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THE  
**COMMUNIST  
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Monthly Organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain

Volume V

JULY 1924

Number 3

IMPORTANT FEATURES of THIS ISSUE

**British Rule in India**

Open Letter to Ramsay MacDonald

By M. N. ROY

**The New Trend in Industrial  
Organisation**

By HARRY POLLITT

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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

*A Monthly Organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain*

Editorial and Publishing Offices: 16 King Street, Covent Garden, W. C. 2

EDITOR: THOS. BELL

BUSINESS MANAGER: A. H. HAWKINS

Volume 5

JULY 1924

Number 3

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*Notice to Contributors, &c.* M.S.S. and letters relating thereto should be addressed to Editor, COMMUNIST REVIEW, 16, King Street, W. C. 2.

*Subscription Rates.* HOME—Single copies, 6 months, 3s. 9d. postpaid. One year 7s. 0d. postpaid. ABROAD—Single copies 6 months 3s. 9d. One year 7s. 0d. postpaid. Home and Abroad—Bundle orders, 12 copies for 4s. 6d. postpaid, sale or return.

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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

*Editor: THOS. BELL*

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## THE EDITORIAL VIEW

**T**HOSE attempting to subvert a government established somehow or other, must be prepared to accept the consequences of their action. It is a legal right of every government to punish every infringement of its authority. But the Cawnpore trial, referred to in the Open Letter to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald appearing on another page of this issue, is, however, of an entirely different nature. Fundamental issues of constitutional right were involved in this latest act of British oppression in India. Both the Government, which was the prosecutor, as well as the judge, were evidently so prejudiced from the very beginning, that the trial has proved to be a travesty of justice of the worst sort.

Thanks to the *Workers' Weekly*, the history of this trial is more or less known to our readers. As usual the British press devoted very little space to the case which created much sensation in India, and which has involved grave consequences to the majority of the Indian people. Eight persons, including Comrade Roy (who, however, was not present) were arraigned before the magistrate of a remote district, which was neither the scene of the alleged conspiracy, nor the native place of any one of the accused. The mystery why such an obscure place was chosen for such an important trial has never been cleared up. An application made on behalf of the accused to have the case transferred to one of the principal cities, was rejected by the judge, who said that he must proceed with the case unless otherwise ordered by the Government. This declaration of the judge throws an interesting sidelight on the whole affair. The judge, who was trying the case, was taking his orders from the Government, which was the complainant. It would indeed be idle to expect impartial justice under such circumstances.

\* \* \* \* \*

The evidence produced to prove the charge against the accused did not in the least prove that they had conspired to over-

throw the King's Government. The evidence was composed of two sorts: one, the testimony of the Chief of the Criminal Intelligence Department, and of a host of police officers, who deposed to have violated the secrecy of private correspondence when there was no censorship legally in force: and the other a number of letters, newspapers, brochures and other published documents of a political nature. The letters, which were the *pièce de resistance* of the prosecution, again were no secret correspondence in the strict sense of the term, because most of them were published in some form or other soon after they were originally written.

Now, what was proved by this evidence, adduced by the prosecution to substantiate the charge of conspiracy? The only thing it proved, if it proved anything at all, was that the writer of these documents did propose to organise the workers and peasants of India into a political party, and held that the programme of this projected party must essentially be of a Socialist nature. It was also proved from the documents produced that there did exist a number of Indians who held Communist and Socialist views, and were in favour of affiliation with the Communist International, which happens to have its headquarters at Moscow. Much was made of a programme drafted by this group of Indians, and of a manifesto addressed to the Indian National Congress by the World Congress of the Communist International. In both these documents it was mentioned that the progress and prosperity of the people of India required free national existence.

On the strength of this evidence, the Government of India charged the eight men, four of whom were brought to trial and convicted, as "Bolshevik agents" conspiring to overthrow the Government by a violent revolution. But neither of the accusations, namely conspiracy and Bolshevik agency, have been proven. The chief prosecution witness, Col. Kaye (Head of the Indian Scotland Yard) declared in the court that he was satisfied as to the guilt of the accused, but his information was not sufficient to convince the court. His misgivings, however, were misplaced. The judge found the accused guilty, even without the information that was the exclusive possession of the Criminal Intelligence Department, and, therefore, not given to the court. Col. Kaye stated that a certain sum of money had been received by the accused from outside; but he himself confessed his inability to prove this assertion, nor could he give any reason why he thought that that imaginary sum of money came from Russia.

Utterly flimsy as it may seem, this evidence, however, was enough for the judge to convict the accused.

Jury trial is an exception in India. In political cases it is hardly available. In this trial, there were three assessors. *Two of the three in the very beginning of the case admitted their inability to follow the proceedings, which were conducted in English. Their knowledge of the English language being too defective.* But the judge requested them to do the best they could with their faulty knowledge of English. That is, they were given to understand that they were there to give a verdict of guilty in any case. It was not necessary to bother about the merits of the case. Indians of late, however, have grown rather too refractory for the British members of the Civil Service. One of the assessors found all the accused not guilty; the second found two guilty and two not guilty; and the third found only one guilty. Their verdict, however, was treated merely as an expression of opinion, not binding upon the judge, who sentenced all the accused to rigorous imprisonment. So much for the justice of the case.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is hardly necessary to say that we regard this trial at Cawnpore not only as a flagrant violation of justice; for us the real issue is the simple elementary constitutional right of combination. The cardinal points of the prosecution were: (1) conspiracy against the King's Government; (2) advocacy of an independent India, separate from the Empire; (3) receiving financial help from the Communist International; (4) Socialist propaganda; (5) organisation of a working class party. The first and third points have not been proved, and the representative of the Government confessed his inability to do so. The second is no crime, if democracy and self-determination still possess any meaning for our Labour Ministers. The fourth and fifth points are not only no crime, but we claim elementary constitutional rights. Mr. MacDonald and his colleagues ought to know that such a violation of justice and of the first principles of popular rights always brings its own Nemesis. Repression leads to revolution.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whatever weaknesses may be attributed to our British ruling class, these do not include a faulty strategy. Again and again, the capitalist class of this country has shown a remarkable capacity for killing two birds with the one stone, Particularly in the struggle against the working class. No finer example could be cited of the kind of thing we mean than the recent "unofficial" strike of railway shopmen.

Here was a strike involving about five different unions all jostling and clamouring for demands, which everyone agreed were just, from the one set of employers. Some of the strikers were

out "unofficial," others had the backing of their trade union executives, though, of course, not associated in any way with the "unofficials"! A fine situation, indeed, for railway magnates like Lord Ashfield to handle, but withal a scandalous exhibition of the lack of working class organisation and solidarity.

The lesson of this latest demonstration of the splendid fighting qualities of the workers, and its significance for us, as well as the exposure of the unexampled treachery of the N.U.R. officials, is fully dealt with in the lucid article by Harry Pollitt on another page. We need not, therefore, go over the same ground again. What we do wish to comment upon, however, is the extraordinary outburst of feeling displayed during the strike against our Party, not only by the entire capitalist press, but by large numbers of trade union leaders.

Not since the events subsequent to Black Friday has there been such a hue and cry against the Communist Party. Nothing was vile enough to hurl at the Communists. The fabricated stories of the hundreds of thousands of pounds filtering into the coffers of the C.P.G.B. were enough to make the scribbling hacks of Fleet Street turn green with envy. Is there anyone naive enough to suggest that this campaign was without intention and design? For our part, we regard the whole anti-Communist campaign as a deliberate plot to sabotage the Anglo-Russian Conference. Again, the "unofficial-strike-inspired-by-Communist" bogey, besides affording an opportunity to spread about lying and fabricated statements about Bolshevik "moles" burrowing into the Labour movement, served the additional purpose of fostering dissension in the ranks of trade unionism, and the Labour Party, and that at a moment when the workers are on the offensive.

The bellicose ultimatum of Cramp, the special preparations of the Labour Government to use navy men to act as blacklegs, only proves once more how essential it is for all the militant elements in the ranks of the organised trade union and labour movements, to cut out all sentimental drivel about official and unofficial action, and throw themselves wholeheartedly into the forward move now manifest everywhere and amongst all sections of the working class.

\* \* \* \* \*

The results of the parliamentary elections in South Africa have sent General Smuts to keep political company with Poincare, Lloyd George, and the other sabre-rattling war-ministers. The defeat of Smuts was predicted in the special article which appeared in

the *Communist Review* for January of this year, outlining the nature of the Nationalist-Labour Pact. We predicted then that the treacherous solidarity of the Smuts Cabinet with the Chamber of Mines would bring its just retribution. The Rand has now swung completely over to Labour. This electoral defeat of Smuts is significant. It is an indication of the resentment nursed by the workers, whose revolt against the slave conditions on the Rand in 1922 was so ruthlessly and cruelly suppressed by him. The remaining part of the bill due to Smuts is still owing.

Since the Pact has accomplished its objective, and Smuts has been routed, what will be the attitude of the numerically strong group of Labour members? Will it follow the Blum-Longuet policy of parliamentary bargaining in the hope of wringing reforms from the Nationalists, just as their French *confrères* hope to do from M. Herriot? Or, will it recognise that beneath the skin of the Nationalists, as of the Republican-Socialists of the *bloc des gauches*, there is the same bourgeois flesh, muscle and bone as of the Smuts' Party or the Poincarè group? Meantime, we have to recall that Colonel Cresswell, the Labour leader, who has been returned, has declared himself a great British patriot. During the war, Cresswell, as with several other South African Labour leaders, served under General Smuts. As late as the end of 1923—four years after the great war, Cresswell could still speak of membership in the British Commonwealth of Nations as "a matter of affection." Another Labour leader, Barlow, could also speak of "carrying the fiery cross into the town and veldt against Republicanism."

