at all, whilst in the province worst off in this respect, Oaxaca, only 0·2 of these families owned land, and 99·8 per cent. owned none. The average has unfortunately not been calculated, but must lie between 2 and 3 per cent.

The small percentage of landowners among the large agricultural population shows that the soil is obviously concentrated in the hands of a few mighty landowners. As a matter of fact, there are landowners in Mexico possessing areas widely exceeding any European conception of landownership. In Mexico there are areas of landed property, belonging to one owner, as large as Belgium and Holland together, estates which it takes a railway train a full day to cross.

It is obvious that in a country like this, where one great tract of privately owned land adjoins another, and 99 per cent. of the

rural population possesses no land of its own, the great landowners must be absolute lords of the country. Up to 1915, the population of Mexico were the complete slaves of the large landowners. The situation has been somewhat alleviated by the agrarian revolution, but it does not appear to be fundamentally changed.

The Position of the Agricultural Labourers

The natives deprived of their land became, and are still for the most part, the actual serfs of the large landowners. Each great estate has its serf population (the "peons") averaging 2,000 to 5,000 persons. Although serfdom has been formally abolished, it still continues in a form of enforced dependence. The landowner gives the peon a cash advance, which can never possibly be repaid out of the frightfully low wages paid, and the law of the country forbids the peon to leave an employer to whom he is in debt. The statistics for 1910 show 3,183,402 peons, employed on 834 estates, to be in this state of slavery-indebtedness. When the families of these peons are counted, we have a total of 10 million human beings, or two-thirds of the total population. Besides these there were only 410,000 persons engaged in agriculture, the independent middle owners (ranchos) and farmers, and these existed for the most part in the utmost poverty and misery, their land being entirely insufficient.

Mexico—the Spoil of American Imperialism

The bourgeoisie of the United States has always regarded the whole region around the Caribbean Sea as their special "sphere of influence."¹ Mexico itself is limited on the north and north-east by the United States; on the east lie Cuba and Haiti; on the south the districts occupied by the United States in protection of the Panama Canal. Politically it is surrounded by the forces of the United States, economically it is dependent on this same country. Any attempt at putting the revolutionary solution of the agrarian question into actual practice encounters the resistance of the superior

¹ As early as eighty years ago the United States made a raid on Mexico, and robbed it of half its territory: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. The land distribution and agrarian constitution of the "democratic South" still show traces of Spanish land robbery. The imperialist raid being made by the bourgeoisie of the United States on the south is well described, though in rather too literary a style, in the works of the champion of the independence of Latin America, the Argentine writer Manuel Ugarte, for instance, in *The Destiny of a Continent*, New York, 1925.

power of American interests, which are here safeguarding an especially precious booty : petroleum. Mexico's wealth of petroleum is its misfortune, has made it the bone of contention between American and English petroleum capital, a mere petroleum colony.

Petroleum was first bored in Mexico in 1901, by Dohenny, the notorious American petroleum capitalist.² But it was not until after 1910 that the petroleum resources were really opened up. The output increased from half a million tons in 1920 to 29 million tons in 1921 or 25 per cent. of the world's output. Since 1921 there has been a decrease to 21 million tons in 1924.

The output was lowered by salt water breaking into the bores in some places. It has, however, been ascertained that up to now only a fraction of the deposits has been opened up.

There are two points characteristic of Mexico as a colonial country :—

- (1) The whole of this wealth is entirely in the hands of foreigners.
- (2) The petroleum is exported as *crude oil* ; it is scarcely worked up at all in the country itself.

The English " Mexican Eagle " has been the first to establish refining works ; the output produced by American capital is exported almost entirely as crude oil. There are twenty refining works, producing fuel oil for the most part. " The other products of the refineries are imported for the most part from the United States."

There has been a violent struggle between American and English capital for the exploitation of Mexican crude oil, fought with all possible weapons : revolutions and counter-revolutions, diplomacy, stock exchange tactics . . . ending finally with the victory of the United States. The various concerns participate in the following proportions in the output (percentages) :—

	1923	1924
Standard Oil	15	35
Dohenny	24	23
Mexican Gulf	8	7
American share	57	74
Royal Dutch Shell	26	13
International capital	10	11

² We here take our facts from an excellent book which has recently been published : *Die Erdölwirtschaft der Welt* by K. Krüger and G. Ponhardt, Stuttgart, 1926, pp. 185-200.

The crude oil obtained is almost entirely exported : 75 per cent. as crude oil, 5 per cent. as distillates, the remainder as semi-products. Only 10 per cent. is consumed in the country itself, principally for running the producing and refining plants of the oil exported, 78 per cent. goes to the United States, 6 per cent. to England, the rest to South America, Cuba and Canada.

The revolutionary governments of Mexico have attempted to prevent the unscrupulous exploitation of the natural wealth of the country by the Americans, or at least to restrict it and to obtain a financial advantage from it. The constitution established by Carranza in 1917, article 27, enacts that land concessions—these including the right to exploit underground deposits—were to be granted to Mexicans or Mexican companies only, whilst those already granted to foreigners were to be subjected to a revision.

This attempt led to a lengthy conflict with England and the United States, whose diplomatists defended the "acquired rights" of the petroleum capitalists with the utmost energy.³ The Obregon government was positively forced to beat a retreat in 1920, and to recognise the concessions granted before 1917 as legal.

England has proved even more sensitive on the subject of the violation of the sacred rights of petroleum capital than even the United States. For eight years, until the autumn of 1925, England refused to recognise the Mexican government; this as protest against paragraph 27 of the constitution of 1917. Not even the MacDonald government would recognise the government. *The Times* of April 8, 1924, writes with obvious satisfaction that the President of Mexico and his ministers have probably never supposed that a Labour Government would demand protection for British rights and British property as a necessary basis for recognition, or would ask for proofs of the stability and integrity of the Mexican government. The MacDonald government once more took sides against the working class in this case, preferring to side

³ Force and corruption, the original means of accumulation, were unscrupulously employed. Mr. Dohenny, for instance, promised a million dollars to the Secretary of State of the U.S.A., MacAdoo, the son-in-law of the highly moral Wilson, if his "negotiations" with Mexico were successful. Thus the *New York Times*, March 11, 1924.

rather with Anglo-Dutch petroleum capital than with the Mexican workers.

Meanwhile every detail of petroleum legislation continues to be the subject of the bitterest conflicts. At the beginning of April, 1926, a new petroleum law was passed in Mexico. This enacts that all petroleum rights are to be converted into concessions running for fifty years from the time of the commencement of exploitation. The special correspondent of *The Times*, April 20, 1926, naturally furious, declared this to be a fresh act of confiscation, as in many cases the rights of possession terminate within a few years, and fall to the Mexican government, and condemned it at the same time as a violation of the agreement made between the United States and Mexico in April, 1923, prohibiting the retroactive effect of § 27.

Equally severe criticism is exercised against the aliens law, which enacts that foreigners are not to acquire land or water rights for a distance of 100 km. from the frontier or 50 km. from the coast, or to become stockholders in a Mexican company possessing such rights. Foreign stockholders must declare in writing that they submit to the Mexican laws. Property already held by foreigners on this territory may be held till the death of the owner. The heirs must sell it to the Mexicans within five years. The capitalists judge this to be confiscation, as no Mexican possesses the money to buy.

The Times expresses the opinion that the *sole certain way of putting an end to the confiscation policy of the Mexican government is a closer diplomatic co-operation among the great powers.* This is characteristic for the comparative forces waging against one another in Mexico. The United States permit England no armed action in Mexico ; England is thus dependent on the aid of the United States. Petroleum capital will doubtless find some means of destroying the effect of even this new law, and the petroleum will finally remain the property of the Americans. The penetration of the country by American capital is observable in every sphere. The nationalised railways have had to be given back to America. American capita is pressing forward into every branch of industry, it monopolises foreign trade, and is authoritative in finance. It is converting Mexico gradually into a colony.

England is being supplanted more and more by America in the *investment of capital*. The figures dealing with capital investment are, however, extremely contradictory. In general England's share is estimated at only a fifth of that of the United States.

In *foreign trade* the United States have incontestably the supremacy. America supplies not only large quantities of goods, but every description of articles of consumption which would find a sale in an average town, village, or market place in the United States. (See *Trade with Latin America*. Dept. of Commerce, 1924, p. 2.) Mexico is almost a part of the home markets of the United States. The same articles are exported or imported, according to local conditions. Crude oil from California goes to the West Mexican refineries of the "Mexican Eagle," cotton is imported in the east from Mexico to the United States, and from the United States to Mexico in the west, &c.

The value of imports has increased from 187 million pesos in 1913 to 304 millions in 1924, and the value of exports from 261 million pesos to 711 millions during the same period. The preponderance of the United States in Mexican foreign trade is seen in the figures of its share in 1924 of 233 million pesos in imports and 493 millions in exports.

This comparative position of exports and imports in general, and the great share carried off by the United States, gives an idea of the intensity with which American capital is pillaging Mexico. There is not only an import surplus, but an "investment of capital," that is, the surplus value expropriated in Mexico is partially allowed to accumulate in Mexico itself.

The finances of the country are equally under the influence of the United States. Mexico has no trouble with the rate of exchange of the currency, for this is practically all metal, a natural consequence of the large amount of gold and silver produced in the country. The large amount of silver coined in 1924 has caused a disagio of silver money in comparison to gold, to the amount of 8 per cent. Paper money is but little in circulation; only banknotes. On the other hand, interest was not paid on the national debt during the revolution, and this gave the Americans, the chief creditors, an excellent excuse for interfering. A bank of issue was recently established, and the payment of interest on state debts resumed.

Mexico is being subordinated to the United States all along the line : by political power, by the investment of capital, by means of foreign trade, and by cultural propaganda. The A. F. of Labour is working along the same line. It is true that resistance is growing among the new bourgeoisie of all Latin American countries. But the subordination of the country cannot be prevented by bourgeois means. As in China, the anti-imperialist movement can only be victorious in the form of a social revolution.

Industry and the Industrial Workers

During the last decade, industry has made certain advances in Mexico. It is hampered by the poverty of the agricultural labourers forming two-thirds of the population, for these cannot buy industrial goods, whilst the rich ruling class covers its requirements abroad for the most part.

In 1923, the number of industrial workers was as follows⁴ :—

Total	284,000
Mining workers	85,000
Textile workers	52,000
Food workers	36,000
Transport workers.. .. .	7,000

In a total population of 15 millions, this shows a very slight degree of industrialisation. The colonial dependence of the country on the United States retards industrialisation, for American capital prefers to supply Mexico with finished articles, rather than establish undertakings in so " bolshevist " a country.

It is difficult to ascertain the position of the industrial workers. According to the letter of the law, their position must be good. Paragraph 123 of the Mexican constitution of 1917 prescribes : eight hours day, seven hours for night work, six hours for children, no night work for women and children, one day of rest weekly ; cash wages and obligatory participation in profits ; the right to strike ; three months' wages for wrongful dismissal ; obligatory arbitration by the State, &c. If an arbitration board find a strike justified, it has the right to oblige the employer to pay a part or the whole of the wages lost to the workers during a strike. This actually happened some time ago (in 1923) on the occasion of a strike in a printing works in Mexico. A French textile factory

⁴ *Commerce Yearbook*, 1925, p. 574. Published by Dept. of Commerce, U.S.A.

arbitrarily discharged half-a-dozen workers ; when it refused to take them back the government confiscated the factory until the workers were reinstated.

It is, however, difficult to determine how much of these regulations is carried out, and how much is merely paper.⁵ In any case, these laws have not prevented foreign capitalists from making gigantic profits in Mexico.

The report published by the Communist International, *One Year of Work and Struggle*, gives the following statements on the wages in Mexico for 1925 :—

Average wage of an industrial worker	.. ..	3.0 pesos
Average wage in the country	.. ..	0.75 pesos

The wages of the women and juvenile workers are considerably lower. In the country there are women and children working twelve to fourteen hours for 10 to 20 centavos per hour, and in industry nine to ten hours daily for 25 to 70 centavos per hour.

In many cases the State authorities appear to be aiming deliberately at raising the wage level.

A report issued by the American Consul in Yukatan states that the State Board of Arbitration ordered the following increases in wages to be made (June 19, 1925) :—

For a monthly wage of	Per cent.
less than 20 pesos	200
21—30 „	150
31—40 „	125
41—70 „	100

Conclusion

The general survey may be summed up as follows : The present government, incapable and unwilling to solve the agrarian problem by way of revolution, is attempting to create an aristocracy of industrial workers which is to combine with the growing inland bourgeoisie to form a counterweight against the revolutionary rural proletariat. Although the wages of the industrial workers are extremely low, speaking absolutely, they are still much higher than those of the agricultural labourers, so that the industrial workers form a comparative aristocracy. The promotion of the trade

⁵ The actual carrying out of these laws requires legislation for the individual States. Such legislation, that of the State of Jalisco for 1923, is given in the *Monthly Labour Review of the Labour Office of the U.S.A.*, June, 1924.

unions of the industrial workers, the admittance of a trade union leader into the government as Minister for Industry and Labour, the close alliance between the Mexican trade unions and the A.F. of L., all this goes to show that the Calles government is seeking to corrupt the industrial workers, to create a bourgeois industrial workers' aristocracy, and to divide the industrial proletariat from the rural proletariat, to the end that the latter may be robbed of its natural vanguard.

The first task of the Communist Party of Mexico is to prevent this split, to unite the forces of the proletariat in town and country, and to carry out the revolutionary solution of the agrarian question. During the last few weeks, whilst this report has been in the Press, a sharp conflict has arisen between the government and the church in Mexico. This is a conflict being carried on by the working-class, the bourgeoisie and a section of the secular landowners against the church in its capacity of especially privileged gigantic landowner and banker. At the same time it is a manoeuvre for distracting attention from the revolutionary agrarian movement.

HOW COME THESE TRAITORS?

By RUTLAND BOUGHTON

IF a dictatorship of the proletariat were declared in Britain to-morrow I don't suppose that a single individual capitalist would suffer in his person beyond the suffering consequent on putting in his daily work. But I am not so sure of the fate of two or three prominent men in the Labour Movement. Thomas and MacDonald, for instance, are hated by the rank and file as no capitalist is hated. And now I expect that Hamilton Fyfe will be added to the number, for in outspoken treachery he has gone farthest of all. (Witness his self-exposure in the *Sunday Express*.) During the Railway Strike of 1921 I heard a rich landowner say that he believed Thomas was working in the interests of the companies. At the time it seemed absurd to me. But now that Thomas's policy has proved so disastrous to the workers it may be useful to look carefully into the matter. If it were a mere question of baseness of character the problem would be simple, but it seems incredible that such baseness could exist in a man whose personality has been so grateful to the rank and file of railwaymen. They are not fools. And if on the other hand this recurrent danger and this failure of leadership in the Labour Movement are brought about by factors other than human baseness it is necessary to understand what causes them. For if we understand we may be able to get rid of some of the causes, or at least be prepared for them as they arise and before they develop destructively.

The example of Hamilton Fyfe is fresh in our minds, and will serve my purpose best, as I have been thrown into some personal contact with him. In 1923 the *Daily Herald* was making frantic appeals for support to all Socialists and Labour folk. It was in some danger, and its policy was consequently to the Left. During that time one or two articles of a distinctly pro-Bolshevik nature were accepted, and I subsequently joined the staff as musical critic. But as the paper grew in influence and increased its circulation its policy moved to the Right. At first my articles had only been edited to a very small extent, but as time went on even

friendly references to Russia, and especially to the Trades Union Report on Russia, were blue-pencilled. The ostensible reason was that I was the music man, but as a matter of fact there are in that report one or two very important references to the arts and to the workers' opportunities for artistic and musical education. And finally, when I wrote in support of our own Musicians' Union, whose immediate needs happened to conflict with MacDonald's policy in foreign affairs, the whole article was turned down. Of course I resigned, though my personal relations with Fyfe had always been pleasant. Some time later the paper again showed signs of a movement to the Left, and again I joined the staff; but this proved to be a much shorter term. One article, containing a slight criticism of the Eccleston Square people, was promptly returned with a friendly letter asking if I should expect the editor of the *Morning Post* to print an attack upon the Duke of Northumberland. As a matter of fact I should, though I should know that a defence would not lag far behind. I should expect a live editor to be glad of such things, he being aware that in any case he has the freedom and effect of the last word.

However, Fyfe's point of view was disclosed not so much in suppressing criticisms of his immediate employers, but in his mistaken idea as to who were the real owners of the *Daily Herald*. His answer made it clear to me why the *Daily Herald* was failing as a Labour paper—why, in spite of the great awakening of class-consciousness among our people, the paper had so miserable a circulation. And Fyfe stressed his unhappy point of view in a farewell message to the present editor, when he spoke of his hopes that Mellor would increase the circulation. Does the *Daily Herald* belong to the Labour Movement as a whole, or is it an instrument for imposing upon us an oligarchy of officials? Has it been the editor and his staff who have slightly increased the circulation of the *Daily Herald*, or has it not been more particularly the Left Wing and Communist sections of the Labour rank and file who have pushed the paper in spite of very indifferent editorship, while the Right Wingers have continued to enjoy the *Daily Express*, *Mail*, and *News*.

Now, is it not clear that the mentality which believes in the superior virtues and right of leaders and public men is really

opposed to the interests of the people and to every principle of Socialism? It came out very clearly during the General Strike. Eccleston Square sent out agonised appeals that the masses should trust their leaders—and that while these leaders were receiving such a measure of trust as had never before been accorded to British Labour leaders. Perhaps part of the agony lay in the fact that they knew as they sent out the appeals that they were engaged in betraying those who trusted them. Anyhow, it was very noticeable that while these cries were ringing the Communists were making an exactly opposite appeal, urging the Labour "leaders" to trust the people who were standing so solid and faithful even where they were isolated in little country places, even while they were being lied to and threatened by means of every instrument which the Government could control and organise. This difference of mentality is a vital one. So long as officials trust their rank and file, so long as theoretical Socialists realise that the masses of the people (even though starved of education) are a creative and not a destructive force (as the master class quite honestly fears), so long these officials will be faithful. The miners' leaders have proved better men than their predecessors not because they are men of extraordinary mentality, but because they have known and trusted their rank and file, and acted strictly according to the will of that rank and file both for good and for ill. And it has got to be so. Leaders cannot trick the masses into victory. When they think the masses are mistaken they can try to persuade them, but from the moment that the real creative pressure ceases in the rank and file, from that moment the leaders can only mark time or lead their people by trickery to tragedy. I have referred to the doubt which is in the minds of many Labour officials as to whether the masses are really a creative force, a doubt which as a matter of fact is more current among the intellectuals than among the proletarian leaders. But in any case it represents a point of view which is entirely foolish and inexplicable to the rank and file, who know their own faith and cannot understand why their officials should cease to believe in it. That is why they have no word but "traitor" for men like Thomas, MacDonald, and Fyfe.

