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TWOPENCE

OUR DUTY TO IRELAND

The Solidarity of British and Irish Workers

A NEW chapter in the age long tragedy of Irish history has begun.

For hundreds of years the Irish nation has been fighting an unceasing struggle, at fantastic odds, against the British Empire. For hundreds of years the Irish people have been resisting a hard and diabolically cunning tyranny.

Economically, this tyranny has kept Ireland poor, starving, and undeveloped. It was accompanied generation after generation by the worst forms of oppression. It produced untold miseries, famines, songs and music of revolt, a literature of protest. And so frequent was revolt and repression that the miseries are remembered fully now, the old songs are sung throughout the land, the old literature is being re-written in more expressive terms. A few times, as when Davitt won for the peasantry land rights from the feudal lords, and Larkin organised strike and threw the class war into relief, the people have been rallied on purely economic issues. But even in those struggles the national appeal had to be employed.

* * *

Until the signing of the truce, the struggle against England had been carried on almost continuously. The form and manner of it might vary, but Irish revolutionaries were united as a body. No offer sufficiently specious had been made to divide them. Since the signing of the Treaty, that is no longer true. The Treaty was the master-stroke of British Imperialism.

Lloyd George has won. He has turned the bayonets of the Irish revolutionaries away from the British Empire and against each other. He made revolutionary fight revolutionary, worker fight worker, Collins fly at the throat of O'Connor.

In this ghastly tragedy all classes are mingled, at first sight inextricably. Yet it is beginning to be clearer what are the main class ideas dominating each side.

In favour of the Free State compromise are Collins (with Griffith, an opponent of Larkin in 1913) and others. They are eagerly supported by the upper and merchant classes, the middle classes and a great proportion of the farmers. The Catholic hierarchy hesitated in December (when the issue among the people appeared doubtful) to support the Treaty, but when in March it saw that the starving masses were tired of struggle and would not immediately object to any kind of peace, and when it saw that a proletarian minority threatened seriously the seizure of property, cattle, land, mills, factories, bank deposits, food and arms, it approved of the Free State, and called for the punishment of the property appropriators and the credit disturbers. Many ardent economic revolutionaries are tolerating the Treaty believing that at last it would be possible, under the Free State, to demonstrate the futility of political government and throw the development of the class war into better and more effective relief. The newly feathered Irish Labour Party, in all its reformist glory, appears as a willing co-operator with Collins.

* * *

Why, then, the opposition? From where does O'Connor come, and what is the reason of the rally behind him?

The origin of the opposition to the Treaty was simple. In every bourgeois Nationalist movement there are found to be leaders like Mazzini, who take literally every word of their programme. Honest, sincere, relentlessly logical, they will not accept the compromises that their class desires. They stand aside while others follow where their class wishes to go. Mazzini would not consent to Italian unity under a King—he must have a Republic. He stood aside—tried to carry on the struggle. But the Italian middle class was satisfied with the reality and did not care about the form, and in a very few years Mazzini's movement was a ruin.

De Valera is Ireland's Mazzini. He and his followers would not follow the Irish middle class. They stood aside and demanded the letter of their

Workers of Britain! Do not allow the Irish people to be once more subjugated by Anglo-Irish Capitalist Imperialists.

Workers and Peasants of Ireland! Be fearless. Carry on with the fight for emancipation. But remember that liberation from the English oppressor is only a prelude to the final struggle against your own native exploiters.

Long live the solidarity of the British and Irish exploited workers!

claims. Here and there the Treaty was not in accord with their promises. The Republic was not a Republic, because there was an oath to the King. They wrangled about details. But Collins had with him the bulk of the middle class, and in but a little while De Valera, like Mazzini, would have faded away into an unimportant, queer old man.

For, like Mazzini again, he was forbidden by his own principles to appeal to Irish power—the working class. De Valera never was, never can be, a leader of the workers. Nevertheless, most of the revolutionary workers are with O'Connor and him.

They are with them for the same reason that we, if we had to make the choice, would be behind De Valera and O'Connor—because they are fighting the British Empire.

That reason—no other.

It is important to remember that when the truce was declared in 1921 both Valera and Collins sent troops to all strike areas and ordered, in the name of unity, “that strikes be abandoned and pickets removed from the streets.” These commands were not always obeyed in the county areas—where sometimes the strikers constituted the local body of the I.R.A.!

Consequently last week when Collins, pushed by Churchill and chagrined by the spread of armed seizures of property, rashly precipitated war upon the most prominent Republicans, the Irish proletariat, organised and unorganised, was to be found loosely adhering to several political groups, but the bulk of the more ardent men were found on the side of the Republic.

The struggle is not being waged upon a direct economic issue. Rory O'Connor rallied the Republican wing of the army about himself and others with the cry “We are sick of politics and politicians (meaning both Collins and De Valera): we are plain men who stand by the Republic.” When attacked, Rory O'Connor issued an appeal to “all old comrades” to stand by the Republic.

* * *

Such is the position in Ireland to-day. There are the cross currents and warring tendencies. What is *our* duty?

Well, the facts are fairly plain:

We see that Michael Collins, ex-Republican and now one of the Administrators of the British Empire, has found his political sway so challenged as to be obliged to make war upon the armed adherents of the Republican idea.

Twelve hours previously Colonial Secretary Churchill, from the House of Commons, told Collins that he must oust Rory O'Connor, chief of the Republican military forces.

We see that the effect of Collins' assault upon the Republican military headquarters in Dublin has been to galvanise all armed opponents of the Free State Treaty into action, consolidate all Republican opinion, re-uniting all the divergent Republican groups in a spontaneous defensive alliance throughout the country. Collins' political sway and that of all he stands for is for the moment seriously in doubt. And the great tragedy is that in the contest worker is pitted against worker.

We read in the Press that the ultimate issue is not in doubt. British warships are in all the harbours. Twenty-four thousand English workers, armed, in khaki, are held in the north of Ireland ready to swoop to Collins' aid. British arms, and British munitions made by British workers, have been liberally fed to Collins for the bloody purpose of ruthlessly crushing all serious opposition to the Imperial Free State. This is more than civil war. The threat of bloody war if the Treaty were not accepted is being fulfilled.

Collins has prorogued his parliament till July 15th. He contemplates serenely the prospect. He knows that whatever befalls, the British power is at his back and that it far outweighs the Republicans'. With equal serenity Churchill regards the prospect as the little fortunes of battle vary. Churchill knows that millions of you in this country are workless and famine-stricken: he has convinced himself that if the hour for undisguised British armed action in Southern Ireland comes again the workless will, for the sake of bread, rally again to an oppressive Imperial standard.

Workers of Britain, show these politicians they are wrong.

You have no cause for quarrel with your oppressed comrades in Ireland. You never had. Whether the present armed conditions in Ireland are prolonged or no:

Stop making munitions for Ireland!

Stop sending munitions to Ireland!

Demand the withdrawal of British troops!

Do for the Irish what you did for the Russians!

Who Broke the Front

By A. MACMANUS

[*"The Second and Third Internationals and the Vienna Union." Official Report of Conference in Berlin. Labour Publishing Co. 1s.*]

THE official report of the Conference held recently at Berlin has been issued and it makes interesting reading. One is surprised after reading the various articles written by Ramsay Macdonald, to turn to the case as presented by the Communist International and find it anything but ambiguous or obscure either in statement or in fact.

Adler in opening outlined the basis upon which the Conference had been convened and gave it as "an attempt to find a basis for a united front for action, and not for organisation." He explained that in calling it together the Vienna Union were satisfied that the time had not come when unity of organisation could be profitably discussed, and that any endeavours in this direction could only result in further confounding confusion and do more harm than good. But he also explained their conviction that the time and occasion for seeking a basis for common action of all the sections of the International movement had never been more hopeful and necessary than it was at present.

In every country in the world there could be observed the tragic results of the International offensive of Capitalism, and the most deplorable feature was the division in the ranks of the working class. To all this the delegation of the Third International brought agreement, but it brought something more. It brought also damning evidence of the cause of the tragedy. It hurled in the teeth of the Conference the crime of its own commitment. The Jingo Imperialism of the Second International in practically every country in the world, and their callous and treacherous desertion of the true working class interests alone was held to be primarily responsible for the catastrophe and was more than a justification for the separate existence of the Third International. And to read is to be convinced. Then there came Radek's statement with the declaration that the Third International was prepared to place its entire machinery at the disposal of the Conference for the calling of a world Congress of Labour embodying every section to arrange for a common front for action to resist the present aggression of Capitalism. This was all the Conference asked for and this much the Third's Delegation offered freely. And the Committee of Nine set up to eliminate any existing obstacles in the way, and to arrange for the World Congress, collapsed at its second meeting.

