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THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

EDITOR :: WM. PAUL

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Review of the Month

THE DOCKERS' STRIKE.

NEVER in the history of the Labour movement has there been such a betrayal as that of which the dockers have been the victims. It has been of such a treacherous character that one almost despairs for the future of the Labour movement in this country. And yet, when we study the matter calmly and coldly, we see in it something that is symptomatic. The dockers' betrayal is but another episode in the long list of disasters which began with the acceptance of the Sankey Commission. The dockers are getting a dose of the trade union tactics of which "Black Friday" was a sample. The Labour leaders who had not the courage to fight capitalism during the war lack even the moral fibre to lead the masses, ready for battle, in times of "peace." None of the big unions is prepared to make a stand for its members. The leaders are incapable of militant action. Trade union officialdom has become one of the vested interests.

In the whole Press of the country the only important paper that

dared to make a stand for the striking dockers was the "Workers' Weekly"—the organ of the Communist Party. The fact that the leaders of the Dockers' Union have been praised for their attitude in all the London papers—from the "Morning Post" to the "New Leader"—is the most damning indication that they are playing the game of the capitalist class. Even the "Daily Herald," under the editorship of a gentleman who received his journalistic experience by writing reviews of fiction in the "Daily Mail," came out against the striking dockers. The "Daily Herald," we regret to say, is rapidly traversing the same path that led to the humiliating collapse of the "Daily Citizen." A Labour journal that won't fight for the workers deserves to come to a speedy end—and the quicker the better. One cannot help contrasting the present "Herald" with the heroic daily paper founded and conducted by George Lansbury. The "Daily Herald" began as a small paper issued to assist the dockers during a strike. Its attitude on the latest revolt of the dockers has disgusted so many active rank and filers that they have lost all enthusiasm for it. The first "Herald" became famous for fighting for the dockers; the present paper of the same name is becoming infamous because it was afraid to fight for the dockers. Meanwhile, a great clamour has been raised for a genuine "Workers' Daily."

It has been claimed that the "Herald" adopted an "impartial" attitude regarding the dockers' strike. During a strike a Labour paper must not be "impartial"; it must be with the workers first, last, and all the time.

As with the Press so with the various political parties. All the important political groups, with the solitary exception of the Communist Party, came out against the dockers. From the Tory Die-Hards to the official blow-hards of the I.L.P.—all showed a united front against the strike. We had here an illuminating example of Mr. MacDonald's famous social recipe regarding the need for co-operative effort on the part of all members of the community. The sight of Mr. Philip Snowden, in Parliament, conducting the imperialist struggle against Soviet Russia, whilst his leader sabotages the dockers' demand for bread, shows to what depths of political iniquity the official I.L.P. has sunk.

The dockers' strike reveals, like so many other things that have happened recently in the class struggle, that the C.P. is the party for the workers.

LABOUR AND CAPITAL.

AT first sight it might seem that our criticism of the attitude of the trade union leaders and the Labour Party Parliamentarians, regarding the class struggle since the Armistice, is too severe. Let those who think so study a most remarkable volume on "The Workers' Register of Labour and Capital"* that has just been issued. This is probably one of the most important pieces of research work done by the Labour movement. The scope of the book is

* *The Workers' Register of Labour and Capital, 1923.* Prepared by the Labour Research Department. Published by the Labour Publishing Company, 5s. net.

highly important. It analyses "the relations of Capital and Labour, the relative strength of capitalist and workers' organisations, the forces reacting upon them, influencing their policies, and their power to make their will effective. We have aimed at "registering" the forces at the disposal of the two parties to the industrial struggle, and at providing a clear record of what they have done and experienced, of their fortunes and relations, during the period since the conclusion of the war." The volume shows that in 1918 the workers were on the offensive and were seriously challenging the present system. It records how, step by step, the capitalist class slowly and skilfully retreated under the brilliant leadership of Mr. Lloyd George. But it was only a Corunna retreat; it was the sort of retreat that the Russian Communists conducted two years; it was a falling back to a powerful base from which to launch a most devastating offensive. We can see in this book that at no period did the leaders of the British Labour movement have any desire or will to lead the masses against the capitalist class. On the other hand the political and industrial leaders of the propertied interests displayed the utmost determination to defeat the workers on all fronts. Promises and the most sacred pledges were given—only to be gaily swept aside when the masters saw they had a chance to advance to victory by doing so. The ethical code, that parleys made on the arena of the class struggle must be carried out, is something only meant to be taken seriously by sentimental Labourists anxious to seize any pretext to cover their cowardice. The capitalist class certainly do not believe in it. No class in history has ever accepted it. Class society presupposes struggle and the basis of all social strife—is strife.

"The Workers' Register of Labour and Capital" shows that the daring leaders of the propertied interests out-manoeuvred the cowardly simpletons who control, at present, the Labour movement. Since 1918 the workers have been thrashed time after time. The real problem of the Labour leaders has been to hold the industrial masses in check. All privileges won by the workers during the war—privileges won by courageous rank and file movements which had to struggle against the official trade union bureaucracy—have been lost. In 1923 the masses are in a much inferior position to that occupied by them in the bad pre-war days. And the dockers betrayal comes as a fitting end to a series of tragic defeats and treacheries.

On the other side, the capitalist class has swept from victory to victory. They have consolidated their power. They have linked up their forces. Capital has concentrated and centralised. But with it all, final defeat stares them in the face. So tremendous are the productive forces that they wield that they dare not use them; if they do so they create chaos. By restricting production and by keeping up prices in order to maintain profits, they throw millions on to the unemployed scrap heap. This causes chaos and revolt. The capitalists are in a cleft stick. A little courage among the leaders of Labour and a capacity to struggle could end capitalism to-morrow. But only in the Communist Party can be found that courageous leadership which ultimately will take the workers to victory.

The authors of "The Workers' Register of Labour and Capital" are not, of course, responsible for the conclusions which we have drawn from the splendid array of facts which they have compiled. And we can understand why the Press of the moderate Labour movement has not emphasised the importance of this book which ought to be in the possession of every member of the fighting C.P.

AU REVOIR!

IT is now over two years since the "Communist Review" was founded. Its first number caused some uneasiness amongst those whose special function it is to act as watch-dogs for the propertied interests; and it was quoted in the Courts in what was an unsuccessful attempt to outlaw the Communist Party. During these past two years we have had to struggle against many difficulties not the least being the usual financial embarrassments that accompany every revolutionary labour movement and its press. Thus the editor has had to do all his editorial work in that part of the country where he can hold down a bread and butter job. Consequently the "Communist Review" has, for some considerable time, been edited in the provinces, and not in London. As it is thought desirable, in a revolutionary journal like ours, that the editor should be in very close contact with the Party headquarters, the Central Committee have expressed a desire to see this realised. And as I am more than anxious to help the Central Committee, I have requested them to produce future numbers of the "Communist Review" from the Party headquarters in London.

In resigning the editorship of the "Communist Review" I take this opportunity of thanking the many party members and sympathisers who have so loyally and readily given their assistance. I cannot hope, for one moment, that my methods of conducting the "Review" have pleased everybody. The two very important articles in this issue, for example, may not appeal equally to all party members. These articles, however, get into close grips with very pressing constructive proposals, of a definitely concrete nature, which must be faced by a bona-fide Workers' Government. It was my intention, had I remained editor of the "Review," to have covered many of the problems relating to the control of industry and to show what were, in my opinion, the most important and immediate tasks of a Workers' Government. To that end I had opened up communications with many friends known to be authorities upon their respective industries. The articles which appear in the present issue upon Agriculture and the Fish Industry, are neither dogmatic nor complete solutions of the problems analysed. They are only intended to be sign-posts which point to the problems and which indicate possible methods of grappling with them. It is no paradox to say that in the measure that our plans for the destruction of capitalism are matured, so in the same

ratio our constructive proposals must be carefully prepared. The present leaders of the Labour Party have not planned any practical programme of social reconstruction to be enforced when they reign at Westminster. Since they have no carefully worked-out policy of combatting capitalism, they do not feel the need for a constructive programme. It is those who are out to destroy capitalism, root and branch, who most vividly realise the need for carefully organised plans for constructing the new era. The first step in construction is destruction. The Labour Party, under the guidance of Mr. Webb and Mr. MacDonald, do not intend to destroy, so they need not trouble about social construction. It is because the Communists, as leaders of the masses, shall be the destroyers of capitalism that they must be also the builders of the Workers' Republic. Therefore, we must not allow all our energies to be consumed in the purely destructive struggle against capitalism. As capitalism rattles on to chaos we will be compelled to study, very closely, such questions as those raised by our Comrades Joss and Johnstone. These questions, and their importance, are the best indications that the revolutionary movement in Britain is now entering a new phase—that it is passing from phrases to deeds, from purely theory to practical work.

Some friends may feel that these articles, dealing with the practical problems of social reconstruction, are of too prosaic a character for a revolutionary journal like the "Communist Review." They would prefer to see the pages devoted to purely agitational and theoretical subjects. I am of the opinion that there are a great number of serious people in this country who can be converted to the Communist viewpoint if only they can be convinced that we are something more than enthusiastic destructionists. There are also many workers whom we can never influence by theoretical arguments. Once we can convince them, however, that we have concrete and practical plans to put into operation, they will rally to us and help to sweep away the capitalist debris that is preventing our plans from being operated. The workers' mind being what it is, we must use any and every method of winning it to our side in the big struggles that are now looming up.

Of course an editor can never hope to please all his readers. Some of our comrades were anxious to see poetry in the "Review"; some clamoured for cartoons; some were angry when we ceased to print the coloured covers which used to adorn the party journal. Some friends were anxious to see more articles dealing with Soviet Russia in order to reply to the impertinent insolence of crude reactionaries like Mr. P. Snowden. Others, on the other hand, were of the opinion that we devoted too much space to the doings of the Russian Communists. The old problem of trying to please everyone in an organisation, while at the same time seeking to propound the policy of the party, is one that no mortal editor shall ever succeed in solving.

If the editor of a proletarian journal succeeds, even in a small way, in showing the masses their true position in the international revolutionary struggle, then his efforts have not been in vain.

W. PAUL.

Democracy & the 2nd International ❀ By C. Rappoport

Translated from *l'Humanite* (Paris) by A. HUTT

TWO opposing streams ran through the Second International—the proletarian stream and the democratic stream. These two, giving rise to two distinct methods, to two tendencies, were in continual conflict. In the end it was democratic ambiguity which carried the day. And so the Second International died. Altogether it is a drama whose different acts possess an acute interest.

The genius of Karl Marx inspired the proletarian stream, with his slogans—class struggle and international solidarity. The consuming energy of Lassalle formed and directed the democratic stream, with universal suffrage as its principal demand.

Lassalle, as an almost orthodox Hegelian, sacrificed much to the metaphysical “absolute.” He had an enthusiastic admiration for the State as a “thing in itself,” as the guardian of the interests of the community. Under the influence, as he was, of formal logic, Lassalle had no difficulty in showing statistically, that the majority of the nation only received a quite ridiculous income. Logically, therefore, it had every interest in overthrowing the regime of property and monopoly. Let the majority express itself through universal suffrage, and the revolution would be accomplished. Thus Lassalle became the real founder of that Social Democracy which, on August 4, 1914, made its revolution—backwards.

Marx was not very fond of this argument; and, while doing justice to the extraordinary gifts of Lassalle, he did not make universal suffrage one of his gods. The Second Empire had shown it in a new light. His chief followers in Germany, Liebknecht and Bebel, fought the illusion of democracy, and took their stand on the class struggle.

Moreover, Bismarck entirely understood the counter-revolutionary role that universal suffrage could play. He strove for a rapprochement with Lassalle. The latter, personally honest and independent, refused to take part in Bismarck's machinations. Bismarck, doing without his assistance, took the initiative in granting universal suffrage to Germany.

This was a mortal blow to the revolutionary method. The German proletariat went from victory to victory on the electoral field. Its electoral progress was prodigious and frightened Bismarck himself. The Iron Chancellor tried to break the Social Democracy by severe repressive legislation: he was broken himself by the ever-rising tide of Socialist votes. And finally this triumph went to people's heads and gave some kind of solid basis for the democratic illusion.

It was then that revisionism arose. Revisionism asked Social Democracy to put its theory in accord with its practice, by declaring that Socialism was nothing and reformism everything. This classic formula of opportunism denying Socialism in actual fact, could have been expressed another way—Socialism is nothing; democracy is everything. In fact, the Mensheviks, the present-day revisionists of Russia, prefer to use this last formula.

Revisionism provoked a storm of protest. The influence of Marx and Engels was yet too strong to allow such a striking recantation.

Revisionist ideas were fought with congress resolutions. But, as in practice revolutionary tactics had been renounced, and, for the conquest of power, one was simply relying on electoral and democratic successes, revisionism laughed at theoretical condemnations. It had the whip hand. It was thrown out of the congress door, but in real life it came back through the window.

The democratic spirit determined the character of the Second International. First of all it declared itself "constitutional." Every appeal to revolution was considered as a provocation, whether police or Anarchist. There was a noisy split with the Anarchists, not only because of the lack of agreement on principles of organisation and on the political struggle, but above all because of their revolutionary propaganda. On the other hand, great care was taken not to quarrel with the revisionists. They were given a place of honour, despite their denial of our "final aim"—that is to say, of the Socialist transformation of society. The revisionists ended by winning all along the line. They created a party in their own image which only existed for elections and Parliamentary-reformist action. When the world war came the fruit was ripe.

Above all, the democratic spirit is a national spirit. Nation is placed above class. Marxian dialectic is profoundly hostile to every confusion of this sort. Within the nation it distinguishes social classes, their opposing and antagonistic interests, the incessant struggles, with revolution and the seizure of power—the dictatorship—as a consequence.

The electoral and parliamentary Socialism of the reformists is above all national. To catch votes they declared themselves more patriotic than all the bourgeois parties put together. They expressed themselves in favour of a "war of defence," of national defence. Naturally, each national party closing its eyes to the capitalist and imperialist character of the war—an international phenomenon—discovered that "their" war alone was really "defensive." The class collaboration, in the interests of democracy of peace-time, became, during the war, the **Union Sacrée** of each Socialist party with its own bourgeoisie. With the saving of the "common heritage" from the conflagration as an excuse, the leaders of the working class of each nation proceeded to give it up to the capitalist incendiaries. And, with the abandonment of the theory—and the practice—of the class struggle, they lost all sense of criticism. They swallowed all the idiocies about the "War to End War," the "War for Civilisation and Justice," and so on. They became parties to a national and international swindle on a colossal scale.

Moreover, for the sake of appearances, these democrat-socialists, more democrat than Socialist, had declared that their coalition with the bourgeoisie was quite exceptional—determined by the exceptional circumstances of the war. But when the war was over, the coalition-mongers forgot their promises. They continued the policy of coalition.

