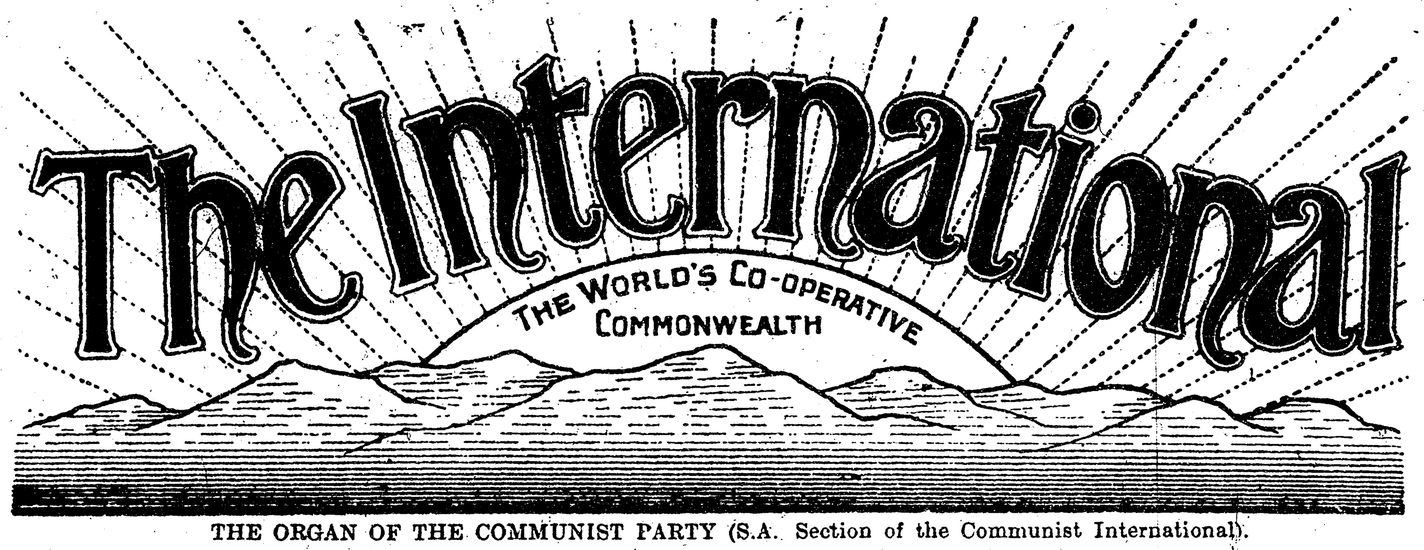
Registered at the General Post Office as a newspaper.

LABOUR DAY
May 1st.

Procession Assembles 10 a.m.
DEMONSTRATION 12 NOON.
All Working Class Organisations fall in under your banner.

Bands, Decorated Trolleys, and Cars.

PROMINENT LABOUR SPEAKERS.



MAY DAY.

SOCIAL
IN
Town Hall,
JOHANNESBURG.
April 30th
(MAY DAY EVE.)

Tickets 2/6

THE ORGAN OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY (S.A. Section of the Communist International).
No. 4, TRADES HALL, RISSIK STREET, JOHANNESBURG. P.O. Box 4179.

Vol. VIII. No. 362. FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 1923. PRICE THREEPENCE.

At Loggerheads.

There seems to be one very satisfactory result of the "scene" in the House of Commons to which so much prominence has been given. The cabled reports draw attention to the rivalry between the Labourites and Liberals for the glory of inflicting a defeat on the Government.

A Liberal member moved, amid Ministerial cheers, the appointment of a select committee to enquire into the conditions of the ex-service men, which roused the ire of the Labourites, who naturally, as the official opposition, claimed precedence.

If this incident indicates that the dangerous and unnatural friendliness between the right wing labourites and the Liberals has had a check, it will be welcomed by all class-conscious workers.

* * *

Thieves Fall Out.

"The French Government has lodged a protest against the Turkish Government's adoption of the Chester Concessions scheme, on the ground that it is in violation of the Franco-Turkish argreement of 1914."—Cable item.

These concessions provide for the construction by American capitalists of 2,700 miles of railways in Asiatic Turkey, and many other valuable concessions. The French capitalists are furious at the possibility of these valuable rights to exploit Turkey slipping from their grasp.

The more the thieves fall out the better chance the workers have to come by their own.

* * *

The Censorship.

We have reason to believe that all P.O. officials have recently been instructed to "arrest" all copies of "The International of Youth," issued by the E.C. of the Young Communist International, and to send it to the D.L.O. for destruction, on the ground that it is "objectionable" matter.

* * *

The Metalworkers Amalgamate.

Very slowly but inevitably the workers are learning that their only hope is industrial unionism. In this connection the March Journal of the A.E.U. reports an Amalgamation Conference, which was called by the General Council of the Trade Union Congress in Manchester in February. Thirty-five unions engaged in the metal industry were invited, and twenty-eight attended.

A resolution was passed approving of the principle of amalgamation, and a committee was formed of a representative from each union to investigate the possibilities and report to a further conference. It is noteworthy that among the absentee unions were the Boilermakers' Society and the Shipwrights, very important bodies which cannot be left out in any serious scheme of one big union for the metal workers.

* * *

Virtuous.

The great United States has expressed its displeasure at the action of Soviet Russia in punishing certain ecclesiastics for counter-revolutionary activity by refusing to allow Mrs. Kalinin to visit her husband, the Soviet Commissar, who is now in America.

The great U.S. is great on virtue when not engaged in lynching negroes and Ku-Klux Klan torturing orgies.

* * *

Having It Both Ways.

"Mr. Bonar Law has played the transitional part he said he would play, and has discharged his obligations. The solitary burden of Parliamentary debate and of the responsibility for foreign affairs is intolerable, and Mr. Bonar Law would not continue long in any case; while without solid reinforcement of his Cabinet and of the Treasury Bench he cannot and will not continue at all."

Thus the London "Observer" and "News of the World," as quoted by the "Rand Daily Mail" last Tuesday. In the very next column we read, on the authority of "our own correspondent":

"Those reports are without foundation. Mr. Bonar Law's health is good—indeed better than it has been for some time. He is playing lawn tennis on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, and is mentally more alert than he has been for some time, the House of Commons having, as I have already stated, an exhilarating effect on him. . . . Both the 'Times' and 'Morning Post,' who are in close touch with the Government, confirm what I say."

Which is all very illuminating.

* * *

An Apology

It is reported that the American Government has apologised to the British Government for the removal to Ellis Island of Mrs. Fred Thompson, wife of a well-known dramatic author.

There are no apologies, however, for the treatment of thousands of the working class, who are herded like cattle when arriving not only in the United States, but other so-called democratic countries as immigrants.

Chivalry.

The Paris dressmakers have gone on strike, and for their audacity have been hunted and chased like wild beasts by the capitalist thugs. Capitalism has much to say of the position of women in Soviet Russia, but we have not yet read of the red troops being used to break a woman's strike.

* * *

Not Bolshevism.

The Public Health Commissioner (India) states that a rise in mortality from plague began in December, and in March there were 36,900 deaths compared with a mean average of 14,400 for the previous four years.

India enjoys the blessings of British rule, Henry, and millions starve and rot for the privilege.

Hooray for Imperialism!

* * *

Going Slow.

The capitalist press shrieks at the insensate wickedness of labour leaders who urge as a weapon against the boss class the policy of going slow on the job, and try to prove by the most weird and topsy-turvy economics that the more the workers produce the more jobs there will be. This argument does not apply, it seems, when, as in the Ruhr, the bosses decide on the go slow policy to defeat their rivals.

What is sauce for the goose is evidently NOT sauce for the gander.

Oil Again.

The chairman of Standard Oil claims that Mexican oilfields are drying up, and advises Americans to seek foreign oil lands, especially Mosul. Probably the Mexicans will not be altogether sorry if Uncle Sam's unwelcome attentions to their country is diverted to other fields, and they may obtain a breathing space whilst American big business is settling its difference with British and other European capitalism.