Ramsay Macdonald states that it was due to the unreliability of the declarations of the Third International representatives, and one wonders whether brutal frankness is an essential feature of Machiavelianism. For brutally frank were the repeated declarations of the Third's representatives. Might it not be that frankness and outspoken truthfulness are qualities unknown in the realm of statesmen and aspiring diplomats? Anyway the Committee of Nine collapsed, and our own definite opinion is that it was rather due to the fact that any united front for action which might be formed at a world Congress would be sure to lead to conflict with the various governments, and considering that a number of the influential sections of the Second are involved in the business of government, they were not prepared to give countenance to any such proposal. Nor yet were they prepared to be frank about it, hence the resort to moral doubtings. It should be said, however, that at the Conference itself certain agreements were arrived at.

Both Ramsay Macdonald and Arthur Henderson sent a signed cablegram to the E.C. of the Third International, reminding them of the pledge given by Radek, that the Social Revolutionaries at present being tried would not have the death penalty inflicted and calling upon them to put it into operation. We would remind them both of the other clause in the same agreement that all sections were to participate in a world Congress.

Will they do it?

"YELLOWS" see "RED" IN SOUTH WALES COALFIELD By A Left-Wing Miner

IF there is one word more than another that describes Miners' Conferences since the lock-out, it is the word—*Tame*.

"Tame" was the general nature of the S.W.M.F. Annual Conference at Cardiff; with the exception of two incidents, which deserve special mention for their importance to rebel Left-wingers. The agenda contained almost as many items as there were delegates. The majority of these were of the hardy annual type usual at miners' annual conferences—dealing with compensation, pensions, hours of labour, holidays, overtime, pit-head baths, safety, unemployment, etc.—resolutions which the Chairman, Vernon Hartshorn, rightly considered as "pious"—to be realised not to-morrow or the day after, but in the dim distant future.

Contrasting sharply with these "pious" resolutions was one that the President roundly denounced as "pernicious," saying he was opposed to it, tooth and nail. This came under Item 12 on the agenda, entitled "International."

This item was the storm-centre of the conference. It was the only resolution which roused delegates to a high pitch of enthusiasm and interest. Here it is, in full:—

12. International.

That the South Wales Miners' Federation attempt to get the Miners' Federation of Great Britain to affiliate to and actively identify itself with the "Red International of Labour Unions"; failing this, that the South Wales Miners' Federation as a unit becomes affiliated thereto forthwith.—MARDY.

Amendments.

"Failing to get first part re M.F.G.B., delete after 'failing this,' the part applying to South Wales alone."—COEDEL.

"That the S.W.M.F. becomes affiliated with the Red International first, then press the M.F.G.B. to join afterwards."—TILLERY.

Out of three days devoted to the whole agenda, a whole afternoon and a morning—about 4½ hours in all—were devoted to the debate on this question.

The President of the S.W.M.F.—Vernon Hartshorn, M.P., O.B.E.—an avowed Amsterdam Yellow Second Internationalist—took refuge in an amendment from the floor, asking that the above Item 12 on the agenda be referred back to the Lodges for two months to allow the delegates to report back the various speeches and points made for and against the affiliation to the Red International of Labour Unions.

Had the Left-wingers in the Conference pressed for a vote there and then there is no doubt that the Conference would have voted overwhelmingly for the Tillery amendment. But seeing that there was no harm at all in referring this matter back for two months to enable the delegates to carry home the magnificent Left-wing propaganda that this exhaustive full-dress debate had afforded, the rebel Left-wingers did not oppose the amendment; obviously much to the relief of the President, who was in mortal fear that the Second International, so dear to him and some of his fellow reactionaries on the S.W.M.F. Executive, would not only be *dead* or *killed* (as it has been since the advent of the Third International) but also *buried*, with ignominy.

The President, introducing Item 12 in a subtle speech, tried to poison the mind of the Conference against any discussion of it at all. He insinuated that if the S. Wales Conference passed either the proposition or either of the amendments he, as their President, would have to withdraw resolution 9 (2) on the International, sent on to the Annual Conference of the M.F.G.B. at Blackpool, which reads: "That the M.F.G.B. be urged to affiliate and actively identify itself with the Third International."

But a spirited protest and a quiverful of logical shafts from Comrade Jack Thomas, of the Anthracite district, soon got Hartshorn off this pedantic pedestal. And as a result the matter was thrown open to debate.

Comrade Jack Thomas led off with a clear, pithy statement of a historical survey of the Second, Two and a Half, Third, and subsequent development of the Red International of Labour Unions—which in itself justified to the hilt the establishment and programme of the R.I.L.U. In a convincing way he next proceeded to compare and contrast the respective principles and performance of the Second International with its bourgeoisie I.F.T.U., and the Third International with its revolutionary R.I.L.U. The speech was well punctuated with cheers from the delegates, and an enthusiastic tone and lead was given to the debate.

The Chairman ruled that the debate would be conducted by his calling first on speeches from the platform to oppose the R.I.L.U., and alternately others to support affiliation. After the platform

(i.e., miners' agents) were exhausted he would throw the debate open to the rank and file, on the floor of the Conference.

If hell itself had been raked with a tooth comb never could there have been found a more diabolically weak set of speakers from the platform, or the floor, for the Second International.

Logic, they had none; ignorance of the failure of the Second International and its shortcomings they showed in abundance. Prejudice against the Third International and the revolutionary leaders of the Russian Republic was their sole stock in trade. Not a single cheer could they get from the assembly of delegates; but many were the protests and outbursts from the floor when D. R. Grenfell—the respectable Labour Party candidate for the by-election contest at Gower—made deliberate distortions of facts (e.g., that "Lenin was an aristocrat born of the Tsarist Court") or when Arthur Jenkins—who, like F. Hodges, has studied at Ruskin College—made deliberate mis-statements (e.g., that the French T. Union movement was in a state of chaos and anarchy because of its affiliation to the R.I.L.U.).

The truth is that the French T.U. movement is in a chaotic state because of the presence of patriotic Second Internationalists of the Hartshorn type.

The three rank and file speakers that followed the foregoing two Yellow reactionary miners' leaders contributed nothing to the debate but personal prejudices. This afforded the Third Internationalists a glorious opportunity for scoring their points. The "Reds" simply mopped the floor with the "Yellows" from beginning to end of the debate.

S. O. Davies, the Dowlais miners' agent, followed after D. R. Grenfell with a forceful analysis of the class struggle that called for some international organisation to supersede the anemic Second International, with its middle-class, Fabianised I.F.T.U. and the applewoman courage of its Appleton's, Henderson's, and Jimmy Thomases.

A. J. Cook, the Rhondda miners' leader, followed Arthur Jenkins, and trenchantly exposed the futility of the I.F.T.U., with its reactionary Privy Councillors and honours-from-the-ruling-government-seeking individuals. Cook was his own former self in the debate.

The debate never flagged when the rank and filers from the floor took up the cudgels on behalf of the Red International, after Cook sat down. Telling points were made by Comrades Jack Jones (Abertillery), Jack Jones (Pontypool), F. Bright (Porth)—all of whom are active Communists.

Serious-minded though all the Reds were, their speeches were as "live" and full of flashes of wit and humour as the efforts of the opposition were flat and unconvincing.

It was well for the "Yellows" that the debate was adjourned and the matter *not* put to the vote—for they would have been literally slaughtered in the overwhelming majority that the Red Internationalists would have registered.

It was ludicrous to hear speaker after speaker of the "Yellows" pleading ignorance of the respective Internationals, and asking that the Lodges be given time to read and discuss the literature of the R.I.L.U. so as to weigh the respective merits and demerits of Amsterdam and the R.I.L.U., and of the Third and Second Internationals.

And yet, with all this avowal of their crass ignorance, these anti-Red or Yellow reactionaries had the audacity to speak against the affiliation of the S.W.M.F. or the M.F.G.B. to the R.I.L.U. and the Third International! Further, Grenfell and Jenkins, as miners' leaders, were dishonest enough *not* to point out to the delegates that the *present* affiliation of the M.F.G.B. to the Reformist, Reactionary, "Amsterdam" International was *done without the knowledge or previous consultation with the Lodges of the respective districts of the coalfield*. And these "Yellow" leaders were the very folk to dub Thomas, Cook and Davies as undemocratic because they pleaded for affiliation to the Third International.

Noah Ablett and George Daggar were conspicuous by their absence from the debate.

The next phase of this debate on Yellow v. Red International will be fought out at Blackpool at the M.F.G.B. Conference, where we shall have a further opportunity for solid revolutionary propaganda.

The only other item on the agenda of the S.W.M.F. Annual Conference that gave rise to real discussion was the one that dealt with non-unionism, which led to a decision to tender 14 days' notice in the S. Wales coalfield on July 10th, to put down non-unionism and craft unionism in the coalfield.