The pretext of "reconstruction" took the place of the pretext of national defence. To-morrow, the struggle against reaction will serve. This simple, yet fundamental, Socialist truth was forgotten—namely, that while the bourgeois regime continues with the aid of "national" Socialism, war, and therefore, chaos and reaction, will in the nature of things continue.

But the greatest crime of "democratic" Socialism was its fight

against the Russian Revolution. Having to choose between a proletarian revolution and bourgeois democracy, the Second International put its loyalty to the bourgeoisie before the defence of the first great Workers' Revolution. So it appeared in its true colours.

The proletarian revolution of October, 1917, was not opposed as a foregone conclusion to democratic institutions. The best proof of this is, that it was the Bolsheviks who summoned the famous Constituent Assembly, while the specifically democratic government of Kerensky never dared to risk what it considered a leap in the dark. But with the historical development of the revolution, the Constituent Assembly, a revolutionary watchword in 1917, ceased to be so in 1918: it corresponded neither to the revolutionary needs of the moment nor to the state of mind of the vast majority of the people. The Bolsheviks, true masters of revolutionary dialectic, did not insist on giving life to a dead form, and decided on its dissolution. For the first time in history, the proletariat established its dictatorship over the whole of a vast country.

Even while not in agreement with the tactics of the Bolsheviks—and the whole democratic ideology of the Second International was their antithesis—a genuine Socialist, having to choose between the dictatorship of capitalism, which had achieved supremacy after the war in all capitalist countries, and the dictatorship of his own class, should have chosen the dictatorship of his own class.

But the decay of the Second International was so deep-seated that it declared war, side by side with the whole capitalist world, on its own class, on its own future—greatly to the joy of the forces of world imperialism. In the whole history of the class struggle no greater crime can be found. Granted the mental habits of the members of the Second International, the sudden success of the Russian Revolution, and the extraordinary character of this fact, a few doubts as to its import were permissible at the outset. I confess that, with many Bolsheviks, I was extremely sceptical; but when the Russian proletariat joined battle with the capitalist world, the duty of solidarity with the revolution imposed itself. This duty the Second International—and later the Two-and-a-Half—scandalously betrayed.

We have tried to prove that it could not have been otherwise. The Second International took its life from bourgeois democracy—and died of it. Between bourgeois democracy and proletarian revolution one must choose. They cannot coexist.

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HISTORY
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Tasks of a Workers' Government: Two contributions

1. AGRICULTURE & FOOD SUPPLIES

By Wm. Joss.

It is one of the scandals of the British Labour movement that it has never devoted adequate attention to the problem of agriculture and its direct relation to the food supplies of the masses. This all important question, like the condition of the agricultural workers, is generally dismissed as of little or no importance. In the following article we have an expert contribution on the subject by one who is an active worker in the agricultural district of the North.

The "Communist Review" intends to give a lead to the movement by discussing the many important concrete problems that must be faced when a Workers' and Peasants' Government captures power.

Readers of the "Review" and members of the Party are invited to discuss the problems raised and to send in their opinions upon them.

Editor of "Review."

Historical Survey.

THE condition of British agriculture at the present moment is attracting attention from various sources. The plaintive howls of the landowning class regarding the incidence of high taxation; the complaints of the farmers at the prices obtained from the sale of their produce, and the pressing down of the agriculture workers' wages have raised such a clamour that the setting up of commissions of inquiry was the only logical development of the situation. The politicians' motto when faced with a problem which they cannot solve, within the present framework of society, is to set up a commission of "economic experts" who receive evidence from various sources, issue a report, and then wait to see what happens. The success of past Governmental commissions has been well demonstrated. Everyone is aware of the harvest of dead-sea fruit gathered from the results of the commissions on Housing, Dockers' Inquiry, and the Sankey Conference. Now at long last a report has been issued by the Commission on Agriculture. And it is just as abortive as the reports and findings of other Governmental commissions. The study of agriculture in this country has not received the attention which it deserves. This is due to the overweening influence of the development of industry in Great Britain. The failure, however, of the present system the capitalism and landlordism to give even a tolerable existence to the industrial and agricultural proletariat, has brought the urgent problems of the reconstruction of the present basis of society rapidly into the foreground. The purpose of this survey is to investigate the conditions of agriculture in this country in view of the developments which are leading to the creation of a Workers' Government in the not far distant future and to formulate the methods and procedure

which will require to be undertaken by that regime in solving what is commonly known as the Agrarian Question. As it is impossible to understand how the present alarming crisis in agriculture has arisen, or to take an intelligent view of the question without knowing something of the historical development of the agricultural industry—and especially the crisis which industrial development forced on it about two hundred years ago when England decided to sacrifice agriculture to industry—I intend to present, in the first instance, a short historical survey. Secondly, to outline the economic basis of the industry. Thirdly, to show what is required for immediate needs, and finally, to present a draft Agrarian programme on the question for a Workers' Government, together with practical methods of application.

Whatever opinion may be held in respect to the dates of the origin of other branches of industry, no one can dispute that agriculture plays an important part in industrial evolution. "As in the case of the discovery of fire and the domestication of animals we are left in the dark as to the benefactor who made the priceless discovery of tilling the ground" (Jenk's "History of Politics"). Agriculture remained for ages, even after its rudiments were known, as a mere supplementary pursuit rather than a substantial occupation. It was not adopted, on a large scale, until the increase of population began to press upon the means of subsistence. At what precise period any branch of systematic farming was commenced in this country seems very uncertain. In the early history of Britain its surface was abundantly covered with forests, and much more land was under water than at present. The earliest features of agriculture in Great Britain are to be found on the sides of the downs of Southern England and the hillsides of Scotland and Wales; one may still see the curious terraces grass-covered like the uplands to which they belong. On these terraces it is believed the first agriculture in Great Britain began. The slopes of the downs between Devizes and Calne afford many examples. Of equal interest is the neighbourhood of Rushmore on the borders of Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, and also Hampshire about three miles south of Winchester, close to Shawford station, on the Sussex downs and the Chiltern Hills in England. In Wales in North Carmarthenshire, near Llangollen, there are some fine examples to be seen from Llantysilio railway station. In Scotland, at Purves Hill, about eight miles below Peebles; at Newlands Kirk in Peebleshire, at Dunsyre in Lanarkshire, and on the south-east slopes of Arthur's Seat above Duddingston. This system of terrace cultivation, associated with the neolithic peoples, can be further studied in Prof. Boyd Dawkin's book, "Early Man in Britain," and "The English Village Community," by F. Seebohm, "Rural Economy of the Southern Counties," by Marshall, and "The Village Community," by Laurence Gomme. These writers have done work of a similar character for Great Britain to that which Lewis Morgan's "Ancient Society" has done in research in America in relation to early man. In all the evidence of this early period there is one fact which is very pertinent, viz., the total absence of a land settlement on the family or individual. There was no form of land tenure whatever; if an enterprising individual tried to apply his energies to the land his holding expired with a single crop. The family was held together by the women, whose labour represented the agricultural and manufacturing activities in the primitive community.

Slavery made little progress amongst the early Britons until its

introduction with the civilisation of the Romans. "There is no doubt that the Romans developed the agricultural resources of this country. Not only did the introduction of wheat, oats, barley, and other grains, the lucerne and artificial grasses, apples, currants and other fruits tend to produce in the most equable and temperate climate in Europe another granary and stock-raising country for the Romans, but during the four centuries of the Roman occupation the country was able to maintain not less than five millions, and probably six millions, of a population." ("Growth of Nations.") The chief export of Roman times appears to have been corn. Thus in the fourth century we find armies of Gaul and Germany depending in great part for their subsistence upon regular annual arrivals of corn from Britain. The historian *Losimus* relates that in the year 359 the Roman colonies, situated in the Upper Rhine, having been plundered by the enemy, the Emperor Julian built a fleet of 800 vessels of a larger size than usual, which he dispatched to Britain for corn. These brought so much that the inhabitants of the plundered towns and districts received enough not only to support them during the winter but also to sow their lands in the spring and to serve them till the next harvest.

After the Romans left England the country drifted back to a barbarian level and during the Saxon epoch of the next four centuries the country only maintained one half the number of people in comparison to the Roman period. The live stock degenerated into herds of swine fattening in the forests of beech and oak which over-spread the wasted arable land of the earlier period. The backward condition of rural Britain was to a great extent due to the persistence of the village community and its customs. These influences are in operation and even are felt to-day. Ample evidence of this is confirmed in nearly every inquiry about the actual state of agriculture. Over and over again, in the reports presented to the Board of Agriculture dealing with the obstacles to improvement and the best means of introducing something like scientific principles to the industry, the one answer which seems to have overwhelmed inquirers was that the prevailing system is carried on simply because it had been in operation from time immemorial. This answer was also backed by a deep-rooted aversion to change of any sort—especially when change meant an enclosure of lands and allotment of several parcels held in common by a group of individual owners. Sir H. Arthur Rose, writing in the "*Glasgow Herald*," July 29, 1922, said, "Land hunger is a factor in the Highlands and Islands which cannot be neglected: it shows itself by frequent illegal seizures of land, sometimes caused by dire necessity, sometimes arising from an inherited and traditional sense of injustice dating back to the forcible evictions of the ancestors of those now demanding the land."

In order to grasp what communal farming was we have first to understand that the early farmer was never in business entirely as his own master; the times were much too rough and life and property were too uncertain. The early agriculturist realised that union was strength, and he farmed not in isolation but in combination, because life in the village was safer than in a separate dwelling. As Mr. R. H. Rew says, "The village ground plan, indeed, remains in hundreds of villages to-day, but the detached isolated farms are of a later date."

Where did the lord of the manor, whose name and some of whose powers have survived to the present day, come in?

The most ancient village community was a body of people who

held their land in common. How did the change take place? William Paul, in his book, "The State, Its Origin and Function," hits the nail on the head when he writes, "The real history of the early middle ages is the struggle between the village democracy and the military usurper." And we are on no uncertain ground in our knowledge of rural history. When William of Normandy came to England the land was tilled by the village community and the wastes and commons were subject to certain undoubted rights to the community. When the Normans established a permanent footing they changed the tenure of land from agrarian freehold to the great military fiefs. This brought with it servile tenancy, a change which caused a diminution of population and capacity. And during many a winter there was famine in the land and man and beast suffered hunger.

As the power of the Law developed under the feudal state, as commerce developed and products were increasing and exchanged for money, landowning became a business and farming a trade. Land was now passing into fewer hands and there began the development of tenant farming and the system of paying wages. The Black Death assisted this process. When it had passed there was more land than workers, with the result that wages rose to such a point as to call for State interference. "An ordinance concerning labourers and servants," which "directed first that persons of the class of servants shall be bound to serve when required, and, secondly, that they should serve for the same wages that were accustomed to be given three years before." This Act, the 23rd of Edward III, 1349, was supplemented by another in the following year which, after a preamble, declared, "that servants had had no regard to the preceding ordinance but only to their ease and covetise." The Statute of Labourers was confirmed by Parliament in 1340. In 1377 events had developed and a deadlock was created. We are told "that villeins and land tenants in villeinage who owed services and customs to their lords, due as well of their body as of their tenures, and will not suffer any distress or other justice to be made upon them but do menace the ministers of the lords of life and member and what more is gather themselves together in great routs and agree by such confederacy that every one shall aid to resist their lord." This united front culminated in 1379 in the Peasants' Revolt because "they would have serfdom abolished, they would have land for fourpence instead of sixpence and tenpence per rod, they would have freedom to buy and sell where they please and not at their lord's pleasure."

These men of England at that date not only burnt Court rolls which established their bondage, but also had a way of making short work of the lawyers.

From this period and the following period of the War of the Roses a further extension of tenant farming took place, and, as Mr. Prothero says, "When the struggle ended a new world began to piece itself together. Accepting the coming spirit of the age, agriculture reorganised itself on a money basis and two classes emerge in prominence, capitalist tenant farmers and free but landless labourers" ("English Farming Past and Present.") The development of sheep farming and wool being in increasing demand, the period of enclosures and evictions commenced. In his book "The History of the English Agricultural Labourer," Prof. Hasbach says, "Manorial lords aimed at the obtaining the use of larger areas and therefore at driving out the population settled on their lands. Enclosures and evictions began."

The plunder of the church lands by Henry the Eighth, and the division of the spoils by the ancestors of our modern aristocracy makes interesting reading. As a matter of fact, the whole of our aristocracy are land thieves in the most literal sense of the word. The idea that some of them came over with William the Conqueror and got their lands by right of the sword is mere fancy. John Russell, the head of the Bedford family, obtained from Henry VIII and the boy king Edward VI (from the latter by means of a forged clause in Henry VIII's will) 87,427 acres of church land in various counties besides Covent Garden Markets and the Bloomsbury Estate. Grosvenor, the head of the Westminsters, obtained in the same way 19,749 acres in four counties besides the London estate. The first Cavendish grabbed no less than, 199,891 acres in eleven English and three Irish counties. Cecil, the "Spider," secured 10,122 acres of church lands in seven counties, and so on.

There is scarcely an aristocratic landlord whose noble pedigree goes back to the sixteenth century who does not have in his possession some portion of former church lands. Few parishes were without guild lands from which the aged and poor were nourished, till, on the plea that they were devoted to superstitious uses they were stolen, under an Act of Parliament by Protector Somerset.

Thorold Rogers throws a bright light on the Northumberland of that date in his "Economic Interpretation of History." He says: "By a political law that in such a time the greatest villain gets the mastery, Northumberland got Somerset out of the way and for a time seemed master. He was on the point of dismembering England and creating for himself a principality or kingdom north of the Trent when Edward died, and the angry and impoverished labourers rallied to Mary Tudor, and Northumberland fell. On the scaffold he added one more vice to his catalogue, for he pretended to repent; but he was so bad a man that it may be doubted whether hypocrisy could have made him worse."

When the enclosures of the eighteenth century began only half of England was under cultivation, and three-fifths of that was farmed on the common field system. Within 120 years, from 1760 to 1879, over 10,000,000 acres were enclosed. Muthall's "Dictionary of Statistics" gives the following figures:—

1760 to 1800	3,221,000 acres
1801 to 1829	3,380,000 acres
1830 to 1869	2,217,000 acres
1870 to 1879	1,687,000 acres
Total	10,505,000 acres

It is very necessary for us to remember the above historical facts regarding the seizure of the land through the violent methods of the land-holding class. As the British constitution is built upon a series of historical precedents the workers and peasants of this country could do no better than follow the well-known and time-honoured methods adopted by the landed propertied interests. We shall hear much talk, very soon, about questions of buying out the landlords. History supplies us with the answer—our duty to the masses of Britain demands the expropriation of the expropriators. Expropriation would in reality be an act of restitution.

