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TWOPENCE

## CAPITALISM AND COAL

By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

IN the history of capitalist production in this country no other industry has had the same fundamental importance as that of coal-mining. The whole fabric of manufacture and trade has been built up on the use of the one form of fuel that, until recently, was commercially utilisable. The great centres of population (outside London) are on the coalfields or close thereto. Every great industry has developed in an area which is, virtually, co-terminous with a great coalfield.

Not all the coalfields are, of course, of equal importance. Some of them, even some of the more extensive, have a diminishing influence within the capitalist system.

Those that matter are in: Fife; the Lothians; Lanarkshire; Northumberland; Durham; South Yorkshire; Derby and Notts; Lancashire; Staffordshire; and South Wales.

Having considered the last-named in a special article and nothing of vital import having occurred since that study appeared last October, except that prices have continued to fall and unemployment and low wages to prove themselves a chronic rather than a temporary feature, South Wales will not come in for treatment in this number.

The coalfields with which we are, on this occasion concerned are those which supply the steady demand for house coal, the comparatively regular requirements of the railways, gas and electricity plants, the varying needs of general industry and of the iron and steel trades, the diminished wants of the ship-bunkering business and the profoundly disturbed export market.

As a general rule, the miner does not trouble himself with any thoughts as to what becomes of the coal which he cuts and sends to the pit mouth for loading into the wagons in the colliery siding. He applies his toil to the coal and thereby gives it value and, having done that, lines up at the office, draws his pay and goes away to his home or, in some few cases, to the meeting of his lodge. He has been so accustomed to a state of affairs in which the coal that he has sent up the shaft has automatically disappeared and the manager has asked for more that he has never worried himself about the disposal of the commodity which his labour produces out of the rock face.

### Prosperity and Contentment

As long as British capitalism was expanding, as long as the market for British-made commodities continued to absorb them and send over here for more, as long as British shipping was busy and prosperous, as long as British coal found a ready sale on the Continent and in South America, so long did the indispensable commodity called coal make its way, unchecked as on an endless band, from the pit-head to the mineral-train and thence by rail and dock to the market.

The British miner had some excuse for taking himself seriously and walking up the floor of every conference serenely conscious that his organisation was the back-bone of the working-class movement. The whole structure of commerce and industry rested upon his labours and without his agreement to go on producing the commodity with which steam could be generated, capitalism was helpless.

Industry runs out of coal much sooner than commerce runs out of cotton, woollens, boots and other manufactures. So long as the British miner had a monopoly of supplying coal to the export and home markets he was, given moderate intelligence and honesty on the part of his officials, in an impregnable position.

### Causes of the obsolete Organisation of the Miners

It is true that the miners were slow to organise into unions and still slower to come together into a nation-wide federation. They had the advantage of working in association and of living in village communities by themselves. They had no lines of demarcation caused by peculiarities of craft and trade to divide them. They had, on the other hand, no particular skill to protect. They lived under degrading conditions and they were constantly being "diluted" by the bringing in of agricultural workers with a much lower standard of life.

In Lanarkshire and South Wales, organisation was only achieved with the greatest difficulty by reason of the fact that, in the former area, masters like Stewarts of Murdostown and Houldsworths of Collness had introduced low-paid Irish immigrants, the victims of famine and poverty in their own country, whose real menace of a lower standard of wages and conditions was disguised and presented as an antagonism of religious faith and national ideas.

Smillie in the Clyde Valley and Richards in Monmouthshire, to whose pioneer work so much of the miners' organisation in these areas was due, encountered almost insuperable difficulties in overcoming the jealousies of religion and of race which, in places like Motherwell and Ebbw Vale, it has for two generations been the calculated and deliberate aim of the master-class to aggravate and prolong.

It was factors such as these, counting for all too much on some of the coal-fields, which hindered the effective exercise of an industrial power which economic conditions had placed in the hands of the workers.

To-day, when not only has the coal market become international, but the proletariat of Bengal and of Kailan, newly recruited from the rice and mullet-fed peasantry of India and of China, is sending up cheap coal from the rapidly developing collieries of the East to bunker ships, formerly getting their fuel supplies from Durham and South Wales, it scarcely becomes a miner's leader to talk in terms of contempt, of "the Asiatic mind."

With capital flowing steadily from South Yorkshire to Cammell Laird's extensive colliery properties in India where, last year, the wages scaled down from 1s. 1½d. to 11d. a day (see *Report of Department of Statistics, India. Prices and Wages, 1922, p. 212*) and Ellerman cutting rates at Castleford and going more and more into Indian coal, the workings of Mr. Hodges' agile mind seem a little in need of attention and improvement.

In the nineteenth century it was Irishmen and Lithuanians who were employed to weaken the resistance of the miners. To-day, it is Indians, Chinese, and Kaffirs. Only last week there was news of the loss by South Wales of a South American coal

contract of thirty years' duration as a result of South African price-cutting. Nantgarw cannot compete with Natal. Black labour is given preference over white because it is cheaper. There can be no hope for a miners' organisation that does not take into consideration the raising of the wages and standard of life of the black, the yellow and the dark-skinned wage-workers of Africa and of Asia.

The movement of capital, the adoption of machinery and the general industrialisation of backward countries and continents makes more and more insecure the status of the British miners. The logic of events in the world coal market, the whole tendency of international economic evolution, demands of the miners that they either link up with and adopt the programme and methods of the Red International of Labour Unions or sink back into the serfdom and semi-serfdom out of which men of character, vision and of courage have, during a century and more, laboriously raised them.

At this moment, the menace in the mind of every thinking miner is the competition with British coal, of the coal produced by the low-paid and over-wrought miners of Germany. A memorandum, prepared officially for the M.F.G.B., states that "it will be seen, therefore, that the total loss of coal exports to Russia, Germany and France, as compared with the pre-war period, amounts (for 1921) to a figure of 19½ million tons of coal."

In France, in Belgium, and in Spain, as in the United States, the miners are, according to "the Iron and Coal Trades Review," being met with demands either to work longer hours--to forego their eight-hour day--or to accept less wages, to enable their masters to retain their markets. Even the Germans are not exempt from attacks on the eight-hour day, inspired by just the same arguments.

As for the position in Spain, the facts are significant. The *Compendium*, in December, 1920, recorded that Seymour Berry and D. R. Llewellyn, the South Wales coal-owners, were extending their interests in the Asturias Coalfield of Spain. The same publication, in May, 1922, states: "Coal mining trouble in Spain. The employers have notified their men of the decision, stating that it is impossible to compete with foreign traders unless wages are reduced, the only alternative being to close their mines."

### The Bosses' "Double Cross"

Berry and Llewellyn, who know a thing or two, went to Spain. They cut wages in South Wales "to compete with foreign traders" on the Spanish market. Then they even matters by cutting wages in Spain "to compete with foreign traders," presumably from South Wales. Next January they will try to swing it across South Wales once again and so on--till Frank Hodges asks them to refrain in the interests of his Ten Years' Truce of Mammon.

But European competition is not the permanent danger. It may pass. The competition of Africa and of Asia has come to stay, to become more deadly.

There is no hope for the miners in this respect but in world-wide solidarity, in the Red International of Labour Unions.

# THE MINERS' PLIGHT

## Reports from the Main Areas

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENTS

### THE NORTH EAST

By George Harvey

**T**RADE depression, the high cost of living, and low wages have turned the North-East Coast area into a famine district. Ten years ago this district produced one-fifth of the coal, one-third of the coke, ironstone, and pig-iron, and one-half of the shipbuilding output of the nation. One ton of every three carried on the railway was mineral, and coal formed 80 per cent of the cargo of outward bound vessels. The coal trade to-day is slack, and the dependent industries also suffer.

No one living has seen such depression of trade.

The situation may be gauged by taking the position of the Durham mine worker. Nearly twenty thousand mine workers are unemployed and have been for twelve months now. Far more are doing half-time or little more, and even those in work on full time are just barely existing. The subsistence wage is 6s. 8½d. per shift, the coal-getter's wage is 8s. 7d. per shift. Householders have coal supplied in addition, and either a company house or 10d. per shift paid to them for rent.

No more need be said to indicate that the famine has reached here. Miners' wives have wept at week ends, kiddies have poor clothing, and thousands have no boots. Butter, eggs, and meat, as well as milk, are hardly ever seen by many families. Thousands are hopelessly unfinancial in the Union.