How Barrow Fought the Lock-Out

THE developments at Barrow-in-Furness during the engineering lock-out deserve special attention.

In such a typical engineering and ship-building centre the struggle was bound to be particularly acute. Industrial capitalism is epitomised in Barrow, with its massed working class population; and, over all, the shadow of trustified industry in the shape of Vickers, Ltd., dominating the place.

For a time Barrow was isolated from the outside world. No news appeared, even in the capitalist papers, concerning the district, and letters addressed to officials of the Communist Party outside were not allowed to reach their destination.

A Premature Move?

At the beginning of the crisis the local Communists urged the Trades Council to form a Council of Action. It is a debateable point whether this was not a premature move. Councils of Action, like Soviets, are not to be thrown up on any and every occasion of conflict, but only when the situation is so urgent that it demands imperatively a new development on a new plane.

However that may be, the formation of a Council of Action on this occasion had the effect of thoroughly arousing the official elements in the trade unions, who attempted to obviate any chance of the Council of Action being dominated by the active sections, by forming a Co-ordinating Committee of delegates from all the unions concerned in the dispute.

The Women at Walney Island

To understand the situation as it developed later it must be borne in mind that picketing was conducted at first on the old orthodox trade union lines. That is to say it was more or less a farce.

Mass picketing was obviously needed, and the first to take the initiative were the women.

Vickers' works are situated on Walney Island, a long narrow strip of land connected with the town by bridges. At 5 o'clock one evening the women formed up across the foot of Walney bridge awaiting the scabs returning from work. The trams were boarded, and some of the blacklegs very roughly handled, one of them being taken to hospital with broken ribs.

Mass Pickets at Work

Then the Unemployed Committee took a hand.

The situation had become very tense owing to the decision of the Shipbuilding Workers' Executive to instruct its members to return to work. Pressure from the Unemployed Committee resulted in a mass meeting being called to test the feeling of the rank and file.

A unanimous decision in support of no separate settlement was the result; the cry being: "All in, or all out."

The mass pickets lined up in the early mornings in strong force, with the result that at least one baton charge by the police took place.

The military experience of the men was splendidly utilised by the Unemployed Committee, who were now in charge of the mass pickets.

A leader was elected, and under him were company leaders. The pickets marched four abreast in military fashion to Vickers' works gates; a company swinging round here and another there, as they moved into their proper places for picketing. As the companies marched into position they were cheered by crowds of women and children. It was effective because it was all so disciplined and orderly. The police were beaten.

The effect upon the frightened bourgeois of the town can be gauged by a statement of the Mayor in the Council Chamber, when defending his action later:—

"It was all very well," he said, "to talk about the discipline learned by the men who had served in the Forces, but it was the very fact that these men had served in the Forces and were disciplined and trained that the authorities had to guard against. *If it had been a rabble they would have had nothing to fear.*"

A Baton Charge

The crowd of lookers-on were the cause of one of the first real scuffles with the police.

A scab riding a bicycle passed by, and before the regulation pickets could get to him he was rushed by a number of bystanders and pulled from his bicycle. A child was knocked down in the scrimmage, and an old man stooped to pick her up. One of the policemen immediately dropped him with his baton. Then, moved by righteous indignation, and entirely against orders, a picket stepped from the ranks, snatched the baton from the policeman's hands, and repaid him in his own coin. For which offence the erring picket afterwards received one month's hard labour.

A general scuffle between the police and the crowd of bystanders ensued, during which the mass pickets, although greatly provoked and naturally restless, maintained their ranks.

Hunting for Strike Breakers

A few days following this event a huge demonstration, 7,000 strong, was held in the public park. Every trade union concerned in the dispute was represented, as also were the unemployed.

But so keen were the men not to interrupt picketing that the meeting hurriedly closed amid cries of "Action, not words," and "How about Vickers' gates?" The ranks immediately filled up and marched off to the works.

On the way a regular hunt for blacklegs took place; the trams to outlying districts were searched; and a number of misguided individuals persuaded to return to their homes.

There was a total absence of police on this afternoon.

"Black and Tans" Imported

Such a magnificent display of solidarity thoroughly scared the local authorities. The Mayor and the Chief Constable, acting conjointly, decided, on their own responsibility as it afterwards appeared, to bring county police, mounted and foot, into the town.

It was asserted in the Council Chamber, during the discussion on the Mayor's action, that a number of these men had only a short time previously been disbanded from the Irish "Black and Tans."

Whether this were true or not, they lost no time in making their presence felt. A cordon was drawn across the main road leading to Vickers' works. People residing on Walney Island were actually stopped from going home, especially if they were known to be Communists. Fortunately the mass pickets had succeeded in getting across previous to this manoeuvre taking place.

Events looked likely to develop, for an ugly temper prevailed. Anticipating trouble in consequence of the drastic police measures, many of the pickets had armed themselves with batons made by Vickers' apprentices out of hammer shafts, or any other material to hand. If there was to be bludgeoning it was as well it should not be all on one side.

Official Negotiations

But, as a matter of fact, things did not develop.

About this time the Co-ordinating Committee sent a deputation to the Mayor and Chief Constable which resulted in an agreement on picketing arrangements being arrived at. Twenty pickets were to be placed at each gate; Messrs. Vickers agreeing only to open three gates. Bad as the arrangement was, Vickers did not trouble even to keep their part of the contract. They had felt the pulse of the official leaders of the men, and what with that and the advent of the imported police, gained increased confidence.

The Co-ordinating Committee, on the other hand, became utterly discredited in the eyes of the workers. That would not have mattered at all had not the splendid moral effect created by mass pickets been dissipated by this and other local occurrences.

Undoubtedly, too, the national defection of the 47 unions and the vacillating leadership at headquarters had its effect upon places like Barrow, where otherwise so fine a fighting spirit was displayed.

A Council Protest

The Chief Constable's action in importing outside police did not go unchallenged. Councillor Longstaffe, a Labour Councillor, moved a resolution in the Town Council "condemning the action of the chief Constable in importing 'Black and Tans' into the town in the form of county police, mounted and foot," and condemning also "the unwarrantable attacks made by the police upon the liberties of the citizens of this town and the deliberate attempts made by them to precipitate a riot and a trial of strength between the police and the general public," which was only lost by 15 votes to 10.

The Unemployed Committee took more direct action by organising a very effective boycott of the Picture Palace in which the Chairman of the Watch Committee is a principal shareholder.

To Sum Up

Summing up, one finds in the Barrow situation, as reported, no bad forecast of what is likely to happen on a larger scale as the class struggle develops.

On the workers' side the old conservative methods of conducting a dispute still dominating the minds of the leaders and most of the workers themselves. A virile minority keenly dissatisfied with the policy of sitting down to starve it out, but not at all sure

of how to lift the dispute on to a different plane. The Communists exciting much influence as individuals in the different working class organisations, although little as a Party. Also not free themselves from the unemployed doubts and differences, acting as active agents in the dispute, to some extent under Communist influence, but, like the Communists, not immune from personal antagonisms. The Communist lesson forcing itself on the minds of the workers by the very fact of the struggle itself.

On the other hand the authorities, as ever, at the beck and call of the employers, and ready to use armed force in defence of the sacred interests of property and big business, albeit they may do so in a moment of panic. Their action always likely to be hindered by the opposition of the best among the elected Labour men.

Barrow has no reason to be ashamed of the fight it put up. If the men go back defeated they are in no worse plight than the rest of their fellows all over the country.

They have the satisfaction of knowing that in the midst of the prevailing doubt and timidity they showed a spirit of organised determination, which, had it been general, might have led to better results, and anyhow will be a lesson for the sterner fights to come.

Communist Party of Great Britain

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His Majesty's Labour Party

WOMEN'S PAGE Owing to the illness of the Comrade in charge the Women's Page is unavoidably held over till next week.

The King Let there be no doubt will be there about it. The British people who "walked in darkness" have "seen a great light." The "fierce light that beats upon the Throne" has revealed unto them the error of their sinful past, and what was Milton's England and those who were the kinsmen of Oliver Cromwell have each fallen prostrate saying: "we have sinned oh! Lord, against the divinity that doth hedge a king."

The *Daily Mail* says it (in between pictures of the Prince of Wales—smiling as usual); the *Mirror* records it (with a delicate hint that "an interesting event" may be expected in high places and in due course); the *Times* announces it with pomp; and *John Bull* with cracked clamours; the *Morning Post* finds it unnecessary to affirm something that should be obvious to "Almighty God and all right thinking persons"—filling their "leader" space with rotund declamation of British Beer as a cure for Bolshevik tendencies.

And all this because Mr. Arthur Henderson (as the "oldest Privy Councillor in the Labour Party") affirmed his conviction that "when the Labour Party comes in the King will be There."