Already the ball seems to have started rolling over the concessions in Asia Minor given to Americans by the Turks, to the annoyance of French capitalists, and when Uncle Sam treads on the corns of John Bull in Mesopotamia we shall see how much there is in the cry of Anglo-Saxon solidarity.

They are a happy family!

* * *

Jeremiah.

It is reported that the Selborne Hall was crowded last Sunday to hear a gentleman from Stellenbosch talk about a veritable avalanche of blood and fire, which he says will start from Russia. He said that there is now only one possible thing that could stop the wild and senseless mob, without sense of justice and bereft of reason, and that is that the profiteers should cease exploiting and robbing the people, as suggested by the prophet Jeremiah.

What a hope! Where Jeremiah failed Mr. de Jager is not likely to succeed.

MAY DAY.

TO THE RANK AND FILE OF THE WORKERS.

Your officials are AFRAID to take part in the fight for a General Amnesty and the Workers' Holiday Show them and the Bosses that YOU are not afraid.

Fall in on Union Ground at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, May 1st.

COME IN YOUR THOUSANDS!

Kick the Under Dog.

A miner named Neuhoff was found guilty of contravening the mining regulations at Modder Deep, and causing an accident, resulting in the death of five natives, on March 2nd, whilst the shift boss, who was similarly charged, was acquitted. The enquiry did not get as far as the manager, to say nothing of the directors who pocket the boodle.

* * *

Helping the Rich.

The British Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a reduction of taxation amounting to 47 millions. Of this, 26 millions comes off income tax, and the corporation and companies' tax would be reduced by one-half. The only other considerable reduction was on beer, estimated to be worth 13 millions. The lion's share of the relief consequently, as usual, is enjoyed by the wealthier classes of the community, and the out-of-works and old-age pensioners will continue to starve.

* * *

Easy Money.

Tielman Roos, speaking at Ermelo, gave some piquant details of the way our self-sacrificing Ministers dip their hands into government funds. Quoting from the Auditor-General's report, he said that Colonel Mentz, whilst attending a conference in London lasting 23 days, drew his full Ministerial salary, and at the same time was the guest of the British Government, which paid ALL EXPENSES. He was further allowed £3 per day expenses by the South African Government, and he was even reimbursed £61 10s. for tips.

One wonders how much of this sum actually went into the pockets of porters, etc., and how much profit the gallant Colonel made out of the deal. Tielman Roos rightly wants to know whether Mentz kept a record of all tips given. He would have his notebook on hand pretty often, one would think.

What Next.

The "Star" in a leading article denounces Bolshevism as being responsible for the long drawn out Irish fight for national independence. Tielman Roos describes it as an anarchical form of international Socialism under which system the professional class disappears.

We expect soon to be told that the locust plague is the product of the villainous Soviet Government.

* * *

The Other Side.

In our last week's issue, in printing a letter by Jack Oates, we stated that it had been refused publication by the Durban labour weekly. We now find that the letter appeared in the issue of April 13th.

* * *

Spooks.

Conan Doyle has set the American sensation hunters agog with his pictures of ghosts of dead soldiers taken at the cenotaph at Whitehall, London. The Argus Company, not to be outdone, panders to the superstitious by exhibiting similar pictures in Capetown.

Superstition is the greatest asset of capitalism.

* * *

Why?

We are told that the Irish Republican forces are on the verge of collapse. On the other hand, at a review of 4,000 Tyrone Special Constabulary, Lord Derby said that the depots of the Inniskilling Fusiliers and Irish Rifles would shortly be returned to Ulster.

* * *

Flogging.

"A cablegram states that the U.S.A. authorities are flogging criminals in an effort to stop the crime wave. But the flogging doesn't stop the wave. It merely reverses it. That is to say, those who are responsible for the floggings automatically become the criminals."

What's the Game?

The capitalist press announced last Wednesday that the gentlemen who went down to Capetown a few weeks ago—by invitation and at the expense of the government—to speak on behalf of organised labour in connection with the Conciliation Bill, have been busy with a "supplementary memorandum," to be forwarded to the Parliamentary Select Committee. It is announced that this document was submitted to a "memorandum committee" on Monday, and will be finally dealt with by a meeting of the "executives concerned" on Sunday, 22nd.

We are told that the Memorandum Committee are in favour of creating machinery similar to the now defunct Whitley Councils in England, which are said to be "acceptable to the workers." Now the only occasion on which the workers have been consulted by the self-appointed persons calling themselves the Associated Trade Unions was when they drew up a constitution and submitted it to the unions, and although no public announcement has been made of the result of the voting, it is pretty certain that the crude proposals submitted have been turned down heavily by the majority of the rank and file. There appears, therefore, no more justification for the two or three gentlemen, who have been on a Government trip to Capetown, claiming to represent organised labour than there is for their "bete noir," Archie Crawford, to do the same thing.

The membership of the important unions have emphatically refused to recognise the right of their executives to meet and commit them to policies without consulting them, and anything that may be done next Sunday will NOT, in spite of what Mr. George Brown and his associates may say, be done with the sanction of the rank and file. A hint as to the real object of next Sunday's meeting is given in the article referred to. It is announced that the question of representation at the International Labour Conference to be held at Geneva next October will be discussed. Someone wants to step into Archie's shoes, it seems, and much of the criticism of that astute individual would seem to be but another case of sour grapes.

The workers of South Africa should keep themselves posted on the activities of their leaders and would-be leaders, and assert their right to say whether they desire to have a representaive at the bogus Labour Conference of the League of Nations, and if they so decide, that the election of the individual is placed in the hands of the rank and file. In regard to the Whitley Council scheme, and in fact the whole so-called Conciliation Bill, the proper attitude is to oppose the whole bill, which is only designed by the Smuts Government to hamstring the unions and drive the workers into more abject slavery.

* * *

May Day Celebrations.

JOHANNESBURG ARRANGEMENTS.

Despite the fact that the Workers' Annual Holiday is not officially recognised this year, indications point to its successful celebration. The Committee in charge of matters, on which the Labour Party is now represented, has decided to go ahead with arrangements for a procession and demonstration. The procession will be marshalled on the Union Ground at 10 a.m., and will move off at 10.30 via Plein, Troye, Commissioner, West, President, Eloff, Jeppe and Rissik Streets to the Town Hall steps, where speeches will be made and the proceedings closed with the "Red Flag." A band will be in attendance, and all unions are requested to have their banners out in good time. Comrades in the suburbs are urged to form their own contingents, and march to the Union Ground to take part in the procession. A feature should be made, wherever possible, of decorated trolleys, etc.

Only one union, so far, the B.W.I.U., has issued definite instructions to its members to cease work and take part, although several have recommended their members to do so. Workers are urged to get May Day talked about, and to try to get as large a number as possible to mark the day.

Funds are required to pay for the band and other expenses such as advertising, and donations will be gladly received by the Hon. Secretary (Comrade C. F. Glass), No. 4, Trades Hall, or P.O. Box 6779, who will be pleased to supply any information required.

* * *

Sparks from the Anvil.

We live in an inventive age, but most marvellous of all its inventions is the labourer who will die of hunger unmurmuringly in the midst of wealth he has himself created.

* * *

In a general knowledge paper a scholar defined a grass widow as the wife of a dead vegetarian.

* * *

Land Agent: "This is the plot, sir."
Prospective Purchaser: "Plot! It looks more like a conspiracy."

THE INTERNATIONAL.
Official Organ of
THE COMMUNIST PARTY
(S.A. Section of the Communist International).
(Secretary-Editor, W. H. Andrews.)
Annual Subscription, 10/-; Half-yearly, 5s.
Bundle Orders of One Dozen and over: 2s. per dozen.
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Party Offices:
Nos. 4 & 6, TRADES HALL, RISSIK STREET, JOHANNESBURG.

Vol. VIII. FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 1923. No. 362.

The Red Flag.