This election, therefore, settles nothing since the Labour Party is as patriotically imperialist as the Nationalists are imperialistically Nationalist. But the success of the Pact in defeating Smuts will, as the Communist Party of South Africa foresaw, even while it supported the Pact, be the undoing of generations of strenuous imperialist labours to confuse and divide the workers. The working class will now see that more and more they must oppose to all the bourgeois parties their own class organisations and work for the definite *class* objective of full political power to the working class, black and white—and the working class alone.

# British Rule in India

*Open Letter to the RIGHT HON. J. RAMSAY MACDONALD,  
Prime Minister of Great Britain, LONDON, ENGLAND.*

RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR,

The notorious "Bolshevik Conspiracy Case" of Cawnpore has ended with the conviction of the four accused present before the Court to four years' rigorous imprisonment. In the absence of any interference from your government, this conviction may be taken as the reply to the letter addressed to you on February 20th (copy to the Secretary of State for India), in which the questions of the legality of working class organisation and propaganda, and of an amnesty for those persons branded as "Bolshevik Agents," were squarely put. This letter failed to elicit any direct response. The Appeal subsequently addressed to you and your Government, and to the British Labour Party and proletariat, when the first news of the Trial was received—pointing out its true nature and significance as an attack upon the rights of political organisation and propaganda of the Indian working class, and requesting your intervention—met with the same fate. By permitting the Government of India to prosecute and convict a number of individuals on the charge of seditious conspiracy, because they stand accused of having made Socialist and Communist propaganda, and of desiring to organise a political party of the Indian workers and peasants, your Government has definitely aligned itself with the Imperial policy of its predecessors, and has gone one step beyond them in putting a legal ban on all future activities of a similar nature.

## ***THE REAL OBJECT OF THE TRIAL.***

The verdict handed down in the Cawnpore Court of Sessions goes far beyond the mere condemning of four individuals to four years' hard labour. It serves as a precedent to declare all Socialist, Communist and working class organisation and propaganda illegal and punishable as "criminal conspiracy." It was with this object in view that the case was undertaken, and this object has been achieved, with the connivance, if not given consent, of the British Labour Government. In spite of repeated efforts from many quarters, the latter has refused to intervene on behalf of the rights of the Indian working class, and the Under-Secretary of

State for India, replying to a question from a Tory member in the House of Commons, stated that : " The Government of India was taking all necessary measures to counteract the Communist propaganda of M. N. Roy." Similar facts can be cited to show that your Government is directly responsible for this infamous trial and conviction. You and your colleagues must, therefore, face the British proletariat with this shameful responsibility on your shoulders, and go down in history as the founders of a new Labour Imperialism which does not scruple to crush the struggles and aspirations of the Indian workers towards full social, economic and political emancipation.

You are certainly acquainted with the details of the case. Nevertheless, let me record its most important features. According to the Act of Accusation, it is alleged : " That there exists in Europe a revolutionary organisation called the Communist International ; that one of the objects of this organisation is the formation of affiliated organisations in Eastern countries ; that M. N. Roy is a member of the Communist International ; and that he conspired with the other accused to organise a working class party in India, and so deprive the King of his sovereignty !" The evidence upon which this grotesque charge is based are letters alleged to have been written and received by the accused, advocating the organisation of a political party of workers and peasants, and the published programme and other documents of the Communist Party of India, in which the establishment of a democratic republic is laid down, free from all foreign control. No overt act was alleged against any of the accused, nor could any incitement to criminal violence be shown, for terrorist activities are specifically denounced in these documents, and the means pointed out for the achievement of the goal is solely the organisation of a mass party of the Indian working class upon a programme calling for its full economic, social and political emancipation. It is true that the counter-revolutionary nature of Gandhism was exposed, and the cult of non-violence criticised, but it was not proved in any way that either the alleged writer or recipients of the letters committed any act in violation of the law, nor did anything but express their opinions in a perfectly constitutional manner.

While in the lower Court, the prosecution's case hinged exclusively upon the alleged endeavour of the accused to organise a working class party affiliated with the Communist International—in the Sessions Court, the accusation was shifted to other grounds. Not Communist propaganda, but " to conspire against the sovereignty of the King-Emperor," became the crux of the

case. The reason for thus shifting the ground is obvious. The storm of indignation aroused in Great Britain by this attack upon the constitutional rights of the Indian working class, led the Prosecuting Attorney to take his stand on other grounds. Yet even this unconstitutional and undemocratic charge, which served as the screen behind which to declare the organisation of a political party of the Indian working class illegal, has not been proved. First, the charge of conspiracy is in itself unwarranted, not only on constitutional, but on juridical grounds as well, no overt act nor incitement to overt acts having been shown; secondly, the charge has not been proved before a properly-constituted and unprejudiced Court of Law.

### **A MOCKERY OF JUSTICE.**

The whole trial, like the Act of Accusation which preceded it, was a mockery of justice and of constitutional rights. Jury trial is not the rule, but the exception in India, despite the fact that British justice has prevailed there for more than a century and a half. To avert the possibility of a trial by jury, as well as to avoid the full glare of public opinion, the case was filed in an obscure District Court, and the petition of the accused to have it transferred to one of the larger centres was rejected by the Government of India. Two of the three assessors appointed by the Government to help the judge, confessed to their imperfect knowledge of English, in which language the case was conducted. The objection raised by the Defence Council to this fact was overruled by the Judge, who declared that a knowledge of English was not necessary! What does this mean in the language of British justice, but that the assessors were not required to understand anything, and were there merely for the purpose of finding the accused guilty?

All the witnesses, with one exception, were police officers and government hirelings, and this single exception was challenged by the Defence Counsel as a police spy! The letters and documents produced as evidence against the accused, were seized in the mails by a system of free and unlimited spying on private correspondence over a period of two years, which was openly admitted on the part of the prosecution. The Chief of the Secret Service Department, who was likewise the chief witness for the prosecution, freely admitted that, though he was personally satisfied of the guilt of the accused, he could produce no evidence satisfactory to a Court of Law to support his allegations! **Yet a charge of conspiracy, based upon the alleged propagation of Socialist and Communist ideas brought against eight individuals on the**

sole evidence of police spies and government hirelings, has been confirmed in an Indian Law Court by the ruling of a British judge, and the accused sentenced to severe terms of imprisonment, despite the disagreement of the assessors, and the confessed inability of the prosecution to substantiate its accusations! Such is the nature of British Justice in India, when a similar charge brought on similar evidence would have been laughed out of Court or made the subject of a Parliamentary enquiry in Britain.

### **IS COMMUNISM LEGAL IN INDIA ?**

Though the Act of Accusation and the whole burden of the prosecution arguments were based upon the charge that the accused, in collaboration with others, had attempted to organise a working class party having for its object to "secure the political, social and economic liberation of the Indian people,"—an attempt was made, in response to protests from England, to conceal the real nature of the case by declaring that "it was not the intention to prosecute the accused because they held Communist ideas." The prosecution counsel then proceeded to define his idea of Communism: "Communism means, roughly speaking, a general sharing of everybody in everybody else's property!" Truly a classical definition of Marxism, about which apparently neither the Judge, nor the assessors, nor the counsels for the prosecution and defence, had ever heard. It was this profound ignorance of the very essence of scientific Socialism which accentuated the mockery of the proceedings, and contributed to the final gross miscarriage of justice resulting in the conviction of the four accused present before the Court. Had even an elementary study of Marxism enriched the legal arguments, it could easily have been shown that, granted the legality of Communism, (and the prosecution did grant it) the whole Act of Accusation and trial based upon it dropped to the ground, for nothing was alleged nor proven against the accused but that which is written in the programs of Communist Parties everywhere—namely, the overthrow of the existing system of government and its substitution by a working class government by means of a social revolution.

Thus, the charge of "conspiracy," based upon the use of the terms "revolution," "violence" and "force," must either be applied to Communist Parties everywhere, for all of them use these terms in describing the change from one system of government to another—or it must be dropped against persons alleged to be Communists in India. In view of the unequivocal statement of the prosecuting counsel, acting on behalf of the Government,

that "the organisation of a Communist Party in itself, is not a criminal offence"—the whole case against the accused falls to the ground, for they were accused, and convicted, on no other grounds than this. All the evidence brought against them to prove a "conspiracy," only tended to show: (1) That the accused were either Communists or acted in collaboration with Communists; (2) That they propagated a programme written by Communists from the Communist point of view; (3) That in accordance with this programme, they advocated the organisation of a political party of the Indian working class, whose object should be the attainment of full social, economic and political emancipation; and that (4) To this end, affiliation to the Communist International was advocated. So it is ridiculous to try to camouflage the real nature of the case, whose object was to stamp out the germs of a militant labour movement in India.