It was said at the time, and is still being repeated by historians, that the "enclosures" (as land-grabbing is euphemistically called)

were necessary in the interests of agriculture inasmuch as the lands were mere wastes. Apart from the curious identification of the interests of agriculture with those of the landlords, could the same argument not be applied to-day to the highlands of Scotland and sporting lands of England? Farming prospered during the early Victorian era, as anyone can see by the large farmhouses and the massive rural tombstones in the village churchyards; but there has been little progress from the high standard of farming of the 'fifties. The introduction of the commercial system of leasehold farming, in comparatively small holdings, permitted the improvement of agriculture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but freehold tenure by the actual cultivator was unheard of except in a few districts such as Cumberland.

In the twenty years, from 1881 to 1901, a considerable change took place in the agricultural industry. Witness, for example, the reduction of the agricultural population by 22½ per cent.. The sole cause of this decrease was due to the land going out of cultivation into pasture, and apart from the brief period during the war, when necessity compelled an extension of agriculture, the decline has continued. The main factor has been the private ownership of land and the power of the landowner to exact an individual tribute. Even Lord Bledisloe told the British Association, agricultural section, "Most landowners have been for the last two generations mere rent receivers and have possessed neither the knowledge nor inclination personally to administer their own estates, still less to cultivate them on commercial lines for their own and the nation's benefit. So far as they have been organised as a class of the community they have been organised not as producers of wealth but as defenders of property."

What is wrong with agriculture to-day is that it is burdened with a parasitic landowning class, and a body of farmers who are prehistoric in their ideas of farming. The farmers, pressed on all sides by rack-renting owners, sharp middlemen; pressed by the big banking interests to whom some have become indebted, owing to the landowners putting their land in the markets, and, finally, the rising of the agricultural proletariat who demanded a decent standard of life. The farmers struck out viciously at the labourers and allowed the land to go out of cultivation, thereby intensifying the decay of agriculture.

Not only does this serious state of matters mean that the people of this country have become dangerously dependent on food grown abroad, but the physique of the population is deteriorating as a result of rural depopulation and the congested areas of the towns. There is no country in Europe where the proportion of labour on the land is as low as in Britain. The numbers employed on a hundred acres of cultivated land are as follows:—

Great Britain	4.5 persons
Denmark	7.0 "
France	10.0 "
Belgium	16.0 "
Germany	18.0 "

Farm population tends steadily to decrease, farm production and marketing tend further to become dominated by wealthy farmers and big capital and bankers. For the agricultural workers and the small farmers this means increasing poverty, imperialism, and war. This

is all that the present system seems to offer the peasant and the small farmer.

To sum up. We see in the history of agriculture that a very similar development has taken place to that which took place in industry. The success of industrial capitalism was only possible by tearing from the independent artisans their control over the tools of production and by submitting them to the most unheard of exploitation. Industrialism, with its lock-outs, strikes, unemployment, etc., is rapidly reducing the productive process to chaos. The same tendencies are inherent in capitalist agriculture. There the independent peasant workers were deprived of the natural means of subsistence through a series of violent acts of spoliation such as enclosures, etc., and compelled to become the peasant wage-slaves of the landowning class. There the class struggle takes place over wages, hours, etc., and there the clash of interests, coupled with the insatiable greed of the propertied interests, are reducing agriculture to impotence. The class struggle is inseparable from the private control of land and capital. Thus the class interest of the agricultural workers and industrial artisans is identical. When the agricultural masses are struggling against their masters they are met with the whole force of the political and industrial power of the propertied interests. These same interests show a solid front when the industrial workers seek to improve their lot. The immediate task of the British Labour movement is to close up the gap which at present separates the agricultural and industrial workers. A united front, extending from the town to the village, must be organised. And beneath its banner must be enrolled the whole of the toiling masses to fight to attain a Workers' and Peasants' Government.

The rallying cry of the Communist Party is: "The workshop for the workers and the land for the peasantry. All power to the toiling masses!"

ECONOMICS OF AGRICULTURE.

In dealing with the economic basis of the industry we shall summarise the resources at our disposal and thereby analyse the problems to be faced. We shall also deal with land and population, acreage and yields over a period of years (with the corresponding increasing dependency on imported grain), rents and profits from landowning and farming and their corresponding relation to wages and conditions of agricultural workers. The changes which were responsible for the predominance of the town over the country are revealed in the percentage of Urban and Rural population from the period of the industrial revolution to 1921.

Year	1760	1861	1871	1881	1891	1921
Urban Population	54.6	62.3	64.8	66.6	71.7	77.7
Rural	46.4	37.7	35.2	33.4	28.3	22.3

The official returns of the numbers of persons engaged in agriculture from 1851 to 1921 also show the decline and decreasing number of land workers:—

Year.	No. of persons engaged in agriculture.	No. of agricultural workers and shepherds.
1851	3,453,500	1,110,311
1861	3,080,500	1,098,261
1871	2,744,000	923,332
1881	2,573,900	830,452

1891	2,394,500	756,557
1901	2,262,600	609,105
1911	1,487,587	*665,258

(Great Britain only).

The acreage and principal crops over a period also show a marked decline corresponding with the rural population. The decrease in cereals is instructive, in relation to foreign grain, as shown in the table of imports of wheat and wheat flour over the same period.

AVERAGE OF CEREAL CROPS IN UNITED KINGDOM.

	Year.	Wheat.	Barley.	Oats.	Authority.
Acreage in	1812	3,160,000	860,000	2,870,000	Coomber.
	1820	3,300,000	900,000	3,000,000	Middleton.
	1831	3,800,000	900,000	3,000,000	McCulloch.
	1846	3,800,000	1,500,000	2,500,000	McCulloch.
	1871	3,831,054	2,616,965	4,362,139	Official.
	1881	2,967,059	2,662,927	4,306,391	„
	1891	2,391,721	2,298,998	4,129,048	„
Great Britain only.	1901	1,746,155	2,140,908	4,112,297	„
	1913	1,701,588	1,797,000	2,974,700	Ireland
	1918	2,556,661	1,654,000	2,780,068	not included.
U.K.	1922	1,966,917	1,607,000	2,163,965	
Figures.	1918	2,793,000	1,839,000	5,604,000	

Home grown grain in relation to imports are shown in the following table in millions of bushels and the percentage imported:—

Years.	Home grown.	Imported.	Total.	Percentage imported.
1831-40	408	8	416	2
1841-50	400	31	431	7
1851-60	390	78	468	17
1861-70	388	126	514	24
1871-80	340	226	566	40
1881-90	320	275	592	45

The following figures show millions of cwts. of imported wheat, grain, and wheat-meal and flour:—

Year.	Total imports.	
1875	58,012,600	
1895	84,060,380	
1900	90,217,621	Note the effect of the war and its relation to the period prior to the excessive decline in agriculture.
1905	109,737,263	
1910	115,183,129	
1918	57,889,000	
1919	71,362,000	
1920	109,277,000	

Sir John B. Lawes, whose estimate of crops which were published in the "Times," said that during the eight harvest years 1853-60 nearly three-fourths of the aggregate amount of wheat that was consumed was home-grown, but twenty-five years later the figures were almost reversed. That is during the years 1879-1886 when little more than one-third was provided by home crops and nearly two-thirds by imports. Neither the increase of population, 8,000,000, nor the increased consumption of wheat by six-tenths of a bushel per head

* Including Bailiffs and Foremen.

could account for the change. It in reality meant the reduction in area of wheat grown by 1,590,000 acres.

The figures given by Sir J. B. Lawes are as follows:—

			Crop.
1853-60	Acreage under wheat	4,092,160 acres.	14,310,779 qrs.
1884-87	Acreage under wheat	2,509,055 acres.	9,198,956 qrs.
1922	Acreage under wheat	1,966,917 acres.	7,664,000 qrs.

Now let us deal with that section of the community who has made us trespassers on the land of our birth, the landlords. If the following figures do not state sufficiently clear the necessity of a Workers' and Peasants' Government we should feel inclined to join the I.L.P. and strengthen the claim of Mr. Snowden to compensate the unfortunate landlords. The following is the rental of agricultural land in England and Scotland at various dates:—

Year.	England.	Scotland.	Authority.
1544	£1,500,000	—	Hayden.
1600	£6,000,000	—	Hayden.
1660	£8,500,000	—	Colbert.
1688	£10,000,000	—	King and Petty.
1729	£12,700,000	£800,000	Brown.
1776	£16,000,000	£1,100,000	Young.
1800	£22,000,000	£2,100,000	Newenhan.
1815	£34,330,000	£5,075,000	McCullock.
1843	£40,170,000	£5,590,000	Official.
1860	£42,999,000	£6,280,000	"
1870	£47,800,000	£7,190,000	"
1880	£51,800,000	£7,770,000	"
1890	£44,470,000	£6,820,000	"
	Returns for		
1918	both countries.	£51,980,000	"

Mulhall, in his "Dictionary of Statistics," cites one glaring example of increase of rent, the farm of "One Ash Grange," Derbyshire, belonging to the Duke of Devonshire, which in 120 years had its rent quadrupled as follows:—

1769	Rental	£190
1788	"	£242
1810	"	£440
1855	"	£610
1876	"	£700
1888	"	£900

But who are they that get all this plunder? Mr. Lloyd George, during his campaign against the dukes, said there were about 10,000 of them. We are not personally acquainted with them, but here is some of them whose acquaintance we made in the "Socialist Annual" in a table which is referred to as a modern Domesday Book:—

28 Dukes hold between them	3,991,881 acres;
33 Marquises hold between them	1,567,227 acres;
194 Earls hold between them	5,864,118 acres and
270 Lords hold between them	3,780,000 acres.
525 Aristocrats hold between them	15,203,226 acres.

And this is out of a total acreage, for Great Britain and Ireland, of 76,000,000 acres. Remember the recruiting poster, 1914: "It's a grand country, why not fight for it." Well, why not? c

“ To use a gardening phrase our social and economic system is root-bound by the feudal system. It has no room to develop, but its roots are breaking through. Well, let's burst it.”

The above quotation is not from Lenin, but was used by Lloyd George, speaking at Aberdeen, November 29th, 1912.

There are also the profits assessed on the occupation of lands where also the corresponding increase of plunder is shown:—

1843	£95,284,497
1855	£124,871,885
1901-2	£238,231,937
1908-19	£387,699,057

Mr. McKinnon Wood estimated that the increased profits of the farmers during the period of the war exceeded £200,000,000 and correspondingly with the increase of agricultural produce, the tithes collected by the established clergy were also augmented. No doubt that was one of the reasons why Christ's servants blessed the guns during 1914-18.

Even now the farmers' "big losses" that are filling the Press are not borne out by facts. The Bankruptcy Court figures for 1921 were 203, in 1922, were 287, figures actually below the four years of 1911-1914, and it is quite evident the farmer's motor-car is still prominent on market day.

There is no doubt that the throwing of land on the market has compelled a large number of farmers to become owners and with the falling prices of agricultural produce during the last two years, their indebtedness to the financiers and banks is cutting not only into their profits but also their capital. Mr. C. S. Orwin, M.A., director of the Oxford School of Rural Economy, says that while only one farmer in nine was an owner-occupier in 1913, the relation had changed in 1921 to one in six. In his estimate of 1922, dealing with price levels of agricultural produce, he pointed out that taking all farm produce, the price levels of 1922 were 63 per cent. over the price levels of 1911-13.—(“Yorkshire Post” supplement.)

The above quotation, when applied to the wages of the agricultural worker, does not bear out the necessity for the drastic reductions which have been imposed.

The estimated capital value of the agricultural industry and products, with production per head of population engaged, is as follows:—

Year.	Capital.	Value of production.	Production per head of agricultural population
1840	£1,968,000,000	£218,000,000	£65
1887	£2,287,000,000	£251,000,000	£97

Average wages per worker per year, 1840—£23.

Average wages per worker per year, 1887—£28 10s.

That the deplorable wages paid to agricultural workers to-day are quite in accordance with the past practice of the farmers is clearly shown in the following table of pre-war and post-war wages. The pre-war figures are compiled from Appendix X, of Mr. R. E. Prothero's book “English Farming Past and Present,”

Average weekly earnings of ordinary agricultural labourers.

1837	1845	1860	1870	1882	1892	1898	1910
10/3½	9/4½	11/6½	12/4½	14/2	13/5½	14/8	15/2½
Post-war wages.				1920	1923		
Average				50/-	27/6		

An article on the farm workers strike which appeared in "The Worker" (April 7th, 1923), summarised the position in a vigorous manner when the Editor wrote: "Nowhere in the world is there a landowning class so utterly useless and reactionary as the British landowners. Nowhere is there a farm class so impervious to new ideas as the British farmer. If ever there was a clear case against private enterprise on account of gross inefficiency, it is to be found in the agricultural industry to-day." He quotes Lord Bledisloe with regard to the efficiency of the farmers in the sphere of production: "Owing to the lack of enterprise and to the non-utilisation of scientific discovery, the number of persons fed from 100 acres of cultivated land in Britain prior to the war fell far short of those fed from the same area in Germany, while the average crop yields of Great Britain have for a generation been below those of Belgium and Denmark, although none of those can boast of a soil and climate more conducive to agricultural productivity. The same British acreage could well be made to produce at least twice the present output of human and animal food." Then again in relation to the farmers inefficiency in marketing, the same authority says: "There is probably no worse consequence of the lack of cohesion, organisation and leadership in British agriculture than the extent and power of the middleman interest—unparalleled elsewhere in the civilised world, whose parasitic tentacles have slowly yet surely fastened themselves on the industry to the detriment of producer and consumer alike. It is largely a horizontal interest of useless speculators and not a vertical interest of helpful distributors, while it thrives the industry decays."

Instances of this are given in relation to farmers selling grain to millers at a relatively low price and then buying back from the same source the residual offals for feeding purposes at a higher price than that paid to them for the whole grain.

The interim report published by the Stationary Office of the committee appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, last December, throws important light on this subject. Among the points made in the report are:—

(1) Occasionally the services, costs and profits of as many as six intermediaries may be interposed between the grower and the consumer. At each stage the produce is handled two or three times by porters or railway employees, making in some cases as many as 16 to 20 different handlings.

After this damning admission the committee does not think that the problem can be satisfactorily met by the grower supplying the consumers direct.

(2) West End shop profits averaged 300 to 100 per cent. 56 per cent. in middle class shops, and 43 per cent. in cheap market or street barrows.

(3) The close of the report is as follows: "The best hope of the future lies with the industry itself. Producers must realise that marketing is the other half of production. They

must make it their business to increase their knowledge of market conditions and requirements in order to dispose of their produce. Distributors, for their part, must make every effort to eliminate archaic methods and to enhance the efficiency of the general distributive system."

Capitalism, according to its great exponent, Sir A. Mond, means efficiency; just think of the agricultural industry and the committee of experts reports!

The development of large scale capital since the close of the war has greatly been accelerated in connection with food supplies.