The "mother of parliaments" seems to be getting a rowdy old party in her old age. Challenges to fight are almost weekly occurrences, but not much blood flows, it would appear. The singing of the "Red Flag" last week by the left wing of the Labour Party is one more indication that the executive committee of the capitalist class is falling into disrepute. This is as it should be. The sooner the workers see through the sham of parliament the better, and begin to recognise that although during the propaganda and preparatory stages of the workers' revolution it may be used, yet as soon as the workers take control parliament will be obsolete and cease to function.

These "scenes" must be very distasteful to the statesmanlike Ramsay Macdonald, who would prefer to confine the fight within the limits of correct parliamentary procedure. He will probably be able to tame and drill his more enthusiastic followers, however, when the exhilaration of the election triumphs have somewhat evaporated. A few garden parties and dinners with the King and his satellites will probably have a sobering effect even upon the pugnacious Jack Jones, and even the Clyde stalwarts may become tainted with parliamentary respectability.

It was, of course, annoying to His Majesty's Opposition to see their long-cherished hope of becoming the administrators of a capitalist state snatched from them, when it appeared almost within their grasp; but they will have to wait a bit longer. The resources of the old political parties are not yet at an end. Indications are not wanted of an understanding being attempted between the different sections of the capitalist parties, which will probably succeed as a result of their rooted distrust of the Labour Party, moderate and respectable as most of its members are. Probably the Australian example will be followed more or less closely, and a coalition against Labour will take place. This will, of course, clarify the issue, and the next fight will be frankly between Labour and anti-Labour candidates.

We hope that such will be the case, as the very apparent tendency during the last year or two for the British labour leaders to move to the right and to place in important positions in the Labour Party members of the capitalist parties, who but lately were the bitter foes of the workers, has been very distasteful to thousands of the rank and file. If the Liberals go over bodily into the ranks of the Conservatives, the Labourites will be compelled to take up a more uncompromising attitude towards capitalist imperialism, and by so doing will rally to their support the fighting left wing element of the working class, led by the Communists and Industrial Unionists.

That this is desired by large masses of the rank and file is indicated by the great difficulty the leaders have in carrying out their policy of rigid exclusion of all Communists from the Labour Party. All over Great Britain the Labour Party is permeated with Communists, and the "Workers' Weekly" gives a long list of labour bodies on which Communists are in a majority or in a predominating position. This notwithstanding the fact that at Edinburgh nine months ago the Labour Party Conference decided that "no person should be eligible as a delegate to local Labour Parties on any National Conference who was a member of any organisation having for one of its objects the return to Parliament of any local governing body, of any candidates that had not been endorsed or approved by the Labour Party." This ruling is being ignored by the local bodies, and so, in spite of the leaders, the United Front for Labour is becoming an accomplished fact in Great Britain.

Trades Councils.

Ten or fifteen years ago almost every town in South Africa had its trades and labour council, and good pioneer work was accomplished by these bodies, but with the rise of the political Labour Party and the Federation of Trade Unions, they fell away, and to a large extent ceased to function. It is doubtful whether this was an unmixed blessing to the working class, and there is a tendency, as a result of the dislocation of trade union machinery, to revive these local co-ordinating bodies. We understand that Durban is moving in that direction, and that the various local branches of the union have held preliminary meetings.

It may be pointed out that the Trades Councils of such cities as Glasgow, Newcastle, Sheffield, and others in Great Britain exercise a powerful influence not only upon local affairs, but through affiliation with the Labour Party can make themselves felt in national policy. The Witwatersrand Trades and Labour Council, during the years of its existence, had perhaps the cleanest and most useful record of any labour organisation in South Africa, and when it seems temporarily impossible to co-ordinate unions on a national scale, it might be worth considering whether a body so easily organised and so cheaply run as the Trades Council might not be reconstructed. All that is needed is for the various branches of the unions in, say, the Johannesburg municipal area to send a delegate to a meeting to arrange the basis of representation and get the vote of their members in favour of affiliation. The body would be purely consultative and advisory, and might become a rallying point for the active spirits who want to see the rapid reconstruction of labour bodies on both the political and industrial field.

The March issue of "All Power" makes the following comments on this aspect of the workers' movement: "Every effort should be made by the Trades Councils to develop and strengthen the campaign against non-unionism. Every factory, workshop, mine or mill in their respective localities should be made the occasion by the Trades Councils of meetings with the workers therein employed for the purpose of securing their entry into the unions. Further, steps should be taken, wherever possible, to bring about the establishment of Workshop and Factory Committees and the appointment of shop stewards, under the jurisdiction of the Council. The calling into being of such Workshop and Factory Committees will give a tremendous accession of strength to the Trades Councils, providing them with a grip on the localities never hitherto dreamt of. The policy all the time should be to render the towns and districts covered by the Trades Councils absolutely blackleg proof. And all local power should be concentrated in the Trades Councils.

"In this work of movement reorganisation such steps as are possible for the Trades Councils to take in the direction of transforming the existing craft unions into powerful industrial organisations, and towards the concentration of the whole industrial power of the movement in the General Council of the Trades Union Congress should be taken.

"More and more the Trades Councils should take the lead in all working class activities in the localities. In order to rally first their affiliated members, then the whole of the working masses, they should seize upon any cause for discontent in their constituencies, focus it, elaborate plans in connection with it, then initiate great propagandist campaigns. The burning question of unemployment, the housing and rents questions, the conditions under which the workers work in the local workshops, etc., the disputes affecting particular trades, the national question of the working week, the welfare of women and children, the provision of local services—tramways, libraries, parks and open spaces, child welfare centres, maternity homes, etc.—and the multitudinous questions affecting the workers in relation to municipal or national politics, should all be made the occasion of ceaseless propagandist activity on the part of the Trades Councils.

"On all these matters the workers should be able to look to the Trades Councils for a lead, and should be more and more made to realise that the Trades Councils are the true fighting guardians of all local working class interests. In this way will the Trades Councils be able to win the unflinching loyalty and zealous support of the workers in their constituencies."

Mining Accidents.

"Shaft stripped from No. 7 level to 17th station. Will be abandoned, as not required further. Unfortunately, 23 natives killed. No European injured. Output this month may be somewhat affected."

This is the cable sent to the London office of the Randfontein Central G.M. We referred in a former issue to the statement of the chairman of the Chamber of Mines to the effect that the accident rate on the gold mines of the Rand had decreased, but the appalling number of deaths which are constantly being reported point to an entirely different conclusion.

The increasing age of the mines alone is a source of additional danger, and the system of mining forced on the men after March, 1922, which requires each man to do his own timbering, conduces to further accidents. A man on contract, and a bad contract at that, is always tempted to reduce his timbering to a minimum in his eagerness to make a living wage, and the consequent inefficient and insufficient timbering is the most fertile source of serious accidents.

The mining companies care nothing about this, as the mining regulations are so drawn up that almost any accident can be declared to be the fault of the miner, who has infringed one or other of the mining regulations, thus absolving the company from blame and liability. Of course, if the miner attempted to adhere strictly to the regulations he would be sacked instantly, or at best come out in debt at the end of the month. The only remedy for this disgraceful state of affairs is the reconstruction of the unions and the elimination of the non-union man from the mines, then the miners will be in a position to demand reasonable pay for work done and a board, on which the workers have equal representation, to investigate all accidents and the causes of same, and to supervise and control working conditions generally.

At the present time the mine worker has to do whatever he is told, and if he objects to doing three men's work he is immediately fired, and some unfortunate, compelled by a long spell out of work, takes on the job, and by incompetence endangers not only the lives of his gang, but the lives of all workers in his immediate vicinity.

As an example of the economies practised at the expense of the safety of the worker, in order to increase the dividends for the controlling houses, in several mines the attempt was made to lay the tracks on sleepers made out of tree limbs lopped from lagging as used for timbering. The procedure was for a lot of these loppings to be sent down to the section where sleepers were required, and the track-layer had to split them in half, and then to lay them under the rails and try to dog-spike them. This proved a failure, and on one particular mine the mine captain had to admit that it was not his wish the experiment was tried, but he either had to carry out instructions or get out.

An Historic Parallel.