There seem to be three main causes for the degeneration of character which attacks Labour officials—two of them due to the

stupid modesty (perhaps even in some measure to the personal jealousy) of the rank and file, the third due to the prudence of the capitalist class. So long as the workers choose their servants outside their own class so long they will suffer from the capitalist education (infinitely more dangerous than their own lack of education) which has moulded the brain of these servants. A peculiar example of that mistake has happened twice in their choice of editor for a Labour daily. For the *Daily Citizen* they went to the staff of the *Daily Mail*. They got a real professional pressman and set going a paper with a miserable two-faced, bandy-legged policy, while a group of amateur Left Wingers and Communists set going the first *Daily Herald* with its magnificent record as a workers' fighting organ. But the Right-Wing officials of the Labour Movement learned nothing by the experience, and so in place of Lansbury they installed Fyfe. He played the man to his trades union masters with the perfection which would be expected from a *Daily Mailer*, though he didn't always love his new bosses, as witness his resentment when Robert Williams was appointed business manager.

But Fyfe could give out no more than he had in him, and in spite of his benevolent hopes for a better world his mind had been warped by a long capitalist training. You have only to read his book on Mexico, for example, to realise that, though he is full of kind thoughts, he is absolutely without political understanding. In one of his efforts to keep me out of danger he assured me that art is more important than politics. That could only mean that in politics he only saw the sordid activities of capitalism. If he understood politics from the Socialist point of view he would have known that there can be no more great art until the workers have made the world afresh, and no more art even of a second-rate kind so long as capitalism continues to destroy the remains of our existing civilisation.

A man with Fyfe's brain sees the end of all things in a victorious proletariat, and when he sabotages their will to power he honestly believes that he is saving civilisation itself. For the workers to choose such a man for their editor, or retain officials who could have made such a choice, is folly. It is a false modesty which leads the workers to believe that the right men are those

who have enjoyed a capitalistic education, and made a name for themselves, and a salary for themselves, in the markets of capitalist journalism. And that brings us to the second cause of the recurrent treachery in the Labour forces, namely, the overpayment of officials. I do not mean that £20 a week is more than is needed to-day for a family of four people ; I mean that a man receiving £20 cannot truly understand the difficulties of a man earning £5 a week. To pay the secretary of a trade union or the editor of a Labour paper a higher salary than the average wages of the men he is intended to serve is contrary to every principle of Socialism and common sense. The theory appears to be that if the Labour Movement is to have really first-class officials they must be kept for Labour by the receipt of the sort of wage they could get from the boss class. But the boss class can always afford to pay the highest salaries and so secure the most efficient of these men who are for sale. Therefore of such men Labour can in any case only get the second best, the men left over when the boss class has had its pick—unless, of course, a certain number of very efficient men are actually allowed to put on the livery of Labour the better to do the bosses' own work ; and in that case it is fully to be expected that they will get a good deal more than Labour pays them.

I don't mean that such men would receive actual bribes of cash. That would be too obvious, and would not properly achieve the masters' object. But popular Labour leaders whose ideas are flabby and offer no real threat to the capitalist system may be invited, for instance, to write in the capitalist Press, with great advantage to themselves and to the increase of a reputation for broadmindedness among the masters. Or they may be called upon from time to time to act as Labour adviser to capitalist organisations. But under the most favourable circumstances, even when the highly-paid leader is a man of principle, he is unable properly to serve or represent the workless if he lives at a higher rate than they do. It is not his fault so much as the fault of the workers who overpay him. A man who gets the cut of a joint every day in the week forgets (if he ever knew) the needs of a man who lives chiefly on bread and potatoes. A man who can take his family once a week to the theatre cannot understand the intellectual starvation of one who finds it hard to afford a daily paper.

Further, if an official is paid well enough to mix without too much discomfort in circles frequented by the master class, he will be open to another demoralising influence—to that flattery which is the third cause of official Labour treachery. When MacDonald got into such a muddle over the forged letter I heard a great dramatist remark, “He has fallen a victim to the charming manners of the English governing classes.” And while the workers will have to take steps to guard against that sort of failure they must not despise too much the men who have failed. Not one of the workers themselves but would become weakened in moral fibre if day in day out, year in year out, he were assailed by the subtle sweetness of pretended and genuine admiration from fair women of fine culture, and by the even more powerful flattery of their men when they ask for advice and incidentally learn many solid and useful facts which lie behind the Labour official’s opinions, the knowledge of these facts being so necessary for the continuance in power of the capitalist class. This is not a wilful treachery of the official: he cannot help himself in the false position of superiority which a high salary gives him.

None knows better than the workers themselves that it is generally unpaid men who give them the best service in times of crisis. These men should be marked for official positions, and when the opportunity arises they should be appointed at the average wage of those they represent. And to make that policy effective at the earliest possible moment members of the rank and file have only to cast their minds back to the General Strike, and recall who were the real workers then, and who the slackers, saboteurs, and cowards.

THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS IN CANADA

By STEWART SMITH

THE Canadian general elections of September sound the death-knell of British Imperial domination in her first Dominion. In 1918 Canada became an equal signatory with Britain in the Versailles Treaty ; in 1921, supported by the United States, she pressed in the Washington Conference for Article X, giving the Dominion Parliaments the right to decide on external conflicts ; in 1922 she strongly resented Winston Churchill's call to arms after the abrogation of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty ; in 1923 she concluded a Fisheries Treaty at Washington, without the signature of the British Ambassador ; a year ago she refused to sign the Locarno Pact, and sponsored Article IX :—

The present Treaty shall impose no obligation upon any of the British Dominions or upon India, unless the government of such Dominions or of India signifies its acceptance thereof.

Canada concluded a Treaty with Belgium, her representatives replacing the British Ambassador ; she replied to a suggestion that Canada should contribute some millions yearly to the upkeep of a squadron in the British Fleet with an Act of Parliament making it impossible for governments, without the consent of Parliament, to conclude agreements involving military expenditure ; and decided to send a special permanent representative to Washington. And as if to cap all this, in 1926, with the odds of a smuggling exposure against him, Mackenzie King and his government are returned to office, with the Wall Street journal loudly acclaiming him the representative of American finance.

And this, after the whole tradition of "British Democracy" was violated to give his conservative, flag-waving imperialist opponent, Meighen, the inside of the election track. Lord Byng, the Governor-General, did what no English king has done for a hundred years. And in so doing definitely returned Canada to the position of a "colony." He refused King the dissolution of Parliament, gave the government to the conservatives, and then

granted dissolution. Upon this the unripe nationalism of the Canadian bourgeoisie matured to full bloom. Its chief spokesman, Bourassa, declared :—

Beware of to-morrow ! If you allow a Governor-General, a subaltern of the British government, to accord or refuse dissolution as he likes, and he decides which party shall be out and which party shall be in, you will wake up to find Downing Street will be the judge in Canada's political matters.

White House or Westminster ?

Bourassa merely gives voice to the antagonism between the interests of Downing Street and those of the Canadian bourgeoisie. Actually the political interests of the Canadian bourgeoisie lie much closer to White House than to Westminster. The rapid industrialisation of Canada during the war, America's catching up to and passing the mark of British capital, and the post-war depression, which brought a large part of Canadian industry under indirect American control, has made Canada economically, socially, and so far as foreign policy is concerned, no more than (as the U.S. Department of Commerce says) "the northern extension of the United States." Thus even as far back as the Chanak crisis, when Lloyd George was fomenting war with the "sick man of Europe," Canada categorically refused any responsibility for the implications of Britain's foreign policy. Likewise in the question of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, Canada's position was virtually that of White House. And still later, at Locarno, Canada saw clearly the possibility of implications with France, and refused to sign. In the eastern questions, this is even more the case. Bourassa asked in Parliament :—

Have we the same interests in Irak and Mosul as the oil hunters of England have ?

And in accordance with the position that King has taken at the Imperial Conferences since 1923, an Act of Parliament was passed, that—

before His Majesty's Canadian ministers advise ratification of a treaty, convention or agreement involving military or economic sanction, the approval of the Parliament of Canada shall be secured.

King's victory at the polls is a victory for White House and a defeat for Westminster.

Downing Street and Wall Street

Canada, none the less, by the Grace of God and "imperial diplomacy," remains a part—in area one-third—of the British Empire. Half a million square miles larger than the United States ; possessing 537·8 million acres of productive land against America's 293·8 million ; 800 million acres of timber against America's 500 million ; 3,635 million tons of iron ore on the island of Newfoundland alone, against America's total 4,200 million ; one-sixth of the earth's coal reserve and 90 per cent. of the world's nickel ; water power to supply the industrial demands of 100 million of population—in this Canada, England sees gigantic immigration possibilities and resultant upon this an enormous trade impetus. It is with this object in view that the Empire's foremost travelling salesman, the Prince of Wales, pays unending visits to Canada, followed by a line of lesser fry, all of whom return to entrance the unemployed masses of England with fairy-tales of Canada's prosperity. In regard to the new interest of British capital in Canada, noticeable particularly in the Midland Bank chairman becoming a director of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the *Morning Post* of August 11 states "that policy is necessarily related to the policy of inter-imperial migration." Already the flow of capital has commenced, and immigration to Canada, according to official reports, is 66 per cent. higher for the first six months of 1926 than for the corresponding period of 1925. Apart from Canada's grain, this is her primary importance for England.

On the other hand, for the United States the situation and attitude of Canada is of equal significance. One-fourth of her total foreign holdings are in Canada. She is already dependent upon Canadian timber resources for her pulp wood, and Canadian mines for some of the most important non-ferrous minerals. But of greatest importance is the fact stated by Nearing and Freeman in *Dollar Diplomacy*:—

Within a few years the United States will cease to produce a sufficient supply of wheat and meat to feed its own population. The Canadian wheat fields will then become indispensable.

The continuation of America's prosperous home-expansion is going to depend to a large degree upon the breaking down of the

trade boundary to the north. And already in June, 1925, the *Bulletin* of the National City Bank was urging freer trade with Canada, and bemoaning the high Fordney Tariff and Canada's duty on grain going to America. This is Canada's importance for America.

Political Interests in Canada

But the Canadian bourgeoisie itself is a much larger factor than either of these two, having in its possession a preponderating proportion of Canada's wealth. There will be no breaching of the gaps between the interests in Canada. By a brief examination of them the real significance of the election becomes plain.

Britain desires to exclude America from the Canadian market by a high tariff wall, at the same time maintaining her 33½ per cent. preference on the Canadian market; America seeks freer relations in trade with Canada, and would possibly be willing to offer free trade in natural products, allowing Canada to maintain intermediate tariffs on manufactured commodities. On the other hand, while the American factories in Canada (automobile, &c.) are thriving on preferential treatment within the Empire, the cotton, woollen and boot and shoe industries, &c., are in the most vigorous opposition to British preference, which is successfully competing with them.

Meighen is the representative primarily of the large railway interests and the British Empire Steel Corporation, but also of the smaller anti-British-preference Canadian capitalists. He would raise a high tariff wall against all imports. This would make possible the profitable transport of "Besco" coal to central Canada, and would be a severe blow to U.S. coal interests. He would cancel all Empire preference agreements, a blow to the American branch factories. And finally his avowed policy would be to maintain the grain duties, and possibly raise them to guarantee shipment through Canadian ports and a longer haulage for the Canadian Pacific. But even this stolid Orange imperialist changed his previous slogan of "Ready, aye, ready," and declared the decision of a Government to enter a foreign conflict "should be submitted to the judgment of the people at a general election before troops leave our shore." Even in Meighen Downing Street finds no true representative.

But King is much more the representative of pure American interests than those of the Canadian bourgeoisie. Behind his slogan of American reciprocity he has united the Right Wing of the Farmers' Progressive Party, after splitting them away from the increasingly class-conscious Left. His autonomist attitude to British Imperialism has drawn to him the support of the French masses of Canada. And his pose on old-age pensions, and the sedition clauses of the criminal code enacted at the time of the Winnipeg Strike, has been a fairly successful bid for the support of the workers. He stands at the same time for reciprocity with America and a policy of Imperial Preference—the former in response to a natural economic development, the latter to secure orders for American "Made in Canada" goods.

"Imperial Influence" in Canada

King has over-stepped the colonial bounds a hundred times. In his resolution on military agreements he has created a dangerous precedent for all the Dominions, and at the same time has created the basis for a more decisive position at the forthcoming Imperial Conference. In 1926, rather than being defeated with odds against him, he is returned with a larger majority in Parliament than he received at the last election. How will "Imperial influence" deal with King?

This leads to the fundamental question: Can England check the separatist tendencies of her Dominions across the seas? Can "the far-flung Empire" be held under her political domination? Australia demands the withdrawal of the British governors. South Africa would fly a flag of her own. In Canada the bourgeoisie demands the abolition of British Preference, the farmers demand reciprocity with America, the French masses declare for independence, the Labour Party calls for complete self-determination, and the Communist Party, the real party of the masses, leads the fight for complete separation and a Workers' and Farmers' Government. America's "peaceful penetration" threatens to develop implications of a different character. The interests of the mature bourgeoisie of the Dominions are incompatible with British foreign policy. The manifest destiny of the Dominions is separation from the Empire.

The World of Labour

TRADE UNIONISM IN THE BALKANS

THE Trade Union Movements of the Balkan countries are on the whole of similar nature, and have pursued in recent years roughly parallel courses of development. Before, during, and shortly after the war, the trade unions were predominantly of a revolutionary complexion. Jointly with the majorities of the Socialist Parties they opposed the war, and suffered the consequence, only to gain greatly in membership and strength immediately after the war, and to become important mass organisations. Social instability in the years 1920 and onward reached such a degree in all the Balkan countries that the power of the ruling classes could only be maintained by resort to the most extreme forms of terror, directed at first against the political parties, and later against the unions. In consequence the latter in many cases nearly or completely disappeared. Until 1923 the economic crisis was not very severe, but wage reductions and worsening of working conditions went on.

During this period, the beginnings or increase in influence of the free or social-democratic trade unions took place. They secured the monopoly of legal existence, and in some cases were able to occupy the headquarters from which the revolutionary unions had been expelled, and were thus able to obtain a foothold.

In addition to the two chief types of organisation, several others exist, of which the "autonomous" (syndicalist) unions are the most important. Their chief weakness is their isolation, which in the past has been jealously maintained, but has been fatal to their effectiveness. They are usually willing to enter into negotiations for unification with the reformist and revolutionary organisations.

In 1923 and 1924, the economic situation in the Balkans became rapidly worse, unemployment increased, and hours of work were extended. In spite of the white terror, which during the last two years has committed unheard-of excesses, the revolutionary trade unions began to revive, and with them a strong movement in favour of trade union unity. The pressure of the membership in both the "Amsterdam" and "Independent" unions has been such that several unity conferences, joint demonstrations, &c., have been held, but hitherto without organisational results. The difficulty of unification in the Balkans is naturally very great, since the reformist trade unions are closely bound up with the Social-Democratic parties, which in their turn have had, and continue to maintain, close contact with the white-terrorist Governments.

The I.F.T.U. Balkan Conference

In response to the movement for unity, a conference of Balkan trade union organisations was called by the I.F.T.U. for April 9 and 10 in Sofia, from which much was expected. It was found, however, that only organisations affiliated to the I.F.T.U. were allowed representation. The Bulgarian Independents, collectively and severally, applied for admission, but were refused. Ultimately the Jugo-Slavian Independents were even denied admission as guests.

Large numbers of workers greeted the visitors on their arrival at Sofia, without interference from the authorities, although conflicts took place between members of the rival unions, and the speech of greeting of the Independent representative was not allowed translation. Later, open meetings were held in several towns in Bulgaria, an event without precedent in recent years, and addressed by I.F.T.U. representatives.

The conference was attended by ten delegates from Bulgaria, eleven from Jugo-Slavia, three from Rumania, and two from Greece. In addition the I.F.T.U. was represented by two delegates, the International Trade Secretariat by four, and the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian unions by three delegates. The chair was taken by C. Mertens; Danoff, the Bulgarian secretary, gave an indication of the purpose of the conference in his opening address, in which, according to the I.F.T.U. report, he

pointed to the significant fact that the Congress was attended by delegates from countries which not so long ago had been at war, and now met together to discuss their common interests under the leadership of the I.F.T.U. He expressed the hope that the Congress would strengthen the bonds between the Balkan trade unions, and that his Balkan comrades would have the opportunity of profiting by the experience of the trade unionists in neighbouring countries and those from Western Europe.

Sassenbach, however, replied that the purpose of the conference was not to interfere in the political relations of the Balkan countries. The tasks of the conference were, on the contrary—

(1) To formulate general principles for the conduct of the trade union struggle in the Balkan countries, and to recommend these principles to the National Trade Union Centres for them to carry out.

(2) To impress upon the governments and the ruling classes the justice of the trade union struggle, and to urge them not to obstruct the trade unions by legal, police, and economic measures, since it can be shown that while in the past all countries have been guilty of this conduct all the civilised states now recognise not only the justice but also the need for trade unionism.

(3) United action by the workers of the Balkan countries for the promotion of protective social legislation; united action being made possible by the fact that the stages of development reached in the four countries do not differ very greatly.

(4) To provide our Bulgarian comrades, and comrades in the other Balkan countries, with proof of the international solidarity of Labour.

Committees were appointed to discuss :—

(1) The right of combination and free speech. (2) The basic principles of Trade Union activity. (3) Social legislation.

The report of committee (2) stated that representatives of the Bulgarian and Rumanian Independents were interviewed; both expressed themselves

in favour of unity, and were willing to make concessions in order to facilitate this. A resolution on unity was passed unanimously, which read :—

This Balkan Trade Union Conference urges all trade unions of the Balkan countries where unity has not yet been established but which accept the guiding principles of the Conference, and accept the policy and methods of the I.F.T.U., to enter into negotiations at the earliest possible moment under the auspices of the I.F.T.U. with the object of achieving unity. The negotiations shall be conducted separately in each country, and shall have as their object the formation of a single National Trade Union Centre.

The Jugo-Slavian delegation added a declaration:—

On the question of trade union unity in the Balkan countries the delegation from the Yugo-Slav Federation of Trade Unions affirms that :—

(1) In Yugo-Slavia the unification of the *bona-fide* trade unions has already been accomplished.