O.H.M.S. A Peacock on amorous allurements bent is a gay sight; a Picture Palace attendant indicating the way to the stalls is a grand one; a mayor in his robes and chain of office declaring a municipal wash-house well and truly open is a gorgeous one; a Labour Privy Councillor attending a levee in full court costume—wondering what to do with his hat and sweating with anxiety because his sword will keep poking between his legs is a terrible one. But of all sights grand, gay, gorgeous and terrible, history's page reveals nothing to compare with that of the British Labour Party Executive initiating a revolution—by kind permission of His Majesty.

Purgation The Labour Party has a constitution. It is a good enough constitution as things go, but when bad Bolshies are abroad ("who doubt if Britain rules the waves, and ask the price of glories") it is necessary to "speak and vote by the card lest equivocation shall undo us." Therefore it was found necessary to purge the ranks of the Labour Party Conference (in future) of all suspicion of Bolshevik intrusion. Therefore, also, it was necessary to make clear that the Labour Party has no desperate design upon the King, his Crown and Dignity and no intention to marry the Prince of Wales off-hand to the daughter of somebody or other—the President of the Amalgamated Union of Wedding Ring Borsers.

Constitution So great has been the joy of the Press at this timely pronouncement of Arthur Henderson's that we feel confident that the next stage in the process will be an alteration of the Labour Party Constitution in terms of this new

orientation Here supplied by a most unvarnished correspondent is a draft of the alterations:—

(1) NAME.

His Majesty's Own Loyal and Imperial Labour Party.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.

H.M.O.L. and I. Labour Party shall consist of His Majesty, the Royal Family, and of all its affiliated organisations, etc. (except where disapproved of by His Majesty)

(3) PARTY OBJECTS.

(By Kind Permission of His Majesty).

(a) To organise and maintain in Parliament and in the country a Political Labour Party, and to ensure the establishment of a Local Labour Party in every County Constituency and every Parliamentary Borough (except in Windsor and the Royal Borough of Kensington) with suitable divisional organisations, etc.

SPECIAL MINING NUMBER

Next week's number will be devoted specially to the Mining industry. It will contain reports and descriptions from the chief coalfields and a programme of action for the M.F.G.B. Conference at Blackpool. Readers in Mining areas should send their orders early as a great demand is expected.

(b) To co-operate with the P.C. of the T.U.C. or other Kindred Organisations in joint political or other action in harmony with the wishes of His Majesty and the Privy Council.

(c) To give effect as far as may be practicable to the principles from time to time approved by the Party Conference (except when they conflict with the known or expressed desire of His Majesty).

(d) To secure for the producers by hand and brain and for the Royal Family the full fruits of their industry, etc., etc., and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control (approved by His Majesty) of each industry or service.

(e) Generally to promote (under the direction of His Majesty) the Political, Social and Economic Emancipation of the People, and more particularly the Royal Family, after whom and in consultation with whom can be considered that of those who depend directly upon their own exertion by hand or by brain for the means of life—preference being given to the Amalgamated Union of Foundation Stone Layers, of whom His Majesty becomes Perpetual President.

The Next Step

When this constitution is adopted the only thing left will be to boil all Bolsheviks down into broth to feed the occupants of the Royal Kennels and to place the head of

Arthur Henderson on the coins of lower denomination as a sign of Perpetual Peace, Perfect Amity and a United Front of Loyalty against the insubordinate tendencies of the Lower Orders.

I am a Million

The importance of the decision concerning the Communists and the Labour Party cannot be over estimated. The influence behind it is terrific. Cousin Frank said to Brother Thomas: "I am nearly a million votes and you're several hundred thousand more. If you prod Tom Shaw we'll have a good two hundred thousand more." And then the light from the windows was obscured because John Hodge came in, with J. R. Clynes walking in between his legs, and so there were three million votes and more . . .

Still Pulling The Plug

Three hundred thousand of these votes (we will not answer for the exact figure) addressed a meeting at Bradford on Sunday. We refer to the Right Honourable J. H. Thomas, P.C., M.P., J.P., D.C.L. At this meeting he desired the workers to produce more. "They must be prepared to give the best that was in them."

We make no comment. Indeed no comment is possible. But, so long as there are two millions unemployed, we propose to follow the Right Hon. Gent. about, and each time he urges the workers to produce more, just to note it down.

To The Editor asks all the Correspondents numerous comrades who have supplied him with notes, cuttings, letters and articles to accept his apologies. Delay in acknowledgement has resulted owing to shortage of clerical assistance, but comrades can be sure that their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Booze

"It is impossible," wrote the *Morning Post* on Friday, "to drink beer and believe in the Third International." Having wiped his mouth with a loud sucking noise, and squeezed the ends of his moustache with his fingers, the Assistant Editor leant back in his chair, placed his feet upon the desk and spat jovially into the corner where the typist was sitting. He felt he had proved his case. He had drunk beer—without doubt, for the framed portrait of Lord Bathurst had assumed a curious zig-zag motion . . . Secondly, he did not believe in the Third International. That too was unquestionable. Therefore—

Possibly we are wrong. Far be it from us to deny Lady Bathurst her pint of the usual in the "Old Dun Cow." If she really wants, she may have a gallon for all we care. But we hoped she had taken the advice from the dear Duchess (such a kind woman, my dear) which was "Since I got married, my dear Mary, I find that stout and oysters are positively the only thing . . ."

"It is impossible to drink beer and believe in the Third International." Having re-read this sentence, the Editor adjourned round the corner to "The Albert Inkpin" to make a personal investigation into the truth of the matter.

That is why this is the last note on the page.



Stop these wars



War means racial suicide —



Atrocities and murder

The Communist

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Official Organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain

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Ourselfs and the Labour Party

By FRED H. PEET

THE Labour Party Conference at Edinburgh refused the application by the Communist Party for affiliation.

The course of events has been this:—

Following a Conference between representatives of the two Executives, a Questionnaire was submitted by the Labour Party Executive. This Questionnaire was considered by the Policy Conference of the Communist Party last March and the general line of reply decided upon and referred to our Executive Committee for final draft. These replies were then submitted to the Labour Party Executive, who in their report to their Conference expressed their regret "that the reply of the Communist Party to their enquiries is not, in their opinion, such as to warrant any reversal of their previous decision that the Communist Party is not eligible for affiliation to the Labour Party." The Conference at Edinburgh confirmed this decision by an overwhelming majority.

We accepted the Questionnaire as an indication of a desire on the part of the Labour Party Executive to remove the obstacles standing in the way of affiliation. We replied to the Questionnaire in that spirit. We felt that the questions crystallised the few points in dispute between the two bodies. But it is obvious to everybody, from the criticisms contained both in the Executive Committee report and in the speeches of the leading spokesmen of the Labour Party, that the questions were designed to obtain an excuse for a decision previously arrived at. They sought no desired agreement: they were one more obstacle in the way of affiliation.

An examination of the arguments adduced provides ample evidence of this. By innuendo, implication, and sophistry, careful endeavour was made to obscure the real issue. The Executive of the Labour Party in its report to Conference, uses the most subtle phraseology to imply that our answers to their Questionnaire were full of incorrect statements. It opens with the assertion that "every one of these statements so far as it concerns the Labour Party as a corporate body, is incorrect. For instance, it is untrue that the Party participated in the Leeds Workers' and Soldiers' Council . . . nor did it take any steps in connection with the Councils of Action, which were illegal." And it goes on to admit that "they have not gone into the statements concerning the I.L.P." (wherein we prove that the I.L.P. as a constituent part of the Labour Party was, in fact, committed to something which we were asked to repudiate as a condition of inclusion) "but must guard themselves from any implications that they accept such statements as being more accurate than those made with regard to the Labour Party."

The unfair and misleading character of this amazing passage will be apparent to those who have taken the trouble to read our replies. There is one formally incorrect statement—that which refers to the Leeds Workers' and Soldiers' Council. This we concede. But even so, it is a minor and unintentional mistake. But we did not say that "the Labour Party took steps in the Councils of Action, which were illegal." What we *did* say was that "this policy" (that the Council of Action called for any and every form of withdrawal of Labour) "was endorsed without question by all the Labour Party representatives present." This is true.

The Labour Party's Executive seizes upon this one error to give the impression that our replies were ill-considered and inaccurate.

The Report then goes on to say that "the Communist Party refuses its acceptance of the Constitution of the Labour Party as defined in the phrase 'political, social, and economic emanci-

pation of the people by means of 'parliamentary democracy' (These latter words being merely a summary of clauses (a) (b) (c) and (d) of Section 3, Party Objects)" and cunningly points out that we emphasise our acceptance of *one* of these clauses, namely (d). It entirely ignores the point that there has never been any question of our acceptance of the Labour Party constitution, and that advice to this effect was sent them in a letter nearly two years ago.

