# THE INTERNATIONAL.

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#### The Rat Pit.

Reading the report of the Provincial Commission appointed to investigate complaints regarding the conduct of the Rietfontein Hospital gives the impression of present day society, even in its functions of alleviating suffering, as a huge rat pit. In the vicious round to which the profit system condemns the mass of the people like rats in a hole, like rats they bite and snap at one another as the tension increases with the coming years. Those placed in petty authority, matrons, sisters, warders, alike with the lower victims, patients, chronic wrecks of the wage-system, all come into the contagion of the snap and snarl; because they are in the rat-pit, not able to know that it is the pit produces the distemper, and the system that condemns them to the pit from the as yet unknowable fresh air above the prime offender.

The same ill-humour attends the nurses and probationers as their charges. For example, the number of nurses who succumb to disease, scarlet fever and pneumonia especially, in the Johannesburg Hospital is growing so great as to draw the attention of Board members. The cause is attributed to the long hours worked, making them an easy prey to infection. And yet when attempts are made to substitute the three shift of eight hours for the double shift system of twelve hours, the greatest hostility comes from the nurses themselves.

Society is in the trap of the profit system. So much so that even its much belauded humane institutions are fetid with moral as with physical wreck. A New Zealand rabbiter will describe how going the round of his traps over the mountain side he will often be startled by the yelp of his unwary dog caught in a bunny trap. To extricate it requires the utmost skill and care, for the dog invariably snaps at whoever comes to his relief. Large sections of the workingclass are in this predicament. The irritation of the trap is the greatest hindrance to release. Ultimately, all these sections of workers whose environment places them in positions of lackeydom to the prevailing economic interests can only be relieved by the growing power of the workers organised in the strategic industries of the country.

## Signs of Change.

This week has seen welcome signs of Trade Union activity. The workingman of the Rand is turning more and more from the German to the Capitalist as the enemy to fight. The mine workers held last Sunday the largest quarterly meeting since January 1914. This was attributed to the new system of devolution of control to District Branches. The adoption of local control has resulted in a largely increased membership. This means that where mineworkers previously knew of the Union only by the payment of a fee to the Head Office, the system of District Branches tends to identify them with its administration, in short, makes them Trade Unionists in deed as well as in name.

It is to be hoped that this will lead to further development.

Local initiative will sooner or later bring the surface mechanics into line with the rest of the Mine Workers.' Local "sports" will appear in the ranks of the native workers, and the growing tendency to

make the Mine Branch the unit meeting will be the means not only of consolidating all white workers, but of creating links with the native workers as well.

Meanwhite the mechanics are calloting as to how far they will press their demand for a rise in wages. They are rightly indignant at attempts to divide them along the lines of married and single. If they really nad the fight in them, this is the best opportunity for years to get, not merely increases in wages, but other concessions of a more abiding nature. Now is the ideal time to forge a stronger industrial weapon. While the mechanics and mine workers are variously pursuing their little claims of the passing hour, they might be consolidating their forces into one Union which would make them impregnable against any attempt to drive them back after the war period.

While the white mechanics and mine workers are engrossed in their sectional craft advantages, let them not forget that there is a vast army behind them of dark, dumb, silent workers, gaining more and more cohesion in the web of industry, getting more and more homogenous in the machine leveller, unconsciously imbibing from that machine, from the white worker, and from the education of events, from the treatment meted out to them by capitalist society in the courts, the pass offices, the stopes, and the churches, imbibing a collective wisdom albeit their aboriginal simplicity that will confound all doctrines and all prejudices. The white worker can meet this vast induna as a friend to lift the whole working lass; or delay the fellow-worker's hand of industrial unity, and find all his two and ten penny standards, thrust like foolish prophets forth into the night of utter futility.

## The Casualty Lists.

Will the heavy casualty lists which continue to appear day by day make people pause, and ask what have these men died for. The ravers on the recruiting platform will say that they died to crush Prussian militarism; but that is only their term for Prussian trade, Prussian competition. This spirit is the shopkeeping spirit; and when your rival shopkeeper steals a customer you attribute it to all sorts of unfair methods. But we wonder whether those whose hearts are bereaved by the slaughter of Deville Wood are still satisfied with Trade, even Free Trade, as a cause worthy of their loss.

