

THE Communist

An Organ of the Third (Communist) International

(PUBLISHED BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN)

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TWOPENCE

NOTES OF THE WEEK

Bad Losers. The sequel to the Red Trade Union victory in the French Railwaymen's Federation is a revelation of "yellow" psychology. Here was a straight contest at a national delegate conference. The old gang under Bidegaray had used all the official machinery in their power against the rebels. Confident of victory, they had declared that the National Congress must decide, that the minority must give way to the majority, that there must be no disunion and no questioning of the decision once reached.

And then the Reds won. At once the yellow "democrats" revealed themselves in their true colours. First they tried to mix up the counting of the votes. But this was found out and had to be admitted; and the figures stood clear, 55,140 for the Red Trade Union International against 53,677. Thereupon Bidegaray and his gang marched out of the hall, and declared the Federation split. So much for their care for working class unity, when their own power is questioned. Then they tried to refuse to evacuate the headquarters offices. The representatives of the new majority seized the offices. *Bidegaray declared his intention of appealing to the police.*

The Labour Leaders. That the police are the modern "Labour leader" has always been the contention of the Communists. Bidegaray's instructive appeal to the police is only one illustration of many. The same thing happened in Czecho-Slovakia over the party office. In the same way the "machine" of the American Socialist Party at the Chicago Conference of 1919 which led to the split, called in the notorious Chicago police to exclude the Communist delegates. The Congress of the Second International at Geneva was held behind closed doors with gendarmes to protect it. And now read the report of Peter Hannon, coppersmith, of Sheffield, sentenced at Doncaster for causing disaffection. What was his crime?

"It was stated that in a speech delivered at a Communist meeting at Goldthorp he referred to Mr. J. H. Thomas and Mr. Clynes as 'comedians,' and said the capitalists had sent the workers to France and Mesopotamia to die like flies."

Sentence, three months, with a further three months in default of payment of a £50 fine.

Once, the crime of disaffection meant disaffection to the King. To-day it means disaffection to Clynes, Henderson and the rest. Bow down and worship them, for they are loved by the police.

The Usual. On June 21st the Labour Party meets in conference. The agenda is already issued. There are well sounding resolutions, with many amendments, demanding Democratic Control of Foreign Policy, the cancellation of the Peace Treaties, Peace with Ireland, Recognition of the Soviet Government, Relief of Unemployment, the Right of Free Speech, Nationalisation of the Mines. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. . . .

We venture to prophesy two things: one, that all these resolutions will be passed with enthusiasm. Two, that no attempt will follow to uncover the secrets of foreign policy, that the Peace treaties will not be cancelled, the Irish war will proceed as before, the Soviet will not be recognised, the unemployed will not benefit, no vigorous effort will be made for free speech, and the miners will receive no effectual support.

It is indeed almost a relief to turn from these hardy annual resolutions, which, lacking any "drive," no one believes to be important, to a resolution demanding a Thames tunnel at Gravesend, and the Hampstead amendment suggesting that the tunnel be in the Channel.



LEADER: "We must proceed constitutionally . . . Let us have a Ballot!"

A Banana. On June 8th we learnt that a ban had been put on the sale of THE COMMUNIST in parks and open spaces by the L.C.C. A letter was immediately sent by the Editor to the Chief Officer, Parks Department, our Comrade A. A. Watts, L.C.C., took the matter up, and a reply announcing the withdrawal of the ban was received from the Solicitor to the L.C.C. The following are the letters:—

To The Chief Officer,
Parks Department, L.C.C. 8th June, 1921.

SIR,
A letter addressed by you to Mr. C. Hanson of 44, Malden Road, N.W. 5, has been brought to my notice. It contains the statement that certain articles in THE COMMUNIST are at present the subject of a criminal prosecution, and that on this account the permit for the sale or distribution of this periodical in Parks is withdrawn.

I have to inform you that it is entirely untrue that any criminal prosecution of any kind has been taken against THE COMMUNIST or against any individual in connection with articles that have appeared in this paper. I can only suppose that you are confusing THE COMMUNIST with other publications possibly not dissimilar in name.

I shall be glad if you will take immediate steps to withdraw this injurious statement and the action dependent on it; and I must ask you to put the matter right in a letter to myself as well as to Mr. Hanson.

To the Editor of THE COMMUNIST.

10th June, 1921.

SIR,
Your letter of the 8th instant addressed to the Chief Officer, Parks Department, has been handed to me and in reply thereto I am instructed to inform you that the letter addressed to Mr. C. Hanson by the Chief Officer was written under some misapprehension due to some confusion which arose in connection with the prosecution which is pending at the Mansion House Police Court.

Under these circumstances I am instructed to inform you that the withdrawal of the permit for the sale and distribution of THE COMMUNIST has been cancelled, and I am sorry that owing to inadvertence notice of the withdrawal of the permit in question was sent to Mr. Hanson, to whom I am writing by this post.

Colonial Eloquence. Mr. Massey, New Zealand's imitation W. M. Hughes, is in London

and attended a Rhodes dinner at Oxford. After dinner, and numerous toasts, this windbag became sentimental over C. J. Rhodes, and demanded that everyone should study the life of "this great man."

He was quite right. Let us study Cecil John Rhodes, and the history of the group of South African adventurers, whose best known leaders were Rhodes, Beit and Jameson.

Internally, Rhodes' one great "statesmanly" measure was the expropriation of the natives and the driving them into reservations.

Externally, this group, which had interests in the Rand mines, managed to drag Britain into the South African War, which was fought to secure their authority and profits in the Rand.

The group, almost without exception, retired from public life enormously wealthy, having risen from insignificant origins.

Internationally, Rhodes' only project that has been realised is the Rhodes' Scholarship foundations, by which numbers of the sons of the Colonial governing classes are sent to Oxford to receive that veneer of domineering insolence which Oxford can alone impart. Thus the Colonies will never lack the true breed of Dyers and Curzons.

Manikins. To the ordinary entertainment staff at the House of Commons there were

added a week ago a couple of "cross-talk" comedians in the persons of Mr. H. M. Hyndman and the Duke of Northumberland. They met before a select audience of nuts, nobs, bosses, bounders, Labourites, Deliberals, Coalishers, and general josserrini; and they engaged in back-chat about "labour unrest."

Mr. Hyndman explained (that it was all due to the cold-blooded persistence with which he had been left alone for 40 years. Smithson-the-Duke explained that it was all due to Lenin who once slept with the Kaiser—or words to that effect; that all Socialists, Labour Parties, Trade Unions and Unemployed persons were fabricated in Moscow and imported into the country by German peddlers disguised as Breton onion merchants. And so they got down to it. The Duke said it was all the wicked Bolsh conspiracy against the British Empire. Mr. Hyndman said it was nothing of the sort because the Bolsheviki were just as bad as the Duke's chums in that they were even more disrespectful to His Majesty Hyndman. In fact he, the one and only Hyndman, "would fight against Lenin and Trotsky as readily as he would against the Duke of Northumberland and his friends." And we believe he would—just as readily. Not to be outdone the Duke explained that a near relative of George Lansbury was employed in the office of the Communist Party and that there was a conspiracy to overthrow Religion and Law and Family Life—and Trotsky never got his hair cut and Lenin never had his teeth stopped and it was disgusting for people to call themselves a Labour Party anyway. . . .