### **IS THE INDIAN CLAIM TO FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY UNCONSTITUTIONAL ?**

It soon became evident that such a prosecution of working class ideology and tactics in India, under the auspices of a Labour Government in Britain, would be too bald a violation of the fundamental rights of citizenship which ostensibly exist there. Despite the rigorous censorship on Indian news, reports of the trial began to leak out, and protests arose in Britain at this monstrous attack on the liberties of the Indian working class. It was at this stage that the prosecution deemed it wise to shift the ground of its attack, and to pretend that the accused were being tried, not as Communists and Socialists, but because of an alleged "conspiracy" against the sovereignty of the King-Emperor. The proposed Party of Indian Workers and Peasants would be smothered in its infancy, not because it was a working class organisation, but because it threatened to challenge British rule. The case for the prosecution now became: "Certain persons, believing in Communism, conspired together to give effect to their belief by means of criminal force." This charge is based on the authority of Clause I. in our programme, which calls for the "establishment of an Indian Republic, free from all foreign control," and on the use of the terms "force," "violent revolution," etc., which occur in the course of the exposition of the Communist ideology. **It should be remembered that no overt act or incitement thereto could be alleged against any of the accused.** It was deemed that any possible sympathy on the part of the British proletariat would be successfully alienated, if the accused were tried, not as leaders of the Indian working class, but as enemies of the Empire. This

was indeed a clever move, in view of the fact that a large majority of British workers still harbour illusions about the Empire, which so far as they are concerned, is but a gilded chain. Such a transparent stratagem could only succeed however, in a country like India, situated thousands of miles away from the militant working class movement of Europe, and where the few constitutional safeguards that exist can be brushed aside at will by the arm of an all-powerful bureaucracy. The judicious muzzling of the press kept the progress of the case shrouded in silence, so far as the outer world was concerned, and a snap judgment convicting the accused was allowed to pass without comment in the British Liberal and Labour Press, in a test case which will serve as a precedent for the future suppression of the Indian Labour movement. Is it a criminal offence to advocate the establishment of a democratic Indian Republic, free from all foreign control, by the use of force if necessary, granted that no overt act or incitement thereto can be proved?

The advocacy of the use of force, as opposed to mere constitutional agitation for the achievement of the social revolution, which is the admitted goal of all schools of working class thought, is the chief difference that divides Socialist and Communist tactics. Yet this difference in ideology and tactics does not render Communism illegal in other parts of the British Empire. The right of free self-determination for subject peoples, and the establishment of an autonomous government, is one of the principal planks in the platform of the British Labour Party (in power to-day as the Labour Government), and of the Socialist International to which it is affiliated. Where then, occurs the "criminal conspiracy," in having openly advocated a universally acknowledged right? The British lawyer for the prosecution, acting on the authority of the Government of India, which is responsible to the Secretary of State and the Labour Cabinet, urged the conviction of the accused on the plea that "the conspirators believed that British domination stood on the way to the economic and social emancipation of the Indian working class, and therefore proposed to destroy this domination." So it is only depraved Communists, who in India are convicted as "criminal conspirators," who hold that Imperialist domination is prejudicial to the welfare of subject people? A frank statement on this question from you, Right Honourable Sir, as the leader of a great proletarian party and of the Second International would be very illuminating, particularly in view of your attitude on the rights of the people of Georgia to freedom and self-determination.

## **DOES BRITISH LABOUR STAND FOR INDIA'S RIGHT TO FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY ?**

The final argument of the prosecution resolves itself into this : " The Vanguard of the Indian working class stands for the overthrow of British Imperialism, because the economic and social emancipation of the Indian masses require it." Now the question arises—is this demand unconstitutional, looked at not only from the viewpoint of class-interest, but from the democratic angle of vision as well—an angle which you, Right Honourable Sir, profess to judge all questions, whether Home, Imperial or Foreign. Another question which occurs as a necessary corollary to the first, is whether your Government, as an essentially social democratic one, has done anything, or proposed to do anything, which can or will prove that the social and economic freedom of the Indian working class can be achieved within the framework of the British Empire ?

The programme of an Indian Republic, free from foreign control, is entirely legal and constitutional, if there is any meaning at all in the loudly-proclaimed doctrines of democracy and self-determination which are so dear to your heart. Yet you and your colleagues, supposedly wedded to these lofty principles, have scarcely arrived in office when you sanction the prosecution and conviction of eight individuals who advocate the same thing for India. We expected that under a Labour Government, the Indian workers would receive protection, at least in so far as the elementary questions of hours, wages and conditions of work were concerned ; we expected that the Indian masses would receive freedom of economic and political organisation and propaganda ; that the Socialist and working class movement would be freed from the illegal disabilities under which it has been placed by the autocratic powers of the Indian government. It was in this expectation that I addressed my first letter to you, soon after you assumed office. But contrary to these expectations, and true to the notorious treachery of social patriotism (in your case, imperialism), the persecution of the Indian working class became fiercer under the Labour regime. Strikes have been crushed without mercy, and peaceful and unarmed strikers shot down by the rifles and machine guns of the Imperial police and soldiery, acting under orders from a Labour Government in Britain. Yet its Prime Minister remains an adherent of Fabian pacifism, and speaks eloquently of the blessings of disarmament. At the very moment when British Justice, under the ægis of a Labour Government, was condemning four youths to four years' rigorous imprisonment

on the charge of "criminal conspiracy," for having advocated the use of force in ridding the Indian people of the ravages of capitalist imperialism—at that same moment, the forces of British law and order were shooting down unarmed strikers in the town of Cawnpore, a few hundred yards distant from the scene of this judicial mockery! If to use force be a criminal offence, then the British Government of India which was "established by force and maintained by force," is far more culpable than we! And it is you, Right Honourable Sir, and your Labour colleagues, who will one day stand at the bar of history to answer for the crime of perpetuating this reign of force!

### **IS BRITISH SOVEREIGNTY IN INDIA LEGITIMATE ?**

We are accused of having organised a "criminal conspiracy" against the domination of foreign capital, as embodied in British rule. Has it never occurred to our Imperial rulers, who were the Labour Party of yesterday, that you yourselves have questioned the legitimacy of British sovereignty in India? You, of all persons, require the least to be reminded in what fashion this boasted "sovereignty" was established, and of the fact that governments which have been established by force and which are maintained by force usually end by being overthrown by force. We are accused of conspiracy for having advocated the illegal as well as legal organisation of a political party of the Indian working class. If we work "illegally," it is because we are not allowed to do so legally, despite the recent declaration of the Government prosecutors that "the organisation of a Communist Party was not in itself, illegal." Is it legal, we ask you, to surreptitiously open the private post of free citizens, and to seize, copy or destroy their contents? Is it "legal" to ban the circulation of Socialist, Communist and working class literature; to set spies on the trail of Indian Communists from one country to another, after forcing them to live in exile from their native land? You speak of conspiracy! The British proletariat would have a thrilling tale to hear, if the organised conspiracy on the part of our Imperial rulers against the freedom and well-being of the three hundred millions half-starved, exploited and oppressed men, women and children of the Indian Empire were fully told! You speak very much of "Humanity," Right Honourable Sir. Where is that love of humanity manifest in your avowed intention to perpetuate the infamous domination of British Imperialism in India? When we are arraigned before a British Court of Justice on the charge of criminal conspiracy for having advocated the freedom of the

Indian people by the use of force, if needful, our only answer to your legal scribes and pharisees is : **"Physician, heal thyself!"**

### **HOW WILL YOU SOLVE THE "INDIAN PROBLEM?"**

We repeat, and we challenge you to repudiate this statement, that the economic interests of the colonial and subject peoples require the destruction of Imperialism. India, as a colony of the British Empire, is no exception to this law. While you and your colleagues are flagrantly violating the first principles of that democracy which you uphold, and persist in your brutal persecution of the Indian working class, your Government has manifested its desire to "solve the Indian problem," in the same manner by which Lloyd George "solved" the Irish and Egyptian problems.—by placating the native bourgeoisie! Indian capital will be permitted to combine with British capital to exploit and oppress the Indian proletariat and peasantry to an even worse degree than at present; the forces of "law and order" will be placed at their joint disposition to shoot down Indian strikers whenever necessary. Protection is being granted to Indian industrialists in the name of "Reforms," to win them over to the side of bureaucracy. By granting the demands of the Indian bourgeoisie, and taking into confidence the "elected representatives of the people," it means only that the upper strata of the population, hardly two per cent. have been admitted into the Imperial partnership, to share in the exploitation of the Indian masses! This is no Labour policy; it is the politics of Liberal Imperialism! Will the condition of the Indian workers be in any way altered thereby, except for the worse; and will it not be the final means of forcing the British proletariat, already the victim of chronic unemployment, to sink to the level of coolies? These are the politics of Imperialism, which you and your colleagues of the Privy Council have pledged yourselves to preserve and perpetuate. The success of this policy will mean the intensified exploitation of the colonial masses on the one hand, and the depression of the standard of living of the home proletariat on the other.

### **THE REAL SOLUTION.**

The only real solution of the fatal crisis in which civilisation finds itself involved, is the total destruction of Imperialism, and a change from the capitalist system of economy to a Socialist one. The rise of a militant working class party in India is one step towards this goal. By challenging the right of British capital to dominate India, under any pretext or in any disguise, the pro-

jected compromise between the British and Indian bourgeoisie will be frustrated, and Indian labour will act as the ally of British Labour in their common struggle for emancipation. This fact is clearly realised by our Imperial rulers, and therefore, their excessive nervousness over "Bolshevik conspiracy" and "Bolshevik propaganda." Our programme represents the objective demands of the Indian working class and once given the freedom of agitation and organisation, we would carry the masses with us. Hence this brutal repression, which is not only a violation of the constitutional rights of the Indian people, but treason to the British proletariat as well. If the Labour Government persists in denying the Indian masses a constitutional outlet for their grievances, they will be obliged to take refuge in the only weapon which remains to them—Force, employed as an instrument of freedom, to overcome force maintained as a tool of exploitation and oppression. And who shall dare to say that the Indian people will not be justified? Not the British proletariat, in whose name you are playing the role of the watch-dog of Imperialism.