The world is in the grip of the Trade intriguer. The forestaller and regrater is to-day the ruler. The armament makers whose activities have clawed every Britisher body and soul into their grasp, the shipping firms who are reaping fabulous profits, these and kindred interests through their tool the State to-day dictate the policies of Press and Cabinets. Their Economic Conferences are engaged in finding how by the investment of the blood of another couple of hundred thousand European sons they can gain advantage for their shop interests in the world market.

We wonder whether the mothers of this week's dead are gratified at the news that Italian Railways are now in the control of British Capital. Is it a consolation to them to know that the great American and British munition speculators have amassed huge fortunes out of the mass murder of their sons. Was it for this open brigandage in which the workers have neither share, nor guilt, that

A Swiss correspondent of the Wireless Press says that two gaudily dressed women recently entered a Budapest tramcal and one said to the other:—"We are doing splendidly. If the war lasts another five years we shall be millionaires several times over." A mutilated soldier sitting near rose and struck the speaker across the face. There was an uproar, but, the soldier declared that he had not suffered mutilation to make millionaires of heartless women. But that is the only cause and the only outcome, of his and every soldier's sacrifice.

### Politics and Labour Leaders.

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Every class struggle as p litical struggle. Whosever repudiates the political struggle, by this very act gives up all part or lot in the class struggle.

Plechanoff.

A respected Labor M.L.A. was heard to be moan the other day that "politics are dead" these days. What he meant was that Labour Party politics are dead. To-day it is a straight out issue between Capitalism and Socialism, not between Capitalism and a Party which has the Socialist objective, before which it makes a holy sign at each Annual Conference—if it happens to hold one.

The capitalist Parties are not generating capitalist issues, therefore "politics are dead.' Labour politics are also dead because there is no class conscious industrial organisation to generate the class issue: The revolutionary political workingclass movement, the I.S.L, finds politics very much alive these days, although as yet it has no class con-cious union to back it up. But the political wing of the workingclass movement will be divided, indecisive and ragged so long as the industrial wing will be torn by craft divisions, and the class issue clouded by alliances with capital. Conversely, the industrial wing is in that state of ragged tangle because the political movement misread its mission when it got its class mandate two years ago. The functions of the political and industrial wings of the working class movement towards each other are so interwoven that they can only be stated by seeming contradictions. It is this interwoof that enables the capitalist press to bambouzle the unwary worker. The day after the last General Election, having carried on a furious anti-Labour Party campaign and won, The Star began cajoling the workers again not to despair by resorting to industrial action and strikes. The political weapon was the thing.

So long as the workingclass movement conceives of political action as a kind of fifth, wheel, a machine for drawing off workingclass leaders into capitalist issues, "a rod to lead the revolutionary lightning into the ground," mere "populist" expressions every five years, a play of parliament, an easy avenue for career seekers, a means of getting things instead of a means of consolidating their industrial forces, so long will the capitalist press urge politics as the thing.

On the other hand, the affiliation of Trades Unions to the Labour Party aroused the most offensive ire of the capilalist Press. That kind of political action which tends intimately to bind the industrial force with the political weapon, to keep a firm grip on career seekers, to hold parliamentary representatives, as its own servants although in Parliament, and thus preserves the industrial force from those anarchist outbreaks which make the proletariat an easy prey of capitalist cannon,

—that, the true kind of political action, is what they fear.

There is an idea prevalent among quive respectable spokesmen of the workingclas that for a political party to turn its propaganda away from parliamentary measures towards the regeneration of the industrial movement deprives it of the name of "political"; it is supposed then to be talking "industrialism." It is this narrow interpretation of political action by Socialists that has been the bane of the workingclass movement. The capitalist class had economic power long before it wielded political power. It uses its political to consolidate and increase its economic power.

"Capitalism will remain invulnerable so long as it faces not a proletariat organized in a class conscious Union. That class conscious Union cannot rise or recruit its forces without the political agitation of its kindred—a party of Socialism." So said De Leon. At this stage of the movement in South Africa this is undoubtedly the political function of a Socialist Party. We need to get accustomed to the idea, hitherto strange but none the less correct, that the building up of the workingclass in Industrial Unity can be, and should be, a paramount political issue. It is none the less a political issue because the working class movement and not the capitalist class generate it.