LEADER: "We must proceed constitutionally . . . Let us have a Ballot!"

INDUSTRIAL NOTES

By John Ball

No Mining Peace—Farm Union Jealousy—Plot Against Trade Boards— Building Bosses' Bluff—Laundry Work at Edinburgh—Union Officials and their Pay.

On Friday evening last, after the miners' conference had decided to take a ballot on the mine-owners' terms, the Press was promptly primed by the Government to prepare the way for acceptance.

Next morning we duly learned that the terms would not mean victory for either side, that they were the result of getting down to the wages issue and dropping political questions, that trade would soon revive and when the miners got busy everything in the garden would be lovely.

Every one of these statements is a lie. The terms would mean defeat for the miners: every principle which the miners said was necessary for a decent settlement would be dropped, and the prospects after a resumption of work would be, bad trade, enormous unemployment, and low wages.

The reference to getting down to the wages issue is amusing. That has not even yet been done in the sense urged by the Press for weeks past. The owners have proposed practically the old methods of working and organisation, in place of the new methods proposed by the miners.

However, the miners are not deceived. I do not for a moment imagine that, despite their suffering, they will vote for acceptance. And whatever happens there will not be peace.

* * * *

Farm workers are up against the fight of their lives. The Government has announced its decision to break up the Agricultural Wages Board after the coming harvest, thus withdrawing all legal protection for the minimum wages and 50-hour week.

On top of that, when the Wages Board meets next Thursday the farmers will propose to cut even the present paltry rate (which range from 46s. in some areas to 50s. 6d. in others) down to an all-round 40s. per week.

I want to talk straight to the two unions in which the men are organised—the Agricultural Workers' and Rural Labourers' Union and the Workers' Union. Some of the officials of these unions are consumed with jealousy of each other, and the union policies are frequently in conflict.

We have seen the consequences in the attitude on wages questions on the Board and in the threatened Essex farm strike. This nonsense must be dropped.

All credit to the Workers' Union for the organising work it has done, but it should now hand over all its farming members to the union for the industry. This will be made easier if the officials of the latter union do their part in rising above childish displays of rivalry.

There are people in both unions who are strong enough to get this matter put right. Let it be done.

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It will not come as a surprise to readers of these notes that the attack on Trade Boards is developing.

The Government is now being pressed to "abolish the Trade Boards Act except in the few trades in which there is a possibility of sweating." The Government has already done much to make these Boards less effective. Awards by the Boards are held up by the Minister of Labour, the workers are kept without advances long after the Boards have agreed upon them, and the inspectorate necessary to enforce awards has been cut down.

Many Tailoring Employers in the East End of London—helped by the reduction of the number of inspectors—are ignoring trade board rates in flagrant fashion. Women are being so harassed that they accept lower rates, and then are ashamed to tell their union officials.

I have previously mentioned the throwing over of a trade board by employers in the Scottish flax and jute industry. The *Morning Post* now comes forward and naively explains this by saying that the employers contended that as they had come to an amicable arrangement with their workpeople, reference to the Board was unnecessary!

* * * *

We know something of these "amicable" arrangements! What? No wonder the *Morning Post* talks of the action of the unions in insisting on Trade Board rates being observed as "a socialistic interference with industry."

Some months ago an advisory council was set up by the unions concerned with Trade Boards. That council was to co-ordinate the efforts of the unions. So far I have seen nothing but footling protests in the newspapers.

Meanwhile the capitalist machine works steadily on, removing prop after prop from under the painfully built up standards of the workers.

Here again the moral is plain. The situation cries out for a great united Labour offensive.

* * * *

The great building lock-out which was threatened a fortnight ago has not yet come off. Notices were posted that only men who agreed to accept and help the dilution scheme would be allowed to continue working.

If this was acted on it meant the stopping of the building trade. The president of the London master builders feverishly denied that they meant to lock out anybody. Apparently he was right, and their notices and threats were all bluff intended to save their faces with the Government.

The impossible Tommy Macnamara is being regularly pressed in the House of Commons to tell how many dilutees he has got to work. Tommy knows that he never will get them in the building trade, but he gives hopeful answers. The building bosses meanwhile have been pressed to make a move: the result was the lock-out bluff.

But, make no mistake, the fight is coming—not so much on dilution as on further wage reductions. I repeat the weather is too fine just now to suit the bosses to stop work. The building workers ought not to await the bosses' convenience.

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The time allotted for the annual conference of the Transport Workers' Federation was too short. It was inevitable that there should be a lot of what Harry Gosling called "laundry work" over Black Friday and the embargo muddle. The "laundry work" took so much of the two days that discussion was quite inadequate on the far-reaching changes proposed by the executive in regard to federation organisation.

Such "laundry work" is necessary and healthy, but the Edinburgh conference efforts did not wash the linen clean. They could not. The work was undertaken by people whose hands were dirty—for the 90 or so delegates were nearly all union officials who share the guilt for the blunders of the past three months.

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The defence put up by members of the executive council was awfully weak. Robt. Williams said that the debacle of April 15 was due to the "unwillingness or the total incapacity of the miners to realise the need for united counsel as well as action." Bevin urged the same plea. That might be a plausible excuse for not calling a strike, but not an excuse for calling it off.

As a matter of fact, the debates brought out the need for united counsel in the Transport Federation.

That point will have to be borne in mind in the negotiations which the conference authorised for the purpose of extending the Federation to include distributive workers.

The blunt truth about Black Friday is that the rail and transport leaders had an attack of cold feet.

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Piquant revelations have resulted from the announcement in the *Daily Herald* that Frank Lowe, national organiser of the Painters' Union has struck work against a reduction of salary.

Members of the Union wrote to point out that the so-called "reduction" was a refusal to ratify increases that the executive had given off its own bat.

The executive should rightly be censured for its action, but the matter cannot be left there. The salaries proposed—£500 for the general secretary, £450 for the assistant general secretary and £450 for the national organiser—are not extravagant.

I suppose the painters on an average do not get more than £150 a year, but as they have decided to pay their officials more they should face the fact that £6 a week some years ago is of less value to-day, and they should pay up accordingly. The alternative would be to put their officials on craftsmen's rates. There is no logical middle course.

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Here are some further suggestions for "Work of the Week":—

- (1) Do you know anyone in your trade who is not a union member? Get him or her in.
- (2) If you are in work and are threatened with wage cuts, get up an informal dinner hour meeting in your department to talk it over. I have known such meetings to be very educative.
- (3) Do all you can to influence your mates to think as trade unionists instead of as craftsmen or Wesleyans or bird fanciers.
- (4) Worry your branch officials.