In view, therefore, of the grave significance of the situation, I call upon you, Right Honourable Sir, in the name of the Indian masses, to reconsider your policy. I repeat the demands made in my first letter. Let the Labour Government come to the assistance of the Indian working class, instead of carrying on clandestine negotiations with British and Indian capitalism. Let the monstrous judgment of Cawnpore be reversed, and the accused set at liberty. Give the same rights and protection to Indian Labour as prevail in Great Britain—recognise the rights of organisation and propaganda on the political and economic fields. Lift the ban on Socialist and working class literature. Legalise the existence of trade unions, and equalise wages, hours of work and conditions of labour with those prevailing abroad. Grant a general amnesty for all political offenders, and declare the rights of the Indian people to self-determination and autonomy.

Only by such measures can the British Labour Government justify its pretensions to be a government of the working class, and be true to the principles laid down in its programme of Socialism. Will you have the courage, Right Honourable Sir, to inaugurate this new Labour policy upon the ashes of the old? The verdict of history awaits your decision.

(Signed) MANABENDRA NATH ROY.  
Zurich, Switzerland,

June 5th, 1924.

# The New Trend in Industrial Organisation

**T**HE present wave of industrial unrest is bringing up new problems before the Trade Union movement of this country, and the vigorous Press campaign to explain the position throws an illuminating light on the current conceptions as to what is, and what should, constitute the functions of the trade unions. It is therefore, important to try and see what is the real significance of these ever-recurring revolts, in order that the Party shall be able to intensify its work inside the unions. For it is being more abundantly proven everyday, that the real basis of our work is in the workshops and in the unions.

This is recognised to the full by the capitalists, who are raising the present campaign against the Party, not so much because of our influence now, as the fact that they recognise our work is on the right lines, and constitutes the greatest menace to them in the immediate future.

The trade unions of this country developed at the same period that capitalism was getting into its stride. Because of the highly specialised and technical knowledge required at that time to produce the various commodities, it was chiefly craft unions that were the first to develop. Not only were these first unions craft in structure from the necessities of technical requirements, but the leaders and workers organised in them had an entirely different mental outlook from the unskilled workers, who were left to drift unorganised. The craft-unionists forced to the front, and a labour aristocracy was created.

## ***BASIS OF "PEACEFUL PROGRESS" IDEA.***

Now, general economic and political theory in the middle of last century accepted the idea of the stability of capitalism. Few leaders or workers visualised any other possible economic system outside capitalism. This resulted in the machinery and practice of the unions being made to fit in with this conception of stability. It was in this way there grew up the fetish of peaceful negotiations, conciliation boards, arbitration courts, and the acceptance of the principle of long and binding agreements. All these have been developed right from the early days, and for years the unions were never looked upon by the leaders or by the

mass of the workers as organisations of struggle. Time had to elapse and with it many bitter experiences gone through before it was realised that the objects of the labour unions were not merely to battle for better conditions, but actually to mobilise the whole of the workers on a class basis to fight for the overthrow of capitalism.

With the intensification of capitalism, however, the conceptions of peaceful progress, and the unchallenged sway of the craft unions began to be challenged, first by sporadic unofficial strikes, and secondly by the organising of the unskilled workers in unions like the Gasworkers, and the Dockers' Union. Both these unions have led large mass strikes, in which they have been hampered by the lack of assistance from the craft unions. But despite this, they have won through, until to-day, the unskilled workers in many cases are undoubtedly better organised than the craft unions.

This has led to many changes and modifications in trade union structure, but the basis upon which the official movement has developed has remained the same; that is, the denial of the class struggle, and the real role the unions must play in this, the continual striving for arbitration and conciliation, courts of enquiry, and latterly the coming into the open on the part of many of the leaders for an industrial truce, and an open alliance between the unions and the employers' organisations.

### ***THE UNOFFICIAL STRIKES.***

The class struggle, unfortunately for these leaders, cannot be suppressed. The intensification of economic conditions, and the inability of British capitalism, in face of its post-war problems, to any longer give concessions to the British unions, has led not to the glossing over of the class struggle, but to a situation where, periodically, thousands of workers are forced into unofficial strikes. It is absurd to imagine these masses of workers want such strikes for the sake of striking. These strikes are taking place because economic conditions are so desperate and the union machinery so sectionalised and obsolete, that honest workers are forced to sweep aside all constitutional considerations, and go forward (many times in a blind struggle, and with certain defeat confronting them) independent of their unions in an attempt to get better conditions.

It is this fact of the inability of the capitalists and the union leaders to stop these unofficial outbreaks that is now the most significant fact before the whole of the working class. The

ruling class, and their Labour lieutenants are now seeing all the elaborate machinery of conciliation, and peace by negotiation attacked, not by an army of revolutionaries, but by masses of workers forced to this, in a struggle for what they conceive to be ordinary trade union conditions. That is the real reason why the press is filled with warnings from the trade union leaders of the Clynes' school, warning the workers of the dangers of unofficial strikes, smashing the nice little trade union "House that Jack Built."

### **THREE EXAMPLES.**

We can take three examples within the last year which show conclusively the new trend within the ranks of the masses themselves. The unofficial strike of 70,000 dockers last June and July, the unofficial strike of 7,000 shipyard workers at Southampton in March and April this year, and lastly, the unofficial strike of railway shopmen (the most conservative and reactionary section of the trade union movement taking them as a whole). Two outstanding features of these unofficial strikes are, first, that all of them take place in industries where the unions catering for these workers have taken special pains to build up "peace by negotiation" machinery. Secondly, these strikes have taken place when unemployment was rampant, and at a time when 1,250,000 workers were still unemployed. *In all these unofficial strikes not a single case of blacklegging in the accepted sense of that word has taken place.* This fact is of the greatest importance. It represents the value of the work done by the Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement, and also the growth of class consciousness amongst the workers, which is reflected in this growing solidarity in times of strikes. Then we should note that in the case of the official strikes which have taken place, the Dockers, the Tramwaymen, and the Locomotive Engineers, the impetus to strike came from the workers, and the settlements when made, met with fierce opposition from large numbers of these workers because their full demands were not conceded.

### **GROWTH OF MINORITY MOVEMENTS.**

The lesson from this survey is that a growing conflict is now taking place as to the future development of the Trade Union movement, and there can be no doubt as to the ultimate issue. All strikes, and particularly unofficial strikes, are indications of how the workers actually feel in the railways, factories, mines, etc. At present these strikes are spasmodic in character, and when defeated, cause a few workers to become demoralised. Some want

to drop out of the unions, others want to form new unions, while others just become apathetic. But the bulk of the workers as a whole profit by such strikes. Their activities inside the existing organisations increase always with a view to re-organising the organisational structure, and the mental outlook of the various unions. Out of this activity we get our minority movements.

The present-day active minorities are growing stronger every week. Soon they will have to face the most violent opposition, not only from the capitalists, but from the reactionary trade union leaders, because these people know that their power and influence can only be challenged by effectively organised propaganda work inside the existing organisations.

We may be sure that, as the struggle between the workers and the capitalists develops, more and more leaders of the Cramp type will take their stand with the employers. These men are not fools. They see, even clearer than many of our own people, where this struggle is leading to, and they are afraid. That is why they are not prepared to be associated with it. They know that the smallest strike now becomes a political issue, leading rapidly to a situation where the State has to be brought into what appears to be an ordinary trade union conflict. This is one of the accompaniments of big multiple unions. Because they recognise this, they range themselves with the capitalists in order to stop, or stem the struggle, and thus become the servants of capitalism, for it has more effect upon the workers, when they find their leaders opposing a certain strike, without disclosing their real motives, hiding behind talk about "honouring agreements," "the unity of the unions," etc. Their real motives, however, are revealed when they write, as did Mr. Cramp during the recent strike, of the Minority Movement, in the following polished terms:—

"This is a fight between order and mob law. It is only one manifestation of an underground movement which has been going on for a considerable time. Almost every large union in the country has been afflicted by this foul disease. Wherever it has temporarily established a hold, disaster to the workers has invariably followed. In his opinion what was needed in the British Labour movement at the present time was greater courage in dealing with all those disruptive elements. The organised Labour movement should realise that attempts to placate or temporise with the forces of anarchy, while they may provide a breathing space, must lead to worse disasters later on, and the steady disintegration of the forces of the workers, rendering them less potent to protect the general interest of their members."

Can anyone reading this screed be in doubt now as to where Mr. Cramp stands? Is this not the outburst of a trade union leader, who sees clearly the new development that the unions are taking, and who, unable to stop it, or stem it, resorts to vilification.

Yet the Minority Movement will grow, and that because the objective conditions will force it along—all the Mr. Cramps to the contrary.

As the Communist Party sees it, the new situation is one of the greatest importance. The future is full of big battles, tremendous difficulties, and the whole-hearted hostility of the official trade union bureaucracy. Yet our work in the unions and the workshops is our biggest field of operation. We shall meet with setbacks, we shall be many times misunderstood; mistakes will be made, but all the time, the movement, as a whole, will be marching steadily on, and the influence of our Party increasing.

Now, as never before, must we estimate the forces in our own movement, and in the camps of the enemy aright. No more spasmodic agitations, but careful organised activity; the constant carrying out of Party policy and the pushing up of the sales of the Party organ; the systematic reporting on work done and results achieved—this is what will lead to the Party building out of the various Minority Movements, a strong and mighty Communist Party of Great Britain.

HARRY POLLITT.

### **RESOLUTION ON MINORITY MOVEMENT.**

*(Passed at the Party Conference, Manchester.)*

In view of the new trend in industrial organisation, and the importance of the Minority movements now springing up we append to Comrade Pollitt's excellent survey of recent events connected with the unofficial strikes, the resolution on the Minority movements passed at the Manchester Conference of the C.P.G.B. in May.—(Editor.)

