

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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THE REVOLUTION.

Now that the workers are in revolt is the time of all time to make Socialists and to advocate revolution. Revolutionary progress is not made in periods of dull inertia, but when peoples are stirred to action.

Socialists must support all strikes, for under capitalism the workers are everywhere denied their due share of the wealth they produce, and because, by striking, they manifest a conscious or unconscious discontent with the capitalist system, and unless the workers are discontented the system cannot be overthrown. We weary of those sentimental people who, when the workers strike for higher wages, shorter hours, or against industrial tyranny, always complain that the motive behind the strike is selfish and small, saying they cannot support them till they strike for some wider political objective. In their struggle upward from slavery, the working class must, of necessity, take any step for which it is ready, to better its conditions and to add to its power. We may desire the coming of strikes for broad general objects beneficial to the entire people, and for the conquest of governing power; but we must not cavil at smaller, less conspicuous manifestations of unrest.

It is almost invariably the case that those who deprecate strikes for small sectional objectives are precisely those who are readiest to complain when the workers face the greater risks and sacrifices attendant on a strike for some wide and far-reaching end.

The strike for a shorter working day, the general strike, whatever its object, may possibly carry with it far greater consequences than the achievement of the original aim; but, be that as it may, the strike for shorter hours is itself a great and worthy object. To reduce the hours of labour until work is found for all, is the scientific method of dealing with the unemployment problem, a problem which now looms before the workers of every country as a hideous menace.

The capitalist Governments which have accelerated the unemployed crisis refuse to take any adequate steps to deal with it. The payment of the unemployment doles and the unemployment "dormitory" system for a maximum period of thirteen weeks in six months is not an adequate method of dealing with the situation. The masses of the workless army are growing, although the spread of unemployment is checked by keeping in the Army the soldiers eagerly waiting to be demobilised.

The strikers for reduced hours are doing what is so very hard to do, abandoning their own security, in order to bring the unemployed men and women back into industry. Theirs is a splendid manifestation of courage and solidarity.

The employing classes which, as a whole, have increased their profits by the war, and especially so in the engineering, ship-building, and mining industries, where the demand for reduced hours is strongest, refuse to accede to this, the only method by which unemployment can be avoided.

The Government, which, though a capitalist Government, should feel some responsibility towards the community as a whole, has been called on by the strikers to intervene to secure the necessary reduction of hours. The Government, through Mr. Bona Law's telegram, has refused the strikers' request.

"... The Government are unable to entertain

requests for intervention made by local members of unions whose representatives are working for them in conference with the employers.

"Such action on the part of the Government would only undermine the authority of those who have been chosen by the men to represent their interests."

The terms of the refusal are inoleant. It is not the business of the Government to dictate to the workers concerning the management of their trade unions.

Having refused to intervene in support of the strikers' demand, though its fulfilment alone can save off great misery and unrest in the early future, the Government has not simply allowed things to take their course. It has intervened against the strikers. It has arrested, the men who seemed to be the most prominent leaders; it has sent troops and machine guns, even tanks, to Glasgow. People cried out against Germany's use of the more hideous methods of warfare—no implement of war is more terrible than the tank. Is the Government to be permitted to use it in Glasgow?

The Electrical Trade Union has decided to come to the aid of the strikers; it joins the national strike for 40 hours; it supports the Port of London strikers; it issues strike pay. As usual, it sets an example of solidarity to other unions.

We regret the shilly-shally methods being employed by the officials of the Transport Workers' Federation. At the A.S.E. mass meeting, and Shop Stewards' meeting, where the 40 hour demand was adopted in solidarity with the Clyde, Jack Mills of the Woolwich Shop Stewards tried hard to substitute 44 hours and to defer strike action. Mills declared that he acted on the advice of Robert Williams, the Secretary of the Transport Workers' Federation, and Mills urged that as the Transport Workers were demanding 44 hours, other workers must fall into line with them, because only the Transport Workers could paralyse the food supply, and therefore, they had the best chance of winning a strike. Evidently Mills had not been keeping in touch with the news from Belfast and Glasgow.