We have to get accustomed to the idea of a political party of Socialism being the scaffolding—again to use De Leon's inimitable simile—for the industrial organization of the workers. Or as a tree, whose foliage derives sustenance from the root, and whose root derives sustenance from the transformed sap in the leaves,—to make the tree thrive, it is the industrial root that must be watered. A spraying of the foliage may bring a transient greenness while the root is dying; as happened in the 1914 Provincial Election bubble.

Numerous are the similes which serve the intimate relation of the political and industrial movement of the workingclass. The use which political action has for the industrial movement may be likened to the use which the coulter of a plough has to the ploughshare. Who that has worked between the horns of a plough, turning over the green lea ground in long even, clean cut furrows, does not value the coulter, which prevents the force of the ploughshare from ripping up the field right and left, and breaking the plough into the bargain.

There is no hocus pocus about the Social Revolution. It baffles only because of its simplicity of method. No large statesmanship, no intricate parliamentary bills, no wizardry of finance, is involved in the emancipation of the workingclass. There is no meaning in history except we interpret the industrial organization of the workers as the permanent part of their movement, the kernel of the new society. Neither is there any meaning in all history

unless we regard political rights, wrested by the capitalist class for its own use, as the handle first for Socialist propaganda, then of workingclass consolidation, and finally the weapon by which the capitalist State will itself be destroyed, when the Workers' class conscious unity in Industry will emerge as the only communal authority, having drawn all humanity within itself. By this path alone can we get something real now, while at the same time cutting out a clear course for the Socialist Commonwealth.

The choice lies before us of going on as before, regarding political action as the voice of a mob panicked once every five years, or as the direct voice of the Industrial Union of the workers. If the former, then we can look forward going down in our grey hairs fifty years hence still lampooning and lamenting the atrocities of capitalism. If the latter, then the duty of a revolutionary political party to-day is to create the class conscious, industrial solidarity, without fear or favour to white skin or black, of an undivided workingclass. For some time, this will bring no votes. But votes were not our objective.

## A Pig on the Bench.

The best qualification for a Rand magistrate is that he be more or less a brute. Will Dyson has a cartoon on modern courts of justice, where a huge ugly brute of a cave-dweller with a spiked club in his hand sits dictating verdicts to the judge. But Mr Maurice Bovill, of E Court, Johannesburg, poses as a judicial brute of the pig variety. Last Saturday he was called upon to adjudicate in some remarkable cases bearing on European child life. The following is culled from the press report.

A sad-eyed woman in deep mourning gave evidence in a case wherein Mr. Crabbe applied for two little girls to be sent to a home. The woman said that, apart from the children in court, she had three other young girls who were now in a good home. Her husband died at the beginning of the year from phthisis. She had no means, and lived in a two roomed dwelling in a western suburb. The people in her neighbourhood recently organized a concert on her behalf. She could not go to work, as it was not safe to leave young girls alone in the house in the quarter where she lived:

The Magistrate: You are respectably dressed, and by your appearane I should say you are not entirely poverty-stricken, and the children look to be fairly well cared for. You take upon yourself the responsibility of bringing children into the world, and now you want someone to take care of them for you.

The Women: I do not want anybody to look after them, but (tearfully) I am helpless. I would go to work, but I cannot leave my children alone.

Cicero was right; out of a shop nothing can come but lies. Nothing but lies in the immense shop we call Capitalist society! Its products? All imitations, all adulterated.

PAUL LAFARGUE.