(2) Only certain trade union groups which are not autonomous have remained outside this unification.

(3) The experience we have gained in achieving trade union unity proves that the general unification of the separate sections into which the workers have been divided will become possible only after the complete eradication of the theory and practice of syndicalism and bolshevism.

Since this conference there has been some effort towards unification, principally in Bulgaria, but the results have, up to the present, been small. It is clear that the principal effect of the conference, so far as the Trade Union Movement is concerned, is that the " Amsterdam " bodies are now established, in the eyes of the Governments at any rate, as the national trade union centre, perhaps in return for the declaration, in the resolution on Basic Principles of Trade Union Activity, that

Strikes should in general be undertaken only for economic objects and only after most careful consideration.

Efforts to establish a more equitable social order are primarily the task of the political parties.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Lord Shaftesbury and Social-Industrial Progress. By J. Wesley Bready, M.A., B.D., (Allen & Unwin, 16s.)

World Migration and Progress. (I.F.T.U., 15s.)

Force Trois Films. By Henri Barbusse. (Ernest Flammarion, 26 Rue Racine, Paris, 10 francs.)

The Bridge to Liberty. A plan to evolve from the capitalist system to the Co-operative system. (Henry Roche Printing Company, 25 cents.)

Twenty-five Years of International Trade Unionism. By J. Sassenbach, Secretary I.F.T.U. (Labour Joint Publications Dept., 1s 6d.)

The Islanders. By Archibald Hurd. (Cassell & Co., Ltd., 3s. 6d.)

George Unwin. A Memorial Lecture. By C. W. Daniels, M.A., M.Comm. (Longmans, Green & Co., 2s. 6d.)

The Law of Social Revolution. A co-operative by the Labour Research Study Group. Scott Nearing, Leader. (Social Science Publishers, New York, 60 cents.)

ERRATUM

Page 595, October Number.—S. W. Chandler represented the R.C.A., not the A.S.L.E. & F., at the Bournemouth Congress.



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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month - - - - Page 707

SOCIALISM AND STABILISATION

The New Stage in the Mining Struggle - „ 724

By "FIREMAN"

Indian Nationalism and the Elections - - „ 733

By CLEMENS DUTT

The Relation of the Workers' Party to Religion „ 745

By N. LENIN

What is the A.P.R.A. ? - - - - „ 756

By HAYA DELATORRE

The World of Labour - - - - „ 760

Trade Unionism in the Balkans—Java

Index to Volume VIII (1926) - - - „ 764

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NOTES of the MONTH

The Miners' Fight — Reformist Defeatism — "Now for the Political Struggle" — New Will o' the Wisps — MacDonald's Last Phase—Snowden and Super-Capitalism— I.L.P. Lavish Promises—The Retreat from Socialism— The I.L.P. and Stability—Pre-war and The War — Evidence of Stabilisation — Qualifying Factors — Instability — Unique Present Crisis—Capitalist Inability to Solve— Illusory Remedies—International Cartels — Fordism — Rationalisation—The Future in Britain.

THE miners' overwhelming rejection of the Government's surrender terms is once again the most powerful declaration yet of the growing revolutionary will within the British working class, rising higher and higher to every development of the crisis, and showing once again the complete failure of every section of the existing leadership to voice them. It raises the most urgent question of speedy and unqualified action by the whole working class in order that such courage and determination shall not look in vain for the support to which it is justly entitled. The miners' struggle is the deepest experience of the British working class. Compared with this, all that has gone before has been no more than skirmishes and half-hearted trials. Here have been shown the real conditions of the future struggle in all their bitter and merciless realities; here have been shown the real character and policy of the British bourgeoisie, their Government and practical dictatorship; here have been shown the utter impotence and make-believe of the old working-class movement in organisation and leadership; and here have been shown the deep, inexhaustible, profoundly revolutionary strength, solidarity, and determination of the working masses in Britain, and first beginnings of a real revolutionary Left and revolutionary party in close union with the masses to grow up into the future leadership. The heavy reverses and suffering of the present day are the price of reformist leadership; they can only

be finally overcome when that is overcome. But the spirit that goes forward without flinching in the face of these reverses, that in the moment of heaviest loss is not led aside by illusory alternatives, but sets to work to build up the ranks, is the spirit of the future revolution. 1926 is the great watershed of the British working-class movement. The General Strike and the miners' struggle constitute at the same time the culmination and tragedy of the old half-and-half movement, and at the same time the triumphant beginning of the new revolutionary movement of the future, the new and serious working-class movement, which will find the way forward from the present morass, knowing that the bankruptcy of capitalism in Britain offers no way to the working class save to go forward, and will find the way forward, without hesitation or turning aside, in the face of every loss, to the overthrow of capitalism and conquest of working-class power.

TO-DAY the capitalists and their followers, the reformist leaders, who have done all in their power to defeat the miners, knowing that their own victory depended on the miners' defeat, are trying to blame the miners—like Judas blaming Christ—for the desperate situation and desperate struggle in front laid on the miners by the betrayal of the organised movement, and to argue therefrom the impossibility of the working-class fight, the necessity of surrender to capitalism, and the inevitability of a new period of capitalist revival and reorganisation in which the workers must share and co-operate. This renewed propaganda of capitalist revival is the hallmark of reformism in the moment of working-class peril. It is the inevitable sequel of defeatism and treachery, and the carrying forward of these into a new stage. It is the attempt to cover up the whole meaning of 1926, to hide the real lessons of disruption and refusal to fight, to ignore the real character revealed of the future struggle, and to veil the actual conditions of poverty and misery beyond example under facile, easy hopes of sudden change by reformist tricks and of future prosperity by co-operation with capitalism. And the watchword under which this new campaign is being conducted is the watchword of "Now for the political struggle!"

THE watchword "Now for the political struggle" *in the hands of the reformists* is a lying deception, only intended to cover their betrayal of the actual struggle. By it they do not mean the learning of the lessons of the present struggle, which has been at every stage a political struggle; they do not mean the closing of the working-class ranks, the recognition of the unity of working-class interests against the present Government attack, and the necessity of the concentration of every working-class force in order to drive back the attack and convert defeat into victory as the sole possibility of any further advance or programme of advance; they do not mean the real conquest of working-class power in order to carry through the Socialist transformation which can alone bring relief in the present situation. Instead they mean by it the abandonment of the actual struggle and the acceptance of defeat; they mean the impossibility of future struggle and the docile confinement to only those means and methods that the bourgeoisie will permit; they mean the passivity of the masses to submit to defeat and poverty and to look on at the Parliamentary comedy in the hope that plums will fall into their lap. The programme they put forward for their hypothetical Labour Government is no longer even a programme of Socialism, but an avowed programme of capitalist reconstruction, and therefore incapable of helping the workers. The ignominious retreat of the Independent Labour Party at Margate, with its proud boasts beforehand of forcing a programme of immediate Socialism on the next Labour Government and hasty collapse on the field of battle and prudent withdrawal into a humble request for an inquiry into a minimum wage, marks the dissolution amid laughter of the old "pure Socialists" in the Labour Party, who cannot see that the fight for Socialism is only contained in the actual living class struggle, and apart from that is mere children's castles in the air, leaving only the alternative of a policy of capitalism. So the whole Labour Party leadership from the extreme Right to the I.L.P. on the would-be Left is engaged in fantastic schemes of capitalist revival and mythical prosperity for the workers without the need of the Socialist struggle, at the very same time as the workers are in fact being brought down to desperate poverty through the desertion of those same leaders.

THE propaganda of capitalist revival and illusory hopes, which runs right through the whole reformist leadership from Right to Left, from MacDonal and Thomas to Wheatley and Brailsford, may take a hundred forms. Some preach industrial peace, a "new" conception of trade unionism, "scientific" wage-policies, "industrial parliaments free of party politics," &c. (Cramp, Thomas, Pugh, Hodges, Williams, &c.). Others preach the return to unadulterated parliamentarism, the abandonment of the industrial struggle as hopeless, the acceptance of capitalist continuity, and embarkation on programmes of national and imperial reconstruction (MacDonal and the Labour Party machine). Others preach the rebirth of a new scientific capitalism, technical advance, international trusts, Fordism, high wages, plenty for all through a redistribution of purchasing power, through prosperity to Socialism, &c. (Wells, Wheatley, Brailsford, &c.). Through all these forms, and the differences between the various forms and varieties of the same form, there runs the same note—the note of capitalist revival, the illusory dreams of straightening of the capitalist chaos and the softening of capitalist class antagonisms in the face of every visible fact in the whole world. And through all there runs the same reality—the reality of working-class defeatism.

TWO types of quotation may be taken from the principal leadership of the Labour Party to illustrate the current conception which in varying form runs through the whole line. The first is from MacDonal. Writing in the *Socialist Review* in November, 1926, with the miners' struggle at its most critical point, he declares:—

What use is there in remaining blind to obvious facts? Have we come to the Samson policy of pulling down pillars? Must we be heedless of the new combinations of capital which, having the wisdom to look ahead, see that Samson may tug, but that any stone he can dislodge will fall first of all on his own head? The balcony with the philistines will not fall. If it did, what then? It will be shored up; it will be rebuilt; the workers will be weaker than ever they were, and their standards lower.

Here is expressed the complete and final defeatism of the working-class struggle. It is necessary to take this in conjunction with

a previous statement from the same writer, when, dealing with the miners' struggle, he declared that "the fight is degenerating into blind hitting out," and that it is necessary "to retreat temporarily in order to save something for a new advance."

The time has come for a survey of the whole national position which includes not only mining but every other industry. A victory that does not lead to prosperity is a defeat; a defeat that retains the potentiality of prosperity is a victory.

Here is a complete position. Capitalism cannot be overthrown. If it could be overthrown, it would only be rebuilt. "New combinations of capital" have come into existence and are stronger than the workers; they have "wisdom" to see ahead, unlike the blind Samsons of workers. Therefore the workers must submit. The workers must accept lower wages, although the profits of the capitalists are higher than they have ever been. They must accept lower wages in the hope of future "prosperity," *i.e.*, capitalist expansion. This is the hope held out to the workers by the leader of the Labour Party in 1926.

THE second type of quotation is from Snowden. Snowden's expression of the vision of capitalist revival into a new blossoming era is by comparison more sober than that of the more fantastic gossellers of a new heaven and earth for all under capitalism, but it contains the essentials of the same outlook, and therefore is the more serviceable as a basic expression. Speaking last April, with the titanic social struggle full in front, he said:—

He did not agree with the statement of some of their Socialist friends that the capitalist system was obviously breaking down. He believed that we were to-day in a position very much like the industrial revolution that took place about 120 years ago. Then the steam age was ushered in.

Now we are entering in, he believed, the new age of electricity and an age of chemistry. Wideawake capitalists are seeing this, and they are taking steps to appropriate for private profit and private ownership the exploitation of these great forces. If they succeed in doing that, then the capitalist system will be given a new and long and more powerful lease of life. (*Daily Herald* report, 17-4-26.)

Alongside of this conception of capitalist renovation through technical development goes the conception of a new world capitalist

organisation through international combines. On this Snowden expresses the view:—

These international combines, instead of being a hindrance to Socialism, are according to our economic theories necessary as a preliminary to Socialism, and instead of discouraging them the Socialist policy should be rather to encourage international combines. (*Daily Herald*, 21-10-26.)

Here in this conception of super-capitalist organisation, enjoying a “new and long and more powerful lease of life” through productive development, defeating all possibility of revolution, but offering to the workers the possibility of a gradual share in capitalist prosperity, and eventually even—though this is dim music of the future—a gradual peaceful advance to Socialism: here we have the foundation of the social reformist outlook in the present period.

WHAT this outlook becomes in everyday propaganda is visible in the current Independent Labour Party literature, which converts the vision of a hypothetical capitalist reconstruction into an inexhaustible and ever-varying bagful of promises of peace and plenty for all the world under capitalism, and so through prosperity to Socialism.

What is called the Clyde group has sought in season and out of season to show that our unemployment problem can never be seriously faced so long as our customers overseas are, because of poverty, unable to purchase our goods; and Mr. Wheatley, if we interpret correctly his speech at Dumbarton the other night, has come to the conclusion that *nationalisation of this or that industry might well wait* until it has customers capable of purchasing the goods which the industry produces. And that means an assault upon poverty first. (*Forward*, 23-10-26.)

Mr. Wheatley is even more munificent. In an article on “The Way to Socialism” he explains the scheme as follows:—

The State should be the authority in fixing wages and incomes even while industries are privately owned. To make this policy effective it is necessary to deal with prices also. . . . Another way of stating the same idea is that we should begin our Socialism by socialising the product of Labour and raising the purchasing power of the workers *before embarking on the nationalisation of the means of production.*

This is to be done “in the first session of the next Labour Government.” The dazzling results are then painted in with the broadest brush of the political bagman:—

The raising of the standard of living would automatically provide a market for our super-abundant goods. . . .

Our unemployment problem would be solved. . . .

The people would be economically enfranchised. . . .

Socialisation of the means of production would then proceed smoothly as a means of improving production. Instead of our people marching through starvation to Socialism they would, as Mr. Brailsford put it very neatly at Margate, enter it through an era of prosperity. (*Forward*, 30-10-26.)

This programme of lavish promises for the future is held out at the very moment of the most desperate point of the miners' actual struggle in the present for the maintenance even of the barest subsistence wage.

THE old Socialist teaching used to say that unemployment and poverty were inseparable from capitalism, and could only be solved by Socialism. The new teaching—we will not call it Socialist, but the new Liberal teaching of the Labour Party—lays it down that unemployment and poverty will first be solved under capitalism, and then the happy community will amble peacefully into Socialism in the distant future. The old Socialist teaching used to condemn capitalism as chaotic. The new Liberal teaching proposes to organise capitalism. The old Socialist teaching used to declare that capitalism robbed the workers and must therefore be overthrown. The new Liberal teaching declares that capitalism can give wealth to the workers and must therefore be built up. What is the practical significance of this change-over? It needs very little consideration to see that the practical significance of this “new” policy, which coincides with the betrayal of the industrial fight, with the Liberalising of the Labour Party, and with the whole defeatist stream of reformism at the present low ebb, lies, not in the sudden discovery of the urgency of the problem of poverty and the supposed advance from old-fashioned doctrinaire Socialism to “practical” methods of dealing with poverty, but—in *the retreat from Socialism to capitalism, and in nothing else*. The promises of “Plenty for all” will not be, and cannot be, realised under the next Labour Government. But the promises of “Nationalisation may wait” will be.

HOW completely the current reformist policy identifies its interests with the stability of capitalism is naïvely shown in the I.L.P. comments on the Russian Communist Conference. Bucharin, in his report on the international situation and the prospects of the world revolution, has occasion to emphasise the relative stabilisation of capitalism (while dealing at the same time with the basic weaknesses of that stabilisation). At once the I.L.P. joyfully comes out:—

Bucharin stated frankly that in his view “Capitalism in general has returned to a state of stability which is very near that which prevailed before the war.” If this be the case, surely the Third International will recognise that the Russian method of revolution is not the inevitable path of development in all countries, and that the need is for a united Labour Movement which will vigorously challenge Capitalism and Imperialism by bold constructive policies of Socialism and Internationalism. (*New Leader*, 5-11-26.)

It is unnecessary to deal with the complete or assumed ignorance of Communist policy in this passage (“Russian method,” &c.). What is of interest is the argument. Capitalism is strong; therefore revolution is impossible; therefore the only policy is the I.L.P. policy of verbal “challenges” and “bold constructive policies” by the dozen a month. In other words, the stronger capitalism is, the more the I.L.P. policy is justified; consequently every scrap of fact and statement in favour of capitalist strength is a treasure to the I.L.P., because it is felt to be an argument against revolution.

MORE than this. Capitalism is declared to have reached “nearly” the pre-war degree of stability. (That Bucharin goes on immediately in his next section to deal with the “Instability of Stabilisation” is ignored.) The I.L.P. innocently accepts this as the acme of stability. That the pre-war situation was precisely the situation which gave rise to the war and revolution is apparently forgotten by the I.L.P. That Pre-War gives rise to The War would seem to be a simple fact of observation, with at any rate an initial probability of repetition in its favour if the essential conditions are repeated. But the I.L.P. logic is the exact opposite. They have apparently forgotten that there existed also Bolsheviki in those halcyon pre-war days, who carried on their task of preparation, through

developing mass struggle and the building of the party, for the future inevitable revolution against exactly the same scepticism and opposition of the Mensheviks, who were convinced of the strength of the existing regime for the immediately future period, of the necessity of concentration on legal and reformist tasks, of the folly of l'olshevik ideas of revolution after the experience of 1905, &c. They have also apparently forgotten that 1914 proved the revolutionary Marxists right and the reformists wrong. Instead they have the audacity to come out with the following logic. The present situation nearly approximates to the pre-war situation (except for being a little more unstable). The pre-war situation led to war and revolution. Therefore the present situation rules out any practical possibility of war and revolution.

WHAT is the basis in fact for this conception of stabilisation and capitalist revival which is thus the foundation of current reformist policy? Bucharin, in his analysis of the relative capitalist stabilisation, brings out three general measures by which may be gauged the approach of international capitalism to the pre-war level. First, the figures of production show an average approximation to pre-war level. Second, the figures of world trade show nearly an approach to pre-war level. Third, the currencies and foreign exchanges show a great advance towards the pre-war basis. In taking these measures, it is necessary to add some very distinct qualifications, which it did not concern Bucharin's immediate purpose to give, as he could take them for granted and was going on to deal with more important problems, but which are essential to prevent misapprehension.

FIRST, the figures of world production, which are shown to approach pre-war level, are given in absolute volumes. But in fact the power of production has increased, and the population of the world has increased. The German industrialist, Felix Deutsch, estimates the increase in the industrial capacity of the world at 40 to 50 per cent. above pre-war. This may be an exaggeration, but there is no question of the increase. Thus an equality in volume of production to pre-war represents in reality a

relative decline in functioning of the capitalist mechanism. The actual index of capitalist effective working would need to be a ratio of production to productivity, and this would still show a marked decline on pre-war, and even raise a doubt, on present available signs, of the possibility of reaching pre-war, *i.e.*, whether the capitalist world is capable of absorbing the new powers of production even to the limited extent that it utilised the powers of production before the war, and is not rather being choked by them and forced to increasing measures of artificial restriction, which are themselves an indication of decline. Second, the figures of world trade are given in millions of dollars, without allowing for the rise in prices; a reduction to 1913 values would thus show a considerable decline. Third, the re-establishment of currencies on a gold basis, so far as achieved, has an entirely peculiar character in this respect, that it is based primarily on the support of America as the world financier-creditor and holder of gold, and thus is in no way comparable to the pre-war stability of the various national currencies. Thus even the three positive evidences which Bucharin brings forward for the undoubted fact of the relative capitalist stabilisation have to be taken at a heavy discount; and when it comes to the negative evidence that he brings forward to show the instability and relative character of the stabilisation, it will be seen that these are ultimately of decisive importance.