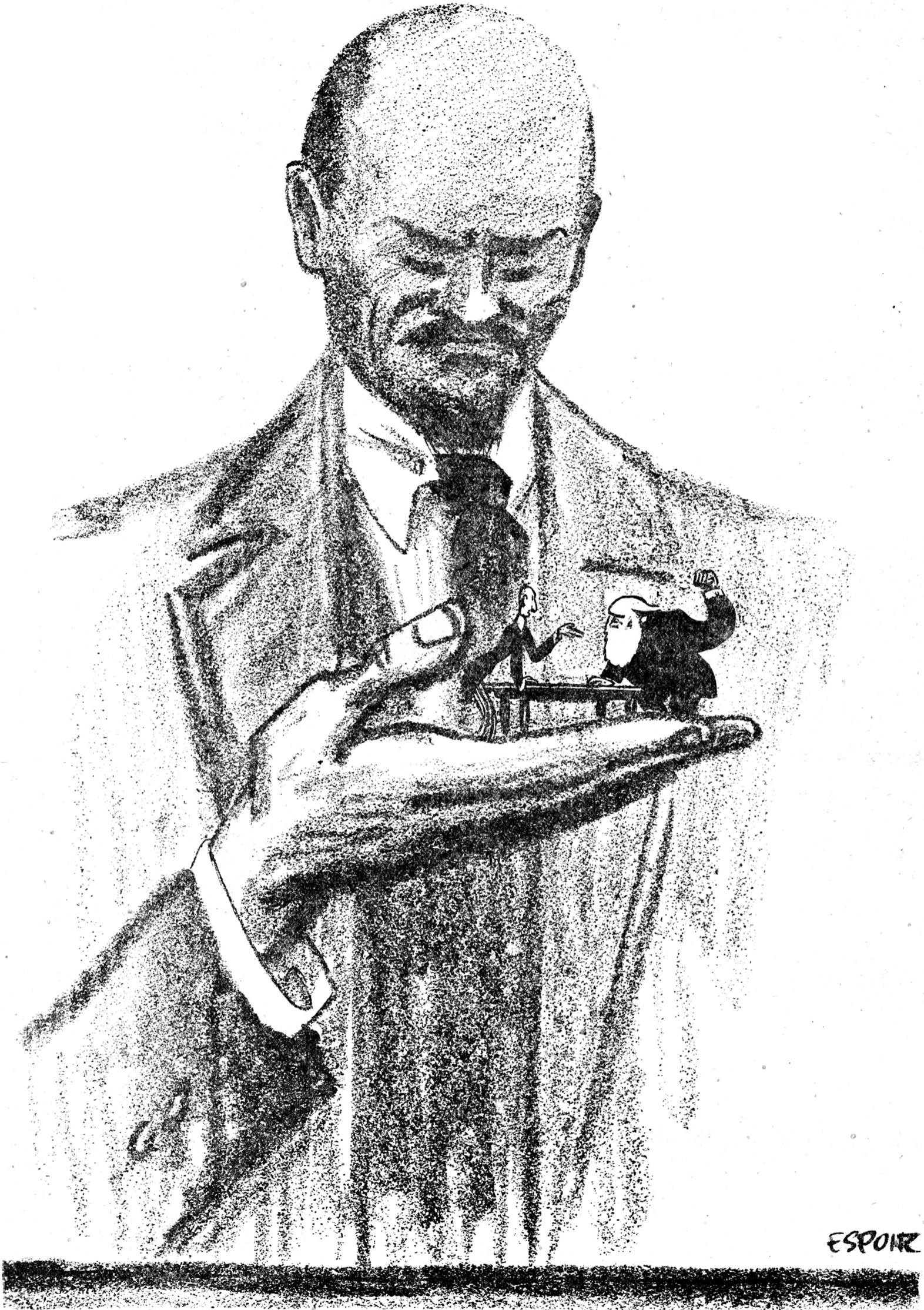
Our Circulation Push.

Agents for "The Communist" are wanted in all the following towns. Where newsagents are unable (on account of the Wholesalers' Boycott) to distribute we will be pleased to supply secretaries or members of Labour organisations at the rate of 13 for 1/4, carriage paid, sale or return. We ask readers in these towns to take a supply for a month on trial and help us in our special effort towards 100,000 circulation. As an aid to publicity we will send, upon application, a supply of back numbers for free distribution, entirely free of cost. All communications to Circulation Manager, "The Communist," 16, King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2.:—

Aldershot	Dover	Paignton
Altrincham	Eastleigh	Penzance
Aylesbury	Ebbw Vale	Pitsea
Barnard Castle	Exmouth	Pokesdown
Barnet	Farnborough	Portslade
Bedwas	Featherstone	Ramsgate
Benfleet	Folkestone	Redruth
Berwick-on-Tweed	Grays	Reigate
Bishop Auckland	Harwich	Richmond
Boscombe	Haywards Heath	(Yorks)
Bournemouth	Hatfield	Rochester
Brentford	Hereford	St Albans
Burton-on-Trent	Hertford	Shoburyness
Bury St. Edmonds	Hitchin	Shoreham
Buxton	Hornchurch	Slough
Chatham	Horsham	Staines
Chelmsford	Ipswich	Stoke-on-Trent
Chichester	Kidderminster	Stourbridge
Clacton	King's Lynn	Stroud
Dagenham	Lewes	Trowbridge
Dartford	Maidenhead	Truro
Devizes	Newquay	Whitehaven
Dorking	Northampton	Worcester
	Old Cummock	Wycombe, High



LENIN: Charming manikins! And which is Northumberland, which Hyndman?



LENIN: Charming manikins! And which is Northumberland, which Hyndman?

WHEREAS JUDAS DID NOT ISSUE A REPORT BEFORE HANGING HIMSELF

WHEN the COMMUNIST called for a realisation by the whole of the workers of their unity of interest against the oppressor there were not wanting many who saw in the assertion a mere platitude of no practical value—a thing to be agreed to with solemn nod, and then disregarded.

When we asserted that the attack upon the miners was a concerted and deliberate attempt to break the backbone of organised resistance to the abasement of the working-class level of existence we were accused of fomenting a strife that circumstances could not justify and fomenting it from narrow sectarian motives.

When we warned the workers of the possibility of Black Friday and bade them watch their leaders we were told that we were mischievously bent upon disrupting the organised workers movement solely in order that our private spleen might find vent and our party vanity might become augmented.

And when Black Friday came in all its hideous actuality—then we were told that our tone was objectionable and our policy the merest folly.

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How stands the case?

With their confidence raised to the zenith by the cowardice of the Triple Alliance the Boss Class has swept on from victory to victory.

To a million locked-out miners are added half a million locked-out cotton workers. And to these again a quarter of a million workers in wool.

A million and a half workers in the engineering and allied industries are on the very brink of a similar fate and another million and a half engaged in agriculture have been without warning thrust under the feet of the farming bosses resolved upon crushing them back again into their pre-war abjectness.

Over two millions of unemployed workers with over one million short-timers are subjected to a twenty-five per cent. reduction in their "dole." Seamen, labourers, stewards, and shipbuilders have surrendered, and the turn of the printers, the transport workers, the railwaymen and the rest will not be long delayed.

All along the line the Boss Class sweep on in their triumphant determination to beat the whole wage-working class back to its pre-war level of existence, and in the sweeping process to deprive them of all their pre-war apparatus of self-defence.