“This Conference of the Communist Party of Great Britain, notes with pleasure the growing revival of activity now taking place throughout the whole working class. It marks the first stage in the stemming of the capitalist offensive of the last three years, and the slow gathering of the workers forces to go forward in a united attack against the capitalists.

The crisis which the workers' movement has passed through for the last three years has openly betrayed the bankruptcy in ideas and leadership of the reformist elements directing the activities and struggles of the workers.

The existing organisations of the workers no longer respond to the new demands of the workers for united action to secure common demands. Hence the workers are forced into a struggle with the existing reformist leadership in order to realise their most immediate needs and demands. The growing opposition movements now springing up in the leading trade unions, industries and the Labour Party, are the first expression of the concrete raising of the demands of the workers and of a definite challenge to the existing leadership.

The Communist Party welcomes these minority movements as the sign of the awakening of the workers.

The Communist Party will throw itself wholeheartedly into the struggles of the minority movements, and will do all in its power to assist them in their struggles.

The Communist Party, however, declares unhesitatingly to all the workers that the various minority movements cannot realise their full power so long as they remain sectional, separate and limited in their scope and character. The many streams of the rising forces of the workers must be gathered together in one powerful mass movement which will sweep away the old leadership and drive forward relentlessly to the struggle for power. Only so will the partial and sectional struggles around which the minority movements are grouped to-day find their realisation as their struggle unfolds itself.

Yet in the actual fight to achieve their immediate demands the workers will be brought up against the whole organised power of capitalism—the State, and they will be forced further forward in the actual process of this struggle. As the fight develops, new leaders will be thrown up out of the ranks of the workers, who will either have boldly to lead, or be cast aside as the workers sweep forward in their fight for the realisation of their demands.

Therefore, as the struggle develops, the importance and absolute necessity of the Communist Party to the working class becomes more and more clearly revealed. The opposition movements can only go forward under the leadership of a powerful Communist Party, which can unite its forces and carry through the struggle to its revolutionary goal. Out of the struggles of the opposition movements of to-day will be forged the Communist Party of to-morrow.

Therefore the Communist Party, while working inside the minority movements, will on no account sacrifice its separate existence or limit its freedom of agitation and propaganda. On the contrary, while assisting and leading the workers in their everyday struggles, it considers it to be its duty at all times to intensify the struggle, and explain to the workers the real nature of the issues involved. By these means, it will win the workers to the Party in ever-increasing numbers, and prepare the working class for the real problem that confronts them, that of the conquest of power."



# Death of D. Ivon Jones

**R**EADERS of the *Review* will regret to learn of the death of Comrade D. Ivon Jones, who has contributed many brilliant and informative articles to our journal. Comrade Jones was an indefatigable and sterling proletarian worker for Communism. I first met him in Moscow in May, 1921, where he had come from South Africa to represent the International Socialist League—as it was then called—at the Third Congress. In commission we often met to discuss the problems in the Anglo-Saxon section of our movement, and I soon came to appreciate the invaluable qualifications of Jones as a fighter for the closer co-operation of our British Party with the Colonial parties.

He was very keen about organising the Negro natives of South Africa. He had made a special study of the ethnographical and cultural obstacles to work amongst the natives, but never lost faith in the belief that one day the workers in South Africa—black and white—would unite against the bloodsucking exploiters of the Rand. His faith and devotion to the Communist International was an example for all to emulate.

Born in a small village in Wales of working class parents in the year 1883, Jones' early life was the usual lot of working class children. Going to work at 13, first one thing, then another, he finally emerged as a shop assistant. At the age of 19 he became obsessed with the idea of going abroad as is characteristic of most lads in Great Britain. He went to New Zealand with that hankering and striving after the something he couldn't find in Wales. During his four years stay in New Zealand, he worked as an agricultural labourer in Otago, learning to milk cows, plough land, shear sheep and other proletarian tasks. Still yearning for the indefinable, he turned his thoughts to South Africa, and it was here, since 1906, he found his forte in work amongst the struggling proletarians, educating, organising and helping in the common task of combating the gold-bugs of the Rand.

He became a member of the young Labour Party, and soon became known as an ardent student of Marxism. I recollect in those days sending him literature from our Socialist Labour Party literature depot in Glasgow.

The first years Comrade Jones spent in South Africa were given over to Trade Union work—no mean task in those days

just following the British annexation of the Dutch Republics. In such work, the division and national hatred amongst the proletariat—sedulously fostered by the gang of crooks who run the mines—brought Jones face to face with the practical and complex problem of the natives. His proletarian instincts, however, remained strong enough to counteract the sophistry of the bourgeois democratic theories of race, and till his death he stood for a policy of uniting the black workers with the white workers in the common struggle against the oppressors.

In 1914, he became General Secretary of the Labour Party, Comrade Andrews as President collaborating with him. But when the European War broke out Jones and Andrews, who set their faces against the imperialists were forced to resign. A split was the result, and the International Socialist League was formed with a little paper called *The International*. Comrade Jones became editor, and during the war he raised his voice and used his pen with vigour to denounce the imperialists. For this, like so many other brave proletarians, in the Colonies, as in Great Britain, he was outlawed. It was during this period he contracted the fell disease of consumption, which brought him to an untimely end.

Jones was a true Internationalist. He heard and responded to the call in 1917 for the conference at Stockholm. He had no hesitation in lining up with the Third International launched in 1919, and in October, 1920, he left Durban to come as delegate representing the faithful band of Internationalists in South Africa to the Third Congress.

During the repression of the Rand strike, and the murderous butchery of the workers by the bloody Smuts, Jones could not contain himself in Soviet Russia. He longed, and indeed planned to come to Great Britain that he might do something to help to muster the support of the British trade unions to try and stay the hand of Smuts. But his health and strength was fast ebbing. Only those of us with whom he talked, could appreciate the tragedy of the situation. It is questionable, if he had travelled at that time if he would have reached England alive.

Readers of the *Review* have already been acquainted with the qualities of Jones as a writer, and a student of Bolshevism, or, better still, Leninism. I had arranged with him to do a series of articles exclusively for the *Review* with the design of bringing into our movement more of the spirit and teachings of Leninism. Already two of these have appeared. His untimely death deprives

us of a rich feast of studies and researches in Leninism, inestimable for a movement such as ours, in this country with little revolutionary experience.

The loss is ours, and with the comrades in the Colonies it will be up to us to fill the gap and go forward strong in the determination to carry on the noble task of working for the unity of the disinherited in England and throughout the Colonies towards the emancipation of the exploited from the grip of the imperialists—the task to which our Comrade Jones dedicated his life.

THOMAS BELL.

P.S.—This brief appreciation of Comrade Ivon Jones would be incomplete without a word of praise to Comrade Davidovskia, who was most attentive and devoted to Comrade Jones in his illness. All the English-speaking delegates, who have been privileged to meet Nurse Davidovskia will join with us in thanking her for her services.

## *Pluiose*

(In Memoriam D. IVON JONES.)

See how the veld is blood-red : full the spruit,  
 Furrow and donga as with sanguine rain—  
 (Even as a flood-mark of our strife and pain,  
 Bitter, yet sweet)—o'erfull in sluit on sluit ;  
 That what we sowed be harvested—ripe fruit,  
 Honey of bees and yellow growth of grain.  
 Thus nature's cycle : how can be in vain,  
 Comrade, your life's endeavour and pursuit ?

So, too, is Ivon one with those that fell,  
 Brothers whose blood has stained the veld in fight—  
 (How are their names still hallowed in our ears!)—  
 Boer or Briton, Bantu—black or white :  
 Thus shall be quenched the smouldering fires of hell,  
 Thus shall be harvested the golden years.

L. A. MOTLER.

# Moscow Mummies

By DR. ROBERT DUNSTAN.

**T**HE Soviet Government and the Communists of Russia wage a relentless warfare against ignorance and superstition. Their efforts to liquidate illiteracy, the use of the Army as a great educational institution, and their care of the children have received wide publicity and recognition, and in no department of the new life in Russia can the energy and enthusiasm of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League be better seen than in the widespread effort to overcome the legacy of dark nescience left by dead Czardom.

During my recent visit to Moscow as the guest of Dr. Semashko, the Chief Commissar of Health, I had a great opportunity to see and study the work of the Health Ministry to educate the people in a scientific and rational way. It must be remembered that under the old regime the masses were kept in a state of ignorance and superstition, and that the orthodox Greek Church was not the least important instrument used by the ruling classes to maintain their privileges and to exploit the workers and peasants. Till one has seen the crowds of worshippers and heard the countless bells of Moscow's sixteen hundred churches at Eastertide, it is impossible to estimate the power of the Church in the past and to realise its position now as the last stronghold of reaction, a fortress yet to be overthrown.

It is pitiful to see to-day in Russia poor deluded men and women prostrating themselves with foreheads upon the floor before the altar, whilst the priest in rich vestments mumbles his Mass, and to see them kissing the ikons and the glass of the cases in which rest holy relics, though it is significant to note that the younger generation of workers is not to be seen in the churches, the revolution having emancipated them already. The widespread belief in the supernatural is carefully fostered by the Holy Synod and it will take time to eradicate the results of centuries of priestly teaching, and the glittering golden domes of the Moscow Churches speak of the success of the priest in exacting not only a spiritual belief but something much more substantial from his flock.

It is difficult for a modern-minded person endowed with any degree of scientific knowledge to enter into the state of mind of

the poor ignorant Russian workers and peasants, who, thanks to the teachings of the Church and the considered policy of the old rulers, still in large numbers believe that life is a constant battle between saints and demons for the possession of the souls of men, and that, but for some miraculous intervention, victory must go to the devil, and that by the aid of holy ikon and saints' bones men's souls may be saved. Yet such is the current belief of thousands of people to-day in Russia and because of this the Church is still powerful and capable of mischief. Nevertheless, the Church is doomed. The children are being given a rational education and no priest will be able to coin in the minds of the rising generation a spurious belief in the miraculous.