Along such lines Aplin and Barrett and the Western Counties Creameries, Ltd., acquired many cheese factories for the supply of their customers in the retail grocery trade. In the fruit industry Crosse and Blackwell, not satisfied with owning or controlling James Keiller and Sons and Lazenby and Son, raised £2,500,000 new capital and obtained possession of Batger and Co. and A. Cairns and Sons, thus giving them a large influence in settling prices as well as controlling production.

This was followed by E. and T. Pink and Plaistowe (Proprietary), Ltd., whose sales of jam exceeded 24,000 tons in 1920.

Another notable combination dealing with the food supply of the people was the Fruit and Produce Exchange of Great Britain—an amalgamation of nine firms who did an agency or commission business aggregating £1,427,000 per annum. This was issued with a capital of £1,250,000, and there was a prospect of others firms joining the combination.

Harris (Calne) and the General Produce Company is a new combination of half a dozen bacon and produce houses with a capital of £2,500,000.

Firms engaged in milling are becoming few in number and greater in power. Mr. Joseph Rank's activities now extend beyond his mills at Liverpool, interests having been acquired in mills at Birkenhead, Edinburgh and Selby; in similar fashion Spillers Associated Industries have been linked with W. Vernon and Sons, the Liverpool flour millers.

In every avenue of food supplies creameries, cheese, and bacon factories, fruit farming, and milling, large scale production and big business is dominant. In the control of auction marts, pedigree stock, capital is becoming more cohesive, and with the elimination of competition now dominates not only the farmer-producer, but also the distributor and consumers. Landlordism and capitalism are the factors which prevent the utilisation of the land and its products by the mass of workers, agricultural and industrial. The only alternative to the present system which must replace it, as the present system increasingly breaks down and the workers awaken to a sense of their robbery and power, is Communist production, which will mean a rational organisation of labour. The abolition of wasteful and useless production, of duplication of labour, of armies of salesmen, middlemen, advertisers, stockdealers and parasites, and of unemployment, will mean a sensible division of work to be done among all and an immense lightening of labour for the mass of mankind.

And we must not forget that the agrarian question is not merely one of agriculture. It is, as the experiences of Soviet Russia have clearly demonstrated, a problem closely connected to transport and

engineering, etc.; it is only a part of the bigger problem of social reconstruction.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS AND FIRST STEPS.

One of the most important tasks must be that of creating a solid organisation of rural workers linked up directly with the unions of the industrial proletariat. This, indeed, is the first and most essential step in tackling any aspect of the agrarian question. All schemes and ideas relating to the reconstruction of agriculture must remain mere theories and abstractions unless concretely related to and operated by a powerful union of all rural workers working hand in hand with all the powerful industrial organisations of the masses. The deplorable condition of the agricultural workers and their unions is mainly due to the ineffectual methods of organisation. These are broken and split up among the National Agricultural and Rural Workers, which has branches in England and Wales. There are agricultural labourers in the Workers' Union, in the Dockers' Union, Union of Municipal Employees, National Union of Gas Workers, and even in the Union of Co-operative Workers. And in the North there is the Scottish Workers and Farm Servants' Union.

The Labour movement has made little or no attempt to bridge the gap that separates the rural from the industrial worker. That such a gap even existed is a sad reflection upon the petty nature and sectional outlook of trade unionism. The scattered nature of the agricultural worker's job is only an additional reason why greater efforts should have been made, and must be made in the future, to organise them in the most efficient manner. Even to-day the "Back to the Union" campaign is, practically speaking, neglecting the rural areas. The farm labourers, since their recent betrayal at the hands of Mr. J. R. MacDonald, are in no enthusiastic mood to listen to moderate Labourists expounding the virtues of trade unionism. Mr. MacDonald, as the leader of the I.L.P., by his disastrous intervention in the recent strike, has made it very difficult for the I.L.P. to gain the ear, far less the confidence, of the peasant workers. It is all very well for I.L.P. leaders to air their theories on agricultural reconstruction at summer schools or in other spheres away from the actualities of the peasant's life—the one cruel fact remains that at a most critical moment in the class struggle, when the labourers were in open combat with their masters, it was an I.L.P. leader who betrayed them and who transformed a victorious onslaught into a most shattering debacle. The Communist Party must do its very utmost to repair the havoc which Mr. MacDonald's action has created. We must pay very close attention to the rural districts and carry on special agitations there. We must utilise every weapon in the Labour movement to bring the country workers to our side. We can, by using to its fullest degree the machinery of the Trade Union Congress, create a united front of the country and town masses.

We must remember that there are splendid fighters in the country districts to-day. There are thousands of men returned from the war who have learnt much during their absence from the village. These are determined not to endure the old order of things. They know what they want, and given effective leadership, they will get it. Not only on the industrial field, but also on the political field, the power of the organised rural workers could make itself felt. Most of the strikes which have recently occurred in agriculture have been started by local branches on their own initiative. These have been stifled

because the officials have thought that such ill-considered acts will create havoc in the Unions. In order to win over the rural workers to our side we must organise special missions from the large industrial centres to the rural towns and villages to carry on propaganda, spread our literature and our papers, and thus create a link between the industrial and rural workers. During the summer we could have group rambles to the countryside; these could be developed into meetings on the village green, and there are no lack of subjects on which a speaker could deal; for instance, trade union organisation, the eight-hour day (which has now been lost), the minimum wage, the tied cottage, access to the land and small holdings, the game laws. While these questions do not represent the ultimate aims of the C.P. we must remember that these are important to the rural workers and also that the existing basis of society is neither prepared nor able to grant even the most elementary standard of living, nor grant anything which would tend to ease the lot of the worker. The rural worker is little influenced by abstract ideas, but the concrete needs of his daily life are food, clothing, and shelter. The rural workers and their wives require an immediate alleviation of their present conditions. An all-sided extensive development of activity and initiative on the part of the C.P. to help the rural worker in every way should tend to make the road to power a great deal smoother and will prevent him from being used as a bulwark of capitalism against the rising proletariat. Mr. MacDonald's betrayal of the farm labourers is the sort of thing that plays into the hands of the reactionaries by turning these workers against the Labour movement. It should be our work to make the inevitable breakdown of capitalism clear to the rural worker before, and not after, they have been driven down to a lower standard; and by struggling for them they will be our friends and comrades when it does occur. They will respect you both for your foresight and your interest during their daily struggle. The ruling class are losing no opportunity for propaganda in the village. The development of rural clubs and institutes for men and women is proceeding apace to bulldoze and dope their minds. Here again we see the urgent and immediate need of a connecting link between the rural and industrial workers, and that link can be created through the C.P. Why this is so necessary is seen by the united forces of reaction which are piling up formidable obstacles in our path. We must therefore make preparations not merely to storm the capitalist stronghold but to wield power after we have occupied it. That is why the organisation of the agricultural workers is one of the tasks of the party.

The success of Soviet Russia has been due to the clearness and soundness of their policy in relation to the peasantry. The work of the Russian Party, prior to the revolution, in the little village circle studying the problems facing them and their relationship with the town workers were cemented through the Communist workers' paper, *Pravda*. "In spite of all that the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did to dissuade the peasants pointing out the lawlessness of such an action and saying that the whole thing would be useless and result only in bloodshed and so on) the peasants, in spite of everything, took the land, and the Bolsheviks helped them to do it." (Bucharin.)

So also in this country we shall find the reformist elements, the heroes of the 2nd International, with their high-sounding phrases, only repulsive assistants of reaction. The I.L.P. settlement of the Norfolk strike, where over 1,000 organised workers have been sacrificed; the

8-hour day, the Wages Board, are all examples of the betrayal of the workers. We can well understand a woman delegate from North Bucks who, amid applause, declared, "It is a disgrace that the land-workers have been forced to accept such a settlement. If the Labour Party political leaders cannot make better terms than they have in Norfolk, they ought to stand out of industrial disputes. That is a job for landowners and captains of industry and farmers, not labour leaders. It is not good enough that we should have our leader doing this, and a few days later showing his appreciation of a riot of waste and extravagance and the spirit of flunkeydom by attending the Royal wedding." That expresses in reality the feeling in agricultural districts against Mr. MacDonald's paper settlement. The ground is ready for an intensive campaign with the 1921 National Minimum, National Agreement, and 8-Hours Day as the immediate objective.

The most efficient, the best and only way that we can do our part at the present time is to place within the reach of every agricultural worker our papers. Nearly every week there is news from the agricultural workers' battlefield and possibly the arrangement of meetings in rural areas would tend to attract attention to the part that the party are prepared to assist in the building up of a stronger and more united organisation of rural workers. The stimulation of correspondence from rural districts would thereby be accelerated by linking up the scattered forces of the rural workers, stimulating their will to fight, and supporting their struggles by bringing into it the forces of the industrial proletariat.

A continual and favourable change is occurring in the psychology of the rural workers, so everyone will see the need of considering this large group of workers, who will, in the near future, realise that they are a part of the working class. We must show them that only as a united class can they advance. Let one of our aims be that some of the next 100,000 of the **Workers' Weekly** circulation be devoted to the rural areas so that we can make clear to the agricultural workers that they can only be freed from their present servitude and from want, which are inevitable under capitalism, by a proletarian revolution. Only by uniting all the revolutionary forces of city and village against the capitalist offensive can it be successfully resisted.

The tasks of the **Workers' and Peasants' Government** in the development of the agricultural resources will be the provision of the most improved instruments which will attain the maximum of production indicated by the progress of science, thereby saving energy by the utilisation of machinery in tilling the soil and reaping its harvest. The reclaiming of land by irrigation and drainage, the fertilising of areas now sterile; improving the quality and increasing the quantity of grain by continuous selection of seeds, and also by the development of education in research work.

Improved farming means more enterprise and knowledge, and organised large-scale farming supports more people than the workers actually employed on the land. One farm of 1,000 acres could be cultivated by twenty men to produce as much food as if it were divided up and made to carry 200 men on five acres apiece. There is no lack of evidence that this can be done. The means by which such large-scale farming can be prevented from mere grinding labour is by utilising to the full all the resources of science, machinery and organisation. That it is possible to increase the production of this country not only by improving the methods of existing cultivators but also by extending the area under cultivation was well demon-

stated by Sir A. D. Hall in his presidential addresses to the British Association at Adelaide and Brisbane, Australia, in 1914. He said: "In England the average yield of wheat is 32 bushels to the acre: a good farmer expects 40. The average yield of mangolds is 20 tons per acre, a crop more dependent on cultivation, when twice as much will not be out of the way with good farming. A large proportion of the moderate land of England is kept in a state of poor grass; even as grass its production might be doubled by suitable manuring and careful management, while under the plough its production of cattle food might easily be trebled or quadrupled." Dealing with the reclamation of moorlands and wastes, the same authority says: "In England there exists extensive tracts of uncultivated moorland in close proximity to considerable populations, but the process of reclaiming such land for agriculture seems to have come to an abrupt conclusion somewhere about 1850, when the developing industries of the country began to offer greater returns for capital than agriculture.

The examples of land which he refers to are the Bagshot sands of North Surrey, Berkshire and Hampshire; also in the New Forest there are many thousands of acres of uncultivated heath. In Dorset, Suffolk and Norfolk, the Midlands, and the Highlands of Scotland lie many expanses of waste that are convertible into good farming land. He also impressed the need for afforestation and land reclamation going together, and is of the opinion that the reclamation of these heath lands would be a sound commercial venture for the State. The reclamation of heath and peat lands has now become feasible through the application of science, the knowledge and functions of fertilisers, the industrial developments which have given us basic slag and potash salts, and the knowledge of fertility that can be gained by the growth of leguminous plants. The development of research work is of such an importance that money well expended on it returns a hundredfold. In this country we have lagged behind other countries in the application of scientific methods to agriculture. But there is one outstanding exception. Rothamsted, the pioneer and most famous of our research stations, has demonstrated the value of research work. In 1910 the Development Commission came into being and drew up a scheme for the development of agricultural research, but since the period of 1921 the grants have been seriously curtailed. Further, by selective breeding we have evolved types of animals with abnormal powers of production; for example, 2,000-gallon cows, 300-egg hens, and early maturity calves, lambs, and pigs. From the point of view of public health, nutrition is almost a primary question. Recent research has shown that fresh meat, eggs, butter and milk would lead to a decrease in the present high rate of infant mortality and would lead to the rearing of healthier children. It would be cheaper for the people to produce more milk than to build more children's hospitals. The general effects of the application of science to agriculture are, of course, too numerous to be specified here. Besides producing food in greater abundance, the improved system of farming would improve the condition of the agricultural workers. This would be attended with better housing and food than obtains at present with the unhealthy tied cottage and low standard of life.

By passing from the defensive to the offensive the final victory will be won. Then the creative forces lying dormant in the ranks of the industrial and rural proletariat will be able to develop communal production in industry and agriculture to the fullest extent.

2. FISHING INDUSTRY & FOOD SUPPLY BY JAMES JOHNSTONE.

The following important article has been specially written for the "Communist Review" by one of the greatest authorities on the fishing industry in this country. As on the Agrarian question so here we have the solemn warning that the continuance of Capitalism means chaos in an important industry dealing exclusively with food supplies. The writer shows that nationalisation is useless unless backed up by the resolute power of a Workers' Government prepared to revolutionise the whole organisation and administration of the industry.

THE METHODS OF FISHING.

FIRST of all let the distinction between the "deep sea" and the inshore branches of the industry be clearly understood: the former kind of fishing includes trawling from the steam-driven vessels and the sailing "smacks"; long-lining, both from sailing and power vessels and drifting, from steam and motor-driven vessels as well as from the familiar "luggers." Inshore fishing includes trawling in relatively shallow waters, fishing by drift-nets, seine nets and lines, all from small open or half-decked boats propelled by sails. It also includes a multitude of long-shore methods such as set nets on the foreshore, traps, weirs, fishing by lobster and crab pots, shell-fish gathering, etc. The distinction is economic. Prior to the war an inshore, half-decked cutter-rigged trawler might cost about £250; a smack might cost about £2,000 and a steam trawler could cost from £7,000 to £8,000. Therefore the inshore men have always been individualists; typically the smacks and herring drifters were owned by partnerships, while the steam trawlers and drifters were the property of large or small limited liability companies.

THE PROGRESS OF INDUSTRIALISATION.

Smacking culminated about 1870 and by that time the deep-sea industry was beginning to become industrialised in that ownership by the men who worked the vessels was yielding to ownership by small or large capitalists. Companies owned fleets of vessels. Between the '70's and '90's of last century the modern steam trawler was developed, from engined smacks to the specialised ships that we see to-day. Since the '90's the smacks have steadily decreased and the steam trawlers and drifters have increased. Before the war internal-combustion engines were introduced into the smaller vessels and steam capstans for working the sails and nets were introduced into the smacks and herring drifters that still used sails. All the time the inshore fishing industry has steadily gone back—a decline traceable to several independent causes.

THE SLUMP AFTER THE WAR.