By SANTI DEVI.

We take the following extract from a very interesting article which appeared on March 15th, in "The Vanguard," the organ of the Communist Party of India:

"For extent and magnitude, there is only one historic parallel to the conflict that rages throughout India to-day, and that is the period of Industrial Revolution that visited Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, transforming feudal states into modern nations depending less upon agriculture than upon manufacture for their existence and well-being. This re-birth of Europe from agricultural feudalism to industrial capitalism finds expression in the history of the last hundred years as a period of internal and external strife—of peasant revolts, civil wars, revolutions and aggressive and defensive warfare on the part of newly-born political states, in which the powerful middle class was gaining ascendancy over the old feudal nobility and landed aristocracy.

"It is to this period, then, that one must turn to find a parallel for the Indian situation of the present day, and the field is rich in possibilities for comparison. To do full justice to the subject, not a few articles, but a book would be necessary, in which the evolution of political nationhood in India and in Europe would be sketched, out of a background of social and economic transformations similar in nature and extent, though vastly different in method and result. India, like Europe, is a continent composed of a bewildering congeries of races and tongues in various stages of development, and undergoing to-day a vast awakening and readjustment, due to the shifting of her agricultural population from the village to the town, brought on by the capitalistic concentration of land and the development of large industrial centres. As in Europe of the 18th century, so in India to-day, a new class is pushing to the front—a class of native capitalists bent upon securing for themselves a voice in the political administration of the country, which alone can insure their economic growth and prosperity. As in the Europe of yesterday, so in India to-day, another class follows in the wake of these Indian capitalists—a class drawn from the starving peasants of the villages, and forced to seek a means of livelihood in the growing manufacturing centres where, huddled by their thousands into dirty slums, herded into factories regardless of age or sex, they work their lives away for the increased prosperity of the rich merchant and manufacturer. They are the Indian proletariat, who, just as their European prototype, suffer and die till the stings of exploitation and economic need force them to organise themselves for self-defence, and so initiate that war of the working class against its oppressors which constitutes the essence of the modern political struggle of the West.

"After one hundred and fifty years of enforced suppression and stagnation, India is striding ahead with seven league boots, to overtake the van of progress which, through no fault of her own, had left her behind—a prey to the rapacious greed of British Imperialism. And it is this fact, that politically she is still subject to a foreign power which seeks to obstruct her progress at every step, that differentiates her problem from those of the majority of European states born of the Industrial Revolution, and which will superficially, but not materially, alter the result. The Industrialisation of India may or may not lead to her political emancipation from foreign rule, depending upon the strength of British Imperialism and its willingness to compromise with the Indian bourgeoisie; and this political unity maintained from above may prevent the formation, as in Europe, of a large number of politically autonomous but economically interdependent states, whose national rivalries and jealousies have led to so many useless and destructive wars, as well as hindered the free interchange of goods. But the industrial revolution that has come so belatedly to India is accomplishing for that country precisely the same large results that it accomplished after painful strife in Europe, namely, the change from agriculture to industry as a mode of production; the transformation from a country used as a source of raw materials to a country producing and consuming its own necessities, manufactured as well as agricultural. These great economic changes bring about corresponding social and political ones, so that the social problems of cast and creed, as well as the political one of a subject people striving for self-government, gradually break down, resolve themselves and merge into the imperious and unrelenting struggle between a rich, property-owning, non-producing ruling class, both native and foreign, on one side, and on the other, a poor, propertiless producing class, comprising the majority of the nation.

Such was the upshot of the myriad wars, revolutions, nationalist upheavals and other movements, which beset Europe of a last century and a half, and such will be the outcome in India, as those who follow the universal laws of historical materialism may foresee. But since history never repeats itself exactly in the same manner, and since mankind is endowed with an intelligence which enables him to learn from and profit by the lessons of the past, India may modify, hasten and to some extent improve upon the fate of Europe, if she but apply herself to a study of its development. We are the heirs of all the knowledge and experience so painfully acquired by our predecessors, and what was for them a work of centuries may be accomplished by us, and exceeded, in a dozen years. India labours to-day in the throes of a great national renaissance, cultural as well as social and political, and we believe this renaissance to be due, not to some accidental nor transcendental cause, but to the fulfilment of the natural laws of evolution which apply to every people, every race and every clime. Material progress determines all other progress; so long as her material development was obstructed, India remained a backward nation. Now that the springs are released, she is forging ahead to the common goal of all humanity, and the nature and extent of her progress will be determined, within certain limits, by the kind of leadership she is able to produce. The leaders in their turn will be helped or hindered in their task by their understanding and interpretation of the present situation. In such a juncture, it is well to turn to the past for guidance, to seek out a historical parallel, study it closely in order to profit by the triumphs and failures of a similar situation, in a word, to improve upon the lessons of history.

Impartial Witnesses.

The truth about Russia and the conditions under the Soviet regime is gradually filtering through, in spite of the news blockade of the capitalist press.

Mr. Eric Asche, an assistant in the Federal Attorney-General's Department, has returned to Melbourne, after spending five months in Russia as a representative of the Australian Relief Fund for Stricken Europe. Mr. Asche said that the condition of the Russian people under the new economic policy was rapidly returning to normal. Business was going on briskly. The Government recognised communism had to come gradually, and private enterprise was allowed to exist side by side with State enterprise, to foster the latter. Russia was getting on very well under the Soviet Government, the idea being to gradually work up to Communism.

Mr. Asche said that the very distorted picture of Russia given in the English capitalist press was all propaganda, to show the working class in England that Communism was a failure. What appeared in the English papers about Russia was ridiculous.

Another bourgeois observer, Mr. Watt, the Australian representative of the Quakers' International League of Helpers, has recently returned to Australia, after an absence of several years. His time has been mainly spent in Russia, where he has been, with the co-operation of the Soviet Government, controlling relief funds subscribed to mitigate the horrors of famine. At some periods the organisation Mr. Watt represents was feeding up to about half a million of starving people. One fact included in his report deserves to be printed in letters of gold.

From first to last, the total loss in transport of food distributed for relief purposes in Russia only amounted to less than half of 1 per cent.!

This food had to be transported thousands of miles under the greatest possible difficulties, and was handled and re-handled at many points by railway workers, who themselves were in a famishing condition.

DESTROYING GRANARIES.

Of the actual horrors of the Russian famine period, Mr. Watt spoke very briefly, but said enough to make his hearers shudder.

There are some things which ought to be said concerning the agonies through which the Russian people have passed, and the writer intends to say them.

Russia is naturally a great food-producing and food-exporting country, but there always have been recurring periods of drought.

The habit of storing grain to provide against drought cycles is deeply rooted in the Russian mind. Food was stored, but these stores of grain were deliberately and maliciously destroyed by armed invaders during the various Russian "intervention campaigns."

In the Koltchak raid—which was financed at the expense of British taxpayers without their knowledge or consent—an amount of stored grain was burned which could have tided the Russian people over the late famine period.

A MERCILESS BLOCKADE.

In addition to the unspeakable crime above alluded to a merciless blockade was instituted against a country with which we were not at war. Ten million pounds' worth of rolling stock, which had been paid for, was prevented from being delivered, and for a considerable period the stores of food purchased by the Quakers' International League of Helpers were kept out of Russia by Allied warships.

All these foul crimes were part of a gigantic plot to loot Russia's natural resources, particularly the oil wells. They were part of an Imperial scheme for "making Russia a second India."

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

For the first time in history there is absolute religious freedom in Russia. The Soviet Government takes up the stand that religious beliefs—or disbeliefs—are absolutely private matters, pertaining to the individual conscience. The Russian people can worship the old Ikons if they choose, or they can attend Salvation Army services, or Freethought lectures. They are perfectly free in such matters.

One of the things Mr. Watt did not mention in his singularly calm and impersonal address was that he, like many other members of the organisation he represented, had "done time" in an English jail for the crime of being a "pacifist."

—"Australian Worker."