Trade-Unions are threatened. Political organisation is threatened. Working-class agitation is made a crime. Communist propaganda, in speech and in print, is made, by Emergency Legislation an offence as scandalous and as little worthy humane consideration as the spreading of infectious disease.

Back to the pre-war level of wages, with little or no possibility of pre-war prices. The pre-war level of living and the post-war pitch of productivity. The pre-war depth of misery and an abolition of the pre-war reasons for hope. The pre-war causes for discontent with reinforced powers of holding the necks of the discontented firmly beneath their yoke. Such are the slogans of the Great Boss Push.

As you were before the war, with this difference that the Boss has added to his defences all the arts of Black-and-Tannery.

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We refuse to hide the facts. The first battle of the campaign has been won hands down for the Bosses. Notice, we do not say "by" them but "for" them. The men who made victory and defeat, are the leaders who funk on Black Friday. They carried the White Feather then: they will not carry the Red Flag to-day.

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It has been an essential point of our case that the objective sought by the great push of the organised boss class was such a defeat and demoralisation of the workers as would render them incapable of effectively defending their life-standard for a generation; and that the motive impelling the selection of that objective was the recognition by the grim-jawed Boss Class that Capitalism was tottering to its fall.

They know, these bosses, and none better, that in desperate dilemmas attack is the safest defence. With a precipice yawning to engulf them they turned to the assault. Have they won? Is their system safe? Is all resistance crushed?



BLACK FRIDAY — BLACK EVERYDAY!

If we were to take the evidence of the Transport Workers' Executive for it we should be compelled to say—yes!

They have issued a report and the whole of its 36 hypocritical pages, serve only to say in forty different ways that the Railway and Transport Workers Executives were afraid. Afraid to fight—afraid to run: afraid of themselves, afraid of their responsibilities, afraid of their own rank and file, and afraid most of all of the task of rising to an emergency.

And they seek with paralytic ineptitude to find somebody upon whom to cast the blame.

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To follow them in detail would be nauseous to the last degree. And it is quite unnecessary because they admit—or, rather, they let slip through their palsied fingers, a virtual admission of—the justice of every thing we have said.

They admit that they induced the miners to forego their opposition to pump and safety operations.

They admit that they did this not because the miners were wrong, but because the Government demanded it.

They admit that they secured the consent of the miners by a promise of action in their support.

And they admit that they foreswore themselves by an eleventh-hour decision to refuse so to act.

They admit that (as the COMMUNIST alone announced) the Miners had agreed with them to make the issue not merely miners' wages but railwaymen's and transport workers' wages as well, if those sections came out.

There would be "no separate peace."

But at the time they hid this from their membership, knowing that the fine compact would have made stronger than ever the demand for strike action. And, in their excuse for their cowardice, forgetful of their own admission a few pages earlier, they protest that their members were weakening because it was "merely" a solidarity fight!

Remember. They do not deny, nay! they proclaim their "general recognition" that "both the Government and the employers were determined to take advantage of the unexampled growth in unemployment in order to force a material reduction of wages upon the whole of the working-class."

They themselves show that Loco-Engineers, Electricians, and General Workers had all offered support and that this was supplemented by the approval of the Joint Conference of the T.U.C. Parliamentary Committee and the Labour Party. "The Federation itself"—these are their own words!—"had shown a degree of solidarity never before revealed inside its own ranks," and they themselves "emphasise" the fact that "up to Thursday the position seemed well-nigh impregnable."

Why, then, was action not taken?

And the answer is still, Why?

• • • •

It would be difficult to find anywhere anything written by mortal man more pitifully mean and querulous than the pages of the report that recount events from this point.

They falter out what seems to be a blame of Hodges. They speak darkly of a sub-committee of Private Members who carried a report to the Prime Minister. They wail at the activity of the Press and they are torn with anguish at the telegrams and telephone messages that began to pour in from the provincial branches anxious to know what was going on.

Then righteous indignation begins to swell their wilted emptiness and we have a page of brave words upon the theme of the lack of etiquette shown by the Miners Executive—who in their delusion seemed unable to think of anything but getting on with the fight, and had no suspicion that any other intention had found a lodging at Unity House.

As we know, they were mistaken and Black Friday became a fact accomplished.

And the reason—or rather the excuse?

Simply this—the miners made "a mistake in tactics." After affirming and reiterating that the real issue was whether the Government and the Employers would succeed in their endeavour to "force a material reduction of wages upon the whole working-class" the Railway and Transport Executives, find a pretext for saying that it is merely a Miners' matter. And somewhere between the unemployed, the "morale of their respective memberships," the Government's preparations, the hesitation and uncertainty created by the Press, and the mechanism of the Alliance itself they find their excuse for calling the strike off.

Truly justified are the words that ends this "last dying speech and confession."

"If the Triple Alliance ever does enter into action it can only be under the direction of leaders who believe in such action. Half-hearted belief and ill-disguised opposition never assisted any cause, and the membership of all the organisations concerned must make up their minds and then those who are charged with the responsibility and authority for giving effect to the decisions must carry out those decisions willingly and resolutely or give place to those who will."

We said, "Watch your leaders!" We repeat, "Watch your leaders!" For the third time! Watch your leaders! and watch yourselves so that your watching may be to some avail.

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The opening movement of the Big Boss Push gives place to an arrogant assault, but we are confident that, appearances notwithstanding they are doomed to experience a disappointment.

"Bourgeois revolutions like those of the 18th century" (says Marx) "rush onward rapidly from success to success, their stage effects outbid one another, men and things seem to be set in flaming brilliants, ecstasy is the prevailing spirit; but they are short lived, they reach their climax speedily, and society relapses into a long fit of nervous re-actance before it learns how to appropriate the fruits of its period of feverish excitement."

"Proletarian revolutions, on the contrary, such as those of the 19th century, criticise themselves constantly; constantly interrupt themselves in their own course; come back to what seems to have been accomplished in order to start over anew; scorn with cruel thoroughness the half measures, weaknesses, and meannesses of their first attempts; seem to throw down their adversary only in order to enable him to draw fresh strength from the earth and again to rise up against them in more gigantic stature; constantly recoil in fear before the undefined monster magnitude of their own objects, until, finally that situation is created which renders all retreat impossible and the conditions themselves cry out: *Hic Rhodus, hic salta* (here is the place! now jump!)"

The failure of the Triple Alliance in particular and the Trades Union and Labour Movement in general must not be mistaken for a failure either of the courage or the resources of the proletarian mass.

The whole machinery of action, defensive and offensive, must be overhauled. These alliances which are simply consolidations of dislocation, these leaders with "half-hearted" belief and this machinery which enables "ill disguised opposition" at headquarters to thwart the whole-hearted courage and enthusiasm of a rank and file whose heads have been carefully emptied in order to make the process of their delusion possible—all these things must go.

There is only one working class: there must be one Union and only one, through which its will can be expressed. And to reach that end, the rank and file must be roused to action.

To your work! all ye of great hearts and fervent hope. Form your shop committees: form your unofficial groups in every branch and lodge of every union in the land. Form your study groups on the job and your classes in every area. Be diligent at your union meetings; be active and determined in every debate. Contest every position inch by inch, striving always to win control for the organised and militant rank and file. For when the rank and file have won control of each union, all can be united; and when unity of purpose and understanding has spread sufficiently far to make of the working-class a whole that moves as one man, because it feels as one man, then the walls of our prison house will totter to their fall and a victorious peace will be within our grasp.