Just before the war the steam trawling industry had become that on which the public fish supply practically depended. It had also become industrialised to the extent that most of the vessels (between three and four thousand) were owned by public companies. The industry was, however, peculiar in several respects—notably, in that the system of payment by shares in the catches made still survived. The tendency to-day is towards the ordinary method of pay-

ment. The skipper is paid by shares but the deck hands, engineers, and stokers are practically on weekly wages.

Before the war the steam trawling industry was not in a good way. There is little doubt that it was over-capitalised. Its efficiency was so great that there was, even then, difficulty in finding markets for the fish caught, and during the years 1911-14 there was an active, trade, fish-as-food propaganda. The war, while it lasted, destroyed the export trade, but it absorbed practically all the newer steam trawlers and drifters, with their crews, into the Auxiliary Naval Services. Thus the supply of fish was largely diminished and, at the same time, the scarcity of meat increased the demand. Big profits were made during the years 1915-18. During 1919-20 the ships taken over by the Admiralty were handed back to the owners and reconditioned for fishing and in these, and subsequent years many vessels built during the war period by the Government were sold and fitted out for fishing. During 1920 and 1921 the production had gone back to practically the pre-war values.

The British sea fishing industry has always depended, to a large extent, on an export trade. About half of all the fish landed were herrings and about half of all the herrings landed were cured and exported—mainly to Russia and Germany. A large quantity of cod, ling and sprats were also cured and exported, and there was even a considerable trade in exported fresh fish. The war conditions stopped all this and political reasons kept the Russian and German markets closed after peace was made. Now that there is nominal freedom to export, the economic conditions of Russia and Germany have made the privilege of little practical value. Other causes, to which I refer presently, have played havoc with the home markets. Even in 1913, the fishing industry was not in the best of circumstances; in 1919 and 1920 there was a boom, but from 1921 the condition of the trade has been one of unprecedented depression.

COSTS OF PRODUCTION IN 1922.

Why? The figures that I am about to give will disclose the reason and, at the same time, suggest in what ways a Communist Government may be expected to set about reorganising the industry. I give these figures without the formal permission of the people from whom I obtained them and without any apology. It is, at last, evident to anyone who thinks about the matter, and quite irrespective of his opinions on social reorganisation, that not only the fishermen but also all those engaged in production are being exploited by the pure traders—that is, men who are, to a great extent, engaged in quite unnecessary services.

Four up-to-date steam trawlers, managed and worked in a highly efficient manner, landed in 1921 24,598 boxes of fish, that is, about 3,788,000 lbs. in all. These fish were hake, cod, haddock, whiting, plaice, soles, skates and rays, witches, turbot, etc., but not (to any marked degree) herrings. The catches thus represent what one sees in the average fish-shops.

The total expenses incurred in catching, landing, and selling these fish at the home port were as follows:—

Coal was	31.78%	of the total.
Sharemen, poundage and weekly hands	24.28	„ „ „
Ice, provisions, nets, gear and stores ...	21.02	„ „ „
Repairs and Dockage	13.33	„ „ „

Insurance, depreciation, stage expenses, supert. engineers	7.28 of the total
Establishment and administration	2.31 ,, ,, ,,

The fish sold at the fish-dock, for an average price of 3.20d. per lb., and the cost of selling—that is, the commissions of the salesmen and the provision of the boxes in which the fish were packed, amounted to 0.19d. per lb. Making this deduction the net earnings of the company, in respect of the catches of these four vessels was 3.01d. per lb.

The total costs of catching the fish, as stated above, came to 2.95d. per lb. Deducting this from the net earnings we get a profit of 0.06d. per lb.

Now think about this result. Ships are built, equipped, provisioned, insured and sent to sea. Depreciation is allowed for. Establishment Charges are met. Shares, poundage and wages are paid. Men go to sea and engage in an occupation that is full of danger and abounds with all sorts of personal discomforts. They see their homes and families for one day in the week, at the very oftenest. Even during the war, when there were serious risks to life, other than those of the sea, the total earnings of the deck-hands were about £6 a week, and they are very much less now. And when all this is done the fish sell for about 3d. per lb. and a profit of 6-100ths of a penny in the lb. is made.

Perhaps it might cost about 1½d. per lb. to carry the fish from the port of landing to the wholesale fishmarkets, pay the necessary cartage and the commission of the market salesmen. That is, a retail fish buyer ought to place these fish in his shop for about 4½d. per lb. on the average—and in many cases much less.

During the year 1921 we may take the price of trawl-caught fish, as it was exposed for sale in the retail shops, at about 9d. per lb. Readers can check this statement from their own recollections: I don't think it is an exaggeration. Then we get the result:—

It cost about 4½d. per lb., at the most, to catch the fish and place it on the wholesale fish markets. Then it cost at least another 4½d. to take it from the wholesale markets to the consumers' kitchens.

Big companies built and equipped ships and sent them, perhaps, to the White Sea or to Iceland to catch fish. They sold this fish for about 3d. per lb. and made a profit of a few hundredths of a penny per lb.

Fishermen who endured personal danger and a hard life earned much less than 1d. per lb. for catching these fish.

The railway companies and carters made about 1½d. per lb. by handling it.

The middlemen and retailers, who took no personal risk whatever made at least 4½d. per lb. out of it.

Here, then, are bare, bald statements which ought to make a brutal and forcible appeal. If men go to sea and catch fish for about 1d. a lb. ought the railway systems to make another 1d. per lb. and the host of parasitic traders who distribute the fish another 4½d. per lb. If these latter costs are really necessary what in our system of food distribution makes them so? An attempt to answer this question will indicate the lines which Communistic reorganisation may be expected to take.

WASTE IN DISTRIBUTION.

Probably no single man knows the multitude of markets, salesmen commission agents, middlemen, and others through whose hands fish that is landed at Grimsby, Hull, Lowestoft, Aberdeen or Fleetwood passes on its way to the consumers. If we interrogate any one person engaged in this business (which, it must be emphasised, is wholly subsidiary, simple, non-technical and safe when compared with the work of catching the fish) we shall certainly find that he makes little out of it. The retailer himself makes little—though it is fairly well known that he prefers to handle a relatively small weight of fish per day in preference to handling, say, double the quantity at about half the price. The railway companies certainly make too much. What we may be very sure about is that a great number of people all make a little for distribution “services,” most of which are unnecessary. An example of pernicious trading was given to me by a fish packer in 1918. During a fortnight 200 cases of this manufacturers’ canned fish were resold nine times. Each time 2 per cent. was added to the value of the goods. All the while they were lying in the same store! About one half of the retailing price of most kinds of sea fish is frittered away in order that middlemen’s profits may be made.

Then there is much waste because fish is a very perishable commodity. But nowadays, even with the existing methods of preservation, the fish is landed from the big steam trawlers in fairly good condition and there are harmless antiseptic ices on the market which would immensely improve the quality. Once landed the railway companies carry the fish very much as if it were coal—this is not an exaggeration for I have seen herrings being *shovelled* out from an open truck at a big English railway terminus in full view of the passengers in a London express train. There are no refrigerated fish vans. Given these; the use of antiseptic ice on the trawlers; sufficient cold storage to take temporary gluts of fish; brine-freezing of the more expensive kinds, and cutting out the unnecessary handling of the produce between the ports of landing and the retailers and the loss due to decomposition could be reduced to an enormous extent. It is quite hopeless to urge these measures at the present time: even the slight additional cost of the antiseptic over the ordinary ice is probably impossible in the light of our previous statements; much pressure has been brought to bear on the railway companies to provide refrigerated vans but they have successfully resisted this pressure. It is nobody’s business to set up cold storage. It is everybody’s business to handle the fish, taking the “risk” of its going bad, because the prices that the consumers pay bear this risk.

OBsolete MARKETS.

Next take the means of distribution. In very few places in this country are the facilities at the fish docks all that they might be, and at very many places they are extraordinarily bad. One has not space to elaborate this, but it is easy for most readers to see for themselves. Then take the market accommodation. Note the incredible congestion and waste of time at Billingsgate, on the big scale, or the comic fish “market” at Blackburn, on the little scale (one can see this latter instance at comfort from any train leaving Blackburn for the north). It is probably quite impossible to improve these two markets in any material degree under present conditions—the costs would be far more than the productive industry could stand and the

present rates, in neither case, could possibly bear the reconstruction of the old, or the construction of new markets. Under the present system the incentive to enterprise is profit. Why are fish bought and sold at all? Obviously it is because profits can be made and these can be made equally well (and often far more readily) under a bad unnecessarily complex system of distribution than under a simple and direct one. A Communist Government would simply have brutally and forcibly to reconstruct (and duplicate if necessary) fish markets, expropriating land in the interest of the public food supply—otherwise there is no method of improvement, as things are.

A RATIONAL SYSTEM OF DISTRIBUTION.

During the (rather pathetic, because so optimistic) phase of reconstruction in the years 1919-20, the productive fish trade itself (that is, the owners of fishing vessels mainly) elaborated a scheme of distribution from the ports of landing to the great inland markets. The thing was obvious. Round the coasts we have the great fish ports, Aberdeen, Shields, Grimsby, Hull, Lowestoft, Yarmouth, London, Plymouth, Cardiff, Milford, Liverpool, Fleetwood and the Clyde. Between these are a multitude of small ports, rivers, creeks, etc., used by the inshore men, which have to be reorganised in a different way. But the organisation of transport from the bigger ports would certainly be planned out by a Communist Government (as it was by the productive industry in 1920). Round each of these bigger ports there is a certain "Sector" of country, fed (with relation to the port in question) by a certain railway system or systems. Naturally, each port is in easiest communication with a certain group of markets and (again naturally and obviously) these markets would be obliged to draw their fish supplies from their natural port of landing. In this way transport would be simplified and reduced to a routine. The various markets depending on a particular port would be rationed with respect to the quantities of each kind of fish required. There could not possibly be a regular supply at each port but a central Fish Distribution Office would be in telegraphic communication with all the ports, and each port Distribution Officer would be in a wireless communication with all the vessels using his port. Irregularities in supply due to weather conditions, etc., would thus be straightened out, supplies being diverted from their usual routine when necessary. Something like this is, even now, in practice under the Scottish Fishery Board in relation to the herring fishery: there is a regular system of telegraphic communication between the ports.

Clearly, nothing of this kind is possible just now. The system of fish distribution is dominated by the "business" interests of the middle men: it exists, not to supply the public with food as easily and cheaply as possible, but to maintain a multitude of first, second, and third middlemen, commission agents, buyers, etc., and on the uncertainty and complexity of the existing system of distribution these people flourish. This kind of business (unlike the productive side) is unimaginative. It does not seek to innovate or improve, and its spring of action is now profit irrespective of the original purpose for which it was devised. It has resisted the desire for simplification and cheapening of the fish supply in spite of all the reconstructive activity of the immediate post-war years, and it is now so firmly established that obviously it has become impossible to reform it. Everyone in the distributing trades knew of the state of affairs to which I have already referred, yet this year (July of 1923) things

have become much worse. It has been announced that the average selling price of fish at Fleetwood varies between 1d. and 2d. per lb. and the owners contemplate laying up a number of the trawlers. Even those who are indisposed towards a system of Communist production and distribution must now recognise that only a violent break with the conditions of the past can bring about a rational system of supplies.

NATIONALISATION OF THE RAILWAYS AND DOCKS THE KEY.

The key to all the other proposals is, of course, the state ownership and management of the railway systems and docks — and, of course, the public wholesale food markets. Given all this and the reconstruction of the fish distributional services on the lines I have indicated is a small matter. There would be State markets, each of them supplied and rationed from its normal port. There would be controlled and variable retail prices (for the natural conditions of deep-sea fishing are such that the same quantity of product would not always correspond with a particular expenditure of coal, labour, etc.). The whole matter is fairly simple. Now we turn to the question of the production.

THE PORT FISHING SERVICES.

The present tendency—both for the deep sea and the inshore fishing industries—is for each port to become an unit. Note that more and more the deep sea vessels tend to be owned by big companies. Even where there are small companies owning one or two vessels the latter may be managed by one of the big companies (I suppose, though, that the little company still has its Managing and ordinary Directors with their fees). Also the port will contain its own ice-factory, and perhaps refrigerator, its own fish manure and oil factories and other subsidiary enterprises. Separate though these may be in form, one has the well found suspicion that the same capital, owned by the same men, is put into all the main and subsidiary enterprises. Let this tendency proceed a little further and we have each port as a fish-productive unit.

Even now the industry is State-controlled to some extent. There cannot be unrestricted and increasing exploitation of the fishing grounds either within or without the 3-miles limit because the natural productivity is limited and variable from year to year. The present tendency is to make restrictions on methods and seasons of sea fishing and to extend these (by international agreement) to the high-seas grounds. Thus the industry is already State-controlled and will become increasingly so apart altogether from any social reorganisation. As this develops it will soon be an easy step from the system of grouped and co-ordinated, port productive ownership to the taking over, by the State, of the whole capital (that is, the ships and stores). It is assumed, of course, that before that the State will have taken over the docks and railways.

The deep sea and inshore fishing industries must always be far more individualistic in methods than are most others. The unit of production must always be a rather small ship manned by about a dozen fishermen—what one calls mass-production in relation to most factory industries is not possible with regard to the fisheries. The work must always be disagreeable (at times anyhow) and it will

always involve personal hardship and even danger. A successful "voyage" of fish means "sticking it out"—fishing in weather that is not too bad to work in but so bad that work is only carried on with considerable discomfort. That accepting of discomfort and the taking of risk must always be voluntary and it is difficult to see how some system of bonuses on the result of a voyage will not always be necessary.

How will such a State fishery industry be run? In this country we have no experience to fall back upon. The Admiralty Mine Sweeper's Fishery Scheme of 1919-21 ended disastrously, but everything was against it and it was probably insincere in its inception—a gesture on the part of the State in response to the national expressions of gratitude to the fishermen who had served in the war—but never more than a gesture. "The fishermen saved the navy and the navy saved the country" so something had to be done. But not at a loss and it had to be a sound economic scheme. From what has been said regarding the methods prevailing under capitalism it is evident that it could not be a sound economic scheme: it was bound to fail when up against the railways and the middlemen unless it had been run ruthlessly (that is wholly without any of the amenities of employment that one expects from a communistically organised industry) or unless it had been State-aided as regards its profit and loss account. But gratitude to the man who saved the country could not be expected to fly in the face of sound economics!

THE FISHERY SERVICES UNDER A COMMUNISTIC REGIME.

Obviously the port productive units that are suggested here could not be worked under the present machinery of Government. The English fishery authorities have been developed for quite a different purpose. The local authorities police the shore and the territorial waters, enforcing by-laws which they make and which the central authority, rather laboriously, approves. Lately there has been added to these functions the collation of statistics and scientific investigation. The statistical data collected by the fishery officers are, however, actually obtained from the skippers and mates of the fishing vessels, the trawling companies' staffs, or the railway officials. The scientific investigations (and the development work) are rather alien to the traditional spirit of the English Civil Service and so, under the Geddes Economy Movement, the scientific and developmental expenditure was ruthlessly cut down: the expenditure on the "administrative" staffs actually increased!