THIS negative evidence—and what in fact makes the trick in any demonstration of totals of world production and trade as useful evidence of the world situation—is the inequality of world conditions in the present epoch, an increasing inequality which is the inevitable working out of the imperialist period. America and the new capitalist world has leapt forward. Europe as a whole has gone back. Even within Europe, France and Germany go slightly forward; England goes heavily back. A total may present a comparable figure to pre-war, and yet completely conceal the unstable top-heavy position to which the capitalist process is reaching. This was sufficiently illustrated at the Economic Session of the Imperial Conference in Mr. Bruce's report, when he showed that, not only does the post-war period as a whole reveal this striking contrast

with pre-war, but that, even in the past four years, United States manufactured exports have increased by 60 per cent, while Britain has gone backwards, and that in the past three years European trade as a whole has increased, while the British proportion has decreased. We are here far removed from the old loose talk of "post-war unsettlement" under which these questions used to be dismissed. It is clear that a stage is being reached of capitalist differentiation, not only between individuals, between firms and companies, between social strata, between imperialist and colonial countries, but between the imperialist state-systems and world-regions themselves, which is the extreme degree of capitalist differentiation, and therefore of antagonism, of concentration at one end and impoverishment at the other, of credit and debt, of ownership and exploitation, and therefore the opposite of any possibility of real stabilisation or of rational economic organisation.

THIS antagonism is the central dominant fact of the world capitalist situation which the social reformists and pacifists continually try to ignore or cover over with a mixture of illusions and aspirations. In this connection two further facts are important. The first is that the process of social differentiation accompanying capitalist development, intensified and accelerated by the war and post-war inflations and speculations, has produced mass impoverishment, both of the workers and of the petty bourgeois elements, so that unexampled accumulation and concentration of capital in a few hands at the top is confronted with world-wide diminished purchasing power. The second is the increase of productive power. These two combined, under capitalist conditions, intensify the antagonism, the competition for markets and the competition for advantages in production, for monopolist markets and for monopolist sources of raw materials, for colonial exploitation and for intensified exploitation of the workers at home, to a pitch unequalled in capitalist history. So follow the feverish imperialist intrigues, groupings, schemings and counter-schemings, and so the feverish capitalist offensive on the workers, which are the two overwhelming factors of the post-war period.

IT is obvious that the Socialist solution of this situation is to utilise the increased productive power in order to fight the poverty of the masses all over the world. So far, what the social reformists announce with all the clamour of a discovery is the A B C of Socialist propaganda since Owen and Saint-Simon. But what the social reformists actually put forward is something different. For they speak of "raising purchasing power" to solve "unemployment." In other words, they propose to apply the Socialist solution to the conditions of capitalism. And precisely here lies the fallacy. For the Socialist solution is not possible without the necessary condition of Socialism which it presupposes, *i.e.*, the unified social control of production. But within capitalism there is no unified social control, but only the conflict of interests, and even the combinations are only subordinated to wider conflicts. It might thus theoretically be in the interests of capitalism as a whole to raise the purchasing power of the masses in order to postpone its own collapse—that is, to diminish its own share and accumulation temporarily in order to ease the present strain. But there is no such thing as capitalism as a whole. So long as a section of capitalism can find even a temporary advantage by reducing labour costs, it will do so, if it can, without regard to social considerations. The price of labour-power depends on economic and class forces, and not on ideal considerations. Even the so-called higher-wages policy in America (applicable in fact only to a minority) resulted, according to the testimony of all observers, not from any conscious social policy, but from the shortage of labour through the stoppage of immigration; and already, during the past twelve months, with the increase of unemployment owing to more highly organised production, the average of real wages has begun to go down. If the social reformists want higher wages, the only way to get it is to fight for it; but this, as the miners' struggle shows, is exactly what they are failing to do. Thus, while they are dreaming of higher-wage Elysiums in the future, the capitalists of Europe are driving the workers down to lower and lower levels; and the social reformists are assisting in this work in the name of ideal future capitalist "reorganisations."

FOR the capitalist world there are only two lines of solution of the problem that they can see. One is super-organisation of production, technical development, speeding up, elimination of waste, super-exploitation of the workers, so as to cut out all rivals. This is the essence of the process spoken of as rationalisation, the term originating from Germany, where it has been most highly developed. The second is the artificial restriction of production by cartels or delimiting agreements across countries or groups of countries. This is the line of international cartels. Now both these lines contain elements which are closely bound up with the real progress of production, and will reach their full realisation in the future Socialist economy. The first contains the principle of the more scientific organisation of production, correlation of processes, elimination of waste and economy of labour. The second contains the principle of the international rationing and allocation of productive tasks, which is the foundation of the future international Socialist society. But in the hands of capitalism both these principles become completely distorted in reality, reactionary in their effects, and no solution, but only an intensification of existing problems. Rationalisation becomes the driving down of the workers at home, wholesale dismissals and unemployment, and the intensification of competition on the world market. The international cartel becomes at the best a monopolist restriction of production, and in practice a combination of one group of trusts against other groups. Both intensify antagonisms and heighten the crisis, and both are fundamentally hostile to the working class. But the social reformists, because they see the Socialist principles involved in both, rush to welcome and help forward both as the beginning of a new dawn of capitalist revival, with the hope of prosperity for the workers, instead of seeing the attack on working-class interests involved and fighting it, and fighting at the same time for the working-class dictatorship as the sole means of effectively realising the new principles of production and organisation.

IN this way the so-called manifestations of international capitalism resolve themselves into manifestations of new groupings of antagonism and conflict. The Franco-German Steel Cartel becomes a weapon against Britain, and not the less so for the invitation to Britain to come in and be rationed; and the perplexity and hostility of the British reception is obvious. This does not mean that, even if Britain were to come in, even if America were to come in, even if the cartel were to become actually international, there would be an end of the antagonisms. It would only mean, as the *Frankfurter Zeitung* pointed out, that the antagonism would be transferred to a new plane, to the fight over the quota. As soon as a change in the balance of forces arose, with a new development of technique in one country, or other possibility of advantage, there would arise new demands and conflicts and the inevitability of rupture. So, too, the Pan-Europe movement, full of outward idealistic glamour, resolves itself into attempted European combination against America and a further pursuit of the Continental Bloc, as the proceedings at the Congress with the semi-official participation of France and Germany clearly showed—premature at present, but already an indication of future possible lines. So, again, the Bankers' Manifesto, with its high-sounding aspirations after peace and freedom, reveals itself all too clearly as the expression of Anglo-American financial and trading interests, seeking to break down the barriers to the more effective exploitation of Europe by Anglo-American finance and industry. So, finally, the League of Nations to-day becomes more and more clearly a mere bargaining ground of the European Powers against America on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other. Every one of these manifestations has been hailed and welcomed by the social reformists and social pacifists as the dawn of the new era of international capitalism (just as the international cartels before the war were similarly proclaimed, with equal complete blindness to the real forces); and every one has shown itself, not a beginning of international unity, but only a continuation of capitalist conflict under other forms, thus demonstrating that internationalism can only be achieved along the line of Socialism—that is, along the line of the class struggle.

IN the same way capitalist reorganisation or rationalisation becomes, not the scientific organisation of production to meet needs, but the concentration on the maximum profit, and therefore either monopolistic restriction of production, or else reckless competitive mass-production to undercut in the international market, based on the super-exploitation of the workers and driving straight to crisis. If, by the intensification of the labour process, it is possible to pay a higher wage and still make a higher profit (*i.e.*, in reality to increase surplus value and decrease the workers' share), this may be done where it seems advantageous to do so in return for absolute servility of the workers, no trade unionism, &c., as in America; but even there it is necessary to see, not only the few higher-paid workers, but the whole body of the workers, including the twelve millions below the Federal Bureau existence minimum; it is necessary to see the wholesale dismissals and scrapping of these temporarily highly paid workers, so that the average length of service is under twelve months; the reckless waste of human material and social unconcern of these magnates, whose who'e concern is for the perfect working of their own works; and alongside the steady rise in concentrated production, the steady decrease in the number of workers employed. According to the Federal Reserve Board index figures, the index of industrial production has risen 16 per cent. since 1919; the number of workers employed in industry has fallen 6.5 per cent. In capitalistic production the increase in productive power leads not to the diminution of necessary labour, but to the increasing substitution of productive workers by unproductive selling-advertising-financial parasites. Thus in America the proportion of productive workers and those engaged in selling and distribution was in 1850 80 per cent. and 20 per cent. respectively, in 1920 50 per cent. and 50 per cent. This is the real colossal waste of the American miscalled "scientific" organisation of industry. It is only the most hopeless superficial, shortsighted view of temporary conditions that fails to see that the Soviet organisation of industry is already a hundred times more genuinely scientific than the American, *i.e.*, in social organisation, and only having a tremendous backwardness of technique and apparatus to make up in order to realise this superiority eventually in material results.

BUT in Europe, burdened with a deadweight of debt, tribute, restrictions, and entanglements, and with no longer the same abundance of untapped natural resources, rationalisation comes combined, not with higher wages, but with the intensest attacks on the workers' standards, as well as wholesale closing down of superfluous works, dismissals and unemployment. So, in Germany, the British commercial attaché reports the rise of the unemployed figure to even as high as three millions in 1925, and adds that, "although some may be absorbed as business revives and others may again become independent, there will remain for a very long time a permanent residue of unemployed." (*Report on Financial and Economic Conditions in Germany, 1925-26.*) And, in Britain, the combination of chronic unemployment with rising industrial profits right through 1922-26 is already familiar; while the coal war of 1926 is the beginning of the next great stage, of reorganisation and concentration of production and of intensified exploitation of the workers, so that its signals are on the one hand the demand for the eight-hour day, and on the other the preparation for the dismissal of 200,000 miners as superfluous. These 200,000 men and their wives and families are to be thrown on the social scrapheap, with no prospect and no alternative—a fitting symbol of capitalist "scientific" reorganisation. And the social reformists give all their energies to supporting and advocating this capitalist reorganisation in the phantom hope of the "potentiality of prosperity" (in MacDonald's phrase), instead of seeing plain facts and fighting tooth and nail, not the technical reorganisation and concentration which is necessary, but the attacks on the working class alongside, fighting against any lowering of the workers' standards, fighting for the retention of all the men in the industry, fighting for shorter hours in order to ensure such retention, until such time as the working-class dictatorship can carry through the real social reorganisation.

FOR this reason the miners, so far from being blind Samsons to be lectured by the superior MacDonalds and other run-aways with a smattering of capitalist economic lies, represent the sole real force of social reorganisation in Britain—*i.e.*, the developing revolutionary working class. For the reorganisation

which is necessary cannot be carried through under capitalism. The technical development of production, the change in the relative role of different industries, and the altered international position of Britain, as well as the dead burdens of dividend-drawers and particularist interests, demand a transformation, shifting, economising, concentration and re-adapting to altered conditions on so vast a scale as cannot be carried through within the limits of private ownership and imperatively demand a single social control of production and of productive forces, human and material. This can only be accomplished by the revolutionary working class, after the complete overthrow of the capitalist regime and of all capitalist property rights. For this reason the most important question in Britain, the sole force of future strength and revival in Britain in the midst of the general decline, is the growth of the nucleus of the future revolutionary working class. The resistance of the miners in the face of all the advice of the Labour leaders, the growth of the Communist Party to a political force in the face of all obstacles—here are the factors of the future. The revival under capitalism to which the Labour leaders look is a lying deceit for the working class. The capitalist reorganisation, because it cannot tackle the real problems (any more than the reformist labour Leaders, who have now declared themselves afraid even to tackle the National Debt), can only proceed along the lines of the most intensified attacks upon the workers, and can only attempt to introduce changes with the most colossal waste of human life and livelihood. The miners, by their stubborn resistance to the last ounce against the attack upon their standards, by their insistence on the prior claim of the workers' livelihood and therefore on the social character of the reorganisation, have got hold of the right end of the stick, and are fighting for every real force of the future. The reformist Labour leaders, who counsel surrender in the name of a deceitful capitalist reorganisation, are on the side of the decline. For the battle against the capitalist reorganisation on the backs of the workers is already the first stage in the battle for social reorganisation.

R. P. D.

THE NEW STAGE IN THE MINING STRUGGLE

By "FIREMAN"

THE last two Conferences of the Miners' Federation held in London on November 11-13 and 19-20, mark a new stage in the development of the miners' fight. On May 12 the general impression was that, while the bureaucracy of all the other unions worked together against the miners, the Miners' Federation presented a solid, united, fighting front. After the last two delegate conferences of the miners there can no longer be any doubt that the majority of the miners' leaders are made of the same stuff as the leaders of our Trade Union Movement as a whole.

It is true, of course, that this majority among the miners' leaders joined hands with the General Council mediators only after the miners' lock-out had been sabotaged by these mediators and after a big proportion of the miners had been starved into submission. In other words, while the leaders of the other unions let down the miners on the ninth day of the fight, the majority of the miners' leaders gave way only in the twenty-ninth week of the great struggle.

Nevertheless, we believe that there is something in common between the decisions of the General Council on May 12 and the decisions of the miners' conferences referred to above.

It must be borne in mind that on May 12 the miners alone refused to carry out the order of the General Council to return to work. It was then said, quite correctly, that on that historic day the miners saved the honour of the Labour Movement which was betrayed by the capitulators. While thousands of railwaymen and transport workers were forced not only to return to work on worse conditions, but also to surrender the weapon of the sympathetic strike, the miners continued their fight with courage and determination. We must now try to understand how it came about that the miners refused to follow the "lead" of the General Council

The New Stage in the Mining Struggle 725

while other workers agreed—many under strong protest—to go back to work.

The miners' fight has two different aspects. Even Joynson-Hicks has to admit that it is a legitimate *industrial* dispute. The Government which did not hesitate in conjunction with the General Council to prevent financial support from the Russian workers being given to the workers who participated in the General Strike, has not dared to stop the relief from abroad on behalf of the miners.

Furthermore, the mining lock-out is an industrial dispute in which the miners are on the defensive and the owners on the offensive. On April 30 the miners of Great Britain were locked out for the simple reason that the coalowners wanted to decrease the wages of the miners and to increase the working day. The miners decided to resist this attack upon their conditions, which they had achieved at a very high price. Till to-day the miners' fight remains an industrial struggle directed against an attack by a group of employers upon the conditions of more than a million workers.

At the same time the miners' fight is undoubtedly a *political* fight. The attack of the mineowners is only part of the general offensive of British capitalism, which is bent on carrying through its programme, as was clearly formulated by Baldwin (nine months before the lock-out was declared) : " The wages of all workers must come down." The mineowners are acting only as the vanguard of British capitalism, anxious to preserve its privileges at the expense of the workers. Hence the present peculiar situation wherein all the forces of the dominant classes, all the resources of the capitalist State, are mobilised to secure the victory of the mineowners.

During the historic days of May the political aspect of the miners' conflict was plain beyond doubt. While the Baldwin Government mobilised all the forces of the State behind the mineowners, the General Council was forced to mobilise a large part of the working class behind the miners. The miners' fight became a struggle between the two classes of present-day Britain—of the working class on the one hand, and of capitalism, with all its supporters, on the other.

The Baldwin Government was not afraid to define the situation created by the declaration of the General Strike ; it declared that

the General Strike was a challenge to the present system. And so it was. But as soon as it became clear that the mineowners' attack was only a part of the programme of the dominant classes, the General Council hastened to declare that it was prepared to defend the interests of the miners within the limits of the constitution. In other words, it said plainly that it would do as it was ordered by the guardians of the constitution—by the capitalist Government. And so the strike was called off.

Even after the General Strike was abandoned, the miners' lock-out remained, not only as an industrial fight, but also as a political fight. For the miners had to face, in addition to their own employers, the entire forces of the State machinery vested in the ruling classes.

It is quite obvious that these two aspects of the miners' fight created the illusion of a difference between the miners' leaders on the one hand, and the present leadership of the other Trade Unions and the Labour Movement as a whole on the other. The longer the lock-out continued the more clear became its political character, till finally the conflict reached such a stage when the inefficiency and inadequacy of the leadership of the miners was indisputable. The recent conferences of the Miners' Federation have shown quite convincingly that there is a great distance between the rank and file of the miners and their leaders, and that the majority of these leaders are made up of practically the same material as is the leadership of the other unions. For that reason we think that the last two conferences of the miners deserve special attention.

It is important, however, before we take up the analysis of these two conferences, to remind our readers of a few facts of the past.

During the days of the General Strike, as in the days of its betrayal, the Miners' Federation had two representatives on the General Council. We know very little about their activities in that Council of retreat and defeat. But, even from a purely industrial point of view, the miners' representatives should have used all their influence, all their powers, to prevent the isolation of the miners. If they did not do so, they should have been challenged by the subsequent conferences of the miners. We know that the miners' delegates had sufficient courage to challenge Cook for an

alleged breach of discipline, when Cook dared to advise the men to reject the outrageous terms proposed by Downing Street. We cannot remember any decision querying the conduct of Smillie and Richards, whose attitude during the betrayal of the miners in the first days of the struggle remains unexplained.

Several weeks after the betrayal of the miners, the General Council and the Miners' Executive issued a joint document in which it was announced that the Conference of Trade Union Executives called for June 25 would not take place as arranged, and that this joint agreement was reached for the sole purpose of securing victory for the miners. Had the leadership of the miners represented a new tendency within the Labour Movement, these leaders would never have agreed to sign this joint statement. For they would have realised that they could obtain the support of the working class in this country, not *through* the General Council, but *in spite of* the General Council.

Let us take another instance. At the Bournemouth Trades Union Congress the miners' leaders exerted all their influence to pacify the spontaneous indignation of the miners' delegation in order to present a united front with the General Council. The same "united front" policy was pursued in a still more complicated situation at the Margate Conference of the Labour Party. The miners' delegation at Margate decided to support the pious resolution of support to the miners which—as everyone knew—was only a screen behind which the Labour Party leaders sabotaged the miners' lock-out. The delegation changed its mind under the influence of Arthur Horner, and they voted to refer back the resolution. But after the motion of reference back was defeated, they still supported the resolution, again for the sake of a sham united front.