But what shall we say of the Transport Workers' Federation? If the press reports are to be believed, on the very afternoon when Mills was appealing to the engineers to be led by the Transport Workers, the Transport Workers' Federation, at a conference with the employers, agreed to a motion of Sir Alfred Booth of the Cunard Company to postpone the hours question for further discussion by a sub-committee of employers and employed. Having secured this point, the employers withdrew, leaving the workers to realise their mistake. The workers then passed a resolution saying that the committee must meet on Tuesday instead of Friday! Indeed, we are appalled that a strong, powerfully organised body of workers, whose help is urgently needed by their fellows, now carrying on a magnificent struggle, should consent to such an obvious ruse for securing delay.

Do the Transport Workers really believe they will secure a 44-hour week by means of this sub-committee? And if they should secure this point, how could they possibly rest content to get it for themselves alone, when obviously, if a reduction of working hours is to result in the absorption of the unemployed into the labour market, the reduction must be effected on a national scale? Can they stand by and see the Clyde workers beaten for lack of their help?

Though the Transport Workers' Federation is thus dallying with the position, failing to realise the present urgent duty of working-class solidarity, the component parts of the Federation are beginning to show signs of awakening.

The general strike is the great educator in learning the lesson of solidarity. We are moving on towards the general strike, and in due time, we shall assuredly see the workers' revolution in Britain and throughout the world.

An Army of 900,000.

The Pay for Fighting Socialism.

Nine hundred thousand men "in the first

instance" are to be kept mobilised. "In the first instance," be it noted! Remember that at the beginning of the war Kitchener asked for only 500,000 men! Only 100,000 had been actually prepared as an expeditionary force by the Government, which saw the great European war looming ahead. Nine hundred thousand men IS THE FIRST INSTANCE. Keep the words in mind!

How are these men to be distributed?

The forces of occupation comprise:—

The Army on the Rhine.

Detachment of the Far North.

The Home Army.

Army of Middle East.

Garrison of Crown Colonies and India.

What is the Detachment of the Far North?

Obviously it is the detachment which is to be sent to Russia. British workers, are you willing to be sent to Russia to fight the Workers' Government there? The same man said of a party at least of the Middle East Army.

The Daily Mail recently published a map showing how British troops are now distributed. It showed them at Murmansk, Archangel, Omak, Vladivostok, and Transcaucasia in Transcaucasia, Mesopotamia, North Persia, Palestine, Cairo, the Balkans, Italy; all these beside the armies in India, Austria, Germany, and Turkey, Great Britain, and Ireland. The immense army, planned for the most part in the territory of weaker nations, must either be protective, or a coercive influence. From the capitalists' standpoint of legitimate interests, the necessary policy of such armies are coercion and always retard the natural development of the peoples they control.

What is to be the pay for the men who man these armies? £1 1s. a week, in addition to separation allowance, for a private soldier—little enough! To us such wages paid to the men sent to Russia are all too like the thirty pieces of silver paid to Judas for betraying Christ.

We ask those who are considering this matter to recall the words of Arthur Ransome, who went out to Russia as a Liberal journalist, and whose papers were endorsed by the Bolsheviks here, warned them that if he disapproved of the Bolsheviks and the Soviets, he would use his pen against them. Arthur Ransome says of the Bolshevik:—

"I only ask that men shall look through the fog of libel, that surrounds them and see that the way in which they are struggling is among the light which every man of young and eager heart sees before him somewhere on the road, and not among those other lights from which his resolution turns away."

Which men are to form the Army of Occupation?

The young men and boys, and, included with them, may be men who make themselves conspicuous by agitating for better conditions in the Army. The regulations state that any men marked down for returning home who are guilty of any form of insubordination, apart from any other punishment, will be put back to the bottom of the list of those who are to be sent home. So the desire to go home will be used to keep men quiet. The regulations further state that 60 battalions of 18-year-old boys now at home are to be sent at once to the Rhine bridgeheads. The armies will be composed again the sinister phrase, "In the first instance" of those who did not enlist before January 1, 1916.

Remember that if the effort to crush Bolshevism in Europe is allowed to continue and if the British Empire is to be extended, even an army of 900,000 will not suffice.

In the election it was said that conscription would be abolished; now press forecasts announce that legislation to extend conscription will be introduced as soon as Parliament meets as it is generally agreed that an army of 900,000 men cannot be raised by voluntary means.

Capitalism is laying its plans, but we believe that Labour will presently cry "check" them.

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