The Durham Miners' Association called for an unemployed levy, which it has kept on for twelve months. That levy has realised over £300,000. In addition to this, £140,000 has been taken from the General Fund. All of it has gone to unemployed miners. Despite nearly half a million paid out, the Association is still about a quarter of a million in arrears to the unemployed. The arrears to all members for rent during the lock-out is £140,000; the overdraft at the Bank is £107,000, making a total debt of nearly half a million, or £4 or £5 per member.

There is no hope of trade reviving. "Things are getting worse" is the cry.

Northumberland miners are in a similar plight. The "good" pits have been reduced to the level of what were thought "bad." Conditions established by years of "local fighting" have vanished. The masters have persuaded the leaders that it is good for the Northern coal trade that good conditions should be abolished and the pits put on to an "economic basis." The leaders believe this. They belong to an old school of thought. They have no remedy beyond "concessions." There are five unions in Durham and four in Northumberland. There is no connecting link with unions in other industries. No alliance with railway and transport workers.

Organisation in the real sense does not exist. Only a new set of officials can create it. The present "old gang" are hopeless. How to get the new officials is the problem.

Two years ago Durham rules were altered to prevent yearly election of officials. They are now permanent. The Union is ruled by these officials, much like a District or County Council is ruled by surveyors and other permanent officials. The Executive Committee is chosen by the votes of the whole Durham coalfield. This gives officialdom a big pull. The county should be divided into at least six districts and Committee members returned by votes of districts. This would insure district self-determination and safeguard progressive districts from being out-numbered in the voting.

The "Reds" require to get together to make a gigantic effort to obtain some control over officials. Just now the most hopeful movement is that made by the Morrison Lodge to abolish the National Wages Agreement and substitute a Wages Board in accordance with what we always understood the M.F.G.B. was established to fight for. This movement is supported by fifty large Lodges representing some seventy thousand mine workers. The "Reds" should rally to this movement, which the Morrison Lodge intends to keep alive for things far more important.

This movement forced the leaders to call a Special Council Meeting on July 11th on the question of the National Wages Agreement. It will carry on the agitation and swing Durham into line with South Wales. There is hope in this movement. All who are working for the good cause should rally to its aid.

THE MORRISON LODGE, D.M.A., which has placed itself at the head of a forward movement in

Durham (and a manifesto from whom we reprinted recently), has issued a further manifesto in which they say:—

At the two Conferences held recently under the auspices of the above Lodge, it was agreed that the present National Wages Agreement stands condemned, and we were instructed to lay down some ideas as to what principles should govern our Wages and Conditions of Labour. The feeling of the Conference was that the present so-called "Agreement" was not simple enough to be understood; that it divided the workers into Districts and did not make for National Industrial Unity; that it did not provide for the maintenance of the unemployed; that it placed our wages at the mercy of factors over which we had no control; that the information required most by the workers was not disclosed by the chartered accountants; that our labour was the last charge of all upon the industry.

These are fundamental defects. We are aware that some of the leaders desire to patch up the Agreement. No leader can point out how this Agreement can be tinkered with to make it a good one. This talk of "patching up" reminds us of the story of the poodle who was "reformed" in a lot of ways. His body was shaved, a tassel left at the tip of his tail, a hole bored through each

### HODGES' ATTACK ON SMILLIE

Protest from the Chopwell, Spen, and District L.R.C.

At a meeting of the above organisation, held on Tuesday, July 4th, the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

"That this organisation most strongly protests against the action of the General Secretary of the M.F.G.B., Frank Hodges, in using the columns of the Hulton Press to make a scurrilous personal attack upon the veteran miners' leader, Bob Smillie. Smillie, a tried and trusted leader of the M.F.G.B., has grown grey in the service of the working class movement, and we consider the sneers of Hodges not only uncalled for but untrue.

Further, we advise all workers connected with the M.F.G.B. to take this matter up through their respective branches."

ear, a blue bow put on one ear and a red bow on the other, a brass collar placed around his neck and a fancy blanket on his back; he received different treatment and was put to different uses, but at the end of it all—a Poodle he was, a Poodle he is, and a Poodle he will remain.

So with this precious "Agreement." We may dress it up with scraps of paper about mine workers having a say in Selling Price and Joint Control, and a right to two weeks' holiday per year, etc., with "the Employer entitled to a fair return on Aggregate Capital," but what does it all mean?

Selling Price is determined by International Competition. This is too large a question, so far as export coal is concerned, to be solved by either masters or men. Joint Control we can never have. The masters would render it a dead failure, under this Agreement, or any other. After all our tinkering the end would be—a bad Agreement it was, a bad Agreement it is, a bad Agreement as long as it exists it will remain.

We require a fundamental change as the basis of a new Agreement.

- (1) We must have an Agreement framed in simple terms.
- (2) One National Wages Board. (Not two or three score).
- (3) Our labour must be the first charge upon Industry.
- (4) The Industry must maintain its own Unemployed.
- (5) Profits shall bear no relation to the Standard Wage, as at present.

Profits shall not be guaranteed in any way whatsoever. (Why should the Mineworker guarantee the Employer a profit any more than the Bricklayer, or the Compositor, or the Engineer?)

These principles are clear enough.

We can say that we are mainly responsible for this question of the National Wages Agreement being taken up by the Federation Board of Durham, and having accomplished so much, we are now anxious to help to get a new Agreement altogether.

It will take a deal of hard thinking from many heads to get us out of our present terrible condition of poverty.

### YORKSHIRE

By G. Shillitoe

**I**T was freely predicted at the time of the lock-out that Yorkshire would not suffer. We have learnt the untruth of that now. So far from being in a good way, Yorkshire is suffering severely, in ways that can best be summarised under these heads:—

(a) *Non-unionism.* It is pretty generally recognised that the non-unionist is not a scab. He has fallen out of the Union mainly because of the belly-crawling creatures who are in office. He does not forget how he was let down in the two National Disputes (1912 and 1921) and in the numerous local and county strikes that have taken place. At branch meetings, when a progressive move is being attempted, he is "sandbagged" by the officials and would-be officials and falls out of the Union.

These can be brought back by sensible methods. Where high initiation fees are charged these, under the present existing conditions, can reasonably be cut down by 50 or 75 per cent, or cut out altogether. The branch meetings, instead of being carried on as they are at present, can be made a rallying place for the members and non-members. They could attract the whole of the mine workers in discussing their grievances and problems confronting them, showing them that their interests are one and indivisible.

(b) *Overtime.* A considerable amount of overtime is worked in the coal industry, although there are about 100,000 members of the Federation unemployed. Little or no attempt is made by the official element to stop it. If overtime is essential to the well-being of the men, then the unemployed members of the Union should be considered and consulted first, and the Union itself should decide whether such overtime should be worked or not. Another important matter which the Unions must take up is, that if anyone is being engaged at any particular colliery at any particular job, he should be engaged through his Union, the boss having to apply to the Union before engaging anyone.

(c) *Unemployment.* Nothing but the complete abolition of the Profit System, of course, will solve the unemployed question. The doing away with overtime would swallow a portion of the "reserve army of labour." A further method of alleviating unemployment is by putting into operation a 6-hour day and 5-day week policy. And there is also the repeal of the Versailles Treaty.

An immediate campaign should be started to make the unemployed chargeable to the industry. If "the industry cannot stand it," then more reason why the present owners should get out and let sensible people carry on the industry. Anyway, the industry can stand it. If it can afford to support the other section of the unemployed—those who never have worked, and never will work, until the working class make them—then it can stand our comrades who have been hurled on to the scrap-heap.

(d) *Transformation of Unions.* The whole structure and outlook of the Miners Federation of Great Britain has got to be changed. Craft unionism has ceased to be of any adequate use to the working class. The basis of the Union has got to be Industry, and everyone engaged in or about a mine must be in that Union—the British Miners' Union. Power of recall should be put into operation and short period elections.

(e) *International relations.* In consequence of the "sandbagging" operations of the official element, none but those keenly interested in working class organisations know the international relations of the M.F.G.B., and even a good proportion of the official element don't know where they are. They do not know they are affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions, which is but a rallying centre of traitors to the working class and a combination of the mildest mannered gentlemen who ever scuttled a ship.

*This International of Trade Unions is the one which permitted over one million tons of coal to be shipped into this country to defeat the miners in their lock-out last year. This International is the one that permitted engineering and ship-building material to be transported to assist in the defeat of the Engineers in their recent lock-out.*

This International is the one that is taking no action in defence of the imprisoned trade unionists on the Rand, whose only crime is "defence of their women and children." This is the International whose component parts are conveying munitions to Ireland. Last, but not least, this is the

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International which is transporting coal to America, where there are 700,000 miners resisting the onslaughts of the coal owners. This International was not created for struggle, but for soft jobs for Labour —. It is incapable of waging the class war.