"A daily paper tells of an ex-shop assistant who became wealthy enough to buy a mansion. That sort of lucky privilege would be less amazing if it were enjoyed by a bookmaker or a policeman."

A Communist in Parliament.

NEWBOLD'S FIGHTING SPEECH.

The only report of Newbold's speech in Parliament that was allowed to reach the workers of South Africa was, to use an Irishism, the interruptions and attempted assault by Neil Maclean, but the speech was a fine Communist exposition of the forces at work underneath and controlling the policy of the Governments of Britain, France, and America. We can only give a few extracts, but they are the best answer to those who ask "What can a Communist do in Parliament?" Newbold said:

"Representing as I do the workers of a constituency in Scotland primarily engaged in heavy industries, producing coal, iron and steel, I am necessarily deeply interested in the question of the Ruhr. I visited Essen just prior to the occupation, and later whilst the French army was there. I want to say certain things about it because they do react immediately upon the position of men employed and unemployed in the town I represent.

"Just before I left Scotland I went through the iron and steel area, observing the blast furnaces and steel works which are not employed. I went the following week into the Ruhr and there I saw vast furnaces and steel works, engineering shops and the rest, working three shifts and working day and night.

"I saw one particular series of blast furnaces which were the property of the very same firm that had kept our men unemployed in Motherwell for two years. The position is that at the present time international finances are employed. The works of the Rhineland, the Ruhr and the Saar are employing all these workers in competition with the workers in Scotland, Middlesbrough, Sheffield, Dowlais, and other parts of the country. If one watches the course during the last 150 years of Britsh policy with regard to France, one can see the game of this Tory Government. If we go back to 1815 we discover that, after the Conference of Vienna, steps were taken by the British Government whereby, already realising the importance of the coalfields of the Saar, a part was given to Prussia and a part was allocated to France. One-half was put into one economic area and one-half into another economic area; one-half into one political area and one-half into another political area. It was the old policy of the balance of power devised in the interest of British capital. One is not complaining; no one expects a tiger to be a vegetarian.

"Then came the Belgian revolt against Holland. Belgium, we declared, must be free and independent. There was coal and iron underlying the area of the frontier, and from 1830 onwards there was coal and iron on one side in Belgium and coal and iron on one side in France. You may deny it, but it is notorious in the Chancellories of Europe that YOU ARE ALREADY INTRIGUING TO BREAK UP BELGIUM. You are encouraging the quarrel between the Flemish-speaking people and those who speak French. Poor little Belgium! Yes, poor little Belgium if she gets into any other raven's clutches than your own."

Here the incident with Neil Maclean took place. Referring to Lloyd-George as the "idealist who sits below the gangway," Newbold said he hoped his eviction from the Government benches would be permanent; "because I sincerely hope to see the hon. member for Aberavon (Mr. Ramsay Macdonald) occupy his seat with the Labour Party in office. I say that, not because we have faith in the Labour Party, but because we want them to have a shot at it. If they do well we shall do everything we can to support them. We shall join them if they accept our programme. If not, we shall be their heirs. (Interruption by Neil Maclean, who had to be held back from attacking Newbold.) I do not expect my remarks to be altogether pleasant to the opportunist member for Govan (Maclean). He was once a very keen supporter of Connolly; he is now going well to the right. (Maclean: I was going to the right just now when I was stopped getting at you.) If the hon. member for Govan feels unduly injured, I will apologise, but I think his dignity has been rather easily rumpled. I know that, as he says, I represent a small party, but that party will grow. If the Labour Party fights we shall grow slowly; if the Labour Party continues to help the lame dog over the Lausanne stile in the way that it has recently been helping, we shall grow more rapidly."

Referring to the funding of the war debt of 33 millions to America, he continued: "I am not, of course, in favour of paying off the debt. I am in favour of writing off the lot. What is taking place in this matter of the debt is that, once it is funded, against this funded debt the Government will issue paper which will be bought and sold on all the bourses of the world and will be purchased not only in America but by the capitalists of all countries, including the capitalists opposite. When the Labour Government comes into office and is face to face, as it will be, with an attempted boycott of international capitalism they will discover that while they can deal perhaps with their own capitalists they will not be able to deal with the American capitalist and the American capitalist government, and that this funding of the debt, which appears immediately to redound to the interest of the unemployed, is a scheme intended ultimately for the enslavement of the Labour Party. The Labour Party will be face to face with the problem of repudiating debt held by British capitalists in American securities. It will all be made to centre round the debt held by a country which has got a Navy, and it is a wonderful Navy that the British have to-day since the Americans taught them pacifism. Mastery of the seas has gone where the mastery of the dollar is.

AMERICA AND THE LABOUR PARTY.

"The Americans need not use their Navy. I do not think they will. They will remember all the pacific utterances of the leaders of the Labour Party and they will say, 'it will not be fair to treat the Labour Party in this way. They believed in our good faith. We must not wake them up. We will just stop cotton—80 per cent. of the cotton used in Lancashire. We will just stop petroleum. We will stop corn.' And they will stop the supply of meat—in every direction an economic boycott—and what can your poor Labour Party do? I know what it will do. It will take the Albert Hall, it will get all its chief functionaries and it will pass resolutions like it did on the Ruhr. (Interruption.) I understand the purpose of these interruptions. The Labour Party begin to feel uncomfortable. It is feeling uncomfortable because now that its leaders are getting towards the benches opposite they are already adopting a policy of continuity. They are drawing nearer to office, and as they ascend the steps of the Throne they feel a new atmosphere. The Labour Party in those days will come forward with its resolutions, and it will ask America not to be naughty. It will ask America not to be unkind. It will ask America to remember its promises.

"If the Amsterdam International, the Vienna International, and the London International face the situation of the Russian debt and the British and all the other debts as they have faced the question of the Ruhr debt, they need not expect that the Communist International will do the same. From this time, anyway, we shall do all in our power to stir up the workers of the whole of Europe—Italy, France, Germany, Belgium and Britain—to resist the International of the bondholders and to fight by all means at their disposal for the economic and political liberties of Europe. We are prepared to fight to the last for that. I speak as one who can do this, because he happens himself to be one of the the central executive of that body. I know many people who regret that I am not back there. I prefer to be here. Unfortunately, a considerable number of my constituents came at my call under the banner of the Communist International, and, AVAILING MYSELF OF YOUR DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS—NOT THAT I BELIEVE IN THEM, BUT I SHALL AVAIL MYSELF OF THEM AS LONG AS YOU WILL LET ME—I CAME HERE TO VOICE THE DEMANDS OF THE INTERNATIONAL IN YOUR MIDST. So long as we are as weak as we are to-day you will permit us to do it.

THE INTERNATIONAL WILL WIN.

"I am perfectly well aware of the fact that you are not afraid of us at the present time, but as the statesmen of Europe pursue their present course of anarchy, you will need to become afraid of us. The workers will rally to our side, because of the bankruptcy of your statecraft. You can only make us win by pursuing your present courses; you will pursue your present courses, and we shall win. We shall win not by argument alone. That is not the way revolutions are made. Revolutions are made by conditions. REVOLUTIONS ARE CARRIED THROUGH BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER SOLD THEMSELVES TO PEERS ENROLLING BATTALIONS; WHO HAVE NEVER SOLD THEMSELVES TO CAPITALISTS; WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN TEMPTED BY PRIVY COUNCILLORSHIPS; WHO HAVE NOT BEEN TEMPTED TO THE TREASURY BENCH BY THE LURE OF OFFICE. They are carried through by people who are prepared to fight. These are the people who will carry revolutions through. Men will fail, individuals will fail, the movement will go on. The International will win, and before many years you will see throughout Europe the Federal Soviet Republic of Europe."

Smuts.

General Smuts really should be more careful in stage-managing his great orations. In Johannesburg the local S.A.P.'s very wisely choose the Wanderers Hall to speak in for strategic reasons. It is easily defended from any possible hostile demonstration from the outside, and so far as the audience was concerned the most scrupulous care was exercised in the distribution of the tickets of admission, in order that the workers should not by any chance be present in any numbers. In Capetown he made the mistake of throwing the meeting open to all, with the result that he was made aware of the exact sentiments which the workers entertain for him, which may not be an unmixed evil after all.