We have only quoted a few instances to show that the greater part of the leadership of the Miners' Federation preferred to go hand in hand with the General Council instead of fighting it. We could easily add to the number of such instances. But we think that the facts mentioned above are quite sufficient to prove that, on the general questions raised by the mining lock-out, the majority of the miners' leaders are part and parcel of the present trade union bureaucracy.

Now let us come to the last two Delegate Conferences of the M.F.G.B. The capitalist Press hailed the first of the two as the Armistice Day Conference. It was held on November 11, 12 and 13. To this conference, the Executive reported the terms of the Government's proposals, which will go down to history as the most outrageous and abominable terms ever proposed. The Executive of the Miners' Federation received the Government's proposals, according to the official version, after the trade union mediators "succeeded" in opening the door for negotiations. It does not require a vast knowledge of secret history to understand that these negotiations began on the initiative of the Government, and that the General Council mediators acted as scouts and messengers for the Government. We would like to remind our readers that even before the lock-out began, it was Baldwin who proposed that the General Council, and not the miners themselves, should negotiate on their behalf¹. The miners were aware of this fact as well as we were. Still they entered the door opened by Thomas, and came out with the most insulting terms ever offered to a group of workers.

What should have been the simple and concrete proposals of the Executive to the Conference, and of the Conference to the men concerning these terms? Every honest trade unionist will agree that, even under the worst circumstances, it is better to have no negotiated peace at all than to accept such terms as proposed by the Government to the miners. The advantages of imposed terms are obvious, for those who are compelled to accept them are always free to prepare for a new fight when the circumstances allow it. But an agreement based on imposed terms means, if not the perpetuation, at least the prolongation of such terms. Yet the delegate conference dared to recommend the acceptance of these terms, and only by a small majority was it agreed that the lodges should be consulted as to whether they were, or were not, prepared to accept.

It may be argued that this counsel of despair was a result of the tragic situation with which the conference was confronted. Let us try to analyse the conditions then obtaining. According to the figures presented to the conference, 235,000 men were at that time

¹See, e.g., the pamphlet by A. J. Bennett : *The General Council and the General Strike*.

back at work. It is undoubtedly a big number. At the same time, in order to have a clear idea of the situation, we must bear in mind the following facts :—

- (1) These 235,000 represented less than 25 per cent. of the total number of miners.
- (2) This figure did not represent a number of men steadily at work ; even the mineowners have reported fluctuations every day.
- (3) The breakaways have taken place mainly in those districts where the miners are scattered, and where they are at the mercy of Conservative Boards of Guardians, of reactionary shop-keepers, and of all their enemies.
- (4) Even in the districts where breakaways have occurred, a certain number of miners have resisted the owners, and the breakaways were strongest either among non-unionists or among those trade-unionists who were led by leaders of the Spencer-Varley type.

The conference under discussion took place in the seventh month of the lock-out. The delegates present at the conference should have known that the strike-breakers could only produce a small part of the coal required by British industry alone, not to mention export trade. They should also have known that great pressure was being brought to bear upon the Government and the mineowners, and that there were still great possibilities of continuing the fight and of securing, if not victory, at least better terms. It must also be borne in mind that the conference was held after the Conference of Trade Union Executives at which a voluntary levy for the miners was carried.

And yet, notwithstanding all these facts, the conference dared to recommend the acceptance of Baldwin's terms. In the days of November 11, 12 and 13, it might have been argued that this recommendation reflected the feeling of exhaustion prevailing among the rank and file of the miners. The events which followed the conference have proved quite convincingly that such an argument had no foundation whatsoever. Notwithstanding the recommendation of the conference, notwithstanding the fact that the minority which was opposed to the terms was fettered by the bonds of discipline, still 460,806 votes were registered against, while only 313,200 (which includes 190,000 at work) were registered for the terms. It is impossible to believe that those present at the conference were not aware of the spirit prevailing among the men, and when they recommended acceptance they did

not reflect or encourage the feeling of the men ; their purpose was rather to break the determination and courage of the locked-out miners.

Why did the miners' delegates act in this way ?

We believe we are entitled to say that the seventh month of this great struggle has shown that there is no great difference between Hodges and Richards, between Varley and Jones. Hodges was far enough away from the miners to dare to say what Jones and Richards could not afford to say until they were sure that the miners were rather tired and exhausted. But they all belong to the same camp. They are not capable of resisting capital when every inch of the way has to be fought to the finish.

Apart from anything else, this conference of the Miners' Federation has shown that there is a difference between the interests of the bureaucracy and the interests of the men.

The miners' bureaucracy, as well as the present trade union bureaucracy, are now fighting their own battle—that is, they are defending their own interests. They realise that the time when they were able to win small concessions by means of negotiation is now at an end. British capitalism is determined to make no more concessions to the workers, but to defend its position at the expense of the workers. On the other hand, the workers, as the miners' vote has shown, are fully prepared to resist and to fight. The present bureaucracy is not capable of conducting a fight. That is why they are so anxious for peace, knowing full well that peace at the present stage means the permanent worsening of the conditions of the workers and the degradation of the working class of Great Britain.

In the days of November 11, 12 and 13, the miners' bureaucracy came out into the open, and they have shown that they have the same interests, the same views, the same principles and the same inclinations as that part of the bureaucracy which betrayed the workers' cause on May 12.

This fact was demonstrated still more clearly at the delegate conference of November 19 and 20. Every sincere worker felt and understood that the miners' vote against the Government's preposterous terms was an expression of real heroism. The miners' leaders were in duty bound to accept the verdict of the men and to continue the fight with renewed courage and greater energy.

Instead they decided to recommend the men to begin district negotiations, and they did not even have the courage to include in the guiding principles for these negotiations the question of hours.

The tragedy which began on May 12 found its culmination in the decision of the miners' delegate conference on November 20.

Before making any conclusions, we must say a few words about the small minority inside the miners' leadership.

A. J. Cook is the General Secretary of the Miners' Federation. He is the embodiment of the workers' hatred against the ruling class. He is beloved by the rank and file, and enjoys their confidence. Among all his qualities displayed during this fight stands out his untiring energy and his single-hearted devotion to the cause of the working class. Cook was, and remains all the time, a rank and file leader. He was almost alone, however, not only in the trade union bureaucracy, but among the leaders of the miners. It is as yet premature to sum up his activities. Personally, I am convinced that it will not be difficult to prove that his vacillations were mainly a result of the fact that he was always between two great powers—the power of the rank and file and the power of the bureaucracy—which last he could not but appreciate.

Then comes the President of the M.F.G.B., Herbert Smith. It is true, Herbert Smith never rose to the political issues involved in the miners' fight. He was, and he has remained, an honest trade unionist. But the fact that he had to work with the Spencers, the Jones's and the Richards, hampered to a great extent his determination and his consistency. But Herbert Smith had confidence in his men, hatred for the exploiters, and contempt for the traitors and capitulators.

We stated that during this great fight, which is not yet finished, Cook stood almost alone. But with him has stood a small, yet vigorous, group—a new leadership which has arisen out of this struggle. This new group of leaders, although in the minority, is nevertheless responsible for the fact that the Hodges, the Varleys, the Spencers, the Jones's and the Richards were powerless to deliver the miners to the Baldwin Government through the General Council mediators. We are referring to the group headed by Arthur Horner and S. O. Davies in South Wales, by W. Allen in Scotland, by Will Lawther in Durham, and by many others.

All the forces of reaction were and are at work against this young and virile group. It is interesting to note in passing that while the Government chose Will Lawther to be one of the first leaders to be thrown into prison, the bureaucrats at the Margate Conference of the Labour Party chose him as one to be excluded from the Labour Party Executive. Then again, simultaneously with the issue of a warrant for Arthur Horner in South Wales, Mr. Joseph Jones violently attacked him in the Press. Such instances are quite numerous.

In spite, however, of the mobilisation of all the forces of reaction and reformism against the new leaders in our Trade Union Movement, we believe that the greatest factor of the new stage of the miners' fight is the emergence of this new vigorous and fighting leadership which will rise to the requirements of the new epoch in our class struggle.

A good proportion, though by no means all, of this new rising group, are members of the Communist Party. And the new stage of the miners' lock-out shows that even a numerically weak party, if only it has a clear outlook and determination, can play a great part in co-ordinating, mobilising and strengthening the forces of the working class. But the rôle played by the Communist Party of Great Britain in the miners' conflict requires a special analysis.

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INDIAN NATIONALISM AND THE ELECTIONS

By CLEMENS DUTT

INDIA is a country of 300 million inhabitants which has been on the brink of a social revolution. That fact, with all its significance for the British Empire, Asia and the world, is the dominating factor for appreciating what is taking place in India to-day. It is natural, therefore, to measure the stages of development since the war from the abortive upheaval of 1920-21. The betrayal by bourgeois nationalism of the mass movement at Bardoli in February, 1922, is the starting point of a retreat which has put the revolution temporarily in the background, but which will have the effect for its delay of making the next explosion more forceful, conscious and effective. For nothing in the central features of the situation has been changed, but there has been rapid economic development, which has produced a corresponding development in class differentiation and class consciousness.

This differentiation is expressed in the stages since Bardoli through which the nationalist movement has passed. Up to the close of the present year three such stages can be distinguished. The first period from Bardoli to the Gaya session of the National Congress in December, 1922, when the Swaraj Party was launched, was the period of retreat from Gandhism and the formulation of a new policy for bourgeois nationalism. The second period was a further stage of clarification marked by the gradual modification of Swarajist policy during its experience of parliamentarism and reversion to Liberalism. It culminated in the acceptance of Government office and the resignation from the Swaraj Party in the autumn of 1925 by Mr. Tambe, the Swarajist leader in the Central Provinces (the only provinces in which the Swarajists had a majority in the Legislature), which thus opened the new period of differentiation marked by the splitting of the nationalist ranks and the formation of new parties. The imminence of this new phase was pointed out in an article in the *LABOUR MONTHLY*¹

¹ "Indian Politics: An Analysis," by Clemens Dutt, *LABOUR MONTHLY*, Vol. VII, pp. 399-409 (1925).

in the summer of last year. The rapid developments of this phase will reach a conclusion in the results of the elections now being held and in the decisions of the forthcoming National Congress at Gauhati in Assam.

The economic characteristics of this period are a continuation of the preceding one. There has been a series of good monsoons, which has meant that harvests have been satisfactory (an all-important question in India, where the exploited mass of peasants have no reserve to fall back upon) and which, in the resulting absence of famine and consequent economic crisis, has allowed of the establishment of relative stabilisation. Economic development has proceeded rapidly and the policy of economic rapprochement and reconciliation between British imperialism and the Indian big bourgeoisie, determined upon by the former ever since it discovered in the first shock of the war that it would have to be dependent for vital iron and steel products on the Indian firm of Tata, has gone further ahead. Salient features of the recent period have been the establishment of the Indian Tariff Board and the abolition of the cotton excise duty. Nothing marks the new era of the development of Indian industries behind high tariff walls more clearly than this last step, for the whole history of the Indian National Congress has been bound up with the struggle of Indian capitalism for the removal of the cotton excise.

The results of the new economic situation are obvious in recent political history. Agrarian agitation, the centre of the previous mass movement, has been relatively quiescent. The Indian bourgeoisie, discovering that political freedom is not so indispensable for the furtherance of their immediate economic interests as they had previously imagined, are more disposed to be satisfied for the present with the existing constitution, and therefore to "work the reforms." At the same time, the Left Wing in the nationalist movement has become more articulate as it has begun to realise the direction in which the nationalist leaders are going. Moreover, in spite of the legal terrorism exercised against the Communists, the Indian Communist Party has grown in strength, and sympathetic nationalist groups, such as the Workers' and Peasants' Party in Bengal, have extended their influence. A complicating political factor, which reached its maximum intensity

during the last year, has been the unprecedented growth of communal conflict between Hindus and Moslems, resulting in religious riots in which thousands of persons have been kil'ed or injured. This communal tension is closely connected with the political differences in the nationalist ranks.

The Electoral System

All the factors above mentioned affect the present general elections to the Imperial and Provincial legislatures and go to make the situation more complex than at any time previously. The first elections, in 1920, were boycotted by all except the loyalist upper strata of the bourgeoisie. In the second general election, in 1923, the new Swaraj Party was the sole representative of the National Congress. Now the nationalist ranks are divided into a number of different warring parties or factions, each claiming to represent the nation and to speak in the name of the nationalist movement and the National Congress, and seeking seats and positions of power in the legislatures at the expense of its opponents. They quarrel and compete among themselves for the chance of getting into the councils, and they roundly denounce the Government for not giving them more power when in the councils, but they neglect to attack or even to notice the essential feature of the councils, viz., the enormously restricted franchise on which they are based, which make them something aloof from, and useless to, the vast body of the nation.

The character of the elections, and the social composition of the membership of the councils themselves, is above all determined by the nature of the electorate. The restricted franchise is based on both communal and property qualifications. There are also special constituencies for electing representatives of Europeans, big landlords and big commercial and industrial organisations.

Take, for example, the Bengal Legislative Council. First of all, out of 139 members only 113 are elected at all. The remainder are Government nominees, the remnant of the old system in which the members of the Legislative Council were all merely " advisers " appointed by the Provincial Governor. Of the 113 elected representatives, only eighty-five are elected by general, though communal, constituencies. The whole province is divided into forty-two

geographical areas forming non-Mohammedan constituencies in which no Mohammedan, even if otherwise qualified, is allowed to vote. The same province is also divided geographically into thirty-four constituencies in which only Mohammedans can vote. This separation is applied throughout practically the whole of British India, and is intended to ensure representation of the special interests of the Moslems. It, of course, considerably assists in dividing them off from the rest of the population.

The rest of the elected members, twenty-eight in number, are returned by special constituencies. Europeans, numbering less than 25,000 in a total population of 46,000,000, have five representatives. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce returns six members. The big landowners of Burdwan, Chittagong, &c., each elect a representative of their own. The Indian Jute Mills Association, the Indian Tea Association, the Indian Mining Association, Calcutta University, the Calcutta Trades Association, the Marwari Association are all reckoned as special constituencies. Most of these special representatives will be Europeans, and all will stand for big capitalist or landlord interests.

The number of voters in the special constituencies will be very small. They constitute, in this respect, something very like the "pocket" boroughs of pre-Reform England. On the other hand, the vast bulk of the workers and peasants are totally disfranchised. The property qualification for voters varies from region to region, but it is sufficiently high to exclude ninety-seven to ninety-eight per cent. of the population. Take the Bombay rural constituencies as an example. The essential qualification for an elector is payment of land revenue amounting to not less than sixteen to thirty-two rupees per annum, according to region. As the land revenue for the total assessed area in Bombay Presidency varies from half to one and a-quarter rupees per acre, it can be concluded that only cultivators of some fifteen acres or more will be entitled to a vote. Recent statistics show that three-quarters of all the Bombay holdings are below fifteen acres. All these cultivators, therefore, would be disfranchised together with the large number of landless wage-workers and agricultural labourers.

For the All-India Legislative Assembly the franchise is even more restricted. Only 104 out of 144 members are elected. All

but two or three of the general constituencies are separated on communal lines. Most of the provinces have special constituencies of Europeans and of big landholders, and special representation is given to the Indian Merchants' Chamber and Bureau, Ahmedabad Millowners' Association, Madras Indian Commerce, Bengal Marwari Association, &c.

Urban electors to the Assembly have to pay income tax (not levied on incomes below 2,000 rupees per year) or a high rate of other taxes, while the rural electors must pay land revenue of about fifty rupees or upwards. The result of the restriction is that the total electorate for all the seats in the Assembly is below a million, there being only a few thousand voters for each seat.

It must not be forgotten also that the Central Legislature includes an upper chamber, the Council of State, with sixty members, of whom thirty-four are elected. Electors to this body must be very rich or have been members of the Central Legislature or held high office in municipal government. The electorate numbers a few hundreds in each constituency. Thus, in a by-election, earlier this year, in West Bengal, the successful candidate polled seventy-eight votes; the remaining three received fifty-eight, twenty-six, and one votes respectively.

Without taking any account, therefore, of the question of the authority of the councils, it is obvious that they are utterly unrepresentative in character and cannot be an index of the desires of the mass of the nation.

The Break-up of the Swaraj Party

Nevertheless, the attention of the nationalist movement has become more and more exclusively directed to obtaining control of these puppet legislatures. The forty-odd Swarajists that entered the Central Legislative Assembly in 1923 were very quickly deflected from their early intransigence. By the autumn of 1925 the desire of the Right Wing for a drastic modification of the programme, so as to allow of the acceptance of office and the practice of the so-called policy of "responsive co-operation" (*i.e.*, the policy of working the constitutional reforms scheme as far as possible, and only voting against the Government when British policy conflicted directly with the immediate interests of the

Indian bourgeoisie), led to a crisis in the party and the secessions began.

In November the Bombay Swarajist leaders, Jayaker and N. C. Kelkar, resigned and at the National Congress at Cawnpore in December, 1925, there was a definite bloc, led by the Mahrattas from Bombay and the Central Provinces and Berar, calling for a modification of the programme. The National Congress, however, in spite of its smaller numbers, represents a wider field than the electorate of the Assembly, and it endorsed the official Swarajist policy. Thereupon the dissidents seceded from the Swaraj Party and organised the Responsive Co-operation Party, which was definitely launched on February 2, 1926.

The Liberals were not slow in attempting to profit from the situation by forming a bloc with the Responsive Co-operationists aimed against the Swaraj Party. The new alliance, formed in March, 1926, was christened the Indian National Party, and it contained representatives of the Liberals, the Independents, the Home Rule League, led by Mrs. Besant (to all intents and purposes identical with the Liberals, but united in pushing the Commonwealth of India Bill), the non-Brahmins, the Muslim League and the Responsivists. The latter, however, only gave a qualified support to the new party, retaining their separate identity. The real difference of the Responsivists from the Liberals lay only in the fact that they were still members of the National Congress, and they were aware that if they lost their connection with the Congress they would be considered purely as Liberals, and as such less trustworthy and experienced than the old Liberal leaders.

The other groups in the National Party, with one exception, were outside the National Congress, and they based their refusal to have anything to do with the Congress on the grounds : (1) that the present Congress creed still endorses mass civil disobedience and general non-payment of taxes as a policy for which the country should make preparations ; (2) that the Congress is still dominated by the Swaraj Party, which is committed to a policy of obstruction ; (3) that they cannot agree to enter the Congress unless they get an adequate share of the Congress offices ; and, finally, (4) that wearing of khaddar (homespun cloth) is still compulsory at Congress functions (a last relic of the period of Gandhi's domination).