It endeavours to cover this up by phraseology which reads into the Constitution a meaning which is not there. We claim that the report has no warrant for using this limiting phrase: "that parliamentary democracy is merely a summary of clauses (a) (b) (c) and (d)." The Communist Party accepts the whole of the clauses, *as they stand*.

The Report asserts that we are "not prepared to conform to its 'practice' (the words used in the Questionnaire) with regard to parliamentary candidatures." This is proved false by our emphatic assertion in the replies and repeated often in our correspondence that the Communist Party asks no greater latitude in this direction than is allowed to other constituent sections of the Labour Party.

On the question of extra-legal means, the report says that "the Communist Party . . . expressly refuses to pledge itself to refrain from attempting to secure power by means contrary to the law."

We reply that the Executive is not sincere. If it were, it would admit that it itself could not honestly give such a pledge.

Finally, the Conference was told that we "refused to give an unqualified promise if affiliated, to become a 'loyal constituent' of the Labour Party conforming at all points with its constitution, etc." Against this is the fact that it was expressly stated in our reply "we intend to conform to the Constitution of the Labour Party."

It is obvious to those who wish to be fair, that the objection that the words "loyal constituent" were not used, is merely a verbal quibble.

So much for the Questionnaire and the report of the Executive Committee. When such sophistry has to be employed to avoid a square deal one must search deeper for the reasons which led the leaders of the Labour Party to recommend our exclusion.

The arguments of their spokesmen at the Conference were no more accurate or fair than those of the E.C. report. Mr. MacDonald said that "The Communist Party Executive could give the Labour Party no pledge whatsoever . . . They were created to oppose and to smash the Labour Party because they honestly believe that British Labour was so far wrong that in association Communism could not achieve its ends."

Here are two assertions. Both are as untruthful and malicious as they are extravagant. First, definite pledges were given in the Questionnaire. Second, at the first Unity Conference of the Party a resolution was passed that we affiliate to the Labour Party.

So we could go on, argument for argument.

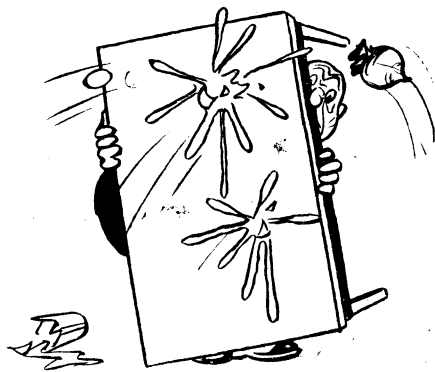
But why all this deliberate and malicious confusing of the issue? The answer is as clear as the sun in a cloudless sky.

The Labour Party Executive has its eyes fixed on the Treasury Bench. It hopes to get into power, and that at the next election. The Communist Party is thrown as a sacrifice to the middle-class intellectuals whose help it considers necessary. No political alliances! But the Labour Party is not a Revolutionary Party! It believes in Monarchy! What use is there for the Liberal Party?

Make no mistake about it. The Labour Party is drifting rapidly to the Right. Mark carefully its new expression to Russia. It intends to go further, *we are to be fought!* That is why the new rules (carried by the big bloc votes of the trade unions) were introduced. That the object of these was to prevent any Communist from being a parliamentary candidate or delegate to Conference, Mr. Hodges made perfectly clear. We do not think it will be possible for these rules to be put into practice.

Will our friends in the local Labour Parties exclude all the members of the Communist Party who are delegates? Will the local Labour Parties expel our Councillors and candidates? We think not. We incline to the belief that the rank and file of the local Labour Parties will ponder well whether they are really satisfied at this effort to placate criticism from the Right by the suppression of tendencies to the Left.

We frankly deplore the decision for the sake of working-class solidarity. It was as a part of the organised working-class movement that we sought to take our place in the Labour Party. We asked no favours, nor expected any. We are excluded. We think the Labour Party has made a mistake. We believe that that view will be shared by the active elements of the rank and file of the local Trades Councils and Labour Parties, and the vigorous elements in the trade unions. It is time for these to ask themselves whither they are going.



Now is the time to rectify our past mistakes by . . . **K**eeping our military and naval supremacy etc. etc.



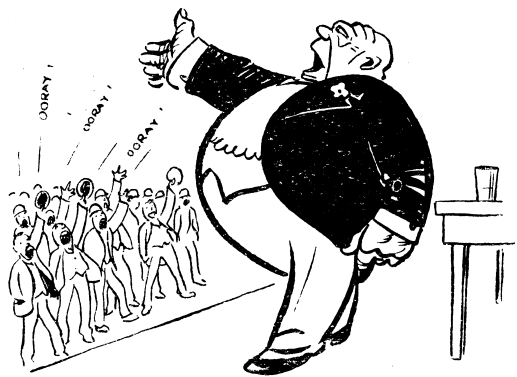
Stop these wars



War means racial suicide —



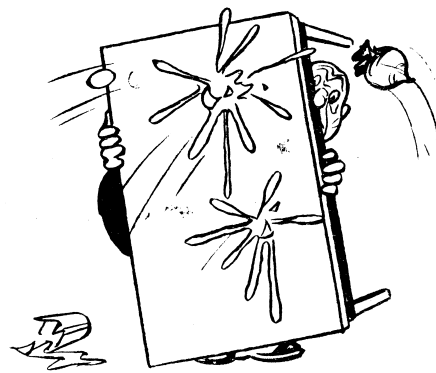
Atrocities and murder



Now is the time to rectify our past mistakes by



Keeping our military and naval supremacy etc. etc.



The Triumph of Sidney Webb

By FRED WILLIS

THE newly-elected Executive has appointed Mr. Sidney Webb as its chairman.

That, in a sentence, sums up the Labour Party Conference at Edinburgh.

This astute, urbane old gentleman of scholarly attainments and superhuman industry has come into his own by means of the characteristic Fabian policy of "permeation." In other words, he has created his "nuclei" within the Labour Party; formed his plan of campaign; and now marches into the fray as something very near the political shad—this mild, middle-class professor of Jevonian economics—of over three million workers organised in trade unions, the great majority of whom don't know the difference between Jevons and Jellicoe—and don't care.

But, mark well his methods, comrades! Mr. Sidney Webb is no screaming propagandist proclaiming from the housetops his intention of capturing the working-class movement for his own peculiar ideal of the bureaucratic State, nicely parcelled out into departments and fashioned by rule and compass along lines as geometrically perfect as a problem in Euclid. He does not advertise his antagonism to any section of the working-class movement, however offensive it may be to his sensitive middle-class soul. He does not waste precious time in discussing the theory of "nuclei." When he wants to form a nucleus, he does it.

Oh, a very wise old gentleman is Mr. Sidney Webb.

And so it comes about that when the workers of Great Britain, harassed by a thousand doubts and anxieties, turn to their own appointed trade union leaders for political guidance, they will receive it directly enough from those individuals; but indirectly and ultimately the message will come from an oracle much more self-effacing than any trade union leader could possibly be.

Be sure the message will never infringe by a hair's-breadth those principles of sane constitutional progress which have given the workers the liberties they enjoy, and the affluence under which they are burdened.

The debate on the trial of the Social Revolutionaries showed Mr. Webb in his most characteristic vein. He seconded the

Executive's emergency resolution, which read as follows:—

"That this Conference condemns the harsh and unjust treatment of the Russian Social Revolutionary prisoners by the Government of Russia; regards the manner in which their trials have been conducted as nothing short of scandalous; and is of opinion that the execution of any of these comrades would be an outrage to the working-class sense of justice, and a tragedy which Socialist and Labour parties could remember only with shame and horror."

On this totally misleading resolution he had the chance of his life (as the most profoundly convinced anti-Bolshevik in England, if not in the world), to make a violent attack on the Soviet Government. Jack Jones did this with disastrous results to his reputation for intelligence. Others were not slow to seize the opportunity. But Mr. Webb's main comment was that the passing of the resolution would be helpful to the Russian Government "which was particularly susceptible to the expression of working-class opinion in other countries."

The little professor knew perfectly well that his audience stretched far beyond the walls of the conference hall in Edinburgh, and carefully tuned his remarks to what he would consider their foolish prejudices. "Our deluded friends in Russia must be saved from themselves," was what he said in effect, and conscious virtue beamed from every honest British face in conference assembled.

Harry Pollitt had no chance against the machine. He did a gallant best to show what a travesty of the real position was being foisted upon the workers by the leaders of the Second International, but, of course, with little effect. It comes to this. An assembly of workers' representatives, which has no word of protest against probable judicial murder by a capitalist Government in British South Africa; which is disgracefully silent when trade unionists are tortured and imprisoned in British India; which saw one of its own in James Connolly shot without a quail by a British Government, with eminent Labour leaders acting as accessories; this same assembly cheerfully "shakes hands with

murder" when it is directed against a revolutionary government of the working-class, and protests before high heaven against harshness and injustice in the punishment of the criminals. Really, we are getting painfully class-conscious in this country.