The administration of the fishery industries (in England) has thus been something superadded to, or imposed on the trades themselves and it has consisted mainly of the making, sanctioning and enforcing of legislative restrictions on seasons and methods of fishing, both in the territorial waters and (by international agreement) on the high seas. It has been costly and it has (again in England) been accompanied by the minimum of investigation and development: even during the war there was hardly any productive work. Although the department had extensive emergency powers under "Dora," and Treasury support was not wanting, there was no sympathy, on the part of the Minister, or the high financial officials, with any plans for State production organised by the fishery staffs.

The traditional theory is that the fishermen and the owners of fishing vessels must always be prevented from doing something or other, in the interest of the conservation of the fish supply, of course. Even now it is evident that this sort of thing cannot go on indefinitely and the tendency is for the industry to manage its own affairs and seek as little contact with the Government departments as possible. One must, of course, recognise that under a system of individualistic trade enterprise what matters most of all is this, on the next few years' balance sheets and not the interest of the next generation. On that theory the fishery authorities have been organised. But with a Communistic attitude the industry will manage itself, both in the interest of the public food supply and the conservation of national resources. One may, in a cynical mood, scoff at this ideal, but plainly it is that or the ultimate decadence of the industry, as things are.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFFS.

At the present time no Government Civil Servants, except the lawyers, engineers, doctors and scientists, are really technically trained. The important administrative posts are filled with men who have had a public school and university education, followed by a probationary job in a Whitehall office. These men could not be expected to run the complex machinery of a big fishing port, with its fleet of vessels, its docks, engineers shops, stores, ice, manure and oil factories, etc. But at the outset the Government would simply take over the present company managements (which in the fishing and port industries are certainly highly efficient). Then the staffs would be recruited from the fishermen, engineers, shop, dock and office workers. The administration, in the official sense, would not be something imposed on the industry, curbing and restricting it (nominally) in the public interest: it would be the industry itself with its new outlook. At one step we should cut out a costly public service—that which includes the policing staffs of the central and local fishery authorities. We should retain the trained statisticians, engineers and scientists, and as many of the purely administrative officers as would be required, absorbing them into the general staff of the nationalised industry. This staff would have the Communistic, futurist point of view. Instances are not wanting where the trawler-owners themselves have voluntarily adopted restrictions on methods of fishing in the interest of future generations—one must not forget this. The general fishery staff, then, would control and regulate the distributive services as far as whole coast lines and big ports are concerned; it would collect and publish statistics of intelligence; it would make scientific investigations; undertake the preliminary stages of new industrial developments; work and organise the technical schools and training ships that are essential for efficiency in the various crafts (and which practically do not yet exist), etc. The cost of the present administration is rather great and it is provided, in an expensive way, by local and imperial taxation. In future it could be met by the imposition of a very small fraction of a penny per lb. on the selling price of fish at the primary distributive markets.

FISHERY DEVELOPMENT.

Apart from the very important "semi-commercial" functions of the Scottish Fishery Board (which so annoyed the *laissez faire* Free Trade politicians after the Mid-Victorian period), the fishery authorities have undertaken no developmental work. The Lloyd George Development Commission have, indeed, made grants for scientific investigations bearing on fishery industrial processes, but the Geddes Campaign has nearly made all this useless. Still a considerable amount of scientific research bearing on the industry has been done and is so far advanced as to enable much of it to be applied. This is a very big subject and we can only suggest its bearing here on our problem.

(1) We must utilise much further the extraordinarily cheap and abundant natural food resources that exist in the sea—for instance, the herrings, sprats, mussels, cockles, shrimps, etc. These are most inadequately exploited.

(2) We must prevent the huge waste that occurs by reason of fish going bad, especially when they are so abundant as to glut the markets.

(3) We must further utilise waste material by converting it into by-products.

Now the hopeful thing is that scientific and industrial research has been in progress so long that it is ready to resume application. Take, for instance, the mussel fisheries: here an extraordinarily abundant and nutritious food-stuff is now becoming unavailable because of the growing pollution, by sewage, of tidal waters. Yet it is already practicable deliberately to fatten mussels on crude sewage and then cleanse the living shellfish from harmful bacteria. The English fishery authority actually runs such an establishment at Conway in Wales: that this is the only thing of its kind is due to Sir Eric Geddes.

The key to all these projects is fish preservation. At present herrings are cured in salt pickle and a few are kippered, etc. Some cod and ling are salted. The big process is, of course, the herring curing (which now labours under the partial loss of the German and Russian markets). The kippering and other curing industries are very small and fish canning is almost negligible in this country when compared with the enormous imports from America, Norway, Portugal, France and Spain. Yet the raw materials (herrings, mackerel and sprats, to say nothing of mussels and cockles) are enormously abundant and superbly good in quality. For several years investigations on antiseptics, the action of salts, curing and canning processes have been going on (under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) and knowledge capable of application is now to hand.

That knowledge will remain unused under the present system of trading. To buy and sell (rather than produce) is far more congenial to the genius of British business. Even the stimulus of the war failed to buck up the canned fish industry. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries had money to build and equip an experimental sprat-canning factory in 1917-22, but it was not allowed to make use of the opportunity. Even the fear of food shortage was insufficient. There was an abortive boom in 1919, when Leverhulme

and others dallied with the fish-canning projects. Those all failed and it is evident that our present form of administration and our individualistic enterprise has been unable to utilise our national resource. It remains, then, for a Workers' Government to try what it can do.

There need be no fish gluts—knowing what we now know of preservation methods. The ways to freeze fish, both in cold chambers and in super-cooled brine have been developed and there is now a magnificent low temperature laboratory at Cambridge, built and equipped by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Chlorinated ice is being manufactured. Methods of refrigeration have been studied successfully. Plans have been made for brine-freezing machinery on the big scale and for installation in steam trawlers. Research on drying, curing and canning is sufficiently advanced to receive application. By these methods any gluts of fish that happen can be dealt with—if anyone wants so to deal with them.

The trawling companies are now so much embarrassed by the chaos of transport and distribution that they can't do anything, the middlemen can't, or—perhaps better—won't. Profiteering flourishes on risk and uncertainty in the production and distribution of food and would tend to decay given the avoidance of waste, a constant supply, storage and the stabilisation of efficiency and transport. It is not in the interest of a dividend-earning railway company to provide refrigerated waggons—nor is it in the interest of the middlemen who find their opportunities in the present uncertainties—for which there is no excuse.

By-products—fish-meat, oils, manures and a host of other materials are already being made and the tendency is to make increasing use of fish-offal. But here much scientific and industrial research is required. Given, of course, a period of renewed profits and stability and the trawler-owners are bound to extend their activities in these directions. But that period of stability seems far away.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the enormous increase in national wealth that would come from a thorough application of existing scientific knowledge towards the conservation of fish materials, preservation, canning, curing, freezing, etc. Still more hopeful is the prospect should more investigation be prosecuted. All this is known both to the fishery administrations and to the private enterprises that exist. The former no longer expect to act, for under the present system of Government State-productive enterprise is taboo—that is why the fishery authorities (except in Scotland, where a century of experience counts for something), have done little or nothing. And pure trading, as we know, has become divorced from production, so there is no hope there. So (even in a mood of despair) people will increasingly look to Communistic ideals.

Nationalisation of the fishing industry really means a rather gentle transition from the existing conditions. It means, of course, sacrificing the shareholders of the great trawling companies, not a serious thing because the dividends are now tending towards vanishing point and will continue so to tend should the present slump persist. That will persist, or will pass, only to recur given the continuance of the present chaos. And it is expedient that a com-

paratively small number of people should suffer for the Workers' Republic—much, even to the Tory Die-Hards, depends on the existence of a stable fishermen-population and in comparison with this the fate of a few thousands of shareholders is not a thing to cry over!

Just as Abraham bargained with God for the safety of the Cities of the Plain, so those who believe in the nationalisation, or Communisation, of our great industries have bargained with trading-financial governing classes. The results are not cheering. One does not see the great industries set on a stable basis and run for the benefit of the nation by any "constitutional" means. Take any of the obvious reforms in the distribution of the fish supply and think out how they can be achieved in any regular way: the difficulties are so enormous that one's heart fails. The only apparent solution seems to lie in the direction of constitutional violence—which sounds rather dreadful! But the constitutional violence that would be employed in the State appropriation of the railways, docks, fishing fleets and subsidiary industries is not the dreadful thing that it may seem to be to the *rentiers*. After all, the really important people are—the fishermen and engineers; the big company managements; the dock and harbour officials, experts and workers; the technical and administrative officials; the statisticians and scientists—and all these people, with their work and their pay, would go on just as before. A Government department is largely a self-contained organisation with its own internal interests and it tends to carry on without much thought of the form of State organisation under which it subsists. Only the parasitic traders, the middlemen and the shareholders would suffer from a turn-over from capitalistic to Communistic practice.

These people would, of course, suffer and the ideals of many others, not so immediately interested, would receive a rude shock. But let it be quite plain: in the present state of world-politics; with increasing population and with the very evident shrinkage of our natural energy-resources, there is no longer any place for the non-producers. Let any reasonable man think it out and he will find that far too much depends on the continued existence of the present British fishermen-population to allow us to consider too generously the position of the parasitic traders and shareholders.

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A POLISH PRISON

By Thomas Dombal.

A VERY few facts suffice from which to survey the Polish prison system at a glance and to adjudge the "democratic" justice of a "knightly" Poland.

For some years I, an inviolable member of the Constituent Assembly and the Seim, have spent more than half of my time in prisons—in the Rzeszowa in Galicia, and the Pawiak Dzielna Ulica 24 and the Mokotowa (Warsaw), and in Poznan.

To start with the detention prisons. The warders, police and gendarmerie there set up a preliminary examination to qualify aspirants for a residential career in a Polish prison.

These detention prisons are loathsome stinking holes, alive with vermin and other stock.

The savagery of the police and warders, who have lost all human resemblance, is revealed in unceasing bestial orgies.

The captives are whipped with rubber thongs, iron rods, have their teeth drawn, are caned on the jaw; and such incidents, together with a flow of the most vulgar abuse, is just the ordinary order of things. Such is the "preliminary investigation."

I often met many comrades who bore the traces of such treatment. The police and warders are never punished for this. Some few complaints have been occasionally handed in by the victims in accordance with the formalities laid down by the judicial authorities; but nevertheless, not one policeman or warder has ever been punished for such an offence. This, too, despite the verification of these grievances by the evidence of the prison doctors, who, willy-nilly, have to attest the facts of the brutalities.

The Attorney-General always have one unvarying stock reply when called on to bring these police miscreants to account: "Not sufficient proof." Furthermore, whenever the defendant and prisoner, whilst his case is being heard, attempts to describe the agonies and tortures he has been subjected to, to extort a confession from him, the Court will equally invariably refuse to listen to such disturbing facts, as being irrelevant to the issue.

Herein we have a clear demonstration that such incidents are not mere isolated occasional accidents, but are, on the contrary, an elaborate scheme of democratic justice.

To take one instance. One young workman, Kazimierz Lepa, of Warsaw, had been arrested for taking part in a 1st of May celebration, and accused of belonging to the Communist Party and League of the Communist Youth of Poland. Whilst under detention he was twice lashed till his blood streamed. He was struck with fists or anything else that happened to come handy. He was knocked down flat and trampled on by the warders, and brutally derided. However, the young fellow stood it all doughtily and refused to betray anyone. The warders, to cover the traces of their crime, kept him in provisional detention a few days more so that the wounds might heal. Then at last Comrade Lepa was sent to prison.

He and I were confined in the same cell. I saw the marks of the whipping, saw his black eyes with bloody marks round them, and his body a mass of blue weals. The prison doctors, even, had reluctantly to acknowledge the marks and give a certificate in accordance with them.

I myself wrote out the text of the petition handed in by Comrade Lepa to the Attorney-General. The latter found there was "not sufficient proof," i.e., no reliable witnesses. Although several comrades had witnessed Lepa streaming with blood in the examination room.

And when the doctor was obliged to admit these traces of the blows, even then this cute and jealous guardian of the law could devise nothing better than this: "The possibility is not excluded that the prisoner lashed himself until the blood streamed"!

A student, Novak, reached the prison so mutilated that the medical commission had to admit the fact of the punishment.

Comrade Novak, in a letter to me, described in detail the ill-treatment to which he was subjected. I received the letter in prison through the corridor post. I worked it in with my own case. They were trying to extort from Novak an acknowledgment of my connivance in a military organisation, and an unlawful store of arms; of plotting an armed insurrection and acting as a spy for the Soviet Government. The object was, generally speaking, to compromise me in the eyes of the poorest class of the peasantry, as a traitor to the country, and at the same time to cast a show of suspicion on the Soviet Mission at Warsaw. The original letter, as communicated by me was sealed by the Court, which refused me leave to read it during the hearing of the case.

The cross-examination of Novak proceeded as follows: About 12 o'clock midnight he was conducted to the office of the commissariat of the reserve police, at Warsaw Town Hall. There were waiting for him the Extraordinary Commissary Rushke, Gostynski, and the chief warder Sparski, who requested him to sign a protocol they had drawn up. Novak refused. Then the torture began. He was struck on his face, spat on, hit on the cheekbones with the butt-end of a revolver, and his hair was pulled. When this proved useless, he was consigned to the care of three specialist executioners, who were commissioned to extort a signature to a forged document. These master-craftsmen set to work at once. They tied their victim with cords, and tickled his soles and armpits with bayonets. Still Novak maintained silence.

Then the brutes were enraged and started opening the wounds Novak had received when defending his "knightly" country. Under the unendurable pain, Novak fainted. He was revived with cold water and the "cross-examination" was continued.

After this torture Novak was taken back to prison. For some days he was kept without food and then his examination was continued.

His father, alarmed for his son, appealed to some members of the Seim. Questions were addressed to the Government, but the guilty parties were never punished.

Or again, Stefan Verblovski, a teacher. We shared the same cell for some time. I heard a very great deal of how Sparski and his drunken gang of fellow-gaolers ill-treated him and his comrades.

Verblovski also handed in a letter to the Court, with an account of the tortures to which he had been subjected; and also informed the Polish "League for the Rights of Man." There is such a League in Poland—but in vain.

Comrade Rwal told me stories of the incredible orgies of the

gendarmarie while they were torturing him and his companions in the military prison.

One of the most innocent methods of extracting a confession was pricking the soles of his feet with bayonet points, irritating the sexual organs, and thrusting nails and steel nibs into the nails. Here are some examples.

Comrade Golombin, an Ukrainian, related to me how he and his companions were examined by Yuri Luxemburg, a prosecutor in cases of especial importance, and also, alas, an unworthy namesake of the proletarian heroine, Rosa Luxemburg.