Even the reports in the Government organs indicate that Jan had a rough time, and that he was unable to address his hearers in his usual suave and well modulated tones; in fact, he had to shout and scream to make himself heard. His political stock-in-trade was not a very attractive one; he calimed that he and his government had been "doing their best," and warned the audience that the opposition might be worse, which of course is possible, but hardly probable. During its period of office this government of capitalists has been responsible for two white industrial upheavals which have been suppressed by military force with the utmost brutality and vindictiveness. It brought about the rebellion of 1914 as a result of compelling the defence forces of the Union to embark on an unprovoked war of aggression on a neighbouring state; it has put down by the method of indiscriminate massacre native industrial disputes on the Rand and Port Elizabeth, which with the ghastly affairs of Bulhoek and Bondelzwarts make up a record of savagery and incompetence which it would be difficult to equal in any other country calling itself civilised. The whole record of Smuts and his Corner House friends is one long story of dragooning an unwilling people into submission by military force.

In the face of these facts the South African dictator has the effrontery to claim that he has given the country a "good, clean, honest government." In examining his opponents' record he taunted the Nationalists with being racialists and against the Empire. The taunt of being racialist comes rather badly from a man with Smuts' record. He is worse than a racialist; he has deserted his own countrymen and taken sides with the other side, not from any lofty motives, but in order to gratify his inordinate ambition to be called a great statesman, if from no baser motives. The charge of being against the Empire which has enslaved them is a charge which all conquered peoples would consider a compliment. Imperialism is the curse of the human race to-day, whether nominally conquerors or conquered. Whether the British, French, German, or American brand is considered, there will be no peace until it is utterly destroyed, and the working class can never hope to emerge from the morass of misery into which they have fallen until they hurl the incubus of Imperialism from their shoulders. The accusation of being anti-Imperialist will cut very little ice with the thinking worker, whether Dutch or British, black or white.

Smuts then proceeded to examine the history of the Labour Party, and paid its members the compliment—scarcely deserved, we think—of sticking to its programme in spite of the efforts of the leaders to drag them away from their Socialistic basis. He proceeded to say that the Nationalist and Labourite had nothing in common, and then contradicted himself by asserting that they both wanted power, which at any rate constitutes one point of agreement, and should be well understood by a man of Smuts' temperament and record. There is another bond between the two parties, and that is a common hatred of the Smuts-Chamber of Mines combination. This is, of course, unpleasant for Smuts and his capitalist friends, but describing the combination as a very fishy and furtive business will not materially lessen the danger to the S.A.P.-Unionist combination, and that the danger is fully realised by Smuts is indicated by the vehemence with which he denounced it as a swindle, an immoral, unholy, and unprincipled combination, and the desperate efforts he made to persuade the backveld that the poor whites and the rank and file would all go over to the Labour Party.

Whatever happens the men in the industrial areas who were herded into jails and camps and the relatives of those who were killed by the government in cold blood, either as prisoners or by judicial process on the scaffold, are not likely to support Smuts again at the polls, and the men in the country who, landless and starving themselves, were imprisoned because they refused to fight against the town workers who were fighting to maintain a foothold in the country, are not likely to forget it when the "man of the hour" appeals again for their votes.

When the Prime Minister came to his own record and programme he was still less convincing. He vaguely advocated opening new markets for South African industries, and said a word or two about the natives and coloured people, some of whom have votes, of course, in the Cape Colony, and must not be altogether ignored, but with evident relief he left this unpopular subject and spread himself out on what he called the "wider issues," and talked largely about the Empire "our" best friend, "our" Commonwealth, "the League of Nations," and the "great cause of peace," winding up on the high note about Ireland's reconciliation with England—which of course is all very well as a peroration, but will not find jobs for the unemployed South Africans nor feed them and their starving families.

Possibly the General never got into his stride owing to the interruptions of that part of his audience which he politely called "roughs," but he will have to dish out some better dope than the sample displayed at the City Hall, Capetown, if he is to prevent the "unholy alliance" of Nationalist Republicans and Labour Imperialists from stepping into his shoes in the near future. To the Communist, of course, this result is only of interest as a further stage in the disillusionment of the workers, but if the stage has to be passed the sooner it is reached the better, and the field cleared for the real fight between the dispossessed of the earth and their oppressors.

Communism and the Ruhr.

Mr. Phillips Price, writing from Elberfeld to the "Workers' Weekly," says:

Every week that passes forces the French militarists, behind whom stand the powerful iron and steel interests of France, to adopt more and more coercive measures against the population of the Ruhr. Hardly a day passes now without the mayor of some town in the Ruhr or some local police prefect being arrested and imprisoned or expelled for refusing to obey the orders of the French military authorities. The German petit bourgeoisie, shopkeepers and tradesmen are in a difficult position. They are, as their class always is, ready to trade with anyone, and interested only in their business. But, in the last week or ten days, the German Government has been calling to its aid the various Fascist organisations, which have their seats in Munich. Essen especially is full of Nationalist bravos, who are terrorising the German population and preventing them from having anything to do with the French.

The Fascist danger is well understood by the miners and metal workers of the Ruhr. Small conflicts have occurred from time to time between workmen and groups of these German Fascists. The offices of the Communist organ in Essen is defended at night by some twenty sturdy working class youths, armed with wire coils and rubber batons. The green German police are in league with the Fascists, and several cases of abominable cruelty and murder by the police of working class youths, known to be active Communist workers, have taken place. The leaders of the trade unions and of the social democratic party shut their eyes to the Fascist danger, or at least propose no measures for dealing with them, except that of trusting to the Green Police, which are known to contain former members of Noske's notorious corps.

The Communists are summoning a conference of the workmen's councils of all the Ruhr industries on March 4th. It is proposed to make a serious start in creating workers' guards for defence against the German Fascisti and to secure the distribution of the coal, which, on account of the French blockade, is accumulating at the pit heads, among the population of the Ruhr. The price to be paid for this coal is to be as many times the pre-war price of coal as the present miners' wages are above pre-war wages, plus a percentage for distribution costs.

This, if carried out, will certainly be a revolutionary act, which may bring big developments in its train. The question, however, arises what attitude the French militarists will take to this. Up till now they have been trying to conciliate the Ruhr workers, and they send their agents about telling them that they are prepared to grant socialisation of the mines, if they will agree to work reparation coal. Needless to say, these overtures have been contemptuously rejected.

Meanwhile the British diplomatic and military authorities in the Rhineland continue to oppose the French in words but to permit them to do more or less what they wish. Help for the workers of the Ruhr can only come about by the summoning of an international Labour conference, to draw up a policy for workers' control of production of the mineral resources in the basin of the Rhine, accompanied by an agreement between the building and co-operative guilds of the French and German workers to reconstruct the devastated areas. And, of course, the Versailles Treaty, with all its iniquities, must go.

RUSSIAN INFORMATION.

GRAIN PROSPECTS.

With regard to the prospects of any substantial quantity of grain being available for export during 1923, the information already available is distinctly encouraging. In the report of the Central Statistical Department with regard to the area sown in the autumn of 1922, that is, for the 1923 harvest, it is stated that over the whole of Russia the increase in the area sown, as compared with the preceding autumn, is approximately 18 per cent., while in the important grain regions which had suffered from the 1921 harvest the increase has been from 20 to 40 per cent. While this extension in the famine area only partially made good the diminution caused by the famine, the fact remains that, compared with last year, the autumn sown area is considerably larger.

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An All-Russian Agricultural Exhibition will be opened in Moscow on August 15th next, and will be open for about six weeks. This exhibition, which is being widely advertised in Russia and is attracting general interest among the peasantry, is open to foreign exhibitors, for whom it will provide a most useful means of getting into touch with the peasants and agricultural co-operatives of Russia.

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During 1922 Russia's total exports amounted to 81,600,000 gold roubles, or just over four times the total exports of the year 1921.