### **SANE EDUCATION.**

Now that the Workers are in power the whole weight of the Government is thrown on the side of a sane education, and throughout Russia a great educational process is going on. The Commissariat of Health has organised and equipped in Moscow a splendid Social Hygiene Museum and similar exhibitions will be opened throughout the country. The museum is arranged entirely to provide the workers with an everyday knowledge of health rules, physiology and anatomy. Beautiful models, pictures and diagrams demonstrate the simple facts of life, and once these are understood by the people the superstitious belief in the supernatural wanes and the power of priest and church declines. The Exhibition is visited by thousands of workers and, during the morning I was there, parties of soldiers were being lectured to by skilled teachers and groups of workers from the factories, and children kept arriving for demonstrations. The Medical Superintendent told me that on a Sunday and on public holidays long queues form, the people waiting patiently to see the circulation of the blood demonstrated through the web of a frog's foot. First they are lectured to from diagram and model, and then they see the actual movement of the blood under the microscope. The Museum is unique—nowhere else outside Russia can such a one be seen—its sole object being the education of the working masses.

There is, however, one corner of the Exhibition of especial interest, for there are to be found the now famous Moscow Mummies. There they are in a series of glass cases. First you see the mummified remains of rats and snakes—just such as are to be found in the woods or on the breaking up of the walls of an old house. There is nothing supernatural about these; the workers and peasants have seen the like hundreds of times. Next lie the

mummified bodies of six saints, holy miracle working saints taken from the monasteries of Moscow. Many were the tales of wonder told of these dead saints and many thousands of the devout have visited them in past times. Yet there is a strange resemblance between their poor shrivelled bodies and those of the rats and reptiles, and, worse still, there is an exact likeness between them and the body in the next case. You ask "Is this also a saint?" and the answer comes—"No. It is the mummified body of a coiner found in a disused cellar in Moscow and brought here to lie alongside these miracle working saints, whose miracles were of even less value than the false coins he used to make."

### **FALSE COINERS.**

It almost makes one gasp to see coiner and saint side by side, their mortal remains speaking now to the ignorant and superstitious, and then the humour of the situation comes and you laugh outright. But what effect has this upon the workers and peasants visiting the Museum, you ask, and you are told by the intellectual and smiling woman doctor that the young workers and soldiers see the point at once and laugh as you have done; but many of the older visitors, and especially the old women, on seeing the saints, cry and kiss and rub their foreheads upon the glass of the cases. The teachings and tradition of the past are too strong for them, the coining of ignorance was too well done.

Thousands of peasants visit the Museum to see the Mummies; their fame has been spread broadcast throughout the land. The number of people who can read is increasing by leaps and bounds and the tale of the Saints and Coiner has been printed in the papers for all to read. Whatever may have been the fame of the Saints in the past, it was small as compared with their present renown, and who will say that holy saint, coiner and rat, mummies though they be, will not now work together the wonder of opening the eyes of the Russian masses, allowing them to see clearly and so to emancipate themselves from the ignorance of the past.

# The Agrarian Crisis

By E. VARGA.

*[This article by Comrade E. Varga, the well-known Communist authority on World Economics and Statistics, forms part of a lengthy report presented to the Fifth Congress of the Communist International on "The Decline of Capitalism." In view of the timidity of the Labour Government in this country to deal with the Agricultural problem, this article of Varga's throws a timely flashlight upon the objective conditions now prevailing throughout the world of agricultural affairs, and is exclusive to the "Communist Review."—Editor.]*

Closely connected with the general crisis is the agrarian crisis, which has been lasting for several years, but has received scant attention. In my "Crisis" I have already referred to the agrarian crisis as an important phenomenon, but only in connection with economic United States. The reason for this was the fact that the agrarian crisis remained concealed for a long time because of the effect of inflation. The harm that came to the farming business through the low prices for agrarian products—low as compared with the general level of prices for industrial products—was compensated for through the automatic depreciation of mortgages, through the actual exemption of farmers from taxation, and through the circumstances that the farmers were able during the inflation period to purchase their industrial products below reproduction costs.

The agrarian crisis is of special social significance, since it has a tendency to separate the small and middle-sized farmers from the capitalist class, and to loosen their identity of interests. This expresses itself most sharply in the United States in the efforts to organise a third party.

*The "Scissors."*—The economic reason for the agrarian crisis is the so-called "Scissors," i.e., the opposite development of prices for agricultural and industrial products during the post-war period. It is exceedingly difficult to express this in figures. From a purely economic viewpoint it is impossible to establish a normal relationship between the prices of agricultural and industrial products, unless one were to assume that the price for agricultural products must be so high that the cultivation of the unrented ground, the yield of which is still necessary for supplying the world market, nets the average profit on the capital. This is theoretically correct, but it can by no means be estimated in figures, since too many factors, modificatory in nature, are brought into play: land hunger, freight rates, varying produc-

tivity, depending upon the climate, weather, etc. There is no other recourse for us save to take the relationship of prices in a normal year, in other words, a price relationship uninfluenced by either agrarian or an industrial crisis, as our starting point. Such a year is 1913, which in most cases was also chosen as the starting point for estimating the various index figures. Since, however, inflation has caused confusion in the price relationship and since there are no index figures for prices fixed uniformly for all capitalistic countries, it is hardly possible to use the index figure for determining the "scissors." Depending upon the weight attached to the industrial and agrarian products in estimating the various index figures, contradictory figures are arrived at for the different countries.\*

Under these circumstances it seems best to us to use the figures for wheat, the most important agricultural product, as our starting point. In Table X are given the market prices of certain grades of wheat in the most important produce exchanges of the world, divided into export and import markets, as well as the notations of such European countries as on the whole produce their own supply. The price quotations of pre-war times show that the prices in the export markets were graded quite evenly, depending upon the distance from or freight charges to Western Europe. With the European countries there is a sharp divergence of prices, depending upon whether there is free trade or protection tariff. Thus the price for inland wheat per quarter was (all prices are expressed in gold francs) :—

| <i>Free Trade countries</i> |     |       | <i>Protection countries</i> |     |       |
|-----------------------------|-----|-------|-----------------------------|-----|-------|
| Average 1913.               |     |       |                             |     |       |
| London                      | ... | 19.86 | Berlin                      | ... | 24.56 |
| Antwerp                     | ... | 19.89 | Paris                       | ... | 27.82 |
| Rotterdam                   | ... | 20.60 | Milan                       | ... | 28.10 |

If, now, we follow the prices, figured in gold francs, in all important exchanges of the world, we see that with the exception of France the price of wheat everywhere lags far behind the general rise of prices. If we compare the present moment, in

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\* The various German index figures are quite contradictory on this point. The index for wholesale trade of the federal statistical office of Germany, for instance, was fixed at the end of November at 98.9 for grain and potatoes, and 155.8 for industrial products, hence a very strong "scissors." During the same period of time the index figure for wholesale trade given by the *Industrie und Handelszeitung* was fixed at 79 for grain, flour, etc., at the same time that the general index figure was 145, hence a divergence of almost 100 per cent. On the other hand the wholesale index figure for the *Frankfurter Zeitung* during the same period showed the very opposite tendency: food and articles of consumption, 1,584, total index for ninety-eight classes of goods, 1,565.

other words, the course of prices at the beginning of April, 1924, with 1913, we find the following :—

|                        | <i>Average 1913</i> | <i>Beginning 1924, April</i> |
|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Chicago ... ..         | 17.19               | 20.37                        |
| Karachi (India) ... .. | 17.26               | 19.16                        |
| Argentina ... ..       | 19.03               | 18.60                        |
| London—Manitoba I      | 20.90               | 23.05                        |
| Plata ... ..           | 20.61               | 21.77                        |
| Berlin ... ..          | 24.86               | 21.24                        |
| Antwerp ... ..         | 19.89               | 22.49                        |
| Paris ... ..           | 27.82               | 24.00 (about)                |
| Milan ... ..           | 28.10               | 25.07                        |
| Rotterdam ... ..       | 20.60               | 24.83                        |

These figures are all reduced to gold francs. If we take into account that the general purchasing power of gold, as reflected in the wholesale trade index figures for the United States, is about one-third less than in 1913, it is evident that the price of wheat at this moment is far below that of pre-war times in the whole world. And as wheat may be looked upon as characteristic for all agricultural products (except textiles), there can be no doubt but that the position of the farmers in the world's markets has become considerably worse, and that there is a "scissors" in the world market. The difference is sharpest in the countries where there was a high tariff on grain before the war, which, however, during the post-war period was either removed or greatly reduced : Germany, France, Italy.

### **THE CAUSES OF THE "SCISSORS."**

The reason for this difference in the fixing of prices between agricultural and industrial products is above all the fact that during the war and after monopolies were established in industrial concerns in greatly increasing numbers. Through the formation of trusts and monopolistic companies the prices of industrial products and monopolistic companies the prices of industrial products are more and more placed outside of competition, and the profits of organised branches of industry are increased at the expense of those not comprised in such combinations. Owing to the fact that there are untold millions of independent producers, a monopolistic fixing of prices is an impossibility in agriculture. The monopolistic fixing of prices can take place only in exporting countries with the help of the government, as was the coffee valorisation scheme in Brazil. Attempts of that sort were made in the United States and Canada, but thus far without success.