The chairman's address was much too good for the Conference. Fred Jowett waved the red flag conscientiously enough, and was duly chastised by the capitalist press afterwards for his pains. It would be interesting to know Mr. Webb's private opinion of his performance. Such men as Jowett who still retain something of the Keir Hardie consciousness of Socialist purpose, must be a constant source of embarrassment at a time when all the world is being assured that Labour stands for a sane political outlook and steady progress towards nowhere in particular.

At a later stage in the proceedings the Scottish I.L.P. group, led by Shinwell, venture to question the bona fides of Mr. Webb in the matter of political independence. The Conference was unanimous against any alliance or electoral arrangement with Liberal or Conservative parties. But Mr. Webb had compromised himself somewhat in the past; and some of his utterances were not above suspicion.

With due solemnity Mr. Webb repelled the unworthy accusation. By bell, book, and candle he swore that pact or alliance would be tantamount to suicide. "The testing-time would come after the next general election, but, for himself, he hoped—"

And so, whatever else goes, political independence, at least, is safe—until the testing time.

Now, although this article is written round a personality, it could just as easily have been written round a phrase. For all practical purposes Sidney Webb, could have been spelt Extreme Right.

On the whole that represents the temper of the workers at the moment, despite the deep discontent that ferments at the base, and may, at any time, break through in unexpected directions.

The Extreme Right controls the Labour Party. Sidney Webb is the chairman of its Executive. But he is much too clever a man not to understand that he sits, not so much in a chair as on the edge of a volcano.

"BRIGHTER SKIES"

THE *Times Imperial and Foreign Trade Supplement* starts off in the first column of the first page of its issue of June 10th:—*Brighter Skies.*

When we arrive, after many meanderings through the familiar regions of illimitable and eternal optimism, at "State of Home Industries" we find the following evidences that "Brighter Skies" are really "skies of brass" whence falls no refreshing rain to water the oases in the desert of British trade.

IRON AND STEEL.

BIRMINGHAM.—Competition is becoming keener from the Continent, several firms making offers of wire rods, steel plates and joists . . . Belgian joists can be bought for £8 17s. 6d. delivered in Birmingham against the British price of £10 10s.

MIDDLESBROUGH.—Of the seventy blast furnaces erected on the North-East Coast only twenty-five are at present in operation.

GLASGOW.—Consumers contend that prices are still too high, and adhere to their policy of only purchasing commodities sufficient for their immediate needs . . . Iron and steel products are still reaching this country from the Continent at more attractive prices than are quoted in the home market.

SHEFFIELD.—The condition of the high speed steel and crucible steel trades generally is still very unsatisfactory. Considerable stocks of surplus Government steel and tools remain on hand and until these are disposed of there is little prospect of recovery in the trades concerned. Some firms, especially in the file trade, are cutting

prices very severely in order to obtain business, and there is much complaint about this, it being asserted that some of the work thus secured will not only yield no profit but will result in loss . . . No improvement is displayed by the cutlery trade.

ENGINEERING.

MIDLANDS.—New heart has come into the industrial life of the Midlands through the ending of the long suspense. A steady revival of business is looked for, though at present there are few departments in which any marked improvement can be reported. . . . Not much work is expected from the motor car and motor cycle firms, whose manufacturing season usually slackens between now and the end of August.

COAL.

NEWCASTLE.—Weakness has developed in the coal market here . . . It is evident that merchants are finding some difficulty in disposing of their holdings . . . Germany, too, is not now in such pressing need for supplies and is buying more cautiously.

CARDIFF.—In some parts of the South Wales coalfield the economic position is almost tragic, for unemployment is on an extensive scale, and thousands of people are unable to pay their rates . . . Probably, the foreign consumer is paying as much as he can afford to pay for Welsh coal, but it is a price which does not actually cover the cost of production.

TEXTILES.

MANCHESTER.—The greatest need in the cotton industry is a vast increase in the export trade, which represents more than

three-quarters of the whole. The goods so lavishly ordered in 1919 and 1920 did not go into consumption nearly so quickly as anticipated . . . buyers, handicapped by this load, are no longer in a position to buy at all.

BRADFORD.—Confidence in the position of large distributors has not yet been restored, and the situation in Germany, whence there has of late been an increased demand for yarns, is causing some apprehension. The financial position in this centre is also causing uneasiness.

NOTTINGHAM.—Reports as to a lace trade revival should be received with caution.

What a calendar of collapse! What a record of catastrophe! What an admission of capitalism's ever-increasing inability to co-ordinate its activities so as to keep its wheels in motion!

This, mind you, is private property, individual initiative, business acumen and managerial ability. This is system. This is not the muddling mess into which the *Times* would have you believe Sovietism and Communism have precipitated famine-gripped Russia. This is not the condition of affairs in a country with non-existing roads and with railways ruined by invasion and civil war, with a low technique of industry and a backward agriculture.

This is the state of affairs where British business men have, for a century and a half, been operating the capitalist system and practising the arts of government.

Ye Gods!

SOUTHEND.—Apartments, with or without board.—Housden, 70, Ramuz Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea.

THE BUNGLING BUILDERS

By H. BRAUN

THE Building Industry is the only industry in the country in which, as the outcome of war conditions, the 44-hour week has been obtained.

The employers, of course, have not relished this. They became insistent on the necessity of a longer week, in order to lower prices and bring the industry upon an economic basis.

On our side, we have been equally insistent on the retention of the concession, our officials being especially careful that we should do nothing to prejudice our position.

The employers' case was aptly stated by Stephen Easten, a past president of the National Builders Federation. While he departed nowhere from the original position that the 8-hour day would have to go before the industry could get back to a pre-war basis, he believed the employers would be well advised not to force the issue at the present time. Having regard to the unemployment then prevalent it would bring them into bad repute and throw the onus of the dispute upon them.

At the early meetings of the Wages and Conditions Council the two things persistently obtruding themselves for settlement were:—

(1) Some method of settling wages nationally and securing to the employer the benefit of any reduction in prices.

(2) The question of the working week.

An elaborate agreement was drawn up, providing, in regard to the first, that there should be a sliding scale to operate nationally, which should ensure a reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per hour whenever the official cost of living dropped $6\frac{1}{2}$ points; and to the second, that the working week should be dealt with by future meetings of the Council. An official recommendation was sent out that this document should be accepted, because no other industry had succeeded in obtaining such a valuable concession, and because its rejection would jeopardise the 44-hour week.

It was accepted, and the employers had scored the first point. We then had a period of quiet, during which the employers re-formed for a second attack. Meanwhile, the wages were reduced in the A grade towns 4d. per hour.

On the 17th March this year the employers advanced to their second attack. They proposed to the Wages and Conditions Council that wages should be reduced by 6d. per hour, and that the working week should be extended. This was in direct contravention of the sliding scale agreement. Nevertheless, it was based on one of the clauses in that agreement—Clause 14, par. (a).

No agreement being reached after several adjournments, a new resolution was put forward—that the reduction should be 4d. per hour, in two cuts of 2d.; that the winter hours for December and January should be 41½ per week; and that the question of the summer hours should be deferred until January, 1923. In order to get this resolution passed the Chairman of the Council (an employer's representative) threatened a "conflict."

At the time of this meeting a reduction of 2d. per hour was due under the sliding scale, and the officials declined to entertain any reduction beyond that point; carrying their decision into effect by accepting the resolution, issuing a ballot paper on it, with an official recommendation for a vote in favour.

The ballot showed a majority against the proposal of 67,518, in spite of the recommendation.

The officials now carried their course to its logical conclusion by accepting the terms, in spite of the ballot. We had thus sustained our second defeat.

Two factors actuated the officials in this decision. The first was that they secured the stabilisation of wages until March, 1923. In all other industries wages are falling owing to loss of markets. This appeared to accentuate the importance of wage stability for the building operatives. But in the building industry the conditions are not similar.

What are you doing to help?

A Book Prize for the best report

We desire information from all parts of the country as to what is being done to push the circulation of *THE COMMUNIST*. In some towns special efforts are being made, and circulation is rapidly increasing; in others practically nothing is being done, and as a result circulation is either stationary or decreasing.

We want the benefit of ideas from those districts that are doing good work, and desire to give all other districts the benefit of same.

We therefore invite all literature agents to send us a short, concise report of not more than 300 words, informing us of what they are doing in their particular town to push the sale of *THE COMMUNIST*.

Every report will be kept and the ideas collated under different headings, and at a later date all suggestions will be utilised for a general "push" campaign.