Golombin was present when the prisoners were whipped and forced to sign forged documents. One of the prisoners had several teeth drawn.

The complaint addressed to the Seim and to the League of the Rights of Man was inefficacious. Another victim similarly beaten during his examination was Victor Gorny, a former member of the Revolutionary Committee of Lublin.

Even women were not spared. Lela Friedman was subjected to these abuses, T.R. (I conceal the full name for good reasons) told me that the warders in the Boleslawski Prison—they were also members of the Polish Menshevist Party—are always especially severe on Communist prisoners, and as a foretaste, manacle them and tie them to the walls and pallet beds.

Lastly, to insist on a fact which even the Press of the Polish Menshevists and their deputies in the Seim cannot deny, these deputies have themselves moved an interpellation in the Seim, in order to shift the responsibility from off themselves.

This is the incident. A Communist, Comrade Krzos, was arrested at Strachowicy. The police, in order to extract information out of him as to the Communist organisation, scorched his soles with heated iron prongs, hung him head downward, beat him till he lost consciousness and pricked him all over with bayonets. The torture went on until Krzos died. The Polish Menshevists asked a question in the Seim on this matter. The place where the outrage was committed was visited by the local medical commission. The body was exhumed and the fact of the inhuman treatment of Krzos could not be concealed.

But the perpetrators of this horrible murder are still at liberty. Krzos was a Communist!

Nor are other conditions less revolting. Frightful cold, filth, teeming vermin, a harbourage of infectious diseases of typhus and tuberculosis. The prisons at Lublin and Swetokrzinski are especially notorious in this respect; in them the prisoners perish like flies and are subjected to barbarous torture.

In the winter the conditions of prison life are especially unendurable. The prisons are not heated at all. The water freezes in the cells. The prisoners are poorly clad, and all their warm clothing are taken from them; and they have to lie on bare iron bed bars. The mattresses contain just a thin layer of straw, which has evidently not been changed since Tsarist or imperial days. The food is skimped and bad. Even a perfectly healthy man, without assistance from without, as a result of two years' confinement, begins swelling and dying of a slow death by starvation. Insanity often supervenes. I was often awakenèd at night by the

piercing shrieks of madmen—it sounded like the howls of starving beasts.

And the prison food? 20 marks per day for the maintenance of a prisoner, this sum included the cost of maintenance of the personnel of the prison, light, water, etc., etc. At that time a lb. of black bread cost 40-60 marks.

In 1921 the Government allotted 60 marks a day, increasing this sum to 80 towards the end of the year.

In the course of 1922 the figure was increased to 120 and in 1923 to 300, and then a lb. of black bread was about 1,000 marks. Our ordinary food was a "light" soup of rotten cabbage, turnips, parsnips, the water from tainted peas, and other similar delicacies. And, whilst the Polish Government thus nourished us, it was receiving from America, rye and flour and fats in large quantities.

These figures which are corroborated by the budget of the Polish Ministry of Justice and ratified by the Seim amount to a monthly expenditure per prisoner of 20 cents in American value—(10d.) or a farthing a day.

It is therefore not surprising that most of the prisoners, even if they do not die of starvation, leave the prisons with a constitution permanently ruined. Of the average of prisoners rescued by the Russian proletariat (on the basis of exchange) 60 per cent. suffer from tuberculosis, attributable to the period of detention, others from rheumatism and all with their health shattered. Such are the facts, despite the fact that help from outside enables us to live comparatively well. In this respect I must, in the name of the prisoners suffering in the Polish prisons, express my deep sense of obligation to the workers of Soviet Russia, who have spared us a crust to assist us in our distress and struggle. Their support has afforded us material assistance, enabled us to procure books and papers and to train ourselves into earnest fighters. Our best expression of gratitude for this aid will be to work for the hastening of a victorious international revolution.

Democratic Poland up to 1921 did not recognise political prisoners as a class and dealt with them as criminals, or even worse. From 1920-1922 I was kept in the penal section, together with Lauer and others who are now, thanks to exchange, in Soviet Russia.

The conditions of our struggle were almost desperate. Public opinion, even in "democratic" circles was directed against us. We were then deprived of any chance of addressing broad masses of labourers or peasants and acquainting them with the conditions of our struggle. Our only weapon was the hunger strike, which might last 10-12 days. During our imprisonment we fought through several such campaigns, and were partly victorious.

As a result, towards the end of 1922, the category of political prisoners was established, but only in the territory of the former Kingdom of Poland. In the former Austrian and German provinces there was no alteration; and in this respect we must fight doggedly to obtain for prisoners that minimum of rights we have obtained.

I will not dwell on the tragic phase during the hunger strikes, when our mouths were riven open, and doses of food forced down our throats: this was grandiosely called forcible feeding. In the course of this operation our teeth might be knocked out, or mercilessly broken.

Needless to assert, our fight was conducted actively and per-

sistently. There was not a single case of retreat. On the contrary, even the invalids and youths (altogether about 30-40 per cent. of the prisoners) took their share in the hunger strikes, in spite of the orders of our prison committee to abstain from it. They preferred incurring the censure of the committee, to standing aside from their share in their comrades' heavy burden.

In the end we won, and we got reasonable conditions, and now the prisoners are alive with an intellectual life. Especially where the number of political prisoners amounts to some scores, prison universities are organised to educate the imprisoned workers and peasants in Marxism. In every prison there now exists a communal management. Assistance from outside from more well-to-do comrades is evenly divided amongst all the comrades, and books are similarly accounted common property. The library in the Mokotowski Prison now contains over 1,000 volumes.

The bourgeoisie and aristocracy of Poland are crowding the prisons much worse than under the Tsardom at its savagest, but in them, arms are being forged and champions tempered, and the young generation of proletarians is developing a will to revolution. In them the fighting corps of the future Soviet Poland are being trained, and the forces prepared for the decisive combat and final victory of the idea of Communism.

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INTERNATIONAL REVIEW



The International Red Aid.

By W. Budich.

THE resolution of the Fourth Congress of the Communist international to found an international organisation for the relief of the victims of the proletarian class-war, brought into being the fulfilment of an entirely new and hitherto neglected task. True, casual spontaneous measures of assistance had been undertaken, when in one country or another some combats had been especially costly, but such efforts were wholly insufficient and lasted only as long as the temporary excitement, as long as the impression of the savage terror of the bourgeoisie still lasted upon the proletariat. In a little while interest would relax, other events would attract the attention of the masses, and the deep veil of oblivion would drop over the victims of the struggle; unless an occasional frightful shriek of despair gave notice of their martyrdom.

As the number of victims increased, this condition became an ever increasing danger, especially to the vanguard, the Communist Party. Something definite had to be done. The sufferers in the battle for revolution had to be systematically shielded and supported; to this end, the masses of the proletariat had to be mobilised; a regular Red Cross service had to be organised for the proletarian armies: such a service as would in every way meet the requirements of the revolutionary struggle.

We are still far removed from even an approximation to such an achievement. In proportion to the demand, the resources of organisation and finance of the International Red Aid are infinitesimal. In Germany a regular organisation had been in existence already for two years; but elsewhere, in Italy, Poland and France, the Central Committee discovered only auxiliary organisations for this purpose.

In all other countries no progress has been made beyond occasional and spontaneous collections to help the sufferers in the class war.

Great difficulties are encountered in organising sections. One decisive ele-

ment is the strength of the Communist movement and the degree to which revolutionary consciousness has been aroused in the masses. In all countries the Mensheviks and the reformists stand quite aloof. Still, after three months of work of the International Red Aid, sections have been formed in Russia, Bulgaria, France, Sweden, Poland, Lithuania, and Italy; of these the Russian is the most active. As in everything, the Russian proletariat holds first rank. We now have eight sections, and are also in contact with a number of other countries, such as China, South Africa, Sweden, America, etc.

Thus the work of assistance to our Red fighters is barely beginning. As to the number of the sufferers in the revolutionary combats of recent years, no exact estimate can be made. The few facts at the disposal of the Central Committee, utterly falsify all previous conceptions. These figures depict the extraordinary force and the magnitude of the fight of the proletarian masses for their liberation; a picture is revealed both of the self-sacrifice of the proletarian class and of the brutality of the bourgeoisie.

The Central Committee of the International Red Aid has drafted this estimate:—

Germany	about 5,000	political prisoners.
Italy	„ 5-6,000	„ „
Spain	„ 2-3,000	„ „
Belgium	„ 2-3,000	„ „
Lithuania	„ 250	„ „
Latvia	„ 500	„ „
Estonia	„ 150	„ „
Finland	„ 1,200	„ „
Poland	„ 1-2,000	„ „
Hungary	„ 70,000	„ „
	(during the Horthy régime)	
India	„ 23-50,000	„ „

The dungeons of the bourgeoisie must be overcrowded. The first and urgent duty of the International Red Aid is to help these victims, and this will involve gigantic efforts on the part of the International proletariat. Large resources not only in money but an organisation as well are required; for material help by itself will not relieve the sufferings of our captives. What

use to them is bread alone, exposed as they are to ghastly physical and mental torture? Until the proletariat manages to burst open the gates of the prisons, it must endeavour to alleviate the conditions of punishment and of prison life in capitalist countries, and at least to ensure that the lives of our imprisoned comrades are not permanently imperilled.

In this direction success can only be achieved, if an unremitting campaign is waged, partly through the Courts, but yet more through political agitation. Further, the fight of the prisoners themselves, to get the barest rights of humanity in these dungeons of the bourgeoisie must be given the utmost publicity. The story of their desperation must be made known outside the walls of their prisons. The iron ring with which the bourgeoisie fetters our imprisoned brothers must be broken.

But this does not exhaust the tale of the work of the International Red Aid. There have been four inundations of terror, which in Western Europe have latterly submerged the proletariat—in Hungary, Finland, Germany and now in Italy. Yet no proletarian scheme of assistance had been organised capable of coping with this task on a grand scale, of affording adequate help through a systemised and powerful Red Aid, thus to temper the horrors of the White Terror and bring the counter-revolution to terms. In Italy to-day thousands of proletarians, men, women, and children roam from place to place, hounded by Fascists. Their homes have been destroyed, and they have been driven from their habitations. Wherever they rest, they are forthwith expelled. In Italy a strong organisation might have been able to render much help, and its work would also have been very useful politically. But we had to content ourselves with sending the Italian workers moneys, scarcely enough to provide for the elementary needs of the prisoners.

The White Terror hits not only our vanguard. This is proved by experience in Finland, Hungary, Germany, and Italy. It also strikes the broad masses of the proletariat, directly and immediately, and cripples their efficiency for battle for periods varying according to the license and severity with which the bourgeoisie can wield the weapon of terror, and the strength with which the International proletariat is capable of rendering the beaten proletariat divisions of the Red Cross assistance.

It is the immediate task of the International Red Aid to create such an active and effective Red Cross service of succour.

The Terror Against the Chinese Workers During and After the Railway Strike in February.

THE strike of the railway workers on the Peking-Hankow line which took place in February of this year may be regarded as the greatest event in the history of the Chinese Labour movement. The significance of the violent suppression of the conference of the railway workers of the Peking-Hankow line and of the builders on February 1st by U-Pei-Fu was immediately recognised by the workers' union of the various railways, as well as other unions in Central and Northern China. They forthwith resolved to mobilise all their forces for a struggle for their existence; and they carried out this resolve. It was only after the frightful military attack on the strikers on February 7th at Hankow, the centre of the strike, that the national strike of the Chinese Railway and other unions was called off by the workers themselves, in order to save themselves from utter annihilation by the military.

The failure of the Peking-Hankow railway strike is, of course, a very severe loss to the Chinese workers. The Central Union of the Peking-Hankow railway workers and its 16 local groups together with their schools and clubs have fallen victims to frightful reprisals. Four other railway lines, Tientsin-Fookow, Hankow-Canton, Cheutinfu-Tayeyinfu and Taochin soon joined the strike after February 7th. In Hankow itself seven labour unions were involved in the strike. The reprisals of the military reaction were directed against all of them, although not with the same degree of severity as against the Hankow-Peking railwaymen. Not only were the unions which participated in the strike suppressed with the utmost barbarity, but also the Federation of Labour Unions in the Huhen province (24 organisations with a total membership of 40,000) together with their weekly periodical and their clubs. Also, most of the railway unions, together with 'three miners' organisations and other labour unions, situated along the railway lines were closed down together with their schools and clubs. Here are a few examples to show how savage and brutal was the persecution of the strikers. At Changeinden (near Peking) the soldiers, at midnight on February 6th, started house to house searches in the homes of the union officials. They dragged eleven leaders out of their beds almost naked, maltreated them, and hauled them to prison. At Hankow one leader, the president of the railway union, was arrested. Three times he was ordered to call off the strike and as many times refused;

thereupon at an officer's command, he was executed in the presence of many workers, near the railway station. Later, another worker was shot in the street, the only pretext was that he was the brother of the leader who had already been murdered. At the house of the general secretary of the Workers' Federation at Hankow, soldiers carried out 13 searches; on each occasion the furniture was greatly damaged, his old mother, his wife, and children, were in the course of a fortnight, chased on to the streets 13 times. At Chenchow three workers who refused to obey the order to resume work were flogged almost to death. Our brave comrades now in the dreadful Chinese prisons have never been arraigned before a court, and never will be, so that we shall never know their fate. In a word, the military, in their persecutions and suppression of the workers have not shrunk from any act however brutal and have violated all the laws of the Republic. The bloodthirsty U-Pei-Fu, who is also a tool of foreign capitalists, is continuing his terrorism, together with his fellow-militarists, and none can foresee an end to it.

Though our enemies have done all in their power and will continue to do all they can to suppress the Chinese workers, their revolutionary spirit will never be broken. The central unions of the Peking-Hankow Railway, and the Central Committee of the Railway Unions of China, and the Workers' Federation of Hankow are, although all their work is underground, taking all the necessary steps—such as sabotage to resist the attack of the enemy. Energetic work is required to fend off the terror, to restore the organisation, even secretly, and to ease the lot of the victims. The immediate task, however, is not merely to resist the terror, but to co-ordinate the masses of the workers of China, so that, whenever the hour strikes, they may be in a position to attack their enemies energetically and effectively.

The greatest obstacle to the organisation of the Chinese workers is the lack of money. We have done our utmost to collect money, but the result is meagre, and international support is essential. In view of the political importance of the struggle which has taken place in China, the necessity of such support must be conceded. We are convinced that the masses of the Chinese workers are really awakening, and have the brightest prospects. This strike will arouse the attention of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world to the situation in the Far East; and we are assured that the world-proletariat will afford its brothers in the Far East the best of its support. The Chinese workers are conducting an

arduous and difficult struggle and, are anxiously awaiting international aid.

In the name of the Chinese workers I beg the International Red Cross with its bureau all the world over to support the Chinese workers to the fullest extent of its powers. I am assured that they in their turn will receive a fitting reply from this institution which with might and main aims at forwarding the world revolution.