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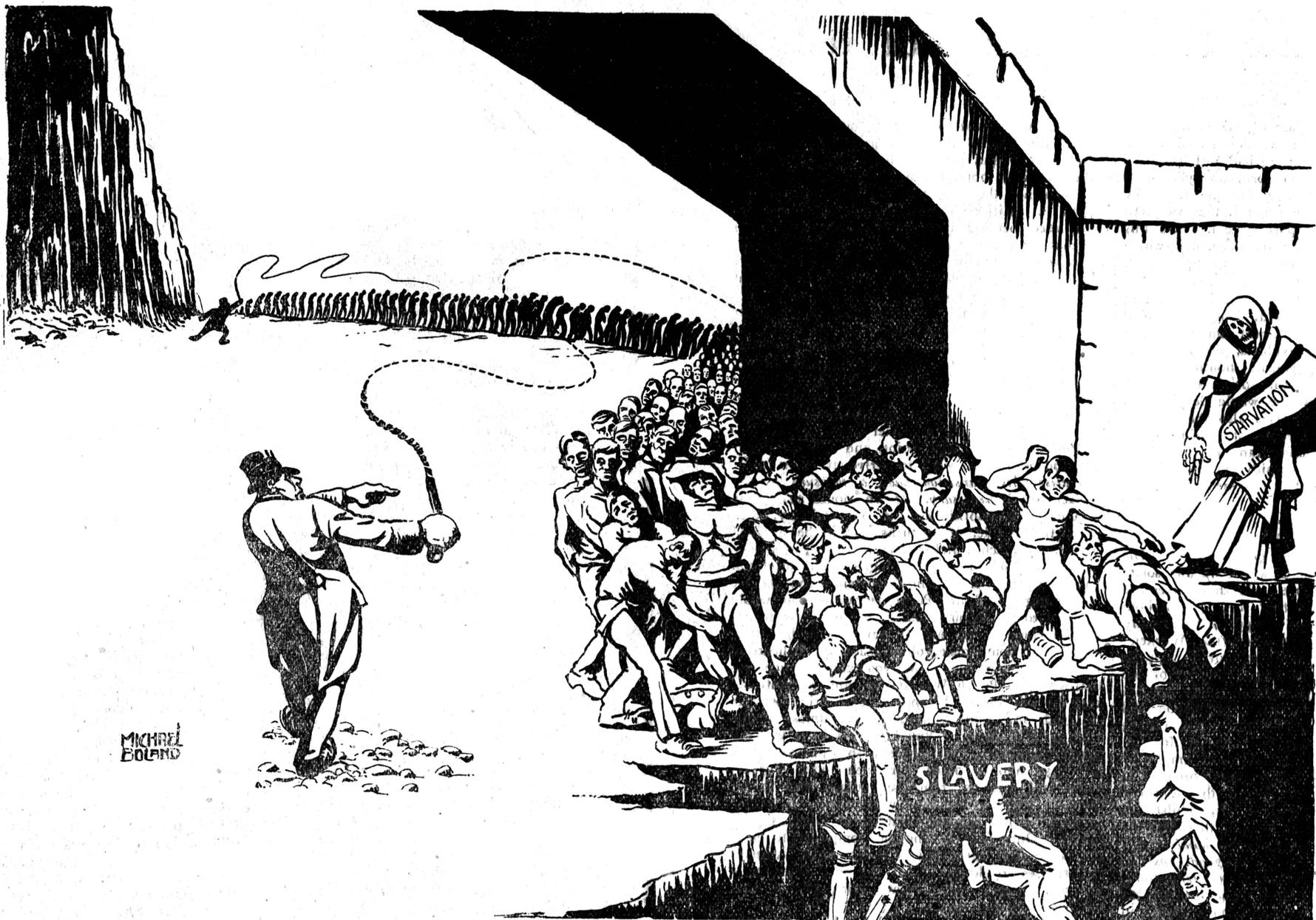
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LENIN'S SPEECH

On the Produce Tax to the Chief Officials of the Communist Party in Moscow.

Cabinet Ministers and their newspapers are fond of alleging that the new policy in Russia towards the peasantry is an abandonment of Communism. It is clear that they have not the honesty to read such expositions of the actual facts as here follows.

COMRADES, in connection with the question of the Produce Tax and the changing of our methods of supplying foodstuffs as well as on the question of the economic policy of the Soviet Power we hear the most varied opinions expressed, which may lead to great misunderstandings. In accordance with an agreement which I have made with Comrade Kameneff he will confine himself in explaining to you in all their detail the recently published laws. This division will be so much the more in accordance with the objects of this meeting as Comrade Kameneff was the chairman of the Commission which was appointed by the Central Committee of our Party, a selection afterwards confirmed by the Council of People's Commissaries. It was this Committee which held a whole series of conferences with the representatives of the various departments concerned and succeeded in working out the details of all the laws which have recently been published. The last of these laws was published yesterday—and to-day we can read it in the papers. There exists no doubt that each one of these laws will call into being a whole series of questions connected with the practical carrying out of them. And not a little work will be necessary before all Party workers and assistants in Soviet institutions will be sufficiently at home in these laws to work out regulations for their administration in different localities.

I simply wish to call your attention to the general or main significance of these regulations. How is it to be explained that the Soviet Government and the Proletarian Dictatorship treads the road to a recognition of "Free Trade" in certain directions? In what way can Free Trade and individual management be permitted at the same time as Socialist industrial methods? In what way can this re-birth of capitalism, seemingly inevitable with even the most limited Free Trade, be agreed to? What has called for this change? Wherein lies its special meaning, its character and its significance and how are the members of the Communist Party to understand this change? In the explanation of these questions lies practically the whole task which I have set myself.

Cause of the Change.

The first question is what has called forth the change, which many feel is too sudden and not sufficiently well grounded.

The fundamental cause of this change is to be sought in the fact that peasant economic life has lived through a very hard crisis—harder up to the spring of 1921 than could have been foreseen. The consequences of this position made itself equally felt in our transport system, as well as in all that concerns the re-establishment of industry.

An exceptionally difficult position of peasant agriculture which had been brought about by the war, and made worse by an exceptionally severe failure of the harvest, together with the great shortage of fodder, which caused a high mortality amongst the cattle; a weakening of the productive powers of the peasantry which in many places were heading straight for utter ruin—that is the picture of peasant agriculture in the spring of 1921. What then is the connection between these exceptional crises and the new policy of the produce tax?

If in a country the overwhelming majority of whose population consists of peasants, a workers' revolution takes place, and all factories, industrial undertakings and railways come into the hands of the working class, what is to be the essential economic relationship between the worker class and peasant class?