#### Labour in Australia.

This week we learn from the daily press that the Labour Party of Australia is likely to split on the question of conscription. There is no doubt that in Australia as in South Africa the war has shaken up things tremendously in the Labour movement. The old alliance between the radical middle class and the Socialist movement, which was hidden under the term "Labour Party." has been exposed there too The sheep are being parted from the goats by the revolutionary march of events. To read in a sedate Labour wee ly of the official dignity of the Australian Worker, quoted with approval by the equally "sound" Labour Call, sentiments such as "The International" has been reprimanded for uttering makes one one feel dizzy at the whirr of revolution's wheel. Let the 'Labour Call': and Australian Worker speak for themselves:--

#### Labor's Future.

"If the rank and file allowed themselves to be influenced by their representatives, the Labor movement would come to a dead stop," says the "Australian Worker" in a recent thought-compelling and action-urging editorial. "It's a good thing for Australia that the rank and file do not," it adds. "Somebody has got to keep the torch of discontent alight, or the cause of the working class would be lost in the darkness. And no one can do it save the working class themselves. The Labor movement, and being satisfied with things as they are, do not go together at all. Labor must either be rebellmus or die. It must be in a state of continuous revolt against the existing system, or perish with a fatuous smile upon its face." It must, we agree, even if those who "keep the torch" of discontent alight" are viciously assailed by shaken up and swollen-headed "let-us-alone" Labor politicians, "enjoying official dignities and emoluments," as "parasites," "swine," "leeches," "men of no. nationality and no religion," and so on, and run the risk of being fallen upon with "the ferocity of a Bengal tiger" by the petty and prodded politicians aforesaid.

Continuing, our virile Sydney contemporary expresses the opinion that "The objective of the Labor movement can never be accomplished by those in office, because those in office are satisfied, and the motive power, of Labor is discontent." Therefore, "The working class, organised for justice, have got to keep busy all the time. They must exert an unceasing pressure on their representatives... Labor aims at the total destruction of the wage system, and the founding of a new social order on the principle of Fraternal Co-operation. Labor Governments that merely tinker with the system of injustice that obtains are little good to us... So the workers must keep their rebel instincts lively. And they must never let the Labor politician feel their grasp relax." Splendid advice that. May the rank and file soak it well into their understanding, learn it off by heart, and continuously act upon it.

"The hope of the future is Industrial Unionism," concludes the "Worker." "It is our firm conviction that only through the unions can the workers win in the greatest of all wars. With this object in view, there must be a consolidation of the Industrial forces. Union must be amalgamated with union. Craft divisions and petty trade distinctions must go. Closer and still closer unity there must be, till the grand ideal of the One Big Union be an accomplished fact." "Hear, hear!" to that.

## England's fight for Liberty.

How is this for a sample of British Prussianism. We happen to get special details of this because Mr. Norman is a well-known Socialist writer. The treatment meted out to hundreds of others more obscure but equally brave Socialist objectors to militarism may be imagined:—

"Private C.H. Norman, 3rd Reserve Battalion Grenadier Guards, appeared before a court-martial at Chelsea on Friday charged with wilful disobedience of mllitary orders on June 12 at Wandsworth.

Staff-Sergeant Andrews stated that Norman refused to dress for parade on the morning of June 12; he did not notice that prisoner was looking ill.

Norman then went into the witness box and said that he had been ferociously treated at Wandsworth Detention Barracks, and was in very bad health. On the day in question he had been in a strait-jacket for over 20 hours, part of which time he was unconscious. He was put on a diet of bread and water, and decided to go on a hunger, thirst and sleep strike for 48 hours. Forcible feeding was resorted to and the tube was too large and inflicted agony on him. The commandant called him, "Swine," "Beast," and "Coward," and spat three times upon him.

Cross-examined: There was documentary evidence to prove his statement but this had been falsified and destroyed by the commandant."

Addischarged soldier was brought up before the Capetown Court last week for wandering about late at night without any apparent means of subsistence. We recommend the item to the kind attention of the Recruiting Committee,—when they settle their quarrels.

The workingman on strike, who throws a brick at a scab, is a menace to society. If he used a 42-centimeter gun he would be hailed as a savior of civilization.

J. E. ALEXANDER.

## Why the "Labour Leader" was held up.

It was known in Johannesburg last week that the "Labour Leader" for June 30th had been suppressed by the censor. The bales were opened at the coast, and all postal copies were suppressed. Newsagents were warned not to sell any copies of that number on pain of heavy penalty.

Comrade Harrison now writes from Capetown indicating the reason:—

"Shoot conscientious objectors, stifle freedom of the press and speech; this war must go on, hence we have the "Labour Leader" held by the Censor Department for publishing an article implying the following episode.