The Finnish Secret Police at Work.

DURING the discussion on the estimates of the Finnish secret police in the Finnish Seim on March 28th, 1923, comrade Longstein, a deputy of the Finnish Socialist Workers' Party, brought forward documentary evidence of the activities of the secret police.

Matti Paasanen, a workman, who had suffered at the hands of the secret police, has given the following account of his experiences: "I was arrested in Viborg on July 4th, 1921. During my examination I was promised release, on condition that I betrayed my comrades. I was also promised a passport in anyone's name and to any country I chose to go to, if I feared the revenge of those I betrayed. This proposal was made by Rundman, an agent of the Helsingfors secret police. When I refused to have anything to do with such a proposal the agent of the Viborg secret police, Janson, as well as the agents Lenfors and Fjarsinen, handcuffed me and beat me; the handcuffs were not removed until the following morning.

In the evening of July 7th I was again examined. My answers being of an unsatisfactory nature, Rundman and another man, unknown to me, again beat me with a stick. As a consequence of this treatment my body was covered with deep scars.

On July 11th I was transferred to Helsingfors (Fabian Street) and on the 16th I was again called up for examination, during which Rundman beat me with a thick stick until it broke. After that I was taken to a dark cell where I spent a fortnight without any bed-linen."

Vaine Salmi, who also suffered at the hands of the secret police, had the following tale to tell: "In January, 1922, the committee of the Finnish Socialist Workers' Party was arrested in connection with the well-known manifesto issued on the occasion of the attack on Karelia. On February 22nd the Raumo Committee of the party, including myself, was arrested. On the following day I was sent to Tammerfors. Two days later I was called up for examination in the middle of the

night (which is the usual practice). During the examination they endeavoured to drag out of me any particulars concerning the illegal organisation behind the Finnish Socialist Party, of which, according to statements made by a certain Huttinen, I was alleged to be a member. The examination was conducted by Rudman, the chief of the Tammerfors secret police and a law student. After the examination, which was accompanied by threats, Rudman ordered that I should be taken back to my cell and have my food allowance reduced. The agent Rekola, while he conducted me back to my cell, belaboured my back all the time with his fists. Every day I was threatened and abused. Early in April my cell was entered by Martti Roling, an agent of the secret police, who was drunk. Uttering threats and imprecations, he dealt me a blow in the chest, with such force that I was bedridden for several days. My requests for a doctor were ignored, and I am still suffering from the effects of the treatment meted out to me. In the middle of April I was again called up for examination, and questioned about the underground organisation. Thereupon the agent Rekola began to belabour my back with a stick about 50 centimetres long and 2½ centimetres thick. After a few blows I lost consciousness. At the trial, I together with the other defendants, denied the accuracy of the statements entered in the minutes. However, the Attorney-General brought forward as witness my tormentors, the agents Rekola and Roling, with the result that the Court refused to consider my statement."

The workman U. Kannel has made the following statement: "On June 25th, 1922, I and two comrades were arrested by eight special constables, who were assisted by the police and the Serdolsk secret police. Previous to my arrest my house was surrounded, and several shots were fired by the attacking party before it forced its way into the flat. Thereupon the agent Payuluoma ordered the agent Uimonen to beat me, in order to compel me to divulge com. Rantal's whereabouts. As I refused to give the required information, I was again beaten until my body was covered with weals. Thereupon the agent dealt me two terrible blows with the butt end of his revolver, as a result of which I have lost my hearing. Showering blows on my head, they ordered me to confess that I intended to escape to Russia. At the examination on July 2nd the same agent, Payuluoma, struck me again in the face with his fist."

Kalle Lepola, a former deputy of the

Seim, made the following statement: "I was arrested in June, 1922. I was taken to the Viborg secret police department where for a whole fortnight I received food only every other day, threats being uttered that I would be starved to death. They also threatened to take me "up the hill" (place of execution). On July 16th I was told that during the night I would be taken, together with the other comrades, "across the Rauta on our last journey." Two days later I was again examined, and similar threats were made, the agent Janson striking me in the face with his fists until one of my eyes was quite shut and my cheek was swollen. This scene was witnessed by the agents Haapalainen and Vepsialainen."

The workman, Tiuhonen, made the following statement about his arrest: "Several days before my arrest, the secret police on July 31st, 1922, arrested my wife and my 6-years-old son, Leo Olavi. I was arrested on August 2nd. My young boy was kept until August 7th in the police station in Kotka in the company of drunkards and criminals. During this period we were examined several times, and the treatment meted out to us was so rough that at one of these examinations my little son burst into tears and ran to his mother. This infuriated the "administrators of justice," and they threatened to beat the boy, to put his parents in prison and to send him to a home. Similar scenes were a daily occurrence during the whole week."

The workman, Evert Salmiari's statement was as follows: "On August 25th, 1922, I was beaten for three hours, from 9 a.m. till 12 (noon), in the secret police department, Fabian Street, Helsingfors. The agents tied my hands behind my back, threw me on the floor, knelt on my chest and began to beat me with anything they could lay hands on. They seized me by the ears and knocked my head on the floor, uttering foul threats all the time. I was subjected to this torture on three occasions and suffered excruciating pain. The chief actors in this gruesome performance were the agents Vilho Kangas and Valtakari. After these tortures I was placed into a death cell and was kept on half rations."

The workman Feuraz has made the following statement: "During my examination in the secret police department in Kayoni in August, 1922, the agents Tolonen and Hermanson struck me repeatedly in the ribs with their fists. I was then put into chains for four days and nights, and I was only able to breathe while in a sitting posture."

An Impression of the New South Wales Annual Labour Conference.

By A Communist.

IN the New South Wales A.L.P. Conference which opened at the Trades Hall, Sydney, on June 2nd., 1923, there were two outstanding questions which had to be settled before a constructive policy for the future could be undertaken — the questions of cleaning up the party from continued aspersions of corrupt practices, such as systematic tampering with ballot boxes for the selection of candidates who were to run for election, and of what is known as Dooleyism; and the question of rivalry for influence and power between the Industrialists and the Politicals. One felt from the very opening of the Conference, under the chairmanship of Mr. Power, the seething undertow of this welter of opposing forces; and as the Conference proceeded, one also felt, as I have felt in Conferences at home and in other countries, that the pull of the rank and file towards honest and generous solutions of each question was, in most cases palpable, and in many cases successful, and that, given opportunity, with intelligent and incorruptible leaders, such as Russia possesses, the administration of the proletariat was not only the evolution, but the supremely necessary outcome of the first half of this century.

On the eve of the Conference the N.S. Wales Communist Party issued an appeal to the delegates based upon the decisions of the All-Australian Trade Union Conferences of 1921 and 1922, the N.S.W. Trade Union Conference of April 19th, 1923, and the Communist Party's decisions, in which it declared:

"The adaptation of the A.L.P. to post-war conditions can only effectively be accomplished by pooling all schools of Labour activity and compounding therefrom a programme and policy of united action corresponding with the urgent needs of the changed times. . . .

Summed up, the new policy is: the formation, not in the dim and distant future, but here and now, of a compact UNITED FRONT.

Resolved into its elements, that means:

- (1) The adoption of the Federal objective; the Socialisation of industry.
- (2) The provision of a common platform within the A.L.P. for all Labour organisations on the Parliamentary field.
- (3) Executive control over Parliamentary members.
- (4) Group election of the Executive."

And the final sentence of the appeal runs thus:

"If the A.L.P. is to justify its existence, it must bring its organisation, its policy and programme into line with the establishment of a United Front against the enemies of the working class." Though, therefore, the dust and dirt thrown up by the Conference's initial inquiries into faked ballot boxes and the Dooley controversy amused and excited the capitalist Press, the heart and clash of the battle will be around the great principle of the United Front, which is to be the workers' spear-head answer to the united front of capital.

As in all other countries the world war laid bare the weak places in the Australian Labour movement, and drove back into the capitalist ranks many unreliable leaders. This made it all the more necessary for Political Labour to attempt to win back the support of the Industrialists, and as the outcome of that gesture towards Labour Unity, the various Australian T.U. Congresses have outlined a fighting programme, which, when adopted by the State and Federal A.L.P.'s, will line them up shoulder to shoulder with the Trade Unions. The recent Queensland elections have pointed the way towards success, but that, being only a temporary unity, is nothing like the strong and flexible weapon which permanent unity will provide; but it is a good object lesson, at the present moment, to the N.S.W. A.L.P., and will not be overlooked when the time for voting comes.

So far, at the time I am writing, when the Conference has been sitting three whole days, and seven evenings, the work done has been: The chairman's address, election of credentials's and agenda committees (on this latter body two of our comrades, Howie and Graves were appointed), a much-contested decision to admit to Conference members of Parliament (non-delegates), who, it was finally agreed, should be accommodated in a portion of the hall set apart from delegates, and should not take part in debates; a decision to hear Mr. Dooley (late Parliamentary leader of the party), who had been expelled by the Executive; a debate on the Executive Report, during which it was disclosed that the chairman and most members of the Executive knew in July, 1922, that faked ballot boxes were being used, and had made no serious attempt to grapple with the scandal; an amendment to the adoption of the report was carried by 187 to 110 to the effect that certain portions only of the report should be adopted, and that clause 2 of the Minority Report should be substituted for the deleted portions. On the resumption of debate, Mr. Dooley's case (which it had been agreed should be taken on the report) was gone

into, the principal accusations of the Executive against him being that he had put forward Mr. Suttor as a candidate for the Legislative Council, or Upper House, when it was difficult to prove that that gentleman was a member even of a Labour League—and secondly, that he had attacked the Executive in the capitalist Press, calling them “uncouth crooks.” Mr. Dooley was allowed to make a long speech from the platform in his own defence, and as he is a master of evasion and subterfuge, he was able, by pointing out, what an honourable man he considered himself in other respects, and how his accuser Hynes had a police record, to throw dust into the eyes of some of the delegates; but his record as a Labour leader, both in and out of power, is the only point in his career of interest to International Communists, and that record, as far as the class struggle is concerned, is a traitor’s record. Of this I had personal knowledge, when working out here eleven years ago with Harry Holland in the International Socialist Movement when Dooley, Labour member for Lithgow, stood with Hoskyns and his imported scabs during the strike at the Lithgow Blast Furnace, and helped to break that strike. His record in the class struggle has evidently not improved since then, for “The Communist” of June 8th, 1923, points out that he fails to reply satisfactorily to its comments in a previous issue regarding his attitude towards the Basic Wage and Motherhood Endowment Bills, the reduction of wages, the police batoning of unemployed, etc., etc. Dooley, as the result of successful intriguing, is once more, since the Conference opened, a member of the party, but he has been relieved of his leadership, which is now in the hands of Willis, the miners’ leader, who was formerly a miner in Abertillery and a student of Ruskin College.

The new Executive, under Willis’s chairmanship, comprises among its 30 members, Graves and Jock Garden, while J. Howie has been placed on the Interstate Executive. The comment of a leading capitalist paper is: “The Executive is mainly composed of leading Industrialist, Communists and members of the minority section of the old A.L.P. Executive. The industrialists, however, predominate. Only one member of the late majority Executive (Mrs. Kate Dwyer) was returned in the new body.” I might remark here that Mrs. Dwyer was on the sub-committee of investigation of the faked ballot boxes, and was mainly instrumental in keeping the subject before the Executive, and having it thoroughly ventilated in Conference.

A suspension of the standing orders was granted to allow Mr. Wignall of

the British Labour Party to address the Conference on the subject of immigration; and a committee, consisting of Messrs. Dunn, Loughlin, Davidson, Baddeley, Bodkin, Bell, Holloway, Trefle, Garden and Voigt was subsequently appointed by Conference to inquire into the conditions of land settlement and unemployed in Australia.

The motion that the objective of the party be the objective adopted at the last Federal Conference in Brisbane, was carried with an overwhelming majority; after which our comrade Garden moved the first of the affiliation proposals, that, “For the purpose of bringing about a united working class front, this Conference recommends to the N.S.W. Conference of the A.L.P. the alteration of the rules of the constitution to allow of affiliation of other working class parties, with the right of propaganda and organisation, while at the same time requiring a loyal acceptance of the decisions of representative conferences.” The voting on this proposal was very close, being 122 for and against, the chairman giving his casting vote in favour of the proposal. This proposal will have to be submitted to the Leagues, and discussed by them; it will then be submitted to the next Conference, when it will require a two-thirds majority to carry it. The present vote was an affirmation of principle that in the interests of solidarity and a united front, the Communist Party should be affiliated to the Labour Party of Australia.

The Conference is still sitting, but the above is a report up to date and is sent off by the outgoing mail so that details of its proceedings should reach other Communist Parties at the earliest date possible.

BOOK REVIEWS.

“The Origin and Evolution of the Human Race,” by Albert Churchward, M.D., F.R.G.S. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 45s.

WHEN it is said that this book is well-indexed (would it were unnecessary to specify this) and contains 78 excellent full-page plates of human types and of their tools, pottery, buildings and symbols, all the good is said that can, with the utmost tolerance, be said about it. It is a terrible example of misdirected and unscientific ingenuity and a danger to any unguided student.

The author’s central theme is that the origin of the human race was in Central Africa, whence from a primitive pygmy stock were derived successive races that spread, in waves of settlement and culture over the rest of the world. The only drawback to this theory is the lack of supporting evi-

dence; admissible as a hypothesis, it does not warrant Dr. Churchward's dogmatism and contumely of all other writers on the subject. Some of the author's suggestions agree with recent scientific research, but he does not quote the relevant facts, and destroys their value by mixing them with much mere speculation. His whole method is faulty; not only does he not handle evidence so as to prove his points, but he achieves his results by assuming the truth of his hypothesis, erecting on them elaborate superstructures, and then saying that the later deductions "prove" the truth of the hypothesis. His reckless identification of widely sundered races and cultures on the strength of one detail, his use of Egyptian hieroglyphics to read inscriptions in Crete, Rhodesia and Yucatan, and his introduction of biological speculations à la Lamarck and Bernard Shaw, and his attempt to derive Chinese from ancient Egyptian, detract

from the scientific value of his book. But when in addition, he brings in the Wise Men of the Egyptians and the Precession of the Equinoxes (which betrays his lack of astronomical knowledge; he ascribes to the pole of the ecliptic a path through the stars that it does not take and attributes to its precession an effect on glacial periods that it cannot have, on both of which errors he builds up a mass of plausible speculation), embraces the exploded astronomical theories of a Naval Professor, and speculates about life being composed of matter impregnated with corpuscles of energy, the patience of any scientific reader is well nigh exhausted. After this, one is not surprised to learn that the socialist vampire has been the cause of the downfall of every great nation, that we cannot level down but must level up, and that the hope of the future lies in the Boy Scout movement and in the study of old Egyptian Eschatology.



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