Were such an artificial concentration of surplus export for purposes of raising prices to come to pass in the most important countries, the "scissors" would in all probability disappear rapidly. It would be quite sufficient for Argentina and Canada to create a monopoly for the export of grain, since these two states together with Russia, which monopolises its whole foreign trade anyway, control the world's grain market.

The creation of such monopolies is prevented, however, by the circumstances that the capacity of the European market, which is decisive in shaping prices, for absorbing the product is very small as a result of the decline of European capitalism that is taking place just now. Thus the agrarian crisis and the crisis of European capitalism are closely inter-connected.

### **DIFFERENT MANIFESTATIONS OF THE "SCISSORS" IN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES.**

The reaction of agriculture to the "scissors" was and is different in the different countries. In this connection the divergent policy governing the fixing of prices in the belligerent countries during the world war is of importance. In the countries of the European continent a maximum price was fixed for the agricultural products, at which the farmers were compelled to yield their produce. Although these maximum prices were constantly circumvented by the farmers, this system, nevertheless, led to a decrease of the gold earned from agricultural products and also to a decrease of production itself. In the Anglo-Saxon countries, however—England, the United States, and the British colonies—the very opposite price policy was followed. No maximum prices were fixed and everything left to free competition. But the governments bound themselves to purchase certain agricultural products, above all wheat, for a number of years at a fixed price which was set rather high. This system tended to the very opposite of the fixing of maximum prices in the continental countries of Europe: it led to the extension of production, as this proved very profitable for the producers. The surplus profit of agricultural producers was, of course, turned into capital and led to a sharp increase in the price of land. Then, when this system was abrogated after the close of the war, the effect of the collapse in prices that soon followed was felt in the following manner:—

In England and the United States, where all land is in private hands, and where the rents had been increased, corresponding with the higher productivity during the war, the crisis was and is severest. It manifested itself in the United States in this manner:—

hundreds of thousands of farmers went bankrupt and left their farms, streaming into the cities. Other hundreds of thousands were only held on the farms because their creditors left them unmolested, their calculation being that if these debtors sell their land at auction, the creditors will eventually lose everything, while if they left them on their farms there was at least the hope that under more favourable business conditions they might be able to collect. In 1923 the crisis among the wheat farmers in certain parts of the United States (the Dakotas) became such that hundreds of financial institutions were driven into bankruptcy. The reason for this is the fact that the leases and rents went up during the war, but the farmers, who during the boom bought land at high prices on credit or leased it, are now, in the face of the low prices, unable to pay their interest or rent. In England, where the farms are in the hands of better situated capitalists, such a catastrophe did not ensue.

But in both countries the result is a *sharp shrinkage of the area devoted to the raising of grain*. The area under cultivation was :—

|               |        | Average.          |         |        |        |         |
|---------------|--------|-------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|
| IN ENGLAND :— |        | In 1,000 hectares |         |        |        |         |
|               |        | 1909-13           | 1917-21 | 1922   | 1923   | 1924    |
| Wheat         | ... .. | 767               | 854     | 796    | 704    | —       |
| Rye           | ... .. | 23                | 36      | 34     | 30     | —       |
| Barley        | ... .. | 748               | 611     | 552    | 537    | —       |
| Oats          | ... .. | 1,634             | 973     | 873    | 800    | —       |
| IN THE U.S.A. |        |                   |         |        |        |         |
| Wheat         | ... .. | 19,065            | 24,670  | 24,779 | 23,574 | 16,263* |
| Rye           | ... .. | 905               | 2,212   | 2,513  | 2,118  | 1,771   |
| Barley        | ... .. | 3,084             | 3,251   | 2,991  | 3,228  | —       |
| Oats          | ... .. | 15,118            | 17,311  | 16,468 | 16,498 | —       |
| Corn          | ... .. | 42,181            | 41,635  | 41,152 | 52,152 | —       |

In England the area under cultivation is far less in extent than during the pre-war period. In the United States the cultivation of winter wheat in the fall of 1923 was 13 per cent. less than in 1922. This means that the United States with an equally good harvest has only half as much wheat to export as in 1922.

In *Canada and Argentine* the area under cultivation has increased still further despite the low prices. This is to be ascribed to the fact that there is still free land to be had† and that the extension of grain cultivation includes lands that were thus far not tilled at all. The original fertility of this land is made use of and with intensive cultivation and very small expenses harvests are

\* Without summer wheat.

† Free land in the economic sense, i.e., at prices that from an economic standpoint cannot be regarded as in lieu of rent; for example, the low tax in Canada.

achieved that even during the present time of low prices make the effort put into production worth while.

The area under cultivation in Canada was :—

|                 | Average                           |           |       |       |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
|                 | 1919-1913                         | 1917-1921 | 1922  | 1923  |
|                 | <i>(In thousands of hectares)</i> |           |       |       |
| Wheat           | 4,025                             | 7,505     | 9,074 | 9,175 |
| Rye             | 47                                | 325       | 852   | 586   |
| Barley          | 637                               | 1,096     | 1,052 | 1,127 |
| Oats            | 3,884                             | 6,139     | 5,885 | 5,372 |
| Corn            | 125                               | 108       | 129   | 129   |
| In Argentina :— |                                   |           |       |       |
| Wheat           | 6,496                             | 6,572     | 6,451 | 6,967 |
| Rye             | 34                                | 97        | 87    | 128   |
| Barley          | 93                                | 253       | 243   | 258   |
| Oats            | 970                               | 1,024     | 1,059 | 1,112 |
| Corn            | 3,525                             | 3,285     | 3,177 | 3,425 |

In *Continental Europe*, where agriculture is for the most part conducted by peasants, the "scissors" began to show their full effects only now. Their detrimental effect upon the position of the peasants, as already intimated above, was prevented by the fact that the farmers during the inflation period for the most part got rid of their mortgages; that until very recent times, also as a result of inflation (in Germany, Poland, Hungary, Austria, in part also in France), they had to pay taxes that were minimal in comparison with pre-war times; that they produce but once per year and by the immediate use of the money realised can escape the losses due to inflation; and that, finally, in purchasing goods they profited by the circumstance that industrial products were being sold under production costs.

The peasants began to feel the full weight of the agrarian crisis the minute stabilisation had taken place. Immediately they are loaded down with taxes in gold. The new mortgages must be made out in gold values and the interest paid in gold. The fixing of prices now turns very much against the farmers, in that they must now pay for the industrial products that are manufactured from raw materials at a much higher advance than before the war.

The classic example for this is furnished by Germany, where at present the agrarian rests upon the peasants with all its weight. The change in the fixing of prices is especially significant. We here cite several figures from the *Borsen Courier* of Berlin for December 9, 1923 :—

|                             | Middle November Increase |            |                 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------|-----------------|
|                             | 1913                     | 1923       | (1913 eq. 100)  |
| Production costs for rye :— |                          | Per 50 kg. | (in gold marks) |
| Rye bread                   | 8.22                     | 9.75       | 119             |
| Retail price of rye :—      |                          |            |                 |
| Rye flour                   | 15.00                    | 31.50      | 210             |
| Rye bread                   | 14.00                    | 22.50      | 160             |

In other words, hand in hand with an increase of 19 per cent. in the cost of producing rye there goes an increase in retail prices of 60 and 110 per cent. respectively :—

|   | 1913  | Middle November<br>1923<br>Per 50 kg. | Increase<br>(1913 eq. 100)<br>(in gold marks) |
|---|-------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Production costs for oxen (live weight) ... ..  | 52.00 | 115.00                                | 221   |
| Wholesale price for oxen ... ..                 | 73.00 | 325.00                                | 445   |
| Retail price for beef (meat for cooking) ... .. | 87.50 | 400.00                                | 444   |

At the same time that there is an increase of 221 per cent. in the costs of production, there is double the increase in the retail price. The difference between the cost of production and the wholesale price has risen from 41 per cent. to 183 per cent., and that between wholesale and retail prices from 20 to 23 per cent.

|  | 1913  | Middle November<br>1923 | Increase<br>(1913 eq. 100) |
|--|-------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Production costs for hides Munich (½ kg.) ... .. | 0.61  | 0.60                    | 98 p.c.                    |
| Wholesale price for sole leather (1 kg.) ... ..  | 2.25  | 3.36                    | 149 p.c.                   |
| Retail price for box calf shoes ...              | 12.50 | 24.67                   | 197 p.c.                   |

A reduction of the cost of raw hides of 2 per cent. is matched by an increase in the retail prices of 97 per cent.

Conditions have changed but little during the last quarter of a year. German agriculture is in dire need, and this distress is heightened by the fact that credits can nowhere be obtained, inasmuch as all German business suffers from a lack of capital. The big agrarians are looking for a way out through agricultural protective tariffs. This might help agriculture, but through the consequent raising of prices for the necessities of life would make the lot of the German proletariat worse, and would lead to grave wage conflicts. The raising of wages, on the other hand, would lessen the ability of German industry to compete and would cause a still severer crisis in the whole of Germany's economic life.



# Joan the Revolutionary

**I**T is a commonplace to say that Shaw is one of the great dramatists of all time. Listening to "Saint Joan," one rejoices afresh that such a man not only has lived and worked, but lives still and may add yet to the monuments of mankind. The play grows like a piece of music. It gives us a theme most familiar—Joan of Arc, and yet unfamiliar—Joan the Revolutionary; simple—a life sacrificed to the stability of established powers, yet rich in possibilities of variation—a victim to the barons, the Catholic Church, the English conquerors. Through six scenes, the theme develops, with humour and wisdom, poetry and passion, and the epilogue brings together harmoniously and emphatically all parts of the design.

And yet it is an unfinished symphony. "The true tale of 'Saint Joan,'" says Shaw, "is a tale with a glorious ending." So it is. But Shaw does not give us the end.