At the Blackpool Conference there will be tabled a motion from South Wales for withdrawal from the I.F.T.U. and to affiliate to the Red International of Labour Unions. What does the R.I.L.U. stand for? It stands for uncompromising battle against the Capitalist Class. It stands to unite the workers for International mass action through live contact with the workers in their every-day struggle to make the workers alive to these international issues and to place industrial administration in the hands of the workers. It stands, in a few words, for the abolition of wage slavery and the substitution of the Workers' Republic world-wide. It is not a talking machine, but an organisation for action. This is why every miner should press forward his branch in support of S. Wales miners' resolution. I know a member of a branch of the Y.M.A. (one of the bull-dog breed, patriotic sort of belly-crawling types you sometimes meet, who make you feel as if you want to kiss them) who, when a notice of motion is given to discuss the S. Wales resolution in support of affiliation to R.I.L.U., yells out, "We want nowt red here, and if it warnt for South Wales we shouldn't be where we are now." (The chap ought to be pitied instead of blamed). Work then to support the S. Wales resolution to affiliate to a fighting organisation—the R.I.L.U.—away from the I.F.T.U., which shelters creatures of the Thomas type.

### LANARKSHIRE

By Alexander Ritchie

SINCE the spectacular defeat of the M.F.G.B. last year, the Lanarkshire men have slowly moved, month by month, to a position of dead level poverty now almost universal. The official wage is 8s. 5d. per shift, but thousands of miners are unable, at prevailing ton rates, to make this sum. This again is aggravated by partial reductions, short time, collieries shutting down, and intensified competition for jobs. This latter phase is something new in this area, caused through a very large body of men who, in many cases, have not been employed since March of last year. I cannot describe the state of the home life: it is too big a job for a quiet chap like myself. You can picture it in your own mind. The dirty insanitary rows, the scantily clad children, the over-worked mother, almost demented trying to make some show on wages of from £1 to £1 15s. per week.

*And that pride-stricken, middle-class, lawyer-like Secretary of ours talks about a ten years' truce. Gawdelpus.*

The big problem is to bring fresh life and hope into the lives of these people again. They have been badly battered, but are learning from their experiences that nothing can be got from the Boss class in the mines by appealing to them on humanitarian grounds.

Bob Smillie is President of Lanarkshire Miners' Union and has been doing his best to rally the men back into the ranks of the organisation. Unfortunately, however, there are no signs of any big move in this direction.

The pits where we have an active Communist element in control are, almost without exception, the best organised.

The only definite link between the miners and other trades is through the Trades and Labour Councils.

The steps that ought to be taken, in my opinion, are:—

(1) The abolition of the County Unions and the merging of these in one division, forming part of the One Union for the whole industry.

(2) The compulsory retirement every three years of all paid full-time officials.

(3) Extension of powers of pit Committees to (a) settle all local disputes; (b) enforce by strike where necessary that every man be member of Union; (c) control of part of each member's contribution for local purposes; (d) power to stop a colliery for a period of not more than 14 days, with strike allowances.

A pit Committee possessing these powers, and composed of real men with foresight and courage, could do more to re-organise the miners than an army of propagandists.

What can C.P. members do to help? The first thing to be done is to organise Communist nuclei. The second is to instruct those nuclei as to the nature of their job, i.e., understanding of the machinery of present day Unions, their history, etc. To do this wholeheartedly and well the appointment of as many instructors as have the necessary qualifications for carrying out this work of educating C.P. members would be necessary.

The freeing from all other party activities of those instructors and nuclei for a time in order that they may devote themselves to this work.

To bind the whole effort constant touch must be maintained with Central Office in each division, instructors reporting on all activities and receiving from Centre information and advice.

That does not appear to me to be such a big job as it may at first seem to be. At any rate, it has got to be done. Loose and informal organisation does not stand the racket, and only good work is worth doing.

### NOTTS and DERBY

By Owen Ford

THE conditions in the mining area of Notts and Derby incline one to the belief that the miner's life is so bad that it could not be made worse.

The miner cannot choose his master with the same facility as formerly, because of housing difficulties. He is as much tied to the area as the serf of olden days.

The employers take full advantage of the conditions to more effectively control the lives of the miners.

The unfortunate compensation man, who is in many cases tied to the Company as a part-timer or half difference wage worker, is having a very rough time with the boss, who ignores the proper working of the Compensation Act.

The boss is daily snapping his fingers at the Minimum Wage Act and men are coming home with a sum that looks more like a tap-room collection on a Thursday night than a wage.

Then one has to remember the debts contracted to the provision dealer during the lock-out last year, to the Trade Union and the Board of Guardians.

Many miners have given up hope of getting straight again, they cannot make the balance sheet business work. Working like hell to pay back rent, Trade Union levies, etc., etc., on a wage 45 per cent above 1914, with food prices 80 per cent above 1914, and that on half-time, is enough to make anyone forget all they ever learned at Sunday School about honesty.

There seems to be a tacit agreement between the boss and the Trade Union officials to crush or starve any rebel or rebels who dare to grumble at their sorry plight.

I know one place where the boss Trade Union official co-operated with the police to starve into submission all the local Communists. You had to take a clean sheet from the sergeant of police to the pit before you could get work.

So much for the plight of the workers of the mines. Less than 50 per cent are financial members of the Trade Union, and the striking feature about these unfinancial members is that they are the virile miners who have not forgotten how they responded to the appeals for solidarity during the lock-out. The result then was a solid bump on Black Friday. The miner has noticed how he has been forced to retreat ever since. Is it any wonder that he is soured and unapproachable?

One sometimes wonders whether the masses whom we seek to lead with be found outside or inside the unions. We must, however, resist the error of assisting the boss class to more effectively divide us, by becoming advocates of another union, and so spending our energy uselessly. We must capture the machinery of the County Unions, and can do it providing the C.P. branches are used as instruments to call together the virile elements among these disgusted unfinancial members to formulate a policy that will start at the point which the best among them have reached mentally, and then by sustained propaganda bring them to where we can tackle the problems in a fighting spirit. We must make the miners understand that we are fighting not for more tubs, but more life.

### FIFE

By John Bird

THE situation in the Blaina and Abertillery districts described by Evelyn Sharp in the *Daily Herald* a few weeks ago is by no means peculiar to those districts.

Wages in Fife have been at a minimum for a number of months with little prospect of an improvement during the lifetime of the present agreement. This minimum means to the collier 8s. 4½d. per shift. The day wage men (other than brushers) have less than the collier, and not being graded, as in other coalfields, are left at the mercy of the boss, without any protection under the agreement.

The surface workers' wages range from 5s. 6d. to 7s. per shift. It will be seen from these figures that even allowing for everything going smoothly, and working every day, it will take some doing to balance accounts at the end of the week.

But things don't always go smoothly. Rates have been cut to such an extent in some collieries that

only a few of the very strongest of the men are able to earn the minimum. Wages statements have been taken at some of the collieries, which have revealed the fact that men are working for as little as 2s. 6d. per shift, and the management quite callously refuse to consider the question of "making up." Nor is this the worst. Local officials have frequently to deal with cases of men working all the available shifts and being in debt to the company at the end of the week.

From an organisational point of view, the position could hardly be worse.

At the best of times there was serious weakness in the Fife Miners' Union. Instead of organising all the men in a particular colliery into a branch (or lodge) the tendency has been to establish branches in localities. The result has been that many men have retained their membership of the branch they first joined. Thus a state of affairs has developed where there is no direct connection between the pit a man is employed at and the branch he is a member of.

The finances of the association are in a bad way. Besides being heavily in debt to the traders in the county for goods supplied during the lock-out, money has had to be borrowed to enable the officials to meet the ordinary expenditure. Only last month the financial statement showed that £2,000 had been borrowed to pay the Law Agent's account. The Law Agent, by the way, is also the agent for the bank which supplied the loan. By this simple bit of book-keeping the Law Agent, as bank agent, gets interest on his £2,000 account. And this was done without consultation with any responsible body. But when some small trader who risked something in order to assist during the lock-out makes an urgent appeal to have his case considered there is a different tale to tell. Or when a branch claims a shilling more than the officials think necessary for hall rents (the branches have no local funds) payment is withheld until the accounts are sent to headquarters. And so things drift on, without getting very much out of the rut.