Thirty four conscientious objectors were sent to France where they, for refusing duty, were lined up to be shot. An officer emerged at the last moment and in tragic tones stated their sentence had been commuted to ten years penal servitude—

This is obviously the "provision" made by the British Government for them which they thought it unwise for us to know.

The lining up and the scene of the firing party was perhaps a ruse to frighten further 'consciences' into submission; but it was also a glaring indication of thirty four men willing to face death rather than take arms against their fellow man".

#### When Eve was Boss.

Freed from the ... oppression of manmade morality, woman will be able to
develop freely her physical and intellectual faculties she will resume the commanding role of initiator which she filled
in the early ages—a role preserved in
memory for us by the myths and legends
of primitive religions. Fot in India, Egypt,
Asia Minor, Greece, those ancient cradles
of human evolution, it is to goddesses, not
gods, that inventions in the practical, industrial arts are attributed. These mythical recollections suggest that woman's
brain was the first to take shape.

PAUL LAFARGUE.

#### No Class War, Please!

But the democrat—by reason of his representing the middle class, that is to say, a transition class, in which the interests of the two other classes are dulled—imagines himself above all class contrast.

MARX.

If the whole class of wage-labourers were to be annihilated by machinery, how terrible that would be for capital, which without wage-labour, ceases to be Capital.

KARL MARX.

in "Wage Labour and Capital." 3d.

## Another League Leaflet.

Hard on the heels of "The Women Badgers" leaflet, the League issued another last week on the occasion of the celebration of the second anniversary of the war, entitled "Let Saints on Earth in Concert Sing." This one was again a big success. 16,000 were issued, and last Friday the women comrades of the League were to be seen distributing them in the crowded streets of Johannesburg. The eagerness of the people in the street to take up the leaflet was remarkable, and during the morning it was seen in all hands. The police became alarmed, as elaborate preparations had been made for a big patriotic fanfare. The names and addresses of the distributors were taken by the police, and Comrade Mrs. Alper was taken to Marshall Square, but no charge was laid, and she was released; the police promising to lay a charge against "The International," from which the leastlet was a reprint, instead.

The wonderful power of the leaflet to influence public opinion has been again demonstrated. Our leaflets undoubtedly created a great impression, and the Recruiting meetings at the Town Hall steps have for the last fortnight been largely taken up with "slashing criticisms of the arguments of the International Socialists," as the "Mail" had it. Said "slashing criticisms" being hysterical demands that all Socialists be placed against a stone wall and shot. But this would never do, so this week there are no recruiting meetings, and Johannesburg is left to enjoy the casualty lists in peace.

## "Chopping off Heads."

DRAWMOT writes taking exception to the use made of the word "anarchist" in last week's issue under this head. His last paragraph fairly represents his objection.

"One could dilate at length on this subject but in order to be as brief as possible I will conclude with the definition of Anarchism as given by the Century Dictionary: 'A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal; absolute individual liberty." I fail to see any reference to bombs, spies, etc. here.'

Of course not. But there is "absolute individual liberty." "What matters the death of vague human beings," said the Anarchist logician Tailhade, "if thereby the individual affirms itself." Drawmot complains of the anarchy in the comprehension of the term Anarchism. Whose fault is that. The next dictionary will have something quite different. Anarchism is evidently incoherence, whatever else it is not. We hear a lot of what it is not, but precious little of what it is. What's wrong with Socialism? Anything that hides under ill-defined terms is of the devil.

#### BRANCH NOTES.

#### JOHANNESBURG

The Sunday night meetings were again a thumping success. In the open air Comrades Bunting and Dunbar held forth to a good crowd. Attempts were made at interruption by men whose faces are getting familiar. But they were shouted down by the crowd itself, a strange reversal of things.

Inside, in the Trades Hall, Comrade J.A. Clark, delivered a lecture on "Why Socialists oppose War." The hall was full to overflowing, floor and gallery. Comrade Andrew Watson presided in his usual cheery manner. Comrade Clark opened with a scathing attack on Labour misleaders in general, and those on the Johannesburg recruiting committee in particular. He cited the atrocious treatment of Mr. C.H. Norman, and showed to what a pass the betrayal of Labour by its leaders had brought liberty in England.