These relations have obviously to consist in this:—that the workers must produce in the factories which now belong to them, everything that is necessary for the country—which means for the peasants who form the majority of the population. These products must then be transported on railways and river steamers belonging to the workers and delivered to the peasants in exchange for their surplus land products. This is quite clear and requires hardly any explanation at all. But people who talk about the produce tax constantly

forget these facts. The state of things we desire to reach and shall arrive at is this—that the Workers' State will receive agricultural products not by means of a levy on corn, nor yet by a produce tax, but in exchange for the necessary productions delivered to the peasant, that we shall take to them on our transport system. On this foundation the economic life of a country which has gone over to Socialism can be built up.

In order that the peasant industry can further develop, it is necessary that the conditions for that development shall be assured to it. The development will be that the most backward small peasant industry carried on by individuals, this most uneconomical form of management, should little by little unite and form a great social agricultural community. This is how the whole development appears to Socialists and this is also the view of our Communist Party. I repeat it. The source of all mistakes and misunderstandings is to be sought in this: that when considering the produce tax the end which we mean to reach, and shall reach, is not kept in view.

Exchange.

What is then essentially the produce tax? The produce tax is a regulation in which we find something belonging to the future. If these taxes are so measured—as they are—that they yield about half the amount of food supplies previously obtained by the corn levy, then the Workers' State cannot by this means alone provide supplies for the Red Army, for the entire industry of the country, for the whole population which are not peasants, for the development of production and the development of foreign relations, whose help in machinery and other goods is necessary for us. All these things cannot be attended to simply by the amount of food and raw material brought in by the tax. On the one hand the Workers' State will rest on the produce tax, whilst the amount of products is lower by half than was the case with the corn levy; on the other hand it will support itself by the exchange of goods, as the products of industry are exchanged for agricultural productions. That means that in the produce tax we find something of the earlier corn levy and something of the only right system, namely, an exchange of the products of the great socialist factories for the products of agriculture. This exchange will be carried out through the food supply organisation of the State power, which belongs to the working class and through the Co-operative Societies of workers and peasants.

The question now presents itself, Why are we compelled to seize on this method of action which still contains elements from the past and only partly goes along the right road. We by no means know how significant is this part which is travelling along the right road, and whether we shall succeed in finding immediately the right road. But why must we take such half measures and from whence has this mode of action arisen? Everyone knows that it did not arise from the fact that the Soviet Power selected this or that policy. It has been called forth by the most extreme need, by a condition of things from which there is no other way out. You all know that, after the victory of the Workers' Revolution in Russia, we were compelled to follow the Imperialist War with the civil war. It can be maintained without any exaggeration that of all the countries that were dragged into the Imperialist War, including those on whose territory the war raged, Russia has suffered the most, because after four years of imperialist war we had yet another three years of civil war. It was as if we were in a besieged fortress.

The Task Accomplished.

We knew of no other means of helping ourselves than by introducing a levy on corn, which means that we took all the surplus from the peasants, and too often not only the surplus but also some things that the peasants themselves needed, in order to maintain the fighting power of the army, and to hinder the complete ruin of industry. This was an exceptionally difficult task that all the other parties declared could not be carried through. The Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, that is to say, the small bourgeoisie and the party of the larger peasants cried out during the most critical moments of the civil war, that the Bolsheviks did things bordering on madness, that it was impossible to maintain a civil war if all the remaining states hurried to the help of the White Guard. In reality the task was extraordinarily difficult and it called for the yoking of all our

strength, and could only have been successfully carried through by the great sacrifices which the working class and the peasantry made and which exceeded every normal limit.

It was not the case that we had an economic system, a political industrial plan and that we could select between this and that system; no it was not that at all. We could not even think about the re-construction of industry so long as we were not assured of supplies of provisions or fuel, at least to a minimum extent. We wanted to protect only the remains of our industry, in order that the workers should not be scattered to the four winds, and that we might have an army. This task we set ourselves, and we could get through with it in no other way than by the introduction of the levy on corn without giving anything in exchange, for bourgeois gold is naturally no compensation. We had no other way out. This position was our starting point, and I have already told you where we wish to arrive at. In order to realise this transition such a measure as the produce tax is necessary. If we should succeed in a quicker re-establishment of our industry, then we shall be able, if it turns out to be a good harvest, to reach quicker our aim of exchanging the products of industry for agricultural products. Many of you will certainly remember that at the ninth Congress of the Party we turned our whole attention to the labour front. We hoped then that we had come to an end of wars. We had then offered the bourgeoisie Poles a peace on unheard of favourable conditions. As you know, peace was destroyed, the Polish War started, and its continuation, the war against Wrangel. The period between the ninth and tenth Congresses was almost wholly filled up with wars. You know we have just this moment signed a final peace with Poland, and a few days ago a peace agreement with Turkey, which will free us from the endless wars in the Caucasus; we have just now concluded a trading agreement with England that is of world significance. Only now is England compelled to enter into a trading agreement with us whilst America still refuses to do so. All this will give you a picture of under what great difficulties we have got free of these wars.

The Great Transition.

What method, then, could be adopted in order to render the peasant industrial system the greatest possible help? There is no other means than that of substituting the produce tax for the corn levy, by which means the amount is fixed at 240 million poods instead of 423 millions, whilst this amount would be much less if there were a crop failure. In that way the peasant knows that he must deliver a definite percentage which has been fixed at the smallest possible amount; and he can then occupy himself energetically with producing as much as possible. For the products remaining in his possession he can obtain the goods he needs.

The present territory of Soviet Russia can supply the needs of the town population, which is estimated at 350 million poods, and still have a reserve of 150 million poods for export, and thus for the improvement of agricultural industry.

The working class, as ruling class, as the class that has realised its dictatorship, when it wishes rightly to carry on its industrial life must say to itself—in the crisis of the peasants' economic life lies our most sensitive spot. That must be changed in order that we can again set to work on the re-establishment of our great industry and reach the point that in the district of Ivanovo-Vosnesensk not only 22, but all the 70 factories shall be at work. Then the products of the factory industry will be able to supply the needs of the whole population, then we will take from the peasant the means of living, not as a tax, but in exchange for the products of industry.

We are living through this transition period now. We must share hunger and want with one another in order that if all cannot be satisfied, those shall be saved without which it would not have been possible to keep the factories and railways at work, and to support our army, without which we could not have withstood the White Guards.

A hearty welcome on the termination of his six months' sentence to our comrade, C. L'Estrange Malone, M.P.—and congratulations as hearty on his marriage, which took place on June 13, four days after his release.



FAT: I can't bear to see this poor fellow starving. Please tell him to go away.

REVIEW

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.

Reviewed by D. Torr.

ON the evening of April 10th, 1848, when the Chartist petition had been presented and the crowds were trudging home from Kennington Common, two parsons and a lawyer sat in Queen's Square, Bloomsbury, and earnestly considered the portents of the day. They were: Frederick Denison Maurice, Chaplain of Lincoln's Inn, who was later ejected from his Professorship at King's College, London, for teaching that "eternal life" might mean a knowledge of God instead of an endless time devoted to the distribution of rewards and punishments; Charles Kingsley, rector of Eversley, Devon, who should be not ungratefully remembered both for *Alton Locke* and *Yeast* and for his remark on the uses of the Bible—"A mere constable's handbook—an opium dose for keeping beasts of burden patient while they are being over-loaded"—and J. R. Ludlow, a barrister, who had been educated in France, where he had seen the revolutions of 1830 and 1848.