As the result of the activities carried on by the Miners' Reform Committee, at the time of the lock-out the rebel element gained a fairly strong position. It would be misleading to say that a majority of the branches had been won over, but it is no exaggeration to claim that a majority of the members were. The union is composed of 54 branches. The smallest branch had less than 100 members, while the largest had 3,000. There were several others with a membership round about 2,000. By concentrating on the larger branches it was possible, by means of the financial (or card) vote, to carry some very important resolutions. As, for instance, the decision to support, financially, and to send three students to the Scottish Labour College. And again, in spite of the bitter opposition of the officials, it was decided to send delegates to the last Congress of the R.I.L.U. in Moscow, and only the intervention of the stoppage gave the officials an excuse for preventing it being carried through.

Since the resumption of work there have been several indications of how the wind blows. Ballots have been taken at a number of places and each has resulted in a victory for the representatives of the "extremists."

*The Fife delegates to the Blackburn Conference are instructed to vote for affiliation to the R.I.L.U.*

The officials have taken note of these happenings and are determined to avoid referring important questions to the rank and file. At the moment, there is a struggle going on which might end in the disruption of the organisation.

The officials have shown no regard for the welfare of the organisation, being only concerned about maintaining their positions and power. They profess to be thorough going constitutionalists, but have not the slightest compunction in trampling the constitution underfoot when it suits their purpose.

Readers may remember the trouble that was caused a year ago by the refusal of the officials to accept the result of a ballot vote on the appointment of the National Union Representatives, because three rank and filers (who were members of the C.P.) were elected in place of three sitting members.

This year the same trouble has cropped up in a new form. In order to avoid the expense of a ballot it was decided that the election should be made by branch vote, and branches were asked to nominate on this understanding. Now, a branch vote carries with it the right of any delegate to ask a "financial vote," which is the procedure adopted to give delegates votes in proportion to the members they represent. This is provided for in the constitution, and it has never been known in the history of the organisation for any chairman to refuse to allow it when the request was made. But the present chairman (who sports an I.L.P. badge in his coat at Board meetings) had obviously received instructions from the "heid yins." When the financial vote was claimed he laid it down

(Continued on page 6)



# MINERS: and other Economic Slaves

**Pauper Miners** In the old days after the great and glorious war against Napoleon, there was a system of agricultural parish relief called the "Speenhamland System." By this system employed men, if their wages were not sufficient, were aided from the rates to maintain a sort of existence. Before long, of course, the farmers ceased to pay anything but a derisory, almost nominal wage, and the agricultural labourer was reduced to a pauper, horribly poor and broken in spirit.

We can see from the information published elsewhere in this paper, that the miners are being forced pretty low. But in Notts, it appears from a circular of the N.M.A., it looks as though the Speenhamland System was to be revived. At least, unemployment pay, it is suggested by the Justices, shall be given to men "working broken time," and direct relief also be given by Guardians in cases of acute distress. And the Association is only too glad to co-operate.

It seems we are touching the depths. Well there is this hope—the darkest hour is the hour before the dawn.

\* \* \*

**English Slavery** Among the various instances in which the existing trade unions have ceased to perform their functions none is more serious than their neglect of "relief works" for the unemployed. Because these are called relief works in many cases the unions have refused to interfere against grossly improper conditions. To one of these jobs—Swanley, arterial road-making—a representative of the COMMUNIST paid a visit to get the exact facts, which we append:—

Nominally, he reports, the wages are £2 12s. 2d. for 45 hours (5-day week, insurance deducted).

But there is more to be said than that.

Swanley is some twenty-five miles from the Elephant-and-Castle Station, and from Swanley Junction the job is roughly three miles more. The men have to start at 7.30 a.m. every day. They have to catch a special train at the Elephant-and-Castle Station, at 6.10 a.m. This means that they have to be up at 4.30 a.m., and leave home by 5.20 a.m. On their arrival at Swanley (about 7 a.m.), a fleet of motor lorries are waiting to take them to the job, arriving about 7.20 a.m., so as they are able to start work at 7.30 a.m. sharp. The train is specially chartered by the governors of the job and also the lorries. They are, therefore, on the firm's job at 6.10 a.m. every day.

They work from 7.30 a.m. till 5.30 p.m. and are allowed one hour all day for meals as follows; twenty minutes for breakfast (8.40 to 9); forty minutes for dinner (12.50 to 1.30); they finish at 5.30 p.m., when the lorries are waiting to take them to Swanley Junction to catch a special train, arriving at the Elephant-and-Castle Station at about 7 p.m. The men finally arrive home about 7.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.

That is 14 hours after leaving home in the morning with one hour for food.

No allowance for travelling time is made, and if the day or part of it is rainy and

they are unable to work they are also stopped the time.

Only last Monday, June 26th, the men worked through the rain and got soaking wet to the skin because their wages are so meagre that they cannot afford to lose a penny.

\* \* \*

**Starvation** This means that to a man with even one child it is worse than starvation. With one day's pay lost and travelling expenses, for a working week of fifty-two hours on the firm's premises, they receive the magnificent wage of £1 18s. 10d. Take from this at a moderate estimate the Landlord's share for the hovel they live in at 8s. per week and they have 30s. to feed, clothe and enjoy their spare time on with their wife and family.

## NEXT WEEK'S

### Communist

will be a Special

## LABOUR PARTY NUMBER

It will consist of special articles on "Who is Splitting the Working Class Movement?"; "Why the Communist Party Seeks Affiliation"; and every aspect of the relations between the Communist and Labour Parties.

The number will be prepared by the Communist Party Executive, Sub-Committee, in collaboration with A. Macmanus, W. Gallacher, R. Palme Dutt, R. Page Arnot, F. Willis, C. M. Roebuck, J. T. Murphy, Wm. Paul, R. W. Postgate, J. T. Walton Newbold, J. S. Clarke, and T. A. Jackson.

Order your extra supplies at once as there will be an enormous demand. Circulation Manager 16, King Street, W.C. 2.

Should any of the men start agitating to get things remedied by way of travelling allowances or wet time allowed, they are at the first opportunity given the sack, and that sometimes means that they receive no unemployment pay or relief from Guardians "because they are Won't Works and got the sack from Relief." The unions put forward the excuse that they cannot interfere because it is Government Relief Work, although it is in fact done by private firms.

\* \* \*

**Mark Time** The collapse of the mark and the announcement by the German Government that it would be unable any more to provide the reparations coal is no more than another step in the collapse and dissolution of the Versailles Treaty. In appearance, it is no more than one of the periodic crises that have disturbed Europe in the last three years. They have uniformly ended in a lot of talk and meetings of experts, rows between Lloyd George and the French Premier—and nothing else.

Something, however, must come of this. Not only has the delivery of coal failed, but this is obviously the last reparations payment that will ever come from Germany. Amendments will consequently have to be made to the Versailles Treaty.

It is quite on the cards that the whole Treaty might collapse. The return to a mere normal capitalist economy that would result would probably be a source of considerable strength and relief to European capitalism, and to that extent a disaster for the workers. On the other hand it is probable that the moral effect of the governmental confession of incompetence that it would involve, and the injury it would inflict on Jingoism everywhere would more than compensate for that.

\* \* \*

**The Coming Split** Undoubtedly the British Government will make an attempt to have the Treaty

in effect, cancelled. But there is no reason to believe either that Poincare will agree or that his opposition can be over-ridden. The plain fact is that French capitalism has adapted itself in the last three years to a parasite existence, and is now actually dependent upon "Europe's coolie plantation." What to Mr. Lloyd George and even to many members of the F.B.I., appears only as a sane return to normal conditions, appears to the corresponding circles in France as a cut at the very roots of their prosperity.

What way out the French capitalists will find, or attempt to find, it is difficult to say. What is obvious is that although the coming dissension between French and British capitalism will be patched up, the quarrel cannot be covered over indefinitely. The split will come—war will come, and America will back France—and goodbye to the British Empire and naval supremacy.

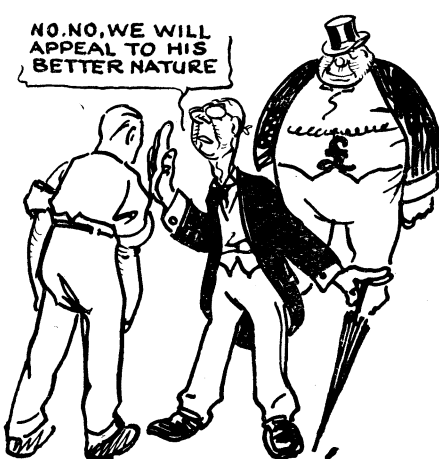
Tyre—Carthage—Rome—Madrid—London. The writing is on the wall.