The lecturer then delved into the economic question, showing how national divisions have given way to the class war through the ever increasing struggle going on between the working class and the employing class, the one to sell its labour power at the highest and the other to depress wages to the subsistence level. This struggle was international, and the workers had no part in the quarrels of capitalists. The workers were not in this war. They often saw the cartoon "what did your daddy do in the great war"? He would be in the proud position of saying that he had not steeped his hands in the blood of the workingclass, but had fought the enemy that keeps us in the workshops so many hours a day. The enemy at home was a much greater menace than any outer enemy.'

Next Sunday Comrade George Mason will speak.

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC.

The children, old and young, of the Socialist Sunday School had a glorious outing to the Rosebank Lake last Sunday. It was fine among the trees, and the enjoyment and caracoling of the young Socialists was contagious.

#### KRUGERSDORP.

Comrade S.P. Bunting will speak next Sunday in Thompson's Buildings, Ockerse Street, at 8 p.m.

Alfred Russell Wallace writing from Borneo in 1855, said:

"The more I see of uncivilized people, the better I think of human nature on the whole, and the essential differences between so-called civilised and savage men seem to disappear."

Of course, Russell Wallace lived before the days of the Petitioners Committee, and he may be excused this cheery optimism for the "so-called civilized."

#### Branch Directory.

Benoni.—T. Chapman, P.O. Box 379, Meetings, Smith's Studio. Lake Avenue, every Tuesday night.

Durban.—W.S. Mabbot, 353, Point Rd. Meetings at Acutt's Buildings every Thursday and lectures every Sunday night.

Eastern Districts.—Secretary, C.B. Ty-13 Evans Street, Forest Hill.

Germiston.—E.H. Becker, 54, Queen St. Meetings in Colin Wade's surgery.

Johannesburg.—Mrs. C. Barnet, P.O. Box 4179. Meetings Trades Hall. Every Thursday.

Western Districts.—Fordsburg, Vrededorp, etc. Secretary, Comrade E.V. Boyd; 49, Solomon St. Vrededorp.

Krugersdorp. — Secretary, P. Somerville, 5 Vlei Street. Meetings every first and third Wednesday and, every Sunday night in Thompson's Buildings.

Head Office.—D. Ivon Jones, Secretary, 5 Trades Hall, P.O. Box 4179.

Capetown—Intending members see Comrade Wilfrid Harrison, P.O. Box 1176, or Socialist Hall, Capetown.

#### ADVERTISEMENTS.

## Socialist Sunday School

Children between the ages of 8 and 16 will be welcomed at this school, which meets

Every Sunday Morning at 11 a.m.

at

#### Comrade Neppe's, c/o Fox & MacLaren Streets,

(Near the Stock Exchange)

Readers of "The International" who would like their children to acquire the rudiments of the Socialist teaching and outlook are invited to make use of this opportunity. There are two classes, a senior and a junior, and it is expected that with the increase of numbers a further subdivision of classes will take place.

The General Dealer business registered in January 1916, by Littman Raikin, 69, Avenue Road, Fordsburg," was abandoned as from July 1st, 1916.

C. & L. Chagman, Parties Agents, Mercantile Buildings, corner of Commissioner & Simmonds Sts. Johannesburg.

The General Dealer business regis tered in January 1916, at Nylstroom, by C. Whyte, on tarm De Hoop, No. 1965, Waterberg District, has been transferred to E.S. Tager, and C. Whyte, trading as C. Whyte & Co, as from 19th July, 1916.

C. & L. Clingman, Parties Agents, 25 Mercantile Buildings, corner Commissioner and Simmonds Sts. Johannesburg.

The General Dealer business, Butchery and Kaffir Eating House licence, registered at Boksburg, on 13th July, 1916, by M. Poss, Stand 341, Boksburg, will be transferred to C. Abel, from September 1st, 1916.

C. & L. Clingman, Parties Agents, 25 Mercantile Buildings, corner Commissioner & Simmonds Sts. Johannesburg.

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Have you subscribed to "The International." 5/- per annum, post free, Box 4179, Jo'burg,

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