"In great excitement," as Kingsley recorded, the three sat up all night producing a placard which announced to the "Workmen of England," that "almost all men who have heads and hearts" knew their wrongs; also that there could be no true freedom without virtue. The workmen of England took no interest in the placard, and the friends, with a group of their own class, spent the next eighteen months in developing their views and in rather pathetic attempts to "get into touch" with the workmen of England.

They found their formula at last: Christian Socialism—"the assertion of God's order." Socialism, as an English term then about 20 years old, meant disbelief in competition and belief in co-operation; and co-operation, Mr. Raven tells us,

was to English Churchmen generally "a term of evil significance." As for Christianity, it had not yet become the fashionable pose for Churchmen. Therefore the Christian Socialists of 1850 should have credit for their courage.

The practical work to which they devoted all their energy and almost all their money for the next six years may not unjustly be said to have succeeded only in directions not specifically Christian. They formed themselves into the "Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations" and founded a dozen co-operative workshops—"associations of producers" inspired by the *associations ouvrières* of Buchez—all of which had come to grief by 1854. But they started some successful co-operative stores, and a co-operative wholesale "Agency," which was the first precursor of the C.W.S. In 1851 they organised the first general Co-operative Conference held since the collapse of the Owenite Congresses in the thirties, thus establishing the long line of annual Co-operative Congresses. And it was wholly due to their persistent efforts that the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, of 1852, which gave legal protection to co-operative associations and their property, was drafted and passed.

This, the final triumph of the "Promoters," put an end to their function. Henceforward co-operation was a commercial concern which could go ahead on its own—the Christians were not needed. So, in 1854, the Society of Promoters dissolved itself, and its members devoted themselves to the founding of the Working Men's College—in which Ruskin and Rossetti later became teachers.

The interest of the story is not apparent in this summary—it lies in the failures of the Christian Socialists more than in their successes, and in their doubts as much as in their faith. The practical achievements of the group were all due to its least "Christian" members—notably to Neale and Hughes—who usually met with opposition and discouragement from their superiors, Maurice and Ludlow.

"To call men to repentance first of all, but then also, as it seems to me, to give them an opportunity of showing their repentance and bringing forth fruits of it. This is my idea of a Tailors' Association." Thus wrote Maurice, and none of the Promoters smiled.

Yet Maurice was by far the greatest man of them all, and his was one of the greater minds of the 19th century. This statement can only be made dogmatically here. Its justification will not be found in Mr. Raven's book—which is a general history of the movement—but in Maurice's *Life and Letters*, edited by his son.

The Christian Socialists failed in their larger hopes and aims not because they were Christians but because they were blind to the existence of the class war. Property relations, Maurice asserted in 1852—when the Communist Manifesto was four years old and Marx, in London, was beginning to think out *Das Kapital*—property relations were not the basis of society. Society was built up on "human relations." "When you substitute property relations for these, you destroy our English life and English Constitution." Poverty could be banished without the banishment of "the English constitution," and, moreover, the English constitution was a good-in-itself.

Mr. Raven's book* is much the fittest and most accurate account of a significant episode in the history of British Socialism. With the calm daring peculiar to mild-mannered men, he remarks of Mrs. Webb's treatment of his subject (in *The Co-operative Movement in Great Britain*):—

"Her injustice to the Christian Socialists is obviously due to the fact that she has not studied their own works at all, but has relied wholly, and with very inadequate acknowledgment, upon the citations given by Benjamin Jones."

The dazed reviewer can merely note that in the latest edition of *The History of Trade Unionism* we are referred for an account of the Christian Socialist only to the works of Mrs. Webb and Mr. Benjamin Jones, with a *New Statesman Supplement* thrown in (p. 225).

Mr. Raven effectively proves that the aims of the "Promoters" were much wider than their achievement, and almost persuades us that they were the first begetters of Guild Socialism. Though he would be more convincing if he showed some recognition of the fact that national ownership of the means of production and representation of consumers are essential features of Guild Socialism.

* "Christian Socialism, 1848-1854." By C. E. Raven, M.A., Fellow and Dean of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Macmillan.



FAT: I can't bear to see this poor fellow starving. Please tell him to go away.



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CZECHMATE

(SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNIST).

IMAGINE a single, staunch Bolshevik party, with well over one million members, embracing the entire territory of Germany, German-Bohemia and Bohemia, and you will have a fair conception of the meaning of the new Czech Communist Party, founded on May 15 and 16 at Prague.

If Czecho-Slovakia is the last of the European countries to form its Communist party, it is far from the least. As a one-day-old organisation, the new Communist party is an infant prodigy. At its birth, it comprises more than 400,000 members. It is at most, a matter of a few months until the Czech Communists are welded into a unified party with the brother groups within this state—with the Slovaks, Ruthenians, Germans, Magyars, and Poles, who will swell the Party's membership to at least 600,000. The German-Bohemian party serves as a bridge between the German Communist headquarters in Berlin and the Czech Communist executive in Prague. Once the revolutionary sections of Czecho-Slovakia have been solidified, it is a mere technicality to synchronise the machinery, so that the Communist workers of the three contiguous territories function as one man with but a single goal.

European revolution has in the first week of May received an impetus which is not to be over-estimated.

* * * *

The avowed and natural purpose of the Czech Communist Party is to establish the Czecho-Slovakian Soviet Republic. Nor is that determination simply a hazy wish; its realisation is decidedly within the realm of possibility during the next few years. As Smeral, the Czech Communist leader, said, "Our movement is already so powerful that, were international revolution now feasible, we could wrench the government from the bourgeoisie and establish and maintain a workers' republic."

And the very existence of a workers' republic in Czecho-Slovakia would be a mortal challenge to capitalism in Central Europe. Counter-revolutionary Hungary, for instance, could not survive as the neighbour of the Czecho-Slovak Soviets. A White Budapest would be compelled to wage war on a Red Prague. Every student of recent Magyar history knows that reactionary Hungary will be confronted with an internal uprising as soon as Horthy's huge army is diverted from its oppression of the workers and peasants. And were it conceivable that irredentist Hungary could abstain from military action against a revolutionary neighbour, it is certain that the influence of the latter would swiftly prove fatal to the former.

These speculations might be in vain did they not rest upon a striking element of likelihood.

For Czecho-Slovak capitalism is speeding toward ruin. Unemployment in this state has increased 100% within the last four months; the currency has but one-twentieth of its pre-war value; the national debt is 50 milliards, while the nation's entire assets are only 200 milliards; trade and commerce are slumping incessantly; the complex of nationalities is pregnant with strife—is, in fact, more acute than in the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy; parliament is impotent, as is indicated by the impossibility of forming a government by any combination of political parties; the promised agrarian reform has remained a yearning; the old-age and invalids' insurance has never materialised. In short, as Dolezal, the textile workers' leader, said, "The mooted independence of the Czech people is no more than the independence of the bourgeoisie and of capitalism, and our proletariat has come to the inevitable conclusion that the trend of this state is leading to certain bankruptcy."