\* \* \*

**Another Secret Meeting** Readers will remember the publication in a recent

COMMUNIST of extracts from the report of a private meeting between members of the F.B.I. and the Railway Managers to discuss ways and means of reducing railway wages. Another and much more carefully guarded meeting was held at the Railway Clearing House on the 5th and 6th of July to go more fully into the joint plan of campaign and concert measures of influencing "public opinion" in preparation for an attack. Confidential clerks were posted outside the room where the meeting was held, at the end of the corridor and one even replaced the lift attendant. No one suspected of working-class sympathies was allowed to approach. Only four highly-placed officials of the Clearing House and the managers and the members of the F.B.I. were allowed in the room.

We have our eye on these people and will continue to report (as we alone of the Labour Press do) everything of the intrigues that we can. But our task ends there. Railwaymen must watch their losses. No one can defend them but themselves.



CLASS WAR?—NO! "TEN YEARS TRUCE." AND THEN . . .

# The Communist

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## HENDERSON'S PEACE

By F. WILLIS

TO the current number of the *Labour Magazine*, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., contributes an article entitled "An Industrial Parliament: A plea for a pact of peace."

It is a cry from the heart. There is a sob in every sentence of a paragraph like this:—

"The world needs a respite from conflict. It is satiated with war. It is growing dispirited in the present state of things, which has almost every element of war except the actual clash of battle. It needs to get back to real peace with all its positive elements. The spirit of conflict must be displaced by the spirit of co-operation; the will to construct must be substituted for the will to destroy."

One almost forgets that this same Henderson, who writes like Tolstoi, was one of the men "who helped to win the great war," and had precious little compunction as to methods in the process.

To establish his case for an industrial truce Mr. Henderson draws a sufficiently graphic picture of working-class conditions at the present time:—

"Unemployment, under-employment, reduced wages, a lower standard of life, domestic misery and wretchedness have followed in the wake of this unparalleled depression."

"It is no exaggeration to assert that the conditions of life for the workers in practically every industry are no better than they were ten years ago, and that in many cases they are considerably worse."

Needless to say Mr. Henderson is optimistic about the future. "I am inclined to the view that the worst phase of trade depression is behind us, and that signs of recovery are gradually showing themselves."

They always are. Every political hack in the country has been working that wheeze for the past twelve months. Psychologically speaking, it is the only possible basis on which to stabilise capitalism. The silver lining is always just behind the cloud; the dawn must be near because the hour is so dark; the lane so long that the turning must be just before us. Henderson banks—and must bank—on that hope or he has no case. Without it there is only a case for Communism left.

Trade being just on the point of revival, nothing—according to Henderson—must be done to retard its recovery. His proposals for achieving this end are given in full. Italics are my own:—

- Employers should undertake not to seek to alter existing conditions by declaring a lock-out.
- Trade Unions should undertake not to seek to alter existing conditions by declaring a strike.
- Changes in workshop conditions (other than wages) to be by mutual consent.
- Existing rates of wages to be stabilised as basic with the present level of cost of living registered as "normal," wages to rise automatically and periodically in an agreed fixed ratio to increased production in each industry, so as to ensure to the worker a fair share of the fruits of restored prosperity.
- All "differences" to be referred to a Council of Conciliation to be set up for each industry and to be representatives equally of employers and employees, such Council to be presided over by one of H.M. judges with power to vote; the finding of such Council to be accepted by both parties.
- Steps to be taken immediately the truce is signed for the establishment of a permanent Industrial Parliament, equally

representative of employers and Trade Unions, on the lines suggested in the scheme drafted by the Joint Provisional Joint Committee appointed by the National Joint Council of employers' representatives and Trade Union representatives in 1919.

Mr. Henderson rightly anticipates that there will be some "who will denounce these suggestions as involving a compromise with capitalism."

Only he uses the wrong term here. He should not have written "compromise," but "abject surrender."

Just imagine, for instance, the miners, who, on his own showing, are existing at a lower level than that of 1914, being asked to stabilise this condition of things. Or the engineers! Or any other industry! Subject, of course, as Mr. Henderson would be eager to point out, to a rise if warranted by increased output.

If he simply means that the workers should work harder, he would be well advised to deliver the exhortation to his distinguished colleagues of His Majesty's Privy Council.

Well, trade having revived; wages having been stabilised on the present coolie level, or probably lower by the time Mr. Henderson's bright idea has materialised; strikes and lock-outs having been abandoned by mutual consent; there still remains the Industrial Parliament to be set up.

Notorious lover of peace though he be, Mr. Henderson is by no means averse from struggle in certain forms. As he remarks the conflict of ideas will still go on.

"Indeed, I contend that any arrangement for the establishment of an industrial truce should include provisions for a proper and regular discussion of ideas to be carried on. A Parliament of Industry would provide the necessary opportunity for intellectual conflict, and would be a safeguard against present conditions becoming stereotyped and fixed."

Representatives of employed and employers will meet together and conduct the class war like civilised human beings. Mr. Henderson will reply to Sir Allan Smith; Sir Allan Smith will retort on Mr. Henderson. Deep will answer unto deep. The peace for which Mr. Henderson yearns will be an accomplished fact, although perchance it may prove to be the peace of slow starvation and stark despair.

Let us judge fairly and frankly this call for a pact of peace.

In the first place the Mr. Henderson of 1916 and 1917 is not the man to play the part of an angel of peace at any time or anywhere. We suspect his sincerity; we doubt his tears. If we do him an injustice we are sorry, but there it is.

Secondly, the truce for which he calls is not a pact of peace, but an act of working-class suicide.

For twelve months past the organised employers have used their power ruthlessly to drive the workers into a condition of servitude unparalleled for three generations. The process still continues, and its end is not yet.

Mr. Henderson pleads for stabilisation on the basis of the status quo. So do the wisest among the capitalists, who fear for themselves even while they exercise their powers. Both Mr. Henderson and the wiser capitalists are obsessed by the necessity of preserving intact the present framework of society—King, Lords, Commons, Privy Council and all. The old order must be sustained at all costs so that—as Mr. Henderson would say—steady and natural progress may be made.

In very truth we Communists hate the whole apparatus of class warfare with its accompanying strikes and lock-outs, with a hate that Mr. Henderson and his like cannot comprehend. We hate it so much that we are not prepared to give the system by which it is inevitably produced, a moment's respite to recuperate.

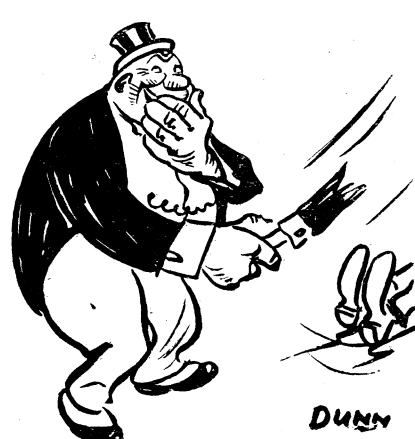
The present vindictive attack by the capitalists on the workers' standard of life cannot be met by a cry of "Halt!" For the workers to neglect to use every economic opportunity created by a revival of trade to recover that which has been filched from them would be an error of strategy so gross as to amount to criminal treachery. War may be horrible, but at all costs the enemy must be beaten and victory won. A patriot should understand that argument at least. Nor will empty bellies be fed by the workers becoming sheepishly pious and bleating in chorus: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want."

There is the real reason for Henderson's pact.

Capitalism, shaken to its base, requires thirty years of industrial peace, with unprecedented conditions of slavery for the workers if it is to have a new lease of life.

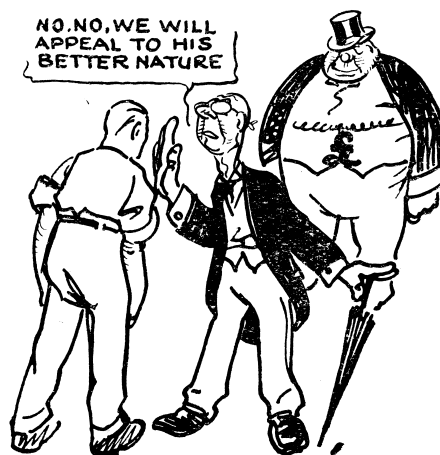
Mr. Henderson would grant the terms. We would not.

Neither, we believe, will the workers.

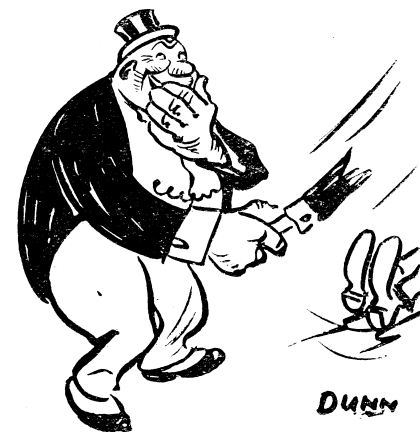


DUNN

INDUSTRIAL PEACE



CLASS WAR ?—NO! "TEN YEARS TRUCE." AND THEN . . .