The only semi-Liberal leader of note who remained within the Congress was Pundit Malaviya, who even during the most revolutionary period fought the Liberal battle inside the Congress, and who has been pressing for the adoption of a Congress programme which would embrace all shades of nationalism.

Faced with the possibility of a union of the secessionists from the Swaraj Party with the Liberals, Pundit Nehru, the Swarajist leader, attempted a compromise which would break up this union, and, by practically giving in to the Responsivists, draw them back into the Swaraj Party. This compromise was formulated in the Sabarmati Pact, signed at Ahmedabad on April 21, 1926.

The Swarajist leader, however, had under-estimated the strength of the Left Wing within his party. The All-India Congress Committee, which comprises 350 members, mostly local Congress officials who are closer to the rank and file of the Congress membership and not directly interested in the question of parliamentary office, refused to ratify the pact. They showed their distrust of Nehru also in their action in defeating his resolution for a committee to inquire into Mrs. Besant's Commonwealth Bill. Since Mrs. Besant had seceded from the Congress over the non-co-operation issue and her scheme was being canvassed by various Liberals and other groups without the endorsement of the Congress, Pundit Nehru's action in attempting to raise the matter was a clear indication of his Right-Wing tendency, and the defeat of his resolution was a clear vote of no confidence in him.

The existence of a Left Wing within the National Congress and the Swaraj Party, which prevents the leadership from openly entering into co-operation with the Government, has been evident at all the larger Congress gatherings. Under the spinning franchise introduced by Gandhi the registered membership of the Congress dropped to about 14,000, and even though the four-anna subscription was re-introduced in 1925, the paying membership at the time of the Cawnpore Congress was still under 20,000. Nevertheless the rank and file, comprising mainly petty bourgeois elements, was sufficiently in evidence to compel the Swarajist leaders to adopt a revolutionary phraseology, to talk of the preparation of mass civil disobedience and to declare that the Swaraj

Party would leave the Legislative Councils if their demands were unheeded by the Government.

It was this Left Wing that called Pundit Nehru to heel. It was this Left Wing that at the Bengal Provincial Congress in May, 1926, began an agitation against Sen Gupta, the Bengal leader, because of his Right-Wing tendencies, and even moved a resolution of protest at the disparaging remarks of the president, Sasmal, concerning the ex-revolutionaries in the Bengal Congress organisation.

The latest stage in the disintegration of the Swaraj Party has followed the fiasco of the party's method of putting into practice the resolution of the Cawnpore Congress for withdrawing from the councils.

In order to make a demonstration to impress the rank and file, and to hide their bankruptcy in policy, the Swarajist members of the Assembly and of the provincial councils made a spectacular withdrawal in March, thus, incidentally, saving themselves the task of voting against the budget, which many of them were loath to do. It was not long, however, before the members in most of the councils were clamouring for permission to return in order to defend or oppose certain measures. Permission was given, for otherwise there would have been many defections from the party, and it is noteworthy that in all cases the walk back was openly for the defence of class interests. Thus, in the Punjab, the Swarajists returned to oppose the Money Lenders Bill, which threatened to curtail the power of the moneylenders: in Madras the issue was the Malabar Tenancy Bill, and in Assam a Land Revenue Assessment Bill.

Finally, it was decided that the members of the Central Legislative Assembly themselves should return in order to oppose the new Currency Bill, and then retire again, taking no further part in the last session of the Assembly. This led to the latest split in the Party, for Lajpat Rai, the veteran nationalist and deputy-leader of the party, refused to walk out again and severed his connection with the party.

This new split meant a serious weakening of the strength of the Swaraj Party. It also gave a new opportunity to Pundit Malaviya. Under his auspices the Congress leaders, like himself and Lajpat

Rai, who were in the Congress but not in either the Swaraj or Responsive Co-operation Parties, began negotiations for unity with both of the latter groups.

It was obvious that Nehru was only deterred by fear of his own rank and file from attempting to conclude a revised form of the Sabarmati Pact. Accordingly it was the Responsive Co-operationists who first joined hands with Lajpat Rai and Malaviya. Early in September they decided to form an Independent Congress Party to unite the Right-Wing members of the Congress, who were outside the Swaraj Party. They adopted a resolution declaring that, since the policy of wholesale obstruction in the councils had failed, as had also the policy of "walking-out" from the legislatures, and that no basis had been found for unity with the Swaraj Party—

the only course left open to such members of the Congress as do not agree with the Swarajists' policy and programme is to form themselves into a separate party within the Congress. . . .

The policy of the party will be to work the legislatures, defective though their constitution is, for all they are worth and use them for accelerating the establishment of full responsible government.

It will be open to the party to accept office, provided the power, responsibility, and initiative necessary for the effective discharge of their duties are secured to the ministers.

The party will work in full co-operation with the Responsive Co-operation Party.

Lajpat Rai was appointed the president of the new party and Pundit Malaviya its general secretary. The formation of the new party was hailed as a triumph for their principles by the Responsivists, though they generally gave as their opinion that it would have been better for Lajpat Rai and his followers to have joined the Responsivists altogether.

The Communal Conflict

The dissensions within the nationalist movement were greatly complicated by the growth of Hindu-Moslem conflict leading to a series of religious riots in all parts of the country, during which hundreds have been killed and thousands injured. The underlying causes are very complex. Apart from direct economic issues (as in Bengal and the Punjab, where Moslem peasants are to a great extent faced by Hindu landlords and moneylenders), the

conflict has been closely connected with the struggle for political influence between the rival communities. This rivalry has always been fostered by the British Government, and it has been deliberately fomented by the nationalist leaders. As long as the common national revolutionary struggle was in the forefront and Government positions were boycotted, rivalry between the communities was not acute. Now, however, communal passions have been deliberately aroused for political purposes. The leaders of each community are competing against each other for positions of influence in the councils and other bodies.

During 1925 Hindu and Moslem religious organisations developed rapidly. Most of the prominent Hindu and Moslem nationalist leaders declared it to be their object especially to defend the interests of their co-religionists. In April, 1926, Sir Abdur Rahim, a Liberal Moslem leader in Bengal, formed a Bengal Moslem Party. In May, 1926, the Khilafat Conference, which had been more or less in abeyance since the abolition of the Khilafat, enlarged its objects to embrace all the interests, temporal as well as spiritual, of Mohammedans. In June the chief Hindu organisation, the Hindu Mahasabha, countered by deciding, where necessary for support of Hindu interests, to run its own candidates at the elections. In August an Independent Muslim Party was formed through the agency of the Khilafat Committee to contest the elections on behalf of Moslem interests. It consists now largely of former Moslem Swarajists.

The Elections

From what has been said it will be clear that the candidates for election to the councils and Assembly are appearing under a great variety of labels. The differences between them are, however, not very important. All of them profess to stand on a nationalist platform, and now that the most extreme Swarajist demand has been whittled down to Dominion status or even merely an encouragement for "honourable co-operation," the Swarajists do not stand so far removed from the most right-wing moderates. The parties can be divided into three main groups, representing roughly the three sections of the Indian bourgeoisie. The big bourgeoisie dominate the Liberal and National Parties; the

Responsive Co-operationists and the Independent Congress Party stand for the middle bourgeoisie ; while the Swaraj Party is predominantly petty bourgeois in composition and outlook.

The National Party is practically indistinguishable from the Liberals. It represents merely an election bloc to prevent clashing of non-Congress candidates in some regions, notably in Bombay and Bengal. As a party it was stillborn, being killed by the mutual suspicions between those in and those outside the Congress.

The Responsivists and Independent Congress men represent the new dominant trend of bourgeois nationalist policy and, therefore, are gaining in strength. Their organisation, however, has a firm hold only in the Mahratta provinces. Both of the parties, and particularly the Independent Congress Party, are strongly pro-Hindu, and in fact, if not in profession, stand for the special interests of Hindus as against Mohammedans. They agree with the Swarajists except on the one point that they believe the national cause should be pushed by using the reforms to the full, including the acceptance of office. Naturally the Swarajists brand them as job-hunters and Liberals, and in return they retort that the Swarajist policy is bluff and make-believe and that the Swarajists are really Liberals themselves. Mr. Jayaker, the leader of the Responsivists, says:—

The Swarajists practise nothing but responsive co-operation, but refuse to call it by that name.

In spite of being weakened by successive splits and defections, the Swaraj Party still includes the bulk of the rank and file of active nationalists. Its leaders, against their own desires, have refrained from advocating a change of policy in the hope of getting a majority in the elections. The electoral arrangements, however, between the Liberals and Responsivists, and between the Responsivists and Independent Congress candidates, have in many places prevented triangular contests, and left the elections to be fought on the clear issue of co-operation or non-co-operation. In such cases, since the bulk of the electorate consists of landlord and capitalist elements, there are bound to be many defeats suffered by the Swarajists, and their hope of a majority in the councils is rendered vain.

The great asset in their favour is their possession of the Congress machinery, and it is freely charged against them that they have

used funds collected for the Congress for their own election purposes. The latest election results appear to show that in no case can the Swarajists secure an absolute majority, that in general they have lost ground, but that they have increased their representation in some places, such as Madras, where the formerly dominant moderates have been discredited through their past actions.

The National Congress

Whatever the result of the elections, the coming session of the National Congress at Gauhati, in Assam, at the end of the year will witness a determined effort on the part of the Right Wing to commit the Congress to a policy of Liberalism under the guise of uniting all wings of the nationalist movement. Hints have been thrown out by prominent Swarajists that the Swaraj Party is only waiting for the result of the elections to modify its policy. If they do not succeed in obtaining thumping majorities, the Swarajist leaders will be ready to accept their defeat as the verdict of the country and adapt their policy accordingly. It will need a bold stand by the rank and file of the party if another Sabarmati Pact is to be avoided. The rank and file are opposed to the surrender policy of the leaders, for they are closer to the masses and themselves also have nothing to gain by the alliance with British imperialism, but they are disunited, confused by communal and other side issues and easily deceived by the pseudo-revolutionary phraseology used by the bourgeois leaders.

Nevertheless, there is no way forward unless they come out into the open with a programme of their own based on the class needs of the masses. The Left Wing can only rally itself around the demand for a free democratic republic. Thus the class issues are getting more defined. After the elections it is to be expected that the communal issue will cease to occupy such a prominent position, and the class issue become more pronounced. After the big bourgeoisie the middle bourgeoisie also is forsaking the national revolutionary struggle and finding its ally in the imperialist camp. The workers and peasants will be compelled to fight their own battle and find their own allies. The latter are especially to be found outside India, where other workers and peasants are engaged in the struggle with the same enemy.

THE RELATION OF THE WORKERS' PARTY TO RELIGION

By N. LENIN

(This article, which is here published for the first time in English, should be of especial interest in England, where the question of religion and the working-class movement has always been very loosely handled. It was originally published in the PROLETARIAT, No. 45, in May, 1909.)

THE speech of the deputy Surkov in the Duma debate on the budget of the Synod, and the discussions in our Duma fraction over the draft of his speech, have raised an extremely important and at the present moment topical question. Interest in everything connected with religion has to-day undoubtedly taken hold of considerable sections of "society," and has also made its way into the ranks of the intellectuals who stand near to the Labour Movement, and even into certain working-class circles. Social Democracy must definitely make clear its attitude to religion.

Social Democracy builds its whole world conception on scientific Socialism—that is to say, on Marxism. The philosophic basis of Marxism is, as Marx and Engels have repeatedly pointed out, dialectical materialism, which has taken over the historical traditions of eighteenth-century French materialism and of the materialism of Feuerbach in the early nineteenth century—that is, of materialism which is absolutely atheist and definitely hostile to all religion. We recall to mind that the whole of Engels' *Anti-Dühring*, which was read in manuscript by Marx, accuses the materialist and atheist Dühring of the inconsistency of his materialism, because he leaves a backdoor open for religion and religious philosophy. We would further call to mind that Engels in his work on Feuerbach brings against the latter the reproach that he fought religion not in order to annihilate it, but in order to revive it, to discover a new "elevated" religion, &c. Religion

is opium for the people—this Marxist fundamental principle is the pivot of the whole Marxist world conception in questions of religion. Marxism regards all present-day religions and churches, each and every religious organisation without exception, as instruments of bourgeois reaction, which serve as a shield for the exploitation and deception of the working class.

At the same time, however, Engels repeatedly condemned the attempts of those who wished to be “more left” or “more revolutionary” than Social Democracy and to introduce into the programme of the workers’ party a direct confession of atheism in the sense of a declaration of war on religion. In 1874, in the discussion of the famous manifesto of the Commune refugees, the Blanquists, then living in exile in London, Engels treats their noisy declaration of war on religion as folly, and expresses the view that such a call to war is the best means to revive interest in religion anew and hinder the actual dying out of religion. Engels blames the Blanquists for their inability to see that only the class struggle of the working masses, which draws the widest numbers of the proletariat into a conscious and revolutionary political activity, that only this is able really to free the oppressed masses from the yoke of religion, while the declaration of war on religion as a political task of the working class is a piece of anarchist phrasemaking. Also in 1877, in the *Anti-Dühring*, in which Engels flays without mercy the slightest concessions of the philosopher Dühring to idealism and religion, none the less he condemns the would-be revolutionary idea of Dühring that religion should be forbidden in the Socialist society. Such a declaration of war on religion, he declares, is “to out-Bismarck Bismarck,” *i.e.*, to repeat the folly of Bismarck’s “Kulturkampf” against the clericals, the fight which Bismarck in the ’seventies waged against the German Catholic Party, the “Centre,” by means of police persecution of Catholicism. By this fight Bismarck only *strengthened* the militant clericalism of the Catholics, only injured the cause of real cultural advance, since he pushed into the foreground religious divisions in place of political divisions and drew away the attention of certain sections of the working class and of the democratic forces from the urgent tasks of the class struggle and revolutionary struggle into the direction of an entirely super-

ficial and deceitful bourgeois anti-clericalism. Engels accused the would-be ultra-revolutionary Dühring of wishing to repeat Bismarck's folly in another form, and he demanded of the workers' party the capacity to work patiently at the organisation and enlightenment of the proletariat—a work which leads to the dying out of religion—without throwing itself into the adventures of a political war on religion. This standpoint has entered into the very flesh and blood of German Social Democracy, which accordingly supported, for example, the freedom of the Jesuits, their permission to stay in Germany, and the removal of all police measures against this or that religion. “Declaration of religion as a private affair”—this famous point of the Erfurt Programme (1891) confirmed the above political tactics of Social Democracy.

This tactic meanwhile has become a routine and has produced a new distortion of Marxism in the opposite direction, in the sense of opportunism. The statement of the Erfurt Programme began to be interpreted in the sense that we Social Democrats and our party actually *regard* religion as a private affair, that for us as a party, for us as Social Democrats, religion is a private affair. Without entering into a direct polemic against this opportunist conception, Engels considered it necessary in the 'nineties to make a definite stand against it, not in a polemical but in a positive form. He did this in the form of a declaration—on which he deliberately laid stress—that Social Democracy regards religion as a private affair *in relation to the State*, but not at all in relation to the individual, not at all in relation to Marxism, not at all in relation to the workers' party.

This is the outward history of the views of Marx and Engels on the questions of religion. For people who handle Marxism carelessly, who cannot and will not take the trouble to think, the history is a tangle of senseless contradictions and vacillations of Marxism: a mess of “consistent” atheism and “indulgence” towards religion, an “unprincipled” vacillating between the r-r-revolutionary war on God and the cowardly wish to suit one's words to the believing workers, the fear of frightening them away, &c. In the literature of the anarchist phrase-makers many attacks on Marxism after this fashion are to be found.

But whoever is even in the least able to take Marxism seriously,

and to go more deeply into its philosophical foundations and the experiences of international Social Democracy, will easily see that the tactics of Marxism in relation to religion are completely consistent and fully thought out by Marx and Engels, and that what the dilettantes and ignoramuses consider to be vacillations are a direct and necessary conclusion of dialectical materialism. It would be a great error to believe that the apparent "moderation" of Marxism in relation to religion finds its explanation in so-called "tactical" considerations, in the sense of the wish "not to frighten away," &c. On the contrary, the political line of Marxism in this question is inseparably bound up with its philosophical foundations.

Marxism is materialism. As such it is no less hostile to religion than the materialism of the eighteenth-century Encyclopædists or of Feuerbach. This is certain. But the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels goes further than that of the Encyclopædists and Feuerbach, in that it applies the materialist philosophy to history and to the social sciences. We must fight religion. That is the A B C of *all* materialism, consequently also of Marxism. But Marxism is not materialism that remains at its A B C. Marxism goes further. It says: we must *know how* to fight religion, and for this purpose we must explain *on materialistic lines* the origin of faith and religion to the masses. The fight against religion must not be narrowed down to an abstract ideological preaching; the question must not be brought down to the level of preaching of this character; the fight must be brought into close connection with the concrete tasks and activity of the class struggle, which is directed to the elimination of the social roots of religion. Why does religion maintain its hold in the backward strata of the town proletariat, in the strata of the semi-proletariat, and in the mass of the peasants? Because of the ignorance of the people, answers the bourgeois progressive, the radical or bourgeois materialist. So: down with religion; long live atheism; the spreading of atheist views is our principal task! The Marxist says: Wrong! Such a conception is a superficial, narrow bourgeois view of "spreading light and culture to the people." Such a conception does not explain deeply enough the roots of religion, does not explain it materialistically, but idealistically. In the modern capitalist countries these roots are above all *social*. The social oppression of

the working masses, their apparent absolute impotence before the blind forces of capitalism, which daily and hourly inflict upon ordinary working men and women sufferings and atrocious tortures a thousand times more frightful than all the extraordinary happenings, such as war, earthquakes, &c.—here is to be sought the deep present-day roots of religion. “Fear has created the gods.” The fear before the blind power of capital—blind because its action cannot be foreseen by the mass of the people—the fear that hangs like a menace over every step of the proletarian and the small owner, and can “suddenly,” “unexpectedly,” by “accident,” inflict upon him poverty, downfall, to be turned into a beggar, a pauper, a prostitute, hand him over to death by hunger—here is the *root* of present-day religion, which the materialist must before all and above all hold before his eyes, if he is not to remain stuck in the children’s shoes of materialism. No mere books of propaganda are going to drive out religion from the masses who are ground down by the convict system of capitalist forced labour, who are at the mercy of the blind destructive forces of capitalism, so long as these masses have not themselves learnt, as a united, organised, systematic, conscious force, to fight against this *root* of religion—the *domination of capital* in all its forms.