The writer of the report which, in the opinion of the Editor, is indicative of the best circulation work being done, will receive a bound volume of the *A.B.C. of Communism*. The Editor's decision is final, and he also reserves the right of printing any report independent of whether it merits a prize.

The only stipulations we make are that the reports should not exceed 300 words and that they should reach us not later than the 20th of July.

CIRCULATION MANAGER.

We are not so dependent on the international situation as the steel and coal trades. The building industry is limited to the home market, and there does exist on the home market a demand for the building trade worker which is not being adequately met.

Another fact to remember is that the sliding scale provides for an increase of wages as well as for a decrease. If the cost of living rises $6\frac{1}{2}$ points wages automatically rise $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per hour. Now this period during which wage stability has been secured is a period more likely to see a rise in prices than a fall. The sliding scale providing for this contingency (should the employers attempt to evade it) we could, by skilful publicity in using the housing shortage, throw the onus of any conflict on the employers.

But we have, by our official act, given the employer the means of evading the provision.

The second factor contributing to the official acceptance of the terms is the question of the working week. The Federation officials believe that by accepting the present proposals we not only secure the 44-hour week till next March, but we will, by gaining that point, be in a better position to retain the concession when the question next comes forward. On the ballot paper they quote the Chairman of the Council to that effect. If that were so, I should be inclined to agree with the official policy. But it is not so. I cannot think of any policy more likely to lose us the 8-hour day than this.

What is the policy? First, the employers demand a reduction of wages and threaten longer hours. The policy was to give way to the threat. The reduction was accepted and a sliding scale agreed to which gave the employer the benefit of any fall in prices. The threat was laid aside for the next occasion, and our officials complimented themselves, and us, on their ability. The next occasion brought a demand for a greater reduction than the cost of living warranted, an alteration in winter hours, with the usual threat. Again the policy was to give way to the threat, the officials still being remarkably pleased with their astuteness. But what is that astuteness (!) going to do for us? It is going to lose us the 44-hour week. All along the employers have had a definite aim—to break the 44 hours and throw the onus on the men. We know that 90 per cent of the employers want longer hours; Stephen Easten has told us that they don't want the responsibility of it on their own shoulders. In appearing to give way on the larger issue they have obtained the smaller.

The Wages and Conditions Council was the prelude to the sliding scale; the sliding scale the prelude to their latest machinations, and these in turn will lead to the abolition of the 8-hour day.

The smaller issues have been like ground bait, to entice the wanted fish within reach of the rod and line. The latest proposal required a reduction greater than the sliding scale warranted, and a reduction of the winter hours. It had to be accepted as a whole, or not at all.

Why is the reduction of winter hours demanded when a 44-hour week is not long enough.

Here, on the North-East coast, we have had more favourable working hours than any other district. We had a 50 hour week when other districts worked 53 and 56 hours. In winter we had a 44-hour week. For what reason is a 44-hour week too long now? Why had the proposals to be accepted as a whole?

The 44-hour week is too long in winter because it is too short in summer. The reduction of hours in the winter means a reduction in wages. A reduction in wages, think the employers, will cause a change in the men's attitude; it will make the men say, "Well, if we have to take less hours and less wages in winter, why can't we make it up by working longer hours in summer?"

That is what the employers hope will happen; they are going all out to see that it does happen. It is happening in some districts now.

Comrades of the building trade, the remedy is in your own possession. The power is in your hands to prevent your comfort, your leisure, being taken from you to become the comfort and leisure of the master class. It is in your hands and yours alone to stop your officials being used as pawns in a game the end of which is your defeat. The remedy is to control your industry yourselves for your own good and the good of the whole of your working class comrades. It is up to you. When are you going to begin?

THE AIR PERIL

IT is possible to derive much amusement from the Capitalist Press. On one hand is the *Pall Mall Gazette* with its discovery of the existence of the Y.C.L. and its quotations from the Thesis. On the other hand is the *Daily Mail* with its scare headlines on "London's Peril from the Air."

What is behind it all? It is obviously more than a fear of losing the command of the air that is making the Capitalist Press devote valuable space to a matter which has always been to them one of secondary importance.

Is it possible that those who mis-govern us see in the aeroplane the ideal weapon against the Reds? Or is it merely that the writers of the articles have shares in the big armament firms?

It is said by those who have studied the question, that of the armed forces of Capitalism, the navies are the most inclined towards revolutionary ideas. It is well known—and one believes well proved—that troops are helpless without transport, but an aeroplane, given its pilot, is its own transport, and its pilot, taken from the officer class, has a Military rather than a Naval training—which would seem to invest the aeroplane with ideal properties—from a White point of view.

The majority of the supporters of the Revolution live in crowded areas—most suitable for bombing; a large number of the Red Forces would

be more or less undisciplined—a good target for machine-gunning from the air; while the White crew of the aeroplanes would be comparatively safe.

While supplies last, this sort of thing would go on. Defence against it would be difficult. Anti-aircraft gunnery and balloon-apron defence during the late war was not too successful and was very expensive. An aeroplane with a load of bombs is likely to do more harm if forcibly brought down than it will do if left in the air, and the small fast machines used for machine-gunning troops are not easy targets as their speed is very great. The only real defence is the offensive-defensive raiding of the enemy aerodromes, and this needs not only big aeroplanes but skilled aerial navigators.

The danger—for a time at any rate—from an aerial offensive would be a very real and nerve-shaking one if it ever came to anything like open fighting. But an aeroplane is essentially a skilled workshop job, and without engine and without fuel it is useless. The solution to the question lies, as usual, in the workshop.

The Capitalist Press, by successfully disguising its real object, may work public opinion up to such a pitch that the Government is enabled to increase the Air Estimates; defeated Labour may be induced by its Capitalist masters to build more and yet more aircraft to be used against their

By S. Francis

comrades in the Social Revolution; but aeroplanes do not last indefinitely—even in store—and if a class-conscious Socially-Revolutionised Labour was in the field there would be no replacements.

Of course, that suggested above may never happen, and the *Daily Mail* may be merely trying to increase sales and profits, but the fact remains that aeroplanes have already been used against the workers in England, Ireland, and on the Rand, and they can be used again.

The important points for the class-conscious to observe, however, are that the workers control replacements, and that despite an unlimited number of machines, without daily attention from the mechanics they are useless, for effective flying is not possible.

During the war, the mechanics were drafted mainly direct from the workshops, and consequently, might be affected by Revolutionary events and propaganda—as was the case in various localities just after the Armistice. This contingency has probably influenced the Government in their present policy of training, as mechanics, youths who have had no contact with the class-conscious worker.

It is as well, therefore, not to leave the R.A.F. out of our calculations. The tendency, even in these days, is to think of the Capitalist Forces in terms of the Navy and the Army. The Communist Party might find it advisable to pay special attention to the R.A.F. rather than to the older and more effete Services.

THE BREAD LOAN

Soviet Government prepares for The Hague

By TOM BELL

IN a recent issue of the *Manchester Guardian* the radical economist Keynes, in discussing the problem of the currency, made the assertion that Soviet Russia would probably be the first country among the broken nations to reach stability in its monetary system. No doubt such a suggestion was treated in many quarters as a first-class joke.

In face of the astronomical figures that are being paid at present in Moscow for the most elementary necessities, the suggestion certainly appeared ridiculous.

But what the bourgeois minds of Europe, including the heroes of the Second and Two-and-a-Half International will not realise, or refuse to recognise, is the plain fact that Soviet Russia is not a mere "utopian experiment." They don't seem to understand the fact that the Russian revolution is the unfolding of a new social system to which the cannons of the old bourgeois order do not apply. It is not that they haven't been treated to some sharp lessons. Freed from the restraints of private greed and aggrandisement, the Soviet Government has time and time again solved apparently the most intricate problems in a plain, matter-of-fact common sense way that is baffling to the minds of the bourgeois politicians and diplomats.

Thus, while the bourgeois publicists and statesmen chant the phrases of self-determination of subject nations, the Soviet Government blandly renounces all claims to territory, as in the case of Persia, and backs that up by a cancellation of indebtedness, as in the Rappalo Treaty.

Its diplomats go to Genoa and put the pacifist humbugs to shame by proposing a universal disarmament. To the arguments of the bourgeois economists who assure a poverty stricken world that there can be no stability until Europe returns to a gold basis, the common sense method is proposed of pooling the gold resources and so solving the problem. For these and other sane views the Soviet delegation is laughed out of court.

In the meantime, if the imperialists think that by prolonging the agony for another four months they can still further weaken the proletarian power, they are very much mistaken.

Denied credit or financial assistance, despite the fact that Europe is in as much need of the market in Russia as the Soviet Government is in need of economic assistance, the proletarian power has once again proven its resourcefulness.