. . . . . INDUSTRIAL PEACE

# Communist Demonstration AT EDINBURGH

THE lying accusations of Macdonald, Hodges, etc., made during the Labour Party Conference against the British Communist Party, the Soviet Government, and the Third International were not permitted to pass unchallenged.

On the floor of the Conference itself a vigorous defence was made of everything associated with Communism, and, later in the week, our point of view found full expression at a Communist Demonstration held in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, which was addressed by the Party's most prominent speakers.

It is surely a tribute to us that our demonstration surpassed in size and enthusiasm the annual official demonstration of the Labour Party held in the same week. Instead of a melancholy assembly of a few disappointed Communists there was a large proletarian audience, employed and unemployed, numbering nearly two thousand.

The platform party comprised the Communist Conference delegates, some Party officials and propagandists, and several of the local champions of Communism.

The speech making was confined to Comrades Macmanus, Stewart, Jack Thomas, Pollitt, Helen Crawford, Gallacher, and Saklatvala.

Comrade R. FOULIS (twice rejected by the Labour Party Executive as a Parliamentary candidate), in opening the meeting, disabused the minds of the audience of the idea that the Communist Party wanted to break up the Labour Party and only wanted to get inside to perform the work of destruction more effectively. It was not the Labour Party the Communists wanted to destroy, he said, but the reactionary policy which afflicted the Labour Party. They wanted to give to the political organisation of the working class a direction which it did not possess to-day.

HARRY POLLITT was the first speaker. He dealt with the futility of the Conference. Industrially, he said, the workers were broken and dispirited. Internationally the economic system was in decay, breeding death and desolation amongst the toiling masses. On no issue of local, national, or international magnitude did the Conference of the Labour Party give a straight lead.

WILLIE GALLACHER criticised the resolution of condemnation passed on the Soviet Government for the trial of Social Revolutionaries. The Social Revolutionaries were assassins. The Labour Party objected to the trial of assassins in Russia, but it did not object to the trial of the alleged assassins of Sir Henry Wilson in Britain.

He considered that there was a sinister motive behind the condemnation of Russia. In that motive Vandervelde (friend of Ramsay Macdonald and leader of the Second International) was involved. Vandervelde, as representative of the Belgian Government, wanted to bring Russia to her knees.

To that end he was using the Second International.

To that end he was using Macdonald and the British Labour Party.

To that end he had instigated the resolution of condemnation of Russia in order that the opposition of the British working class could be hurled in the teeth of the Soviet Government.

Although Communists were excluded from the Labour Party, a great many people were coming

in at the other end. The respectability and the middle-class were beginning to join up.

The Labour Party was becoming a respectable institution. Already a half circle had been formed in London of the wives of Labour leaders. These ambitious ladies were taking up the study of etiquette in order to be able to entertain guests in the event of their husbands becoming *Cabinet Ministers*.

The policy of the Labour Party was described by HELEN CRAWFORD as a policy of drift. When the country is at war the Labour Party supports war; when the country is at peace the Labour Party supports peace. The Labour Party supported indemnities when the Government demanded them; the Labour Party opposed indemnities when they brought about ruin and industrial decay. The Labour Party, she said, had absolutely no foresight or initiative.

She charged the present leaders of Labour with responsibility for the pitiful, poverty-stricken plight of the workers to-day. These proud men, she said, ought to be hanging their heads in shame.

The Communist Party is not crushed by the mere fact of being refused admission into the Labour Party. On that point the words of Comrade MACMANUS, the Chairman of the Party, were quite decisive—"We will continue to pursue the fight for political direction of the working class."

Macmanus outlined the inevitable conflict of the working class with existing institutions of government, the struggle for power, and the need for creating new governmental institutions of a working class character.

Political parties were a reflex of the interests of those whom they comprised. The Independent Labour Party and the Fabian Society he described as middle-class parties, representing the interests of those desiring to avoid the dictatorship of either the employers or the workers. These parties had foisted themselves on the political organisation of the workers and were a hindrance to revolutionary progress. Only the admission of proletarian elements such as the Communist Party could reclaim the Labour Party for the workers.

It was explained to the audience by Comrade THOMAS, of the South Wales Miners, that the block vote of different unions instituted at the Conference stifled all expression of opinion. Nine hundred thousand miners' votes were cast against the Communist Party, in spite of the fact that the Welsh miners and miners in some Scottish areas were in favour of Communist affiliation.

S. SAKLATVALA spoke gloomily of the consequences of the Labour Party's ineffectiveness which would be visited not only on the British workers, but on the workers of India.

He scourged the intellectuals of the Conference for their prejudice against what they chose to term the "Asiatic mind."

BOB STEWART completed the list of speeches. Stewart referred to the meanness of the attack made by Hodges on Bob Smillie.

He stated that affiliation to the Labour Party was not the be all and end all of the Communist Party's existence. Further, that the Party would continue to expose the duplicity and treachery of Labour Party leaders.

The meeting came to a close with the singing of the "International" and cheers for Communism.

## THE MINERS' PLIGHT

(Continued from Page 3)

that on the question of the appointments no financial vote would be allowed. This ruling was supported by the officials and a majority of the delegates.

Since then Mr. Adamson has stated at the Standing Committee and the Board that he is not going to allow the constitution to be used by any section of the association, *even though they be in the majority*.

The explanation of this is that had the financial vote been granted two, or perhaps three members of the C.P. would have been elected and one or two of the agents dropped. And Adamson and his section cannot tolerate that.

Constitutionalism and Democracy go by the board and the Dictatorship from the Right is put into operation.

Compare the position taken up by Adamson and Co. in Fife with that taken up by the same people at the Labour Party Conference last week. Frank Hodges voted against the affiliation of the Communist Party on behalf of 900,000 miners and also against the reduction of the rate of interest on the War Loan. *The miners never discussed either of these questions*, and Adamson raised no word of protest.

There is a grave possibility that a definite move will be made to establish a Fife Miners' (Emergency) Association—making a break with the ex-

isting union. If this is done it is almost certain that before many weeks there will only be a few thousand left in the present organisation. The Executive of the National Union of Scottish Miners and the M.F.G.B. Executive will then have to decide which of the two bodies they are going to recognise.

It must not be imagined that there is no hope for the future in Fife. The magnificent spirit displayed during the last struggle may have received a severe shock, *but it has not been killed*. Evidence is not wanting of an early revival. With a good fighting programme the enthusiasm can be raised in a very short time.

Such questions as an immediate reduction of rent to the pre-war level and a similar reduction in the price of fire coal are questions which are the cause of complaint everywhere.

Above all, there is general determination to end the present agreement at the earliest possible moment.

Frank Hodges' dream of a ten years' industrial truce is not likely to materialise. The miners are having it pressed home to them "that industrial warfare is inevitable and inherent in the nature of things," and everywhere one hears expressions of regret that we failed to take advantage of our opportunities during the last few years. The feeling is undoubtedly growing that there is no hope for the miner as long as capitalism lasts, and with it is growing the desire to be up and doing.

When the call comes, Fife won't be late.

## LABOUR'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

By George Garrett

[To be sung by the members at every meeting of the Labour Party Executive.]

When Labour reaches power—  
Which may be any hour—

We'll save the King.  
'Cos if we don't, poor chap,  
He might be on the "gap"  
And lose his diamond cap—  
We'll save the King.

Confound that Communist,  
He, we know, would insist—  
"Work for the King."  
Cheerful we pay the price  
(High!) for his sane advice:  
E'en though we starve on rice—  
Long Live the King.

Honours he keeps in store,  
On us he'll please to pour—  
Long may they "rain!"  
Some may smell like a sewer—  
P.C.'s are extra pure,  
They honest are "for sure"—  
To Our Own King.

Long Live our Labour Laws,  
They will defend the cause,  
Of Our Great King.  
Should Henry Dubb get wise,  
And take us by surprise,  
Proving our statements lies—  
!!\*???GGod save the King!!

## Communist Review

SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL  
NUMBER FOR 'JULY

The splendid number for this month contains the following remarkable articles by well-known revolutionary writers.

### The Struggle Against New Wars

By CLARA ZETKIN

This article, written by one of the most fearless fighters in the revolutionary movement, is a trenchant exposure of the intrigues of the imperialists who are hurrying the nations to a new world-war. The writer shows the difference between Labour pacifism and revolutionary anti-militarism.

