

# PREPARING THE WAY. By J. T. Murphy.

There appears to have grown up in the Socialist movement in this country a stereotyped method of training newcomers into the movement.

A heavy dose of economics is offered, to be followed or accompanied by a dose of industrial history. Literature in abundance is also thrust upon them, and about five years reading expected in the course of six months. Now no one recognises more than I do the value of a course of study of economics. No one recognises more than I the value of books, but I often think that many Socialists are so occupied with books they know nothing of the social conditions around them. Socialism has become a hobby to them, and plays the same part in their lives as the little Bethel does in the lives of other sections of the community. Marxism has become to them a method of analysis of books rather than a method of analysis of social relations.

Books should be an aid to development, not stumbling blocks to action. It is because of these things I want to call attention to the practical demands of a revolutionary period. If my reading of history is correct then it appears clear that revolutions are not pre-arranged but are thrust upon us. The initial activity is not usually even national in character, but it takes upon itself a local character and spreads and spreads until it has reached from

one end of the country to the other. But even if it were not so, even if a general movement of the workers took upon itself a completely ordered national form, and simultaneously happened throughout the country it would not do otherwise than emphasise the points I am about to make.

The times demand, with all their revolutionary potentialities, attention to the actual conditions around us, not simply for the purpose of focussing the grievances of the workers, but for the purpose of being prepared for the development of revolutionary situations. It is foolish to wait for spontaneous generation of organisation and equipment which experience has taught us will be needed in a crisis. To the degree that we anticipate the needs of a revolutionary crisis and prepare the way, to that degree do we make easy the success of our activities.

It is one thing to act in negative fashion, to stop production, for example. It is another thing to control production and distribution. For the first any old or new organisation will do. For the latter purposes, however, definite organisation is required, and also a knowledge of all the resources to hand. Glasgow, Belfast, and Limerick have clearly shown the potentialities of the mass movements and the needs when the issue shifts in the course of the struggle. To feed the masses out on strike is a far different proposition from the cessation of work, and that

problem is thrust more and more forcibly upon the strike committees the longer the strike lasts. It is in that change of issue that there looms up the possibility of a revolutionary situation leading to a revolution. To anticipate the requirements of such a situation, therefore, demands a knowledge of all the local resources which are likely to be of value in such a crisis. Food, warmth, light, are essentials to all. How they can be organised and distributed becomes a practical problem which should not be left to hamper a critical situation but should be anticipated and prepared for in an organised fashion.

Much more can be said, but sufficient for the moment to indicate the demands of these critical situations and to call for more attention to the actual task of preparing the way for the march of the masses.

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## WORKERS' SOCIALIST FEDERATION. MASS MEETING

ON  
**THE PEACE TERMS,**  
TRAFALGAR SQUARE, SUNDAY, MAY 25th,

AT 3.30 P.M.

SPEAKERS—

**TOM MANN,  
SYLVIA PANKHURST,  
MELVINA WALKER,  
VICTOR BEACHAM,  
WALTER PONDER,  
JACK TANNER,  
And others.**