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The factory committee is one of the most important institutions of every industrial enterprise in Russia. Elected by the workers of each factory, its main duty is to guard the interests of the workers. The committee has no direct or specific control over the administration of the enterprise, but keeps a constant watch over it, and should the administration prove inefficient, or should its actions be contrary to the interests of the workers, the committee can and often does take the initiative in bringing about the necessary change.

SEDITION.

On the proposal of Mr. Ley, the N.S.W. Minister for Justice, to submit an Anti-Sedition Bill to stop the teaching of Communist doctrines to children, the "Australian Worker" makes the following comment:

The suppression of ideas is the last imbecility of feeble-minded reactionaries who have not even intelligence enough to realise when they are making an unnecessary display of their idiocy.

The Communists are as much entitled to teach their children Republicanism as Ley's mob has to teach their children the sycophancy of title worshippers.

The Communists have as much right to bring up their children to detest the capitalist system as Ley's mob have to inculcate in their offspring a hatred of all that is Communistic.

And if, as Ley says, "to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different classes of his Majesty's subjects" is evidence of seditious intentions, then he ought to be prosecuted under his own measure, and because of his own measure, for the very framing of it would be proof of an intention to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility towards those who do do not subscribe to his jingoistic and capitalistic views.

There is, however, one redeeming point about men like Ley.

They are the tools of destiny, and by narrowing the channel through which the tide of progress flows accelerate its pace.

LENIN.

(ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE C.P.R.)

By KARL RADEK.

Like everything else in nature, Lenin was born, has developed, has grown. When Vladimir Ilyitch once observed me glancing through a collection of his articles written in the year 1903, which had just been published, a sly smile crossed his face, and he remarked with a laugh: "It is very interesting to read what stupid fellows we were!" But I do not here intend to compare the shape of Lenin's skull at the age of 10, 20 or 30 with the skull of that man who presided over the sessions of the Central Committee of the Party or the Council of People's Commissars. Here it is not a question of Lenin as leader, but as a living human being. P. B. Axelrod, one of the fathers of Menshevism, who hates Lenin from the bottom of his soul, related how Lenin went abroad for the first time, and how he went walking and bathing with him. "I felt at that time," said Axelrod, "that here was a man who would become the leader of the Russian Revolution. Not only was he an educated Marxist—there were many of these—but he knew what he wanted to do and how it was to be done. THERE WAS SOMETHING OF THE SMELL OF RUSSIAN EARTH ABOUT HIM." People often observe in others that which is lacking in themselves, and Axelrod's words with regard to Lenin grasp with unsurpassable acuteness precisely those characteristics which make Lenin a leader.

It is impossible to be a leader of the working class without knowing the whole history of the class. The leaders of the labour movement must know the history of the labour movement; without this knowledge there can be no leader. The history of the labour movement does not tell us what to do, but it makes it possible to compare our position with situations which have already been experienced by our class, so that in various decisive moments we are enabled to see our path clearly, and to recognise approaching danger.

But we cannot get to know the history of the labour movement properly without being thoroughly acquainted with the history of capitalism, with its mechanism in all its economic and political phenomena. Lenin knows the history of capitalism as do but few of Marx's pupils. It is no mere knowledge of the written word, but he has thought out Marx's theory as no one else has done. Lenin has independently grasped and thought out the theory of historical materialism as no one else has been able to do, for the reason that he has studied it with the same object in view by which Marx was actuated when creating the theory.

Lenin entered the movement as the embodiment of the Will to Revolution, and he studied Marxism, the evolution of capitalism, and the evolution of Socialism, from the point of view of their revolutionary significance. Plekhanov was a revolutionist too, but he was not possessed by the Will to Revolution, and despite his great importance as a teacher of the Russian Revolution, he could only teach its algebra and not its arithmetic. Herein lies the point of transition from Lenin the theorist to Lenin the politician.

Lenin combined Marxism with the general working class strategy, but at the same time he applied it concretely to that strategic task involving the fate of the Russian working class. It may be said that at the Army Staff Academy he studied not only Clausewitz, Moltke, and their like, but he studied at the same time, as no one else in Russia, the territory of the future Russian proletarian war. Herein lies the whole of Lenin's genius: in his utmost intensity of human contact with his field of activity.

I must take some other opportunity of debating why so great a mind as that of Rosa Luxemburg was not capable of understanding the correctness of Lenin's principles on the origin of Bolshevism; I can only outline the fact. Lenin's way of knowing Russian actuality is another point in which he differs from all others who have stretched out their hands towards the sceptre of leadership over the Russian proletariat. Not only does he KNOW Russian actuality, he sees and feels it as well. At every turning point in the history of the Party and especially at the moment when we seized power, and the fate of 150 million people hung on the decisions of the Party, I have always been amazed at Lenin's store of what the English call "common sense." It may be remarked that when we are speaking of a human being of whom we are convinced that his like will not recur for a century, it is but a poor compliment to praise his common sense. But it is just in this that his greatness as a politician lies. When Lenin has to decide on an important question, he does not think of abstract historical categories, he does not think of ground rents, of surplus values, or absolutism or liberalism. He thinks of Sobakevitch, of Gessen, of Sydor from the Tver Province, of the Putilov worker, of the policeman on the street, and he thinks of the effect of the measure on the Mujik Sydor and on the workman Onufria, as bearers of the revolution.

And I shall never forget my talk with Ilyitch before the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk peace. Every argument which we brought up against the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk rebounded from him like peas from a wall. He employed the simplest argument: A war cannot be conducted by a party of good revolutionists who, having seized their own bourgeoisie by the throat, is not capable of closing a bargain with the German bourgeoisie. The mujik must carry on the war. "But don't you see that the mujik voted against the war?" Lenin asked me. "Excuse me, when and how did he vote against it?" "He voted with his feet; he is running away from the front." And for him that settled the matter. That we would not be able to agree with German imperialism, this Lenin knew as well as everybody else, but when he spoke in favour of the Brest pause for breath, he did not conceal from the masses for a single moment the sufferings which were bound to follow. But it was no worse than the immediate breakdown of the Russian Revolution; it gave us a shadow of hope, a pause for breath, if only for a few months, and this was the decisive moment. It was necessary that the Mujik should touch with his hands the earth which the revolution had given him; it was necessary that he be confronted with the danger of losing this earth, for THEN he would defend it.

Let us take another example. It was at the time of our defeat in the Polish war, when negotiations were taken up at Riga. At that time I went abroad, and before leaving I paid Ilyitch a visit, in order to speak with him on the differences of opinion which had arisen between us on the relations to the trade unions. Just as Lenin held the Mujik from the Riazan Province before his mental vision when deciding on the Brest peace, knowing this Mujik was the decisive personality in the drama of war, in the same manner he placed himself in the position of the plain workman as soon as it was a question of transition from civil war to economic reconstruction, for without this plain workman no economic reconstruction is possible. How did he put the question to himself? The Party meetings discussed the rôle played by the trade unions in political economy; there were controversies on syndicalism and eclectism. But what Lenin saw was the victimised workman, enduring unheard-of and indescribable sufferings, and now called upon to reconstitute political economy. That the economic reconstruction was an imperative necessity, that we had to assemble all our forces, and that we had the right to call upon the working class to take part in the work, all this appeared incontestable to him, but it was a question whether we should begin with this at once, whether we should withdraw thousands of our best comrades from the army, where they had accustomed themselves to commanding, and send them back into the factories at once. Nothing would be produced by pursuing such tactics. "THEY MUST HAVE A REST; THEY ARE VERY TIRED." Such was Lenin's decisive argument. He saw before him the real Russian worker, as he was in the winter of 1921, and he felt what was possible and what impossible.