### The Asiatic Revolutionary Movement and Imperialism

By KINSIC KIM

The author of this closely-reasoned contribution is an active worker in the revolutionary movement of the Far East. The skill with which he deals with imperialism is the best reply to those stupid critics of Communism like Frank Hodges, who sneer at the limitations of the "Asiatic Mind."

### High Finance and Foreign Politics

By J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD

It is not necessary to mention that Newbold is one of the world's greatest authorities on the ramifications of finance. He clearly shows how the money lords used "democratic" states to assist them in plundering foreign peoples.

### The Class Struggle in the United States

By W.M. HAYWOOD

The famous leader of the American I.W.W. deals most effectively with current phases of the class war in "God's own Country."

### Implications of Transition Period

By T. BELL

This well-known exponent of Communism deals with the problems which shall surge forward after the workers capture power.

### International Review

Review of the Month

ALL FOR 6d.

From any Labour Bookseller; or from 16, King St., Covent Garden, London, W.C.2.



# A PAGE FOR WOMEN—(Which Men can Read with Advantage)

**W**ITH this issue we are able to commence what will be a permanent feature—a periodical Women's Page.

At first it will appear monthly; later on, we will, we hope, be able to make it a weekly feature.

The page is prepared and arranged by women, in co-operation with the Editor of the COMMUNIST.

A delegate of the London Women Communists' Study Group is the Editor of the page and women comrades throughout the country are invited to co-operate in making it a successful endeavour to improve the Communist organisation of women.

Articles, notes and letters are invited, and should be addressed to: Editor, Women's Page, The COMMUNIST, 16, King Street, W.C.2.

## Why a Women's Page

By HELEN CRAWFORD

"The woman's cause is man's cause: they rise or fall together—Dwarf or Godlike—bond or free."

**H**AS Communism a special message for women?

Some of us believe that the Communist message applies to women in a very peculiar way. Did the average woman realise the real meaning of Communism, and the liberation from capitalist and sex domination for which it stands, she would be its most ardent advocate.

**SHE DOES NOT KNOW!!!**

The capitalist class-conscious of the power of women, vilifies and misrepresents Communism to them: knowing that an ignorant womanhood is the strongest bulwark of capitalist society. Special reactionary societies are financed, which work through her religious and traditional prejudices—sabotaging every advanced movement.

While it is true that material conditions determine development; it is perfectly evident to anyone who thinks, that in performing the function of the reproduction of the human species, woman is placed at certain periods in a position of utter dependence. Very often in humiliation unspeakable.

Have we not, time and again, heard women say, when asked why they continued to live with a tyrant: "It was very difficult to leave. I was either going to have a child or was nursing one."

Communism stands for the economic independence of woman and the right of motherhood to care during pregnancy.

Are not the problems of the men and women workers in industry similar?

The fact that women are excluded from many of the trade unions on account of sex, proves that the important part played by women in industry (steadily increasing as the machine develops) is not yet realised by the working men of Britain.

Women during industrial disputes have sometimes supported their male workmates. Nevertheless their weakness, from the point of organisation, makes them a serious menace in every fight, as the capitalist ideology imported to them from the school, the pulpit and the press, fosters a parasitical outlook which leads to the acceptance of low wages.

It is true that the average British worker's outlook is insular; but the outlook of the working mother in the home is still more circumscribed.

Only by international action can the monster capitalism be destroyed.

To act internationally, we must learn to think internationally.

The Communist movement exists to raise an International General Staff for the world's proletarian army. To make this army efficient it is important that every unit receive instruction.

The weakest and the most backward we neglect at our peril.

Women have played an important part in the struggles of the past. Here in Britain at the end of the "War to end War," we find her, weary and disillusioned. She sees £175,639,300 being spent on war material instead of £80,390 as in 1914. She sees not £702,580 as in 1914) spent on research work, but £4,217,795. Research work for what?

## COMMUNIST WOMEN In Other Lands

### I.—GERMANY

By Bertha Braunthal

**T**HE development of the women's movement within the Communist Party is slow but steady. After the experiences of nearly two years' existence of the Communist Party, it can be said that the methods of organisation and propaganda adopted (according to the decisions of the Third World Congress of the Communist International) have proved very efficient in bringing our ideas to the masses of working women.

For this purpose a special apparatus has been formed within the Party to carry on the propaganda among women in closest connection with the general work of the Party. Thus the Executive Committee of the Party has formed a National Women's Department, the responsible leader of which is at the same time member of the E.C.

In each of the 28 district committees there is also a comrade in charge of the women's work. In the Rhine province, a great industrial district, we have a special women's secretary, maintained by the district committee.

In every branch and every district the most active women members form a special Women's Propaganda Committee, which regularly meets to discuss the best ways and means of propaganda on the basis of the suggestions received from the National Women's Department.

In the largest provinces Women's District Conferences are convened from time to time in order to discuss the possibilities of carrying out special campaigns among the masses of women. In this way special reports were given to our women members from the first and second National Women's Conferences in December, 1920 and May, 1921, and from the International Women's Conference in Moscow, as well as during the campaign organised for the International Women's Day.

The second annual National Women's Conference took place in May, 1921. It drew up a complete programme on the protection of working women and motherhood, for submission to the International Women's Conference at Moscow. All districts sent delegates and the discussion on this programme and on parliamentary activity proved that we have already a good nucleus of capable women officers in the party.

We are giving our women members every help by means of special training and education, to become efficient class-fighters. The National Women's Department has sent out its three members to conduct lecture courses for women in the various districts,\* providing week-end classes for the study of the Communist theory.

In addition, special evenings are devoted to the discussion of current political and tactical questions, in order that the women members may be informed on the questions of the day. Sometimes specially interesting articles from our bi-monthly paper, *Die Kommunistin* are discussed in these meetings of women members. In this way we have succeeded in training a number of women comrades as speakers and many of these spoke for the first time in public at the International Women's Day in the name of the Communist Party, when they withstood the attacks of political opponents.

On the other hand many proletarian women find an opportunity of expressing their fighting spirit in writing, by con-

tributing to our "Women's Pages," which appear regularly every fortnight in 33 of our 36 daily papers.

In order to spread our ideas among the great masses of proletarian women we have published up to now seven pamphlets, the greater number of which were sold out within a few months.

The increase in prices and the heavy taxes laid exclusively on the shoulders of the proletariat have tended to revolutionise the masses of working women. This was made clear during the campaign for an International Women's Day, when for a whole week, in all parts of Germany and in all the remotest villages, big women's meetings were held, our resolutions being carried with great enthusiasm. At present a great campaign is going on for abolition of the so-called "abortion clauses" of the Statute Book, which render it a criminal offence for a woman to procure abortion. In recent times the bourgeoisie had increased its prosecution under this Act and hundreds of proletarian women have been torn from their children and thrust into prison because of their unwillingness to bring further children, for whom they had no means of providing, into the world. Especially in southern Germany and in the Rhine districts this propaganda, carried on in connection with the demand for efficient State care for mothers and children, has gained us the sympathy and the support of great masses of proletarian women, who recognise that our party is the only organisation which has their interests at heart.

It must however be confessed that we have not been able to get access to the broad masses of working women in the factories and in the trade unions. The overwhelming majority of our women members are housewives. Our greatest efforts are now directed to getting our comrades in the factories to support our propaganda amongst the working women, to spreading our literature in the factories and to training the women in the party nuclei, the shop meetings, etc. The great dissatisfaction of the working women on account of their much lower wages compared with men is justified, in view of the enormous increase of food prices. Our appeal to them to fight for equal pay for equal work within the trade unions and the shop committees is therefore likely to meet with their response to, and to gain us their sympathies, if we take the lead in the movement.

The Communist women of Germany are closely watching the development of the women's movement within the other sections of the Communist International. They have repeatedly and most clearly expressed their enthusiasm for the Russian Revolution and the militant Russian women, by their relief work for the famine districts, and they have helped to establish the Liebknecht-Luxemburg home for children in Tscheljabinsk. They convey their heartiest greetings to their sisters in Great Britain, of whose militant spirit they have received many proofs, and sincerely hope that by the joint efforts of the comrades within the Communist Party they will succeed in getting the masses of working women into the rank and file of the great class army against world capitalism.

\*Work on these lines is now being initiated in the London District by the Women's Organising Committee.

Research work to make the next war more diabolical, more frightful, and this at "the end of the War to end War."

She sees the land that was to be made the fitting abode of heroes, with its hungry unemployed workers crowding every industrial centre. She sees the maimed and mutilated victims struggling to exist on the miserable pensions which "a grateful Government will never forget," and the youth of the country being trained for the next war.