Just as the imperialists during the war raised money and stimulated patriotism by means of their "Victory Bonds" and "Liberty Loans," so the Soviet Government is characteristically issuing its Bread Loan.

The Bread Loan

This Bread Loan in contrast to a gold loan is very significant. It marks vividly the difference between the proletarian government and a capitalist power.

In Soviet Russia to-day, on account of the reduced economic life of the country, bread means more than gold. Besides, even if a gold loan were floated, in a short time the obligations of the Government would have to be met and they would get short of funds. And so the project of the People's Commissariat for a "Short Term Internal State Bread Loan," was enthusiastically endorsed at the last Session of the All-Russian Executive Committee of the Soviets. The terms of the loan, having regard to the present position of the country and the general economic life of the poorer peasants are, to use the language of the bourgeois financiers, certainly very attractive. Since it is a Bread Loan, corn is taken as the standard of value. The average price of corn throughout Russia has been estimated at 400 roubles (new style) per pood. Bonds for this value are issued at a discount of 5 per cent, redeemable between the 21st December, 1922, and 31st January, 1933, and the whole scheme backed up by a Government fund of 10,000,000 roubles. The advantages of this Loan are incalculable, while its purpose is explained with that frankness that marks every move of the Soviet Government.

It is freely acknowledged, for example, that without credits the economic re-building of Russia is bound to be seriously retarded. That is admitted to be the big problem before the Revolution.

But allied to the economic disabilities of the moment is the financial crisis. It says much for the vitality of the proletarian system that it has not collapsed before this. Certainly in no bourgeois country could the financial system have lasted so long, and here there are valuable lessons to be learned in the experience of the Russian Revolution. But in proportion as the Soviet Government has been obliged to make concessions to the petty industry and permitted speculation, the rapidity with which the rouble has declined has been ac-

celerated. These two problems had to be met. The Bread Loan is intended, and certainly will do a great deal to meet both difficulties.

To begin with, the project is launched at a most suitable time. In anticipation of the coming good harvest, the peasants are presently responding to the markets with their saved up supplies. This has been noticeable in the arrest, and in a few cases decline, of the prices of some of the more elementary necessities. At the same time it is no secret that the continuous variations in the paper rouble has had a disastrous effect on the Soviet Trusts, Co-operatives, and other enterprises. These bodies, in order to escape the effects of the depreciating rouble, often invested in goods of no particular urgency for the moment, thus jumping out of the frying pan into the fire, since their purchases only stimulated the very speculation evils they tried to avoid.

As a matter of fact, the feverish buying and selling at the moment resembles a game of tossing the ball to each other.

A Blow at Speculation

The Bread Loan will deal a heavy blow to all this speculation. Those peasants, for example, who invest their surplus corn in the Bread Bonds, will guarantee themselves from the depreciation of the rouble. In this way the peasant is stabilising the price of his corn for at least the period of six months. And since bread is in reality the standard of value in Soviet Russia, the impetus given to yielding supplies to the Government on account of this stabilisation and the other advantages accruing from the success of the Loan, a reaction on prices all along the line is sure to take place.

A further inducement to the peasant to take up the Bread Loan with enthusiasm is the offer of the Government to accept these Bonds in lieu of the tax in kind, and as in cases where these Bonds are purchased by corn (one pood to the value of 400 roubles, less 5 per cent) the Government will itself collect them. This saving in the time and cost of transport is obviously of tremendous help to the peasants.

What effect the success of the Bread Loan will have on the town population, particularly the workers, is incalculable. Certainly it will have the most far reaching consequences.

Anyone who has visited the factories and workshops in Russia knows that the "Elixir of Life" for industry is a plentiful supply of bread. I have been assured of this times out of number in the many factories I have visited. Responsible managers have explained to me, in cases where the plant is obviously understaffed so far as its capacity for output is concerned, that it is impossible to employ workmen because of the difficulties in finding bread supplies, and further, on account of the low rations, even those workers employed were unable to give of their best. But if the Soviet Stores, Co-operatives and Workers' Trusts are assured of plentiful supplies of bread on account of the success of this Loan, not only will fuller rations be available, but the stabilisation, and in many cases actual reduction of prices, will enhance the value of his money wages.

Side by side with this stabilisation in prices and its effects on wages, a more normal situation will be created for the development and stimulation of industrial enterprise generally, including the rebuilding of the means of transportation upon which so much depends in Russia, by the slackening of the money printing press, evidence of which is already noticeable.

A Warning to Shylock

Of course, it is understood that gambling and trading will go on with these Bonds just as in Europe; the financial Cheat is always ready to play the part of the "Kind Man" to the poor Bondholders who must realise his Bond for immediate cash. We can be assured all this has been anticipated and measures will be taken to meet such a situation.

The great thing is the fact that the "money bags" of Europe are going to receive a sharp lesson in the character and self sufficiency of the proletarian system in yet another direction. Already they have had it brought home to them that the first Workers' and Peasants' Government is not the government of a nation of helots.

The Imperialists have been beaten in war, thanks to the glorious Red Army. They have been put to shame in diplomacy at Genoa. When their experts assemble at the Hague they would do well to remember the fate of Shylock.

Lloyd George attributed much of the strength of the Soviet diplomats at Genoa to the inspiration of the May Day celebration. That inspiration will be maintained in the certain success of the Bread Loan.

ADVERTISEMENT RATES

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All communications to Advertisement Department, "The Communist," 16, King Street, W.C.2.

MEETINGS

BATTERSEA. London Council of Working Class Education Classes. R. W. POSTGATE on "Periods of Revolution": a course of weekly lectures starting this Wednesday (July 5th) at 173, Lavender Hill, at 8, and every following Wednesday.

Communist Party Branches

CROYDON. Saturday, Woodside, 8 p.m. Sunday, Katherine Street (outside Town Hall), 8 p.m. July 9th: G. Dallas.

DUNDEE. Every Sunday, 2.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m., Albert Square. Prominent speakers.

HACKNEY. Every Friday, 8 p.m., Kenninghall Road (opposite Lea Bridge Road). Hackney workers rally!

HUDDERSFIELD. Sunday, July 9th, 11 a.m., Market Place; 6.30, p.m., St. George's Square. Councillor G. H. Fletcher.

KINGSTON. Visit the "Ancient Borough." Fresh air surroundings. Meetings every Sunday evening at Market Place, 7 p.m. Prominent speakers.

KENNINGTON. Meetings every Sunday evening outside Kennington Theatre, Kennington Park, 8 p.m. July 9th: J. T. Walton Newbold.

SOUTHEND. Meetings every Sunday, Marine Parade, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. July 9th: J. G. Stone.

Will sympathisers desirous of forming a Branch in Sheerness please communicate with A. E. Hills, 26, Jefferson Road.

A new Branch has been formed at Bexley. Intending members should communicate with D. Jackson, St. Leonards Cottages, Upton Road, Bexley Heath.

W.I. FAMINE RELIEF COMMITTEE.

(Glasgow Section).

Ramble to Cadder Woods on July 8th, in aid of Famine Fund.

Games. Sports. Tea only supplied. Meet at Bishopbriggs Terminus, at 2.30 p.m. Silver Collection.—Convener, Mrs. Sloan.

SURREY, viewing Leith Hill.—Board Residence, Quaint cottage, pretty garden, lovely walks; good cycling centre.—Bottle, Rudgwick, Horsham.

SURREY HOLIDAY CAMP, Newdigate, Surrey. Beautiful scenery; good food; 35s. week, 5s. 6d. day. Full August 5th to 18th.

RED FUNERAL IN SHEFFIELD

THE most impressive demonstration that ever occurred in Sheffield took place on the 29th of June.

A few weeks ago an ex-service man, one of the Sheffield unemployed, his wife and two children, were ejected from their home. The unemployed, to the number of 250, made an attempt to put them back. They were attacked by a large number of police.

Very few demonstrators escaped. Several had to be treated in the hospital, and John William Barker contracted lock-jaw and died in the Infirmary. Thirteen persons were arrested, including two City Councillors, and have been committed for trial.

The unemployed decided to give him a public funeral. Nearly 4,000 of the organised unemployed accompanied the cortege. The attendance was greater than would be accorded to Sheffield's greatest citizen. All Labour organisations in the city were represented.

The procession was headed by the President and Secretary of the District Council of Unemployed, representatives of Labour organisations, Ted Lismar and Alf Barton representing the Trades Council, G. H. Fletcher and Ernie Brown, with the members of the Communist Party.

As the procession passed through the city the sight was one that will be remembered for years to come. Each man wore a rosette of red and black, every head was bared, and the streets were lined with sightseers along the whole of the route of approximately three miles.

The Rev. T. E. Pickering officiated at the grave side. This minister has twice been arrested during previous attacks by the police on the unemployed.