But does it follow from this that a book of propaganda against religion is harmful or superfluous? Not at all. Something quite different follows. What follows is that the atheistic propaganda of Social Democracy must be *subordinated* to its principal task—that is, to the carrying forward of the class struggle of the exploited masses against the exploiters.

Whoever has not thought out fully the fundamental principles of dialectical materialism—that is, of the philosophy of Marx and Engels—can misunderstand this basic principle, or at least not understand it at once. How is this? Shall the propaganda of the spirit, the propagation of certain ideas, the fight against the thousands-of-years-old enemy of culture and progress—that is, the fight against religion—be subordinated to the class struggle—that is, to the fight for definite practical aims in economics and politics?

An objection of this character belongs to those customary objections to Marxism which arise from a complete ignorance of Marxist dialectic. The contradiction which troubles those who

argue thus is the living contradiction of living life, *i.e.*, a dialectical not a verbal or artificial contradiction. To place an absolute unbridgable barrier between the theoretical propaganda of atheism—that is, the annihilation of religious belief in certain sections of the proletariat—and the success, progress and conditions of the class struggle of these elements means not to argue dialectically, but to turn what is a movable relative barrier into an absolute barrier, to separate forcibly what in living reality is inseparably bound. Let us take an example. The proletariat of a given place and industry is divided, let us suppose, into the progressive section of conscious Social Democrats, who are naturally atheists, and backward workers, who are still bound to the village and peasant traditions, who believe in God, go to church or are at any rate still under the influence of the local priest, who has, let us suppose, formed a Christian trade union. Suppose further that the economic struggle has given rise to a strike. The Marxist must unconditionally place in the foreground the success of the strike movement, must resolutely in this struggle work against any division of the workers into atheists and Christians and actively oppose any such division. In such circumstances atheist propaganda can be seen to be both superfluous and harmful, not from the point of view of the philistine who does not want to frighten off the backward sections, or to forfeit an electoral seat, but from the standpoint of the real progress of the class struggle, which under the conditions of modern capitalist society will bring the Christian workers over to Social Democracy and atheism a hundred times better than bare atheist propaganda. The preacher of atheism would at such a moment and in such conditions only be playing into the hands of the priests, who would wish nothing better than a division of the workers, not according to their participation in the strike, but according to their belief in God. The Anarchist, who preaches war on God at any price, would in reality only be helping the priests and the bourgeoisie (just as the Anarchists in their action already help the bourgeoisie). The Marxist must be a materialist—that is, an enemy of religion—but a dialectical materialist—that is, one who takes up the fight against religion, not abstractly, not on the basis of an abstract, purely theoretical, unchangeable preaching, but concretely, on the basis of the class

struggle, who practically accomplishes his object and teaches the masses most widely and best. The Marxist must be able to take into consideration the whole concrete situation, must know how to find the border line between anarchism and opportunism (this border line is relative, movable, changeable; nevertheless it exists); he must neither fall into an abstract phrase-making empty "revolutionarism" of the Anarchist nor into the philistinism and opportunism of the small bourgeois or liberal intellectual, who shrinks from the fight against religion, forgets this task of his, reconciles himself with the belief in God, and lets himself be led, not by the interests of the class struggle, but by petty, miserable considerations—to cause pain to no one, to drive away no one, to frighten no one—who guides himself by the wise rule, "Live and let live," &c.

From this standpoint also must be determined the special questions which bear on the attitude of Social Democracy to religion. The question is, for example, asked whether a minister of religion can be a member of the Social Democratic Party, and this question is commonly answered, without any reserve, in the affirmative, by a reference to the experience of the West European Social Democratic Parties. This experience, however, is not a simple product of the application of Marxist doctrine to the Labour Movement, but is a consequence of particular historical conditions in West Europe, which are absent in Russia, so that an unconditional affirmative answer to this question is here incorrect. One cannot say absolutely and for all conditions that ministers of religion cannot be members of the Social Democratic Party, but neither can the opposite rule be laid down. If the minister comes to us to common political work, and fulfils his party work with understanding, without bringing himself into opposition to the party programme, then we can receive him in the ranks of Social Democracy, since the opposition between the spirit and fundamental principles of our programme and his religious convictions can only concern him and remain his personal contradiction; a political organisation cannot examine its members as to whether there is not a contradiction between their conceptions and the programme of the party. But an instance of this type could naturally only be a rare exception, even in Western Europe, and in Russia

it is still more improbable. If a minister should enter into a Social Democratic Party and then wish to take up as his principal and almost his only work an active religious propaganda in the party, the party would undoubtedly have to expel him. With regard to groups of workers who have still retained their belief in God, we must not only admit them into the party, but should energetically draw them in; we are absolutely against the slightest injuring of their religious feelings, but we win them in order to be trained in the spirit of our programme and not in order to take up an active fight against it. We allow *inside* the party freedom of opinion, but only within certain limits, which are determined by the freedom of the formation of groups; we are not obliged to go hand in hand with those who actively propagate points of view which are rejected by the majority of the party.

Another example. Should one under all circumstances condemn a member of the Social Democratic Party for the declaration, "Socialism is my religion," as one would for the propagation of points of view which correspond to that declaration? Oh, no. A deviation from Marxism, and therefore from Socialism, is very definitely here, but the meaning of this deviation, its specific gravity, as it were, can vary in different situations. It is one thing when an agitator or someone coming before the masses speaks in this way, in order to be better understood, to draw interest into his subject-matter, to express his point of view more vividly in forms which are more accessible to the undeveloped mass; it is quite another thing when a writer begins to propagate some God-construction or "God-constructing" Socialism (for example, in the spirit of our Lunacharsky and his associates). Just as in the first case censure would only be captious cavilling or an uncalled-for limitation of the freedom of the agitator, the freedom of the teacher's methods of work, so in the second case censure by the party is necessary and obligatory. The maxim, "Socialism is my religion," is for the one a form of transition *from* religion to Socialism, but for the other—from Socialism *to* religion.

Let us now consider the conditions which in Western Europe have produced an opportunist interpretation of the thesis, "Proclamation of religion as a private affair." Certainly there are also general causes here in play which at all times lead to

opportunism, as the surrender of the permanent interests of the working class for the sake of temporary advantages. The party of the proletariat demands *from the State* the proclamation of religion as a private affair, but does not regard as a private affair the question of the fight against the opium of the people, the fight against religious superstition, &c. The opportunists distort the question so as to make it as if the *Social Democratic Party* actually regarded religion as a private affair.

But in addition to the vicious opportunist distortion (which in the debates of our Duma fraction on the treatment of the question of religion was not at all made clear) there are also certain historical conditions which have produced the present, so to speak, excessive indifference of the Western European Social Democrats in questions of religion. These are conditions of two kinds. First, the task of the fight against religion is an historical task of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, and in the West this task has to an important extent, or at least partially, been fulfilled by the bourgeois democracy in the epoch of its revolutions against feudalism and mediævalism. Both in France and in Germany there is a tradition of the bourgeois fight against religion, which was begun long before Socialism (the Encyclopædists and Feuerbach). In Russia, in accordance with the conditions of our bourgeois democratic revolution, this task also falls almost entirely on the shoulders of the working class.

On the other hand, the tradition of the bourgeois war against religion in Europe has produced a specific bourgeois *distortion* of this war in the hands of Anarchism, which, as the Marxists have long ago and repeatedly shown, stands on the basis of a bourgeois world conception, despite all the "vehemence" of its attacks on the bourgeoisie. The Anarchists and Blanquists in the Latin countries, Most (who was a pupil of Dühring) and his associates in Germany, and the Anarchists of the 'eighties in Austria raised the revolutionary phase in the war against religion to the highest pinnacle. What wonder that the European Social Democrats to-day fall into the other extreme! This is comprehensible and even in a certain measure justified, but we Russian Social Democrats must not forget the special historical conditions of the West.

Secondly, in the West, *after* the conclusion of the national

bourgeois revolutions, *after* the introduction of more or less complete freedom of religion, the question of the democratic fight against religion was already to such an extent historically overborne by the fight of bourgeois democracy against Socialism, that the bourgeois Governments *consciously* attempted to draw the masses away from Socialism by sham-liberal crusades against clericalism. Such was the character of the "Kulturkampf" in Germany, as also of the fight of the bourgeois republicans in France against clericalism. Bourgeois anti-clericalism as a means to draw the attention of the masses away from Socialism in the West is what preceded the present "indifference" among Social Democrats towards the fight with religion. This is also comprehensible and justified, since the bourgeois and Bismarckian anti-clericalism must be held in check by the Social Democrats on the ground that the fight against religion must be *subordinated* to the fight for Socialism.

In Russia the conditions are quite different. The proletariat is the leader of our bourgeois democratic revolution. Its party must be the spiritual leader in the fight against all remains of mediævalism, including the old official religion, as also against all attempts to renovate it, or reconstruct it either on a reformed basis or on a completely new one. If Engels corrected with comparative mildness the opportunism of the German Social Democrats—who, in place of the demand of the workers' party that the *State* should declare religion a private affair, put forward the proclamation of religion as a private affair for Social Democrats themselves and the Social Democratic Party—it can be imagined how a taking over of the German distortion by the Russian opportunists would have earned a *hundred times* sharper criticism from Engels.

Our Duma fraction, in declaring that religion is opium for the people, acted entirely rightly, and has in this way established a precedent which must serve as the basis of all future acts of the Russian Social Democrats in questions of religion. Should one have gone further and set out in full detail all the atheist conclusions? We think not. This might have called forth an exaggeration of the fight against religion on the part of the political party of the proletariat, and have led to a blurring of the boundary

between the bourgeois and Socialist fight against religion. The first task which the Social Democratic fraction could do in the Black-Hundreds Duma has been honourably accomplished.

The second, almost the most important task of Social Democracy—the exposure of the class rôle of the church and the clergy in the support of the Black-Hundreds Government and of the bourgeoisie in their fight against the working class—has also been splendidly fulfilled. Certainly, there is still much to be said on this theme, and the Social Democrats will on further occasions know how to amplify the speech of Comrade Surkov; but his speech was nevertheless excellent, and it is the duty of our party to spread it among all party organisations.

Thirdly, the right sense of the thesis which is so often distorted by the German opportunists—the “proclamation of religion as a private affair”—should be explicitly made clear. This, unfortunately, Comrade Surkov did not do. This is the more to be regretted, as the fraction had already committed an oversight in this question, which the *Proletarii* at the time nailed to the counter, namely, the error of Comrade Belousov. The debates in the fraction show that the discussion on atheism concealed the question of the right interpretation of the demand for the proclamation of religion as a private affair. We shall not lay the blame on Comrade Surkov alone for this error of the whole fraction. More, we state openly that it is the fault of the whole party, which has not sufficiently cleared up this question and has not sufficiently made Social Democrats aware of the meaning of Engels' comment concerning the German opportunists. The fraction debates show that there was an unclear approach to the question, not a deviation from Marxism, and we are convinced that this error will be put right at a later meeting of the fraction.

In broad outline the speech of Comrade Surkov is, as said, of outstanding excellence and should be circulated by all our organisations. In the handling of this speech the fraction has shown a conscientious fulfilment of its Social Democratic duty. It only remains to wish that correspondence concerning the debates in the fraction should appear more frequently in the party Press, and so build up a close ideological unity in the activity of the party and of the fraction.

WHAT IS THE A.P.R.A.?

By HAYA DELATORRE

(Leader of the "United Front" Latin America Anti-Imperialist Party)

THE struggle organised in Latin America against Yankee Imperialism, by means of an international united front of manual and intellectual workers with a programme of common action, that is the A.P.R.A., the four initial letters of the following words: Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (Popular Revolutionary American Alliance).

Its Programme

The programme of international action of the A.P.R.A. has five general points which serve as a basis for the national sections:—

- (1) Action of the countries of Latin America against Yankee Imperialism.
- (2) The political unity of Latin America.
- (3) The nationalisation of land and industry.
- (4) The internationalisation of the Panama Canal.
- (5) The solidarity of all the oppressed people and classes of the world.

Its Organisation

The A.P.R.A. is a young organisation formed by the young men of the new generation of manual and intellectual workers of Latin America. It was founded in 1924 and has organised sections in various countries in Latin America and also in Europe, where the number of anti-Imperialist Latin American students is pretty large. The principal sections of the A.P.R.A. are at present working in Mexico, Buenos Aires, Central America, Paris and other places in which for political reasons the action of these sections is not publicly allowed. A Central Executive Committee directs the action of all the sections.

The United Front

The A.P.R.A. organises the great Latin American Anti-Imperialist united front and works to include in its ranks all those who in one way or another have struggled and are still struggling against the North American danger in Latin America. Until 1923 this danger was regarded as a possible struggle of races—the Saxon and the Latin races—as a "conflict of cultures"

or as a question of nationalism. From the "Gonzalez Prada" Popular Universities of Peru a new conception of the problem has arisen : the economic conception. In 1924 the first Pan-American Anti-Imperialist League was formed in Mexico and also the Latin American Union in Buenos Aires. The Anti-Imperialist Leagues were the first endeavour of the international united front of workers, peasants and students against Yankee Imperialism. The Latin American Union was founded as the Anti-Imperialist *Frente Unico* of the Intellectuals. As a matter of fact, the Anti-Imperialist Leagues have no fixed political programme, but only that of resistance to Imperialism, and the Latin American Union has simply intellectual activity. The A.P.R.A. was founded in 1924, with a programme of revolutionary and political action, and it invites all the scattered forces to form themselves in a single great front.

The Class Struggle against Imperialism

The history of the political and economic relations between Latin America and the United States, especially the experience of the Mexican Revolution, lead to the following conclusions :—

(1) The governing classes of the Latin American countries—landowners, middle class or merchants—are allies of North American Imperialism.

(2) These classes have the political power in our countries, in exchange for a policy of concessions, of loans, of great operations which they—the capitalists, landowners or merchants and politicians of the Latin American dominant classes—share with Imperialism.

(3) As a result of this alliance the natural resources which form the riches of our countries are mortgaged or sold, and the working and agricultural classes are subjected to the most brutal servitude. Again, this alliance produces political events which result in the loss of national sovereignty : Panama, Nicaragua, Cuba, Santo Domingo, are really protectorates of the United States.

The International Struggle against Imperialism

As the problem is common to all the Latin American countries, in which the dominant classes are allies of Imperialism in joint exploitation of the working classes, it is not an isolated or national question, but is international among the twenty Latin American republics. But the governing classes encourage divisions among

these republics, assisting the Imperialist plan which fears Latin American unity (covering eight millions of square miles and about ninety millions of inhabitants). The governing classes stir up national feeling and national conflicts, as in the case of Peru against Chile, Brazil against Argentina, Ecuador and Colombia against Peru, &c. Every time that the United States intervenes as an "amicable mediator" they arrange matters purposely so that no definite settlement can be arrived at which might produce a principle of unification. The recent question of Tacna and Arica between Peru and Chile is the clearest demonstration of this policy of Imperialism.

Imperialism cannot be Overthrown without the Political Unity of Latin America

The experience of history, especially that of Mexico, shows that the immense power of American Imperialism cannot be overthrown without the unity of the Latin American countries. Against this unity the national dominant classes, middle class, landowners, &c., whose political power is almost always buttressed by the agitation of nationalism or patriotism of countries hostile to their neighbours, are ranged. Consequently the overthrow of the governing classes is indispensable, political power must be captured by the workers, and Latin America must be united in a Federation of States. This is one of the great political objects of the A.P.R.A.

The Nationalisation of Land and Industries as the Sole Means of Combating Imperialism

Within the capitalist system, and in accordance with the dialectics of its historical process, Latin America would infallibly become a North American colony. The United States holdings of values in the world (*The New York Times*, June 27, 1926) are shown in the following table, exclusive of the war debts :—

United States holdings in Asia	.. ..	\$1,000,000,000
" " Europe	.. ..	\$2,000,000,000
" " Australia	.. ..	\$1,000,000,000
" " Canada	.. ..	\$2,500,000,000
" " LATIN AMERICA	.. ..	\$4,100,000,000

This introduction of capital into Latin America increases almost daily. From June to October, Imperialism has invested over \$50,000,000. The conflict between the United States and Mexico shows us that Mexico has not been able to nationalise the

petroleum industry, which to-day is still dominated by the menace of a North American invasion in defence of the interests of the Standard Oil Company (North American capital in Mexico petroleum \$614,487,263). The "Enmienda Platt" of the Cuban Constitution and the cases of Santo Domingo, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Hayti prove to us that national authority is lost in proportion as investments by Imperialism are accepted. The nationalisation of land and industry under the direction of the producing classes is the sole means of maintaining the country's power, and is the correct policy for the countries of Latin America.

Latin American Political Unity pre-supposes the Internationalisation of the Panama Canal

The Panama Canal in the power of the United States Government is one danger more to the sovereignty of Latin America. The programme of the A.P.R.A. frankly proclaims the "internationalisation of Panama." Dr. Alberto Ulloa, Professor of International Law in the University of St. Marcos, Lima, Peru, writes in support of this thesis : "The Panama Canal must be internationalised. . . . It is not possible to allow to the United States the exercise of supreme rule in Panama." (Open letter to the President of the Federation of Students of Panama, June, 1926.)

Conclusion

The A.P.R.A. represents, therefore, a political organisation struggling against Imperialism and against the national governing classes which are its auxiliaries and its allies in Latin America. The A.P.R.A. is the united front of the toiling classes (workers, peasants, natives of the soil) united with students, intellectual revolutionaries, &c. The A.P.R.A. is an autonomous movement, completely Latin American, without foreign interventions or influences. It is the result of a spontaneous movement in defence of our countries in view of the experiences of Mexico, Central America, Panama and the Antilles, and the present position of Peru, Bolivia, and Venezuela, where the policy of "penetration" by Imperialism is already keenly felt. For this our watchword is to be the following : "Against Yankee Imperialism, for the unity of the peoples of Latin America, for the realisation of social justice."

(PARIS, October, 1926.)

The World of Labour

	PAGE
TRADE UNIONISM IN THE BALKANS	760
JAVA : National Revolutionary Movement	763

TRADE UNIONISM IN THE BALKANS ¹

Bulgaria

BEFORE their dissolution in 1923, the revolutionary unions claimed 35,000 members. The so-called "neutral" unions, mainly of state employees, &c., numbered at this time 25,000, but because of their inactivity were of little importance, while the free trade unions, as the result of a split in 1921, numbered under 3,000. In the summer of 1925 the latter claimed a membership of 15,000.