The task of the Communist groups for work among women is to give scientific direction to this discontent, studying the

prejudices and traditions that still shackle her; bringing home to her this lesson, that she is one with the world's workers, "bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh."

Women have played a very important part in the struggles of the past. Women will need to play a part in the struggles of the future.

Will she help? Will she hinder?

Communist direction is of vital importance. Are we prepared to give it?

For these and many other reasons I hail the advent of this special page devoted to this vitally important department of Communist activity.



# THE MINERS AT THE CROSS ROADS

By J. T. MURPHY

FROM every coalfield and from every mining village comes the cry of distress.

Poverty and misery have eaten into the very vitals of the miners and their dear ones. Low wages, unemployment, short time, are driving hundreds of thousands to distraction. They did not fail each other in the hours of struggle against the onslaught of the mine-owners. They stood together as British miners in a way which won the admiration of the world. They were beaten because they were isolated as—"British"—miners.

Now they have come to the cross-roads. At their Conference in Blackpool they have to make a decision of immense importance. They are about to choose whether they will cast on one side the policy of isolation and become part of an international organisation of struggle.

Will they join the Red International of Labour Unions? That is the issue upon which the future of the miners depends.

They are members of an international organisation we know. Through the T.U. Congress they are affiliated to the Amsterdam International.

But none of them could tell that they were members of an International if it were not written in books and magazines.

Certainly it is not revealed to the rank and file miners by deeds of international solidarity. In name they belong to an International. In fact they are isolated and defeated.

The Amsterdam International was re-born in 1919. Since then the miners have passed through their most bitter years of defeats. And the miners have not benefited by a single deed from them.

## A Second-hand Affiliation

But what can the miners expect from a second-hand affiliation?

They are attached only through the T.U. Congress, and we all know what that means. We all recognise how utterly hopeless it is to expect anything from this organisation so long as it is so loosely formed and lacking in authority. And we all know that even if it had authority it would, with its present leadership, be used to stifle action instead of helping to get it.

Its record in this respect is familiar. When the miners were fighting strongly during the days of the Sankey Commission and after, did the T.U. Congress rally the other unions to support the miners?

It did not.

When the miners fought in 1921 did the T.U. Congress rally the union movement to help?

It did not.

Is it reasonable to expect that a second-hand affiliation to an International, through such an organisation will bring international solidarity in action?

Before you could compel action at the International centre you would have to press things through the national centre.

Press things through the T.U. Congress before getting to Amsterdam! Ye Gods! In what year would you be likely to get assistance?

Has not your experience shown the futility of expecting assistance from those whose whole activity has been directed to preventing such assistance? Ask help from leaders whose programme is—a CARD INDEX SYSTEM! Leaders who are bound to an international constitution which permits every national organisation to go its own sweet way!

That is absurd. Could you have a Miners' Federation of Great Britain if every local organisation pursued a policy of going off on its own account?

You know quite well that wherever such occurs the M.F.G.B. becomes weak. It is exactly the same internationally. International organisation without international discipline is not international solidarity in practice at all. You needed in 1921 common action with the miners of Europe and America. Common action with the Transport Workers to prevent the shipment of coal. National autonomy left you isolated.

And how terrible is the penalty of isolation and defeat!

But everything does not depend on organisation. The looser the organisation the more important becomes the question of leadership, and the leadership of the Amsterdam International is the leadership of defeat.

Committed to capitalism, defending capitalism continually, supporting capitalist governments, how can you expect this leadership to make up for the defects of organisation and come to your aid in your daily struggles?

## The Alternative

What is the alternative? This is clearer to-day than ever before.

The Red International of Labour Unions grows continually and offers the only alternative.

It demands of those organisations which join it the pledge to *international solidarity in deeds* as well as words. It demands a solidarity of the workers which stretches across the frontiers and insists that its members carry out the *decisions of its international congresses*. Its leaders are pledged to fight your foes with all the means possible, and are pledged to the policy which leads to the complete defeat and conquest of capitalism.

We are making of the Red International of Labour Unions not a card index system for registering your troubles, but a fighting machine to rally each others aid in time of need and to create a real united working-class front against the common enemy—capitalism.

That is why so much hatred is shown to us by the defenders of the system which creates your misery.

That is why we are building from the bottom by direct appeals to the masses.

The Amsterdam International rests on apathy and indifference. The Red International grows through struggle and the awakening of the masses.

Ninety per cent. of the members of the Amsterdam International did not know they were members until they were roused to the knowledge of it through the campaigns and action of the Red International. The Amsterdam International was never an issue in the union movement until faced with the challenging Red International. It is a machine created by the Trades Union bureaucrats without the knowledge and consent of the masses. Push it away. It is a stumbling block to union progress, splitting the national union movements and barring the way to united action on even the every-day issues. It expelled the union majority in France. It expelled the minorities of other countries. So long as it is left intact at the centre, the leaders assume a dictatorship in practice which they deny in theory. If you would get out of the isolated tracks which lead to defeat, you must therefore thrust these leaders and this apparatus on one side and join the Red International of Labour Unions. This is the direction to which we point and we say—

## Beware of the Objectors!

There will be those who will say this means joining the Communist International. That is absurd.

The M.F.G.B. could not join the Communist International. The constitution of the Communist International demands an individual test of its applicants to membership as well as a collective test. It is an International of Communist Parties, steadily developing into an International Communist Party. The Red International is a separate institution with different conditions of membership. It is formed of the mass organisations, the unions who pledge themselves to act unitedly against the Boss class until the workers rule the world. To this organisation the M.F.G.B. is invited and will be welcomed.

It will also be argued that joining the R.I.L.U. means "Dictatorship from Moscow."

That is absurd. If the M.F.G.B. joins the R.I.L.U. they will participate in the

making of the decisions in the international conferences which will bind them to united action to carry them out. This is not dictatorship but business-like co-operation of national bodies to pursue an international policy. Can the opponents of such a proposal state a case. We challenge them to show a better way.

The actual relationship of the R.I.L.U. to the Communist International is clear and unchallengeable. The two organisations co-operate for common action for common purposes and do it in a business-like, open fashion. For the sake of pandering to the immature political notions of the slave Labour leaders of capitalism must the unions refuse to co-operate with a workers' fighting organisation 3,000,000 strong? To refuse would be absurd. And if we agree, what better method can be proposed than to carry out such co-operation by joint meetings of Executives on special issues and an exchange of representatives on the central committees?

These are the only business-like means possible to carry out real co-operation and to unite the workers in the struggles against the internally organised capitalist class.

The miners are at the cross roads. Their decision to travel either on the path to disorganisation or on the way to real international unity is of immense importance to them and to the union movement of this country. If they go towards the former the chaos of the union deepens. If they line up with the Red International of Labour Unions it will mean the turning of the tide in union affairs. We urge every miner to swing into line and every delegate to the Miners' Conference to step boldly forward and join the M.F.G.B. to the Red International of Labour Unions. This is the way to break down the isolation which has led to defeat and to get the solidarity which will make for victory.

## ADVERTISEMENT RATES

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## MEETINGS

### Communist Party Branches

**ABERTILLERY.** Jock Wilson (South Wales Organiser) speaks at Llanhilleth, Thursday, 7 p.m.; Trinity Corner, Friday, 8 p.m.; Brynmawr, Saturday, 7 p.m.; The Field, Six Bells, Sunday, 11 a.m.; Tin Forge, Sunday, 7 p.m. Kum in Krowds!

**CROYDON.** Saturday, Woodside, 8 p.m. Sunday, Katherine Street (outside Town Hall), 8 p.m. Good speakers.

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

**HUDDERSFIELD.** Sunday, July 16th, 11 a.m., Market Place; 6.30 p.m., St. George's Square. Sean MacLoughlin (Leeds).

**KENNINGTON.** Meetings every Sunday evening outside Kennington Theatre, Kennington Park, 8 p.m. July 16th: E. W. Cant.

**SHEFFIELD.** Sunday, July 16th, 11 a.m., Attercliffe Baths; 7.30 p.m., Barker Poole. J. T. Walton Newbold, M.A.

**SOUTHEND.** Meetings every Sunday, Marine Parade, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.

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

**BOW C.P.** Garden Party, 6, Wellington Road, Bow, Saturday, July 22nd, 3.30 p.m. Admission free. Collection in aid of L.D.C. funds.

**FREEMASONRY** is a curse to Humanity from the Christ Ethic. Speaker: Rodway, 149, Merton Road, Wimbledon.