

Labor Party, to meet early in 1924. At this convention, there must be present, not hundreds, but thousands of delegates. The next convention must unite, not only the left wing, but the majority of the working class for conscious political action, and the struggle against the capitalistic class parties, as well as against the lower middle class La Follette and Ford movements.

The Soviet Air Force

By I. Amter.

When the Washington Disarmament Conference took place, bourgeois and sentimental pacifists believed that the millennium had come. Wars were gradually to be superseded by the rule of reason, and finally violence would be rooted out.

Two loopholes were left in the conference decisions: each nation could build all the submarines it pleased, and the matter of flying machines was not touched. These loopholes were the safeguards that the capitalist governments wanted, in order to modernize their methods of warfare. *The battleship is obsolete*, as any midshipman can tell. The experiments that were conducted with the battleship "Jutland" indicated clearly that an aeroplane can destroy any ship that floats on the waves.

Hence the mad haste with the leading imperialist nations are building aircraft. France, for some time, has had the lead and today presents a serious menace, not only to Great Britain's hegemony in Europe, but to the very safety of the British Isles. During the first eleven months of 1922, France built 3,300 aeroplanes for military and "commercial" purposes, and placed orders for 1,200 more machines. The program for 1923 calls for 220 air squadrons, of ten planes each. In other words, at the end of 1923, the French air fleet should comprise 6,700 machines!

Alarmed at this stupendous program, the British government recently decided to increase the air defense from 34 to 52 squadrons. This will mean an appropriation of nearly £27,000,000 for the fiscal year. The United States Government has declared that it will not make any larger appropriation in spite of the increased budgets of France and Great Britain.

The imperialist powers are very reticent about giving figures on aircraft. It is clear that such craft can easily be concealed and then suddenly appear on the day of battle. There is absolute hypocrisy in the pretension that their official figures are correct. Furthermore, each is building as many "commercial" machines as possible. Although air lines are being instituted in almost all countries, and are doing excellent service, particularly in the carrying of mails, it is a well-known fact that "commercial" aircraft differ from fighting machines only in the color of the paint. *All the commercial machines are convertible into fighting machines and will be at the front and across the border on the day war is declared.*

What must Soviet Russia do in such a world situation? When the imperialist nations are driving the little nations to the wall! When Bulgaria institutes a Fascist government at the instance of the British Government! When the same fate threatens Czechoslovakia! When all these countries are being prepared for a general assault on Soviet Russia! When all the working class, the revolutionary working population, the Communists, are being mercilessly crushed, maimed and slaughtered. This is done in order to give a free hand to reactionary and Fascist governments, which are the tools of imperialist governments, whose hands are stained with the blood of the 10,000,000 killed in the War and the hundreds of thousands of workers massacred in the counter-revolution!

Soviet Russia can and must do but one thing. She must build an air fleet that can challenge the mightiest air-fleet in the world. Soviet Russia, surrounded by enemies, threatened on all sides, must build up a defense that no robber government can dare defy.

The *Fist in the Air*, with the Red Star emblazoned upon it, must be a challenge to any murderous rapacious governmental hand that will dare to touch the integrity of the republics embraced in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

What is the difference between an air fleet at the command of a Workers' Government and a fleet doing the bidding of imperialist masters?

The fleet of the masters is destined to prey on the weak nations, to oppress still further the colonial peoples who for centuries have been groaning under the heel of exploitation, and today are striving for freedom. The fleet of the masters is to attack and break down the Soviet Government that the workers and peasants of Soviet Russia have established with their blood, their suffering, their courage, their enthusiasm and their death! The fleet of the masters is to be used to suppress the attempts of the workers of capitalist countries to free themselves from the

slavery and misery that capitalism brings them. The fleet of the masters is to keep the working population—the workers in the towns and in the country—in subjection, plagued by hunger, misery, disease and unemployment. *The fleet of the masters is to keep the masters as the exploiters of the earth!*

The fleet of the Soviet Government—the *Fist in the Air*, with the Red Star emblazoned on it is the safeguard that the Soviet Government, the goal that the workers of all countries strive for, will preserve the Revolution. It will preserve the Revolution and more: It will add to the Red Army another formidable weapon, warning the bloody capitalist governments to keep their hands off the weak colonial nations whom they pillage and loot. It will warn them, even as the growing power of Soviet Russia warns them, that in the struggle that the workers of the world are waging against the tyranny of capitalism, they will find a friend in the workers and peasants of Soviet Russia! A powerful, challenging friend, unafraid and prepared!

The Fist in the Air is the friend, of the workers!

The Washington Disarmament Conference did not disarm. The Soviet Government was not invited to the Washington Conference. At Genoa the Soviet Government offered *real* disarmament to the whole capitalist world! The capitalist governments did not accept. They dared not accept, for their power rests upon force.

Very well! The *Fist in the Air* accepts the challenge of the masters!

British Labor Party Conference

By J. T. Murphy.

It is impossible to do more than report the essentials of this conference at this stage and to comment on a few of its features.

The only storm scene of the Conference was provided by the re-appearance of the question of Communist Party affiliation and the retention of the Edinburgh resolutions passed at the previous Conference to make it impossible for the Communists to penetrate the ranks of the Labor Party even as trades Union delegates.

Apart from the struggle on these issues the conference registered a sweeping movement towards the "right". From the moment Mr. Webb propounded in his opening speech the theory of gradual growth through capitalism to socialism via the Fabian route, to the cheap sneers of Mr. Macdonald in the closing stages of the Congress against the resolutions of protest concerning the treatment of subject races within the British Empire, the Conference was subject to the leaders' overbearing consciousness of their prospects as a Labor Government. They declared "We are on the threshold of power". Entranced by the vision they proceeded to eliminate and decry everything which might be deemed a working class measure or a direct challenge to capitalism. These things they managed adroitly by selecting men to move resolutions the very essence of which was a flat contradiction to everything with which they had been associated. Lansbury, known everywhere as associated with Republicanism, was quickly called on to queer the pitch for anyone who might be led to believe that labor would interfere with the monarchy. Bob Williams was called on to lamely defend the gross neglect of the Party on the question of the Rand murders. And so they trimmed their sails towards the spoils of office, shedding every semblance of proletarian loyalty that they possibly could.

Thus the official lead swept onward to all outward appearances triumphant. But the struggle on the issue of the position of Communists and the Communist Party in relation to the Labor Party, compelled other modifications which I will indicate before dealing with the Communist question.

Last year at Edinburgh the Labor Party flashed a resolution through in support of the Social Revolutionaries in Russia. Although another was included in the Executive Report this year, it was never mentioned. Nor did Mr. Macdonald venture to tread even ever so lightly upon the claims of Georgia, although again a resolution was down for reference. Nor did Mr. Henderson dare to make the same references to "Religious persecution in Russia" that he made at Hamburg. This silence is as significant as the tongue in cheek resolutions on the monarchy, the Rand and the Subject Races of the Empire. It means that there was a stronger element at the conference prepared to challenge them than what they wished to be publicly known. It means that the figures so widely broadcast concerning Communist defeat are not true indications of Communist strength or influence either in the Conference or outside. This I will proceed to show.