* * * *

It is these politico-economic forces and not the alleged "Moscow dictum" which made the creation of the Czech Communist Party imperative. Indeed, had it not been for the irresoluteness of certain Socialist leaders, the party would have come into being six or seven months ago.

In fact, there is, within the new party, a sharp cleft between the more moderate and pure Communists. Nor is this division merely one of timidity and audacity. It is more fundamental; it is an issue of judgment and principle. The Right Wing Communists, led by Smeral, Skalak and Vaniek, regard with scepticism the assertion that we live in an acutely revolutionary epoch and are inclined to wait and see. The Left Wing, guided by Kreibich, Dolezal and Grimmich, believe that the time has arrived for revolutionary Labour to launch an offensive against capitalism, before capitalism tightens its clutch upon the workers. It is the familiar conflict between Serrati and Bordiga, between Paul Levi and the German Communist Executive, between caution-at-the-price-of-passivity and revolutionary tactics.

By Frederick Kuh

Six months ago the moderate faction in the Czech revolutionary movement enjoyed the unanimous endorsement of the Left Wing Party. Opinion has shifted, shifted with astounding emphasis. At the constituent congress yesterday, this, the Smeral group was hard pressed to attain its aims. The same Left delegates, who had forced the formation of the Communist Party despite the "moderates'" desire to delay that step, made clear that they are a threatening minority. In the final election of the new party's Executive, Smeral did, indeed, secure a majority of places for his followers. But many comrades knowingly declared that this was Smeral's last victory and that the reins of the party are destined to pass into the hands of leaders who are unequivocally at one with the Third International.

The struggle of the Czech Communists against this bourgeoisie is simplified by the impotence of the Czech Social Democratic Party, which is affiliated to the Second International and which has considerably discredited itself among the preponderance of the workers. The Social Democrats' adherents are restricted more and more to the lower middle class; in each crisis, their diminishing weight is thrown on the side of Labour's enemies. Their official newspaper, *Pravo Lidu*, is so pre-occupied in combatting Communism that it finds no opportunity to advocate Socialism. Of the Czech Social Democratic Party it may be said that its policy coincides uncannily with that of the Paris bourse. Not only did the Czech Mensheviks approve their nation's participation in the anti-German "sanctions" but wherever possible, they have outdone the wild chauvinist flights of the Polish official Socialists.

Last week *Pravo Lidu* distinguished itself by proclaiming conspicuously that "Zinoviev is an hysterical female and Bela Kun a drunkard." This is the level of argument employed by the Czech Majority Socialists, in their exalted moments, against Communism. But the delirious utterances of *Pravo Lidu* fortunately only reach a select few; for that paper's circulation, has lately dropped from 50,000 to 12,000, while that of the Communist *Rude Pravo* has risen from 20,000 to 55,000. A small fraction of the Centrists—about 5% of the party—led by Brodecky and sympathising with the Vienna International, quit the Left Wing several weeks ago, and is now hovering in a state of suspended animation. The ample remnant, comprising more than 400,000 Communist workers, stand side by side in Czecho-Slovakia's largest Labour organisation.

The new Czech Communist Party has its internal differences, which must be settled. There will undoubtedly be crucial moments of conflict within the party. Those conflicts will be survived. Their settlement cannot enfeeble the will of the Czech revolutionary proletariat, which is aligned solidly behind the motives and ideals of the Third International. The new party is on the threshold of historic revolutionary movements.

Useful and Suggestive.

"LABOUR BOOKLETS."

(1) "The Government of Egypt," by E. M. Foster.

(2) "Big Navies and Cheap Labour," by "Deucation."

(3) "Communism," by E. and C. Paul.

(4) "The Control of Industry"—Margaret I. Cole.

The Labour Publishing Co., Ltd., 6, Tavistock Square, 6d. each.

These booklets, neatly got-up and well printed, give promising indications of the activity of this new publishing house. "The Government of Egypt" contains a striking and timely record of recent events, with an illuminating description of the machinery of Government in operation until quite lately. Unfortunately for both author and publishers events move so rapidly that it already requires supplementing. It certainly deserves a sale sufficient to make a second edition possible. "Big Navies and Cheap Labour" contains a very valuable statement of the balance of power in the Pacific and some striking indications of the possible causes of war in the near future. The work is marred by the author's enslavement by the Malthusian Theory of Population in its crudest form. "Communism" is just what one would expect from its indefatigable authors. It is learned, comprehensive, somewhat pedagogic, and a highly useful work. "The Control of Industry," by Margaret I. Cole, is in some respects the best booklet of the series in the sense that it tackles what is, and will become still more, the most urgent of all practical problems. It has a "Guilty" look and the trail of the Fabian is over it all, but none the less, a distinctly readable and suggestive essay. Altogether the Labour Publishing Company are to be complimented.

T.A.J.

TO CERTAIN TRADE UNION LEADERS

IN the times when there were trade unions,
You were very efficient secretaries,
Organising Labour all day long
To the noise of clicking typewriters,
And tea
Being poured out into little yellow tea-cups
By little yellow-haired stenographers.
You were very efficient in receiving reporters
And discoursing to them judiciously
Like any Privy Councillor picking his teeth,
With one eye on the clock
And another on an appointment with the Prime
Minister,
Of the dangers of a national lock-out.
You deplored this, and then that.
You were always deploring something.
Your favourite "deplore" was the word "strike,"
It had such an ugly sound
As if it meant
Exactly what it does mean—
A blow.
Even a blow in the dark
(You do not ask a thief to turn his body round
Before you strike him down.
That is, not an ordinary thief)
A blow in the dark
On a wet night
When the electricians have cut off the street-
lighting.
All day you hurried from appointment to appoint-
ment
In taxi-cabs,
Wearing a look of importance
For the benefit of newspaper photographers.
At the week-ends you spoke at meetings,
Large untidy and restless meetings, full of smoke,
And you urged the formation of a General Staff
For a war that (you thought)
Would never come;
And all the time you were busy
Building up a great Fighting Fund
For a fight
You betrayed before it began.
And then in that old grey-stone building
Set up by trade unionists centuries before you were
born
That you patronised and called (with justifiable
pride)
The House,
Or the House of Commons
(But never short commons)
You were the pride of your party (whichever
your party was)

You were very much at home
In the little Bar below stairs,
Where the noise of division-bells
Drifted down happily through the smoke
Of Sir William Sutherland's cigars,
And strikes were very faint,
Far-off, unhappy and foolish things,
Not to be compared
With the joys of Progress
And the successes of legitimate
Org-an-is-a-tion.
Thoughts of
A great national danger
Brought tears into your eyes
And a sudden energy into the querulous hands
(So long unacquainted with work)
With which you banged the table at unruly con-
ferences,
And energetically you would rush round
Avoiding the hollows worn in the Downing Street
pavement
By your assiduous feet
And see the P.M.,
And at his breakfast-table
Reassure him between mouthfuls of bacon and
kidney,
That all was well in the Welsh heaven.

* * * *

But there came a time
When Liberty came blindingly like the lightning,
And blasted the great green oaks
And shrivelled up into small flame
The dead and dying underbrush
About their feet.

G.E.S.

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