The economic crisis affected Bulgaria very severely; the number of unemployed during 1925 was stated to exceed 80,000, a very large proportion. It should be stated that no effective relief is provided for unemployment. The working-class standard of living fell to 30-50 per cent. of the pre-war level, and in industry the hours of work were increased to ten or twelve as a rule, in place of the legally established six or eight hours.

A revival of activity on the part of revolutionary trade unionism began in 1924, and made steady progress. The question of unity was always kept to the fore, and in August, 1925, two conferences were held, on the invitation of some "Independent" unions, with the free trade unions, for this purpose. They broke down principally on the question of international affiliation, and when in September a further invitation was ignored, the independent unions set up their own national federation (end of October, 1925).

No further steps were taken until after the Balkan conference in April, when the free unions issued an invitation to a conference. This took place on July 21, and agreement was reached on a basis for unity, the principal points of which are:—

Complete independence of political parties, and admission of all workers without distinction; no union to hold meetings or establish offices in premises of political parties.

Preservation of freedom of opinion and criticism. Democratic centralisation.

Organisation by industry, with a factory committee in every factory; all unions to belong to their appropriate Trade Secretariats.

The united Federation to be directed by a committee consisting of equal numbers of the two sides, until the first congress six months from the date of agreement.

Meanwhile the Federation shall enter into informative relations with the

¹A general account of Trade Unionism in the Balkans, and of the I.F.T.U. Balkan Conference, was given in the last issue (LABOUR MONTHLY, November, 1926 pages 702-704).

I.F.T.U., the question of International affiliation to be decided by the first congress; the Federation in any case to support the Anglo-Russian Committee in its efforts to unify the two Internationals.

The national congresses of both sections took place on August 8, and instead of accepting the agreed basis, the free trade unions put forward several alterations, the most important of which was immediate affiliation to the I.F.T.U. The new basis was carried by thirty-eight votes to twenty-three, several important unions being in opposition. Unity has thus not yet been achieved.

Jugo-Slavia

The Trade Union Movement in Jugo-Slavia has, throughout its history, been more seriously divided than almost any other. In 1920, when organisation and enthusiasm were at the greatest, the most important federation, which was affiliated to the R.I.L.U., had 250,000 members. Even at that time a free, or social-democratic, federation of 10,000 members, and Croatian, Serbian, Christian and other small bodies existed. With the practical abolition, through terrorism, of the revolutionary unions in 1921 and 1922, the free unions increased in importance, and in 1925 claimed 35,000 members. The "Independent" unions, which had gradually re-established existence, numbered 16,000 members, and in all certainly less than 10 per cent. of the working class is now organised in at least seven different bodies.

In 1925 the two chief federations organised a joint May-day demonstration, and further discussions took place on the question of unification. A conference was arranged for October 10, but shortly before that date a quarrel arose over the expulsion, by the police and the free union officials, of some "Independents" from the Chamber of Labour in Belgrade, and as a consequence many of the latter did not attend the conference. It was successful in realising unification of the railwaymen, but the general question of unity was not solved.

Early in 1926 the "Independent" organisation was again subjected to severe attack, some 450 of its leading members being imprisoned and its work seriously disorganised. It sent to the Balkan conference an invitation to a unity conference in Belgrade, but no notice was taken of this or of its demand for representation, and the Jugo-Slavian representatives at the conference announced that "unification is now accomplished."

The movement for unity persists, however, and during the summer several union conferences declared for unity in principle. On the initiative of the "Autonomous" unions (mainly clerical workers) a conference was held on June 27 at Belgrade, which decided on a basis. This included independence of political parties, no international affiliation, proportional representation of the sections in the central committee, &c., and is receiving widespread support.

Unification by localities and even factories, without official sanction, is also reported.

Rumania

The split in the Trade Union Movement of Rumania dates from the famous congress at Cluj (Klausenberg) in September, 1923. The movement had already fallen on evil days. The number of members, from 2-300,000 in 1920, had sunk in 1922 to 20,000, but had again risen in 1923, so that 50-60,000 were represented at the congress. Here a conflict arose over the defeat of one of the official motions, and the President, according to the I.F.T.U. Report,

declared the session closed, and called a new session to which only those were admitted who declared themselves to be in favour of affiliation to Amsterdam.

The excluded unions formed a Unitary Federation, and immediately proposed to the original body to discuss reunion, but the proposal was refused. Since that time both federations have continued to exist in a condition of great weakness. The policy of compromise and submission of the reformist unions is incapable of attracting the working class, while the danger of membership of a body so persecuted as a revolutionary union is such that none but the hardiest will join it. Under the pressure of the economic crisis of 1925-6 a renewed effort towards unity has been made. The conferences of both sections in January, 1926, considered the question favourably, but the reformist unions put forward the condition affiliation to the I.F.T.U. as essential. Since the Balkan conference negotiations have been reported.

In particular a local conference took place in July at Cluj, which progressed favourably for a time, and aroused much interest. It eventually broke down, however, over the questions of internal democracy and leadership, and of policy, the pursuit of the class struggle. The fundamental difference of outlook on these points could not even yet be overcome.

The national conference of the reformist unions in August, apparently feeling its position strengthened by the decisions of the Balkan conference, declared emphatically that affiliation to Amsterdam is a necessary condition of unification, and members spoke of the impossibility of unity while there remain Communists within the unions.

Greece

In Greece alone of the Balkan States has the split in the trade unions not been serious. The General Confederation of Labour has been able to keep its organisation and membership fairly intact in spite of persecution.

After the general strike in the autumn of 1923 the trade unions were allowed to continue their existence only on condition that the leadership was given into the hands of those in whom the Government had confidence. In spite of this, the movement seems to have recovered, but in 1925, under the Pangalos regime, many of the leaders were imprisoned or deported, the official organ was suppressed, and the general congress forbidden.

Two of the leaders were present at the Balkan Conference. Shortly before this a conference was reported which had decided to bring about complete unity, to affiliate to the I.F.T.U., and to break completely with the Communist Party. A further conference was to ratify these decisions, but a split seems probable if and when such a conference takes place.

JAVA

National Revolutionary Movement

THE Dutch East Indies constitute an economic and political area of great importance and of a typically colonial type. The population is roughly fifty millions, that of Java being about 70 per cent. of the total. Production is mainly agricultural, sugar, rubber, tobacco, tea, &c., being the chief exports, but is carried out under capitalist conditions. Thus, while 45 per cent. of the population is small peasantry, it is estimated that an equal number are employed as wage labourers, whole or part time, in agricultural and industrial enterprises.]

Economic development has been rapid in recent years. The population increased by 40 per cent. between 1905 and 1920. Export figures give a certain indication of the rate of capitalist development. Total export figures in millions of guilders (twelve guilders=£1 at par) were :—

1913	1920	1922	1923
614	2,225	1,136	1,368

In 1923 sugar accounted for 37 per cent. and rubber for 13 per cent. of the total. These and other export goods are produced almost entirely by capitalist-owned, large-scale plantations. Native peasant production is mainly of rice, maize and other foods for local consumption. It is estimated that the total capital invested in the Dutch East Indies is now about £500 millions, of which probably two-thirds is foreign-owned.

The chief foreign commercial interest is Dutch. British trade is considerable and growing, but is not greater in value than that of Japan, U.S.A., China, or India. The competition among these interests, and in recent years those of Germany, is reported to be severe.

The social composition of the country has determined the nature of the nationalist movement, which has become important since the war, and is, far more than in India, and even more than in China, a predominantly working-class movement. The Sarekat Islam, a religious nationalist body, was for a time influential, but is now relatively feeble. Several nationalist organisations exist, of which the best known is the Sarekat Rayat, mainly a peasant party, but partly under working-class influence. It has lately been subjected to official persecution.

The trade-union movement is strongest in the transport industry—railway and dock strikes have become common recently—but extends to all industries, and in the case of the native workers is largely under Communist leadership. The Communist Party was founded in 1918, and since 1922 has made rapid progress. In common with the trade unions it has suffered severely from persecution. Since the railway strike of 1923 particularly, which was defeated by the forces of the Government, acts of violence against the working class, both by official forces and by unofficial armed bands, have been frequent.

The peasantry has recently begun to show greater political activity, and, to some extent owing to Communist Party work, increases in taxation have been met with widespread opposition and refusals to pay.

As everywhere in the East, the successes of the Chinese national struggle have aroused the greatest interest and enthusiasm. Many public meetings have been held and funds collected for its support.

Index to Volume VIII

January-December, 1926

I—AUTHORS

		<i>pages</i>
A. M. A.	Teachers and the Class Struggle	296-303
ANON.	One Sector	359-374
	Police Persecutions	379-384
ARNOT, R. PAGE	Shooting Niagara	284-287
	Introduction to the Study of the General Strike	337-351
	The Miners' Struggle in Midsummer, 1926	402-414
BOUGHTON, RUTLAND	How Come these Traitors ?	691-696
BROWDER, EARL	Course of Economic Development in the United States	559-568
BUKHARIN, N.	Tasks of the Russian Communist Party	18-31
BURNS, EMILE	The I.L.P. Programme	99-107
	Are We Nearing Revolution ?	429-434
B. W.	A Poor Story of Coal	125-126
CAMPBELL, J. R.	Were the Miners Let Down ?	463-470
	The Test of Bournemouth	525-533
CITRINE, W. M.	A Soviet Prison	178-185
COOK, A. J.	The Coal Crisis and the Way Out	157-162
	The Great Mining Crisis	399-401
COPPOCK, R.	The Attack on the Building Trade	242-248
C. P. D.	Two Sides of a Medal	124-125
	The Indian Peasant Through Official Spectacles	510-512
CROSSLEY, J.	Egypt at the Cross Roads	51-57
DELATORRE, HAYA	What is the A.P.R.A.?	756-759
DESAI, M. G.	Colour v. Class in South Africa	172-177
DUNSTAN, DR. ROBERT	From Liverpool to Margate	665-672
DUTT, CLEMENS	British Labour and India	544-552
	Indian Nationalism and the Elections	733-744
DUTT, R. PALME	Trotsky and his English Critics	223-241
E. B.	The Government as Strike Breaker	638-639
EWER, W. N.	After Locarno	32-43
	The Geneva Fiasco	288-295
	The Mosul "Victory"	475-483
	Pharaoh in Downing Street	673-680
F. AND I. C.	Between the Millstones	188-190
"FIREMAN"	The New Stage in the Mining Struggle	724-732

Index to Volume VIII

765

		<i>pages</i>
FOX, RALPH	Fascist Imperialism	553-558
G. A. H.	Revolutionary Song	63-64
GRENFELL, HAROLD	Secret Service and the Labour Movement	492-467
HORNER, ARTHUR	The Coal Report and After	272-283
	Another Stage in the Miners' Struggle	534-543
	Forward to Victory	657-664
H. P.	The Golden Burden of Wall Street	253-255
HUTCHINSON, W. H.	The Industrial Alliance	153-156
HUTT, ALLEN	The Pact of Amsterdam	44-50
LAWTHER, WILL	The Miners' Struggle in the North	471-474
LENIN, N.	The Relation of the Workers' Party to Religion	745-755
LIADOV, M. N.	The Functions of a Communist University	435-440
LUXEMBURG, ROSA	Peace Utopias	421-428
L. V. B.	The Bournemouth Congress	594-604
L. W.	Italy To-day	304-312
MALONE, COLONEL C. L.	Canton	484-491
MARX, KARL	The Revolution in China and in Europe	145-152
O. E. B.	Blinding the Slaves .	62-63
"OUTPOST"	Where is Mr. Baldwin Going ?	163-171
PAUL, WM.	The Left Wing	108-111
POLLITT, HARRY	A Message	605-606
P. R. S.	Empire and Socialism in Australia	613-620
PURCELL, A. A.	Capital and Labour in the U.S.A.	93-98
	The Importance of May Day	208-211
QUELCH, TOM	The Importance of the Trades Councils	313-317
RIAZANOV, D.	Karl Marx on China	86-92
R. P. D.	The Workers' Theatre	503-510
SCHMIDT, P. J.	Great Britain, the Continent and Russia	212-222
SECRETARY, TRADES COUNCIL	A Workers' Council of Action	352-358
SMITH, HERBERT	The Miners' Struggle Continues	375-378
SMITH, STEWART	The Results of the Canadian Elections	697-701
SOUTHALL, JOSEPH	Margate and the Left Wing	607-612
SPECTOR, MAURICE	Where is Canada Heading For ?	621-628
S. S.	India in Perspective	573-576
TANNER, JACK	The Rank and File and the General Strike	415-420
TOLLER, ERNST	The Murder of Gustav Landauer	112-114
VARGA, EUGEN	Mexico To-day	681-690
WELSH, BYRON	Welsh Art and the Revolutionary Idea	629-631
W. P.	A Revolutionary Epic	190-191

II.—SUBJECTS

	<i>pages</i>
ART AND THE THEATRE	
Between the Millstones	188-190
Revolutionary Song	63-64
Welsh Art and the Revolutionary Idea	629-631
Workers' Theatre	503-510
AUSTRALIA	
Empire and Socialism in Australia	613-620
BALKANS, THE	
Trade Unionism in the Balkans	702-704
Trade Unionism in the Balkans (<i>cont.</i>)	760-762
BOOK REVIEWS	
	62-64 ; 124-126 ; 188-191 ; 253-255 ;
	503-512 ; 573-576 ; 638-640
BRITAIN	
Are We Nearing Revolution ?	429-434
The Attack on the Building Trades	242-248
Blinding the Slaves	62-63
Bournemouth and Margate	579-593
Bournemouth Congress	594-604
Class Justice	3-17
Coalition or Working Class Unity ?	131-144
From Liverpool to Margate	665-672
How Come These Traitors ?	691-696
Importance of May Day	208-211
Importance of the Trades Councils	313-317
Industrial Alliance	153-156
Leaders and Leadership	387-396
Left Wing	108-111
Margate and the Left Wing	607-612
A Message	605-606
A Poor Story of Coal	125-126
Secret Service and the Labour Movement	492-497
Stabilisation and Socialism	707-723
Teachers and the Class Struggle	296-303
The Test of Bournemouth	525-533
Trades Union Congress	515-524
Where is Mr. Baldwin Going ?	162-171
BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE	
Government as Strike Breaker	638-639
International Unity in Action	441-446
Introduction to the Study of the General Strike	337-351
May 12, 1926	323-336
One Sector	359-374
Police Persecutions	379-384
Rank and File and the General Strike,	
The	415-420
Shooting Niagara	284-287

Index to Volume VIII

767

		<i>pages</i>
BRITISH GENERAL	Were the Miners Let Down ?	463-470
STRIKE (<i>continued</i>)	A Workers' Council of Action	352-358
CANADA	Results of the Canadian Elections	697-701
	Where is Canada Heading For ?	621-628
CHINA	Canton	484-491
	Karl Marx on China	86-92
	Pharaoh in Downing Street	673-680
	The Revolution in China and in Europe	145-152
EGYPT	Egypt at the Cross-Roads	51-57
FINLAND	The Split in the Trade Unions	249
	Trade Union Congress	498
FRANCE	Communist Party Congress	570-572
	Socialist Party Congress	569-570
GERMANY	Murder of Gustav Landauer	112-114
	The Referendum	446-448
I.L.P.	I.L.P. Programme	99-107
	I.L.P. and the United Front	195-207
INDIA	All-India Trade Union Congress	187
	British Labour and India	544-552
	India in Perspective	573-576
	Indian Nationalism and the Elections	733-744
	The Indian Peasant through Official Spectacles	510-512
	Textile Workers' Strike	122-123
	Two Sides of a Medal	124-125
INTERNATIONAL	After Locarno	32-43
	Enlarged Executive of the Communist International	318-320
	Geneva Fiasco	288-295
	Labour and Socialist International and the Proposed Unity Commission	499-500
	Locarno and the Capitalist Offensive	67-85
	May Day, 1926	259-271
	The Mosul "Victory"	475-483
	Pact of Amsterdam	44-50
	Peace Utopias	421-428
ITALY	Fascist Imperialism	553-558
	Italy To-day	304-312
JAPAN	Agricultural Conditions in Japan	123
	The Japanese Movement in 1925	249-251
	The Workers' and Peasants' Party in Japan	500-502
JAVA	The Revolutionary Movement in Java	763

		<i>pages</i>
MINING LOCK-OUT	Another Stage in the Miners' Struggle	534-543
	The Coal Crisis and the Way Out	157-162
	Coal Report and After	272-283
	Forward to Victory	657-664
	The General Council and the Miners	451-462
	The Great Mining Crisis	399-401
	The Miners' Struggle Continues	375-378
	The Miners' Struggle in Midsummer, 1926	402-414
	The Miners' Struggle in the North	471-474
	The Miners and the New Phase	643-656
	The New Stage in the Mining Struggle	724-732
	Were the Miners Let Down?	463-470
	General Lock-Out	498
NORWAY		
NOTES OF THE MONTH	3-17; 67-85; 131-144; 195-207; 259-271; 323-336; 387-398; 451-462; 515-524; 579-593; 643-656; 707-723	
RELIGION	The Relation of the Workers' Party to Religion	745-755
SOUTH AFRICA	Class <i>v.</i> Colour in South Africa	172-177
	Native Progress in South Africa	251-252
SOUTH AMERICA	Mexico To-day	681-690
	What is the A.P.R.A.?	756-759
TRADE UNION UNITY	Anglo-Russian Committee	632-637
	Anglo-Russian Miners' Conference	569
	Great Britain, the Continent and Russia	212-222
	The Pact of Amsterdam	44-50
	Trade Union Unity	58-61
TUNIS	Trade Union Movement	572
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	Capital and Labour in the U.S.A.	93-98
	Course of Economic Development in the United States	559-568
	The Golden Burden of Wall Street	253-255
U.S.S.R.	A Revolutionary Epic	190-191
	A Soviet Prison	178-185
	Fourteenth Conference of the Russian Communist Party	115-121
	Functions of a Communist University	435-440
	Tasks of the Russian Communist Party	18-31
	Trade Union Resolution of Russian Communist Congress	186
	Trotsky and His English Critics	223-241
WAR	Peace Utopias	421-428
WORLD OF LABOUR	58-61; 115-123; 186-187; 249-252; 318-320; 441-448; 498-502; 569-572; 632-637; 702-704; 760-763	



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