Marx, in the introduction to his "Critique of Political Economy," states that history only sets itself such tasks as it can fulfil. This means, in other words, that only he who grasps what tasks are historically capable of fulfilment at a given moment, and who does not fight for the desired, but for the possible, can become the instrument of history. Lenin's greatness lies in the fact that he never permits himself to be blinded to a reality when it is in process of transformation, by any preconceived formula, and that he has the courage to throw yesterday's formula overboard as soon as it disturbs his grasp of this reality. Before our seizure of power, we issued, as revolutionary internationalists, the slogan of the people's peace against the government's peace. And suddenly we found ourselves in the position of a Workers' Government, surrounded by peoples that had not yet succeeded in overthrowing their capitalist governments. "How can we conclude a peace with the Hohenzollern government?" was a question put by many comrades. Lenin answered mischievously: "You are worse than hens. A hen cannot make up its mind to step over a circle drawn around it with chalk. But it can at least justify itself with the assertion that this circle was drawn by a strange hand. But we have drawn up our formula with our own hands, and now you see the formula only, and not the reality. Our formula of peace to be concluded by the peoples, had for its object the awakening of the masses against the military and capitalist government. Now you want us to go to ruin, and to let the capitalist governments carry off the victory in the name of our revolutionary formula."

Lenin's greatness lies in his aiming at goals arising out of realities. In this reality he sees a powerful steed which will carry him to his goal, and he trusts himself to it. But he never abandons himself to his dreams. This is not all. His genius contains another trait: After he has set himself a certain goal, he seeks for the means leading to this goal through reality; he is not content with having fixed his aim, he thinks out concretely and completely everything necessary for the attainment of that aim. He does not merely work out a plan of campaign, but the whole organisation of the campaign at the same time. Our organisers, who are organisers only, have often laughed at Lenin as an organiser. Anyone seeing how Ilyitch works at home, in his room, or at the Council of People's Commissars, might think it impossible to find a worse organiser. Not only has he no staff of secretaries to prepare his material, but up to now he has never even learnt to dictate to a stenographer, and gazes at the pen he is writing with, something like a Mujik from the Don district gazes at the first motor-car he sees. But show us in the whole Party one single individual capable of realising within decades this central idea on the reform of our bureaucratic apparatus, although this reform is inevitable if we do not want the Mujik, indignant against officialdom, to begin to howl. But the great politician of the Russian proletariat, prevented by his illness from going through his daily routine, thought of the central question of state organisation, and worked out the plan of the struggle for decades in advance. But this is only the preliminary draft. But the more attention we pay to this superficial draft the more plainly we see that in Lenin's personality the great politician and the great political organiser are combined.

How all this happened to be combined in him, God only knows. (Comrade Stefanov and the Commission for combating religion will kindly excuse.) History has her own apparatus for distilling brandy, and no Tcheka can detect her. The German bourgeoisie could not manage to unite Germany, and somewhere, on a small landed estate grange, history set one of her machines in action, and with the aid of God or the devil, that is, by molecular work, she created Bismarck, who then fulfilled the task. If we read his first reports, if we follow his policy step by step, we are obliged to ask ourselves how it was possible for a landowner to possess such an understanding of the whole of European actuality.

The same thought arises every time we think over the history of our Party, the history of the revolution, and Ilyitch. For fifteen years we looked on while this man was fighting over every comma in the resolutions, against every . . . ism invented during the last twenty-five years, from Khvostism to Empiriocretism. For Lenin every such ism has always been the embodiment of some real enemy, existing either in outside classes or in the working class, but in any case in reality. These isms were the feelers of reality, and he absorbed the whole of this reality into himself, studied it, thought it out, until the finished miracle appeared, and the underground man proved himself the most earthly man of Russian reality. History offers no second example of such a transition from subterranean revolutionist to statesman. This combination of the characteristics of a leading theorist, politician, and organiser, has made Lenin the leader of the Russian Revolution. And that this leader should be the only one universally recognised as leader, the human touch was required, the quality which has made Lenin the beloved hero of the Russian Revolution.

He himself tries to convince us that man requires absolute truth. Lenin tells the proletarian the truth, and the truth only, however depressing it may be. When workers hear him speaking, they know that there is not a single phrase in all his speech. He helps us to inform ourselves on reality. At one time I was living at Davos with a Bolshevik workman dying of consumption. At that time the right of self-determination of nationalities was being debated, and we Polish Communists were opposed to Lenin's views. The comrade of whom I speak, after having read my theses against Lenin, said: "What you have written is perfectly convincing to me, but whenever I have been opposed to Ilyitch, it has always turned out afterwards that I was wrong." This is how the leading Party functionaries think, and this is the reason of Lenin's authority in the Party; but the workers do not think so. They do not feel bound to Lenin because he has been in the right a thousand times, but because, if he has once been in the wrong, if a mistake has been committed under his leadership, he admitted openly: "We have made a mistake, and therefore we have been defeated here; this mistake must be made good in such and such manner." Many have asked him why he speaks so openly of mistakes made. I do not know why Lenin does it, but the results of this course of action may be plainly seen. The workman is much too enlightened to believe in redeeming saviours any longer. When Lenin speaks of his mistakes, he hides nothing, he leads the worker into his own laboratory of thought; he makes it possible for the worker to take part in forming the final decision, and the workers see in him the leader who represents their laboratory, the embodiment of their class struggle. A great class, itself needing absolute truth, loves with all its heart a leader who is himself a truth-loving human being, one who tells the truth about himself. From such a leader the worker can bear any truth, even the hardest. Human beings have faith in themselves only when they conceal nothing, when they know everything about themselves, even the most unfavourable possibilities, and yet feel that they can say: In spite of everything . . . Lenin helps the working class to a full knowledge of every decaying and decomposing element of its own existence, and yet enables it to say in the end: I am His Majesty the Proletariat, the future ruler and creator of life. This is another factor in Lenin's greatness.

On this day of the 25th anniversary of the Party, which not only bears the responsibility for the destiny of the sixth part of the globe, but which is at the same time the main lever of proletarian victory, the Russian Communists, and every revolutionist among the proletariats of every country, are filled with the thought and the wish that this Moses, who has led the slaves from the land of bondage, may pass with us into the promised land.

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(Continued next week.)

The Party Congress.

Comrades are reminded that the Second Congress of the Communist Party (South African Section) will open in No. 8, Trades Hall, on Saturday, April 28th, at 10 a.m. Only delegates will be entitled to vote, but all members of the party are entitled to be present on the first day.

On the second day the meeting will be held in the Trades Hall Council Chamber, and will take the form of a discussion on matters of general interest to the class-conscious workers. Admission will not be confined to the membership, but invitations are being sent out to genuine working class bodies inviting them to attend and express their views on the problems confronting the labour movement in South Africa and their relationship to the world movement.

May Day Arrangements.

General meeting of the Procession and Demonstration Committee at No. 4, Trades Hall, on Thursday, 26th inst., at 8 p.m. All wishing to help to make the day a success are cordially invited.

* * *

MAY DAY SOCIAL.

Tickets for the Grand Social to be held in the Town Hall on Monday, 30th April, are on sale at 4, Trades Hall, 2s. 6d. each. The next meeting of the General May Day Committee will be held in the General Office on Sunday, April 22nd, at 3 p.m.

* * *

JEWISH SOCIALIST SOCIETY.
(Paolei Zion.)

May Day Celebrations, Tuesday, 1st May, at 8 p.m. at the Grand Hotel, Plein Street. A gathering of comrades and friends. Admission 1s. Proceedings in Yiddish.

COMMUNIST PARTY NOTES.

JOHANNESBURG BRANCH.

Dates of meetings: April 26th, May 10th and 24th, June 7th and 21st.

All subscriptions are now due, and can be paid to the Secretary at 4, Trades Hall, or R. Gelblum, the Branch treasurer.

* * *

CAPETOWN.

Branch meeting every Tuesday at 8 p.m., at 166, Longmarket Street. Syllabus of lectures:

April 26—"Socialism and the Press." D. L. Dryburgh.

May 3—Musical Evening.

" 10—"The Federation of Trades and Their Wages Bill." W. Green.

" 17—"Women and Socialism." I. Schack.

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Printed by the I.S.L. Press, 54, Fox Street, Marshall Square, and published by the Communist Party of South Africa, No. 4, Trades Hall, Rissik Street (Box 4179), Johannesburg.