Joan, it must be remembered, was all unconscious of the extent of the challenge implied in her mission. Here was an urgent task to be done—the English to be driven from France. What more natural than that the nobles should help and the Church bless the work? What more obvious than that all French-speaking people should unite for it, and find a focus for their loyalty in a glorified king? The thing was so desirable, so reasonable: none but friends of the English could oppose it. Obstruction was an ever-new bitterness to her. She did not know that the wind which was sweeping the English from France might also wreck both abbey and castle. She did not know what great historical forces she represented. But those who had reason to fear knew them.

To the feudal aristocracy her message spelt danger from below and above. From below, in that it brought upon the scene the *nation*, in which the feof was dissolved, and called for allegiance to a common king, rather than to the several feudal lords. From above because, as if to give a head to this shattering movement, the king was conceived as holding his authority from Heaven, and no longer by virtue of being the accepted of the barons. (How these indeed became the guiding principles of English monarchs between the end of the Wars of the Roses and Cromwell's Commonwealth—the period of the disappearance of feudalism in England—is well-known. They were no less abhorred by the

French lords, though denounced in the play by the English Earl of Warwick.) True, such a king would need skilful statesmen and administrators, and by filling these offices the barons might continue to exercise power—which is, in fact, what they did in England in the centralised monarchies beginning with Henry VII's. But this was an adaptation to conditions which had changed in spite of them; and so long as the change only threatened (as in Joan's day), they resisted it in all possible ways.

Moreover, it was by no means certain that the high offices would be their preserve. The Church might well succeed in making them its own. The English nobles had not so long ago experienced this; but that was in a time when they were yet strong enough to impose their will upon the king (Henry III.) and send the cardinals packing. Besides, they were reinforced on that occasion by the English prelates, who had been alienated from Rome by the greed of the papal envoys. It was not difficult to foresee a Wolsey in England, a Richelieu or Mazarin in France.

Jealousy between Church and barons was therefore very keen. The former saw nothing amiss in making the king a vassal of God. Would he not then submit the more readily to be directed by itself—the authoritative interpreter of the Divine will upon earth? On the other hand, the crusader could look tolerantly upon the heretic and the heathen, as checks upon the power of Rome; while it was precisely upon this count of heresy that the Church pursued the Maid. Independence of the individual judgment and conscience, denial of the infallibility of its dicta, that was the arch-sin—the first tremor of the earthquake which, increasing in violence with changing material conditions, would presently bring the Holy Roman Empire crashing down. For the purpose of the Church her death was less to be desired than her recantation—a spectacular renunciation of the exercise of her own reason and a submission to the Church. But for political example nothing sufficed but the burning of this creature who unknowingly challenged the mediæval order of society.

And while the vigilant in Church and State united to destroy her (in a resolve the more implacable because prompted by sincere loyalties of their own), she found the lesser minds too ranged against her, either from jealousy, from indolence, or by reason of having been trained, as are the lesser orders of every society, in ideas acceptable to the ruling class. To her father, she was an unnatural girl, not submitting to drudge for a father or a husband; to the lord of her manor, a peasant who lacked a proper

sense of duty to her feudal master; to the captains of the army, an upstart with wild new methods of warfare. And so on.

Therefore she was burned: to receive in the aftermath the belated and interested worship of her executioners, and to demonstrate how a name which once spelt a menace to the well-established may be transformed into a buttress and an ornament. And not in her epoch alone: in our own day she has been canonised.

In the epilogue Joan appears, moved and made radiant by the chorus of praise. "Shall I come back to you?" she asks. . . . Heavens! No! Her worshippers are horrified. It is not Joan the Revolutionary they have been praising, but Joan the Angel. If she returned, they would have to kill her again. Political and ecclesiastical necessity still exist; and slaughter is still to some a profitable business, as the executioner remembers. The world may some day be ready for such as she: meanwhile, however. . . . And one by one they depart. What more? Only that Joan cries passionately to Heaven, "How long, O Lord! How long?"

Why did not Shaw complete his glorious theme? He has shown us in terms of a fifteenth century tragedy how the general advance of mankind has been made in the teeth of powerful class interests. As long as society is organised to the glory and profit of a part only of its members, so long will that part defend its privileges with fire and sword and shells, though all conditions else be ripe for change. The feudal lord has gone, the feudal church and the tribute-levying king. Their successors, the modern capitalist class, are not a whit behind them in the practice of terror for a similar end. We remember the Commune of Paris, the Bloody Sundays of St. Petersburg and Berlin, Amritsar and Jaita, the invasion and blockade of Soviet Russia. The bourgeoisie is fighting, as the feudal powers fought, against the rise of a new ruling class. It sees coming to power the common people—Joan's people—they who have been through the centuries serf and villein, yeoman and handicraftsman, soldier and proletarian: whose toil has fed and clothed and housed and armed their masters, filled their coffers and fought their battles.

What Shaw's pen has left unfinished, the workers shall complete by their deeds, upon the vast stage of five continents.

MARY TALLAND.

# The A B C of the International

**M**ANY things have happened since February, 1922, in which issue of the *Communist Review* the relation between Communism and an international language was discussed. For example, the *Daily Sketch* (24/10/23), discovered that Zamehof the inventor of Esperanto, "was the uncle or great uncle of Trotsky himself," and hence that language "came into being for Communist propaganda purposes," and was believed by the Bolsheviks to be "a precious aid to international revolutionism." But apart from such Pip-and-Squeak journalism, there has been a steady growth of activity in Left-wing circles to remove the barrier of language diversity, now impeding the path to real internationalism.

Our German comrades now run the monthly *Völker-Spiegel* which collects by Esperanto news from the world's workers. There is *L'Antinationaliste*, which exclusively propagands among the French workers. The monthly *Sennacieca Revuo* has grown to twenty large pages in addition to its regular *Literary and Scientific Supplement*, issued from Leningrad. The British League of Esperantist Socialists has recently sold 3,000 copies of its pamphlet *Esperanto and Labour*. And if the "neutral" Esperantists can claim to have succeeded in interesting the League of Nations enough to issue an Esperanto version of the *Bulletin of the International Labour Office* and to have persuaded the British Broadcasting Company to allow the King's Wembley speech to be broadcasted, we can point to the appearance of many articles in Labour and Co-operative journals and also to translations of important articles by Bogdanov and others made available for the workers of every land in the Esperanto workers' press.

Four books of special interest to Communists recently issued by the publishing department of Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda are *Eklumo en 'Abismo* de Henri Barbusse, *Dokumentoj de Komunismo* the evergreen. *Komunista Manifesto* and *A.B.C. de Sennaciismo*. Upton Sinclair's works are being translated and *The Iron Heel* is ready for the press. Sections of Ernst Toller's plays have appeared already in the Esperantist

journals and some Manchester enthusiasts have made the *Plebs Outline of Psychology* available to the world in the same way. These are important signs of progress.

Organisation is, however, as important as the growing literature of the movement and the following paragraph from the *Workers' Weekly*, (2/11/23), summarises one development of this :

### **REVOLUTIONARY ESPERANTO.**

“ A section has been formed among the Communist Party members of Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda, the revolutionary Esperanto association. The section referred to was established at the Third Congress of S.A.T., at which presided Comrade Drezen, Vice-Director of All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets. Its objects are (a) to uphold S.A.T. in its aims towards helping the world revolution by means of Esperanto : (b) to help the Communist Party by means of S.A.T., (c) to combat the action of those who are tending to split the movement for a world language for the workers.”

It rests especially with the Young Communist League to swell the ranks of the British members of that section. They might well follow the example of James Connolly in this respect for he realised the use of Esperanto in uniting for action the proletariat of the world.

Those of us who are Marxists have always recognised that it was modern means of transport and communication which created the possibility of internationalism. The strides forward made by wireless telephony in the past year have further developed this. The great majority of the workers have not up till now, the means for the delights of foreign travel ; they can hardly meet the postage costs of foreign correspondence. But the humble possessor of a wireless set should he try to listen in to Europe to escape the B.B.C.'s Sunday music and sermons, will find the barriers of language have come on to his kitchen table. And remember, this form of communication is only in its infancy. If we notice that already messages have been broadcasted—in Esperanto, by the way—over the 9,000 miles between Japan and America, we can well imagine “ listening in to Trotsky ” as he welcomes the delegates to the opening session of a conference at the Third International. And why not? Surely internationalism is more worthy of the wireless waves than Imperialistic notions.

Drezen has already from the Moscow station spoken in Esperanto on Russia's development.

Such a removal of the barriers of time and space between the peoples of the world invites one to think upon the future of nations themselves. Will the nations in a world in which the oceans lead to everywhere, the railways link coast to coast, and the radio transmits messages round the world in a few seconds—will they retain their previous differences of habits, customs and language? The answer surely is, No. The modern nation is the creation of capitalism in its fight with an international ecclesiastical feudalism. It is one of its many contradictions that capitalism, while it is based on the nation and nationalism, is continually forced to destroy that of others and its own. In its imperialistic stage it swallows up other nations and destroys or absorbs them; by unemployment, forced emigration, exploitation, and by the horrors of war it forces the worker to be international and to work finally for a classless and nationless world.

This will not come in an automatic way; we can assist and hasten a world culture—richer and greater than any sectional one could be—by helping to sweep away the language barriers.

The Bible has been translated into 500 out of the existing 800 languages in use, but the literature of the new faith based on science and a control by man over society will not follow that example. We can take one step in practical internationalism, and to that state of which it was said: "Behold the people is one, and they have all one language . . . and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." And when the cry, "Workers of the world, unite," has been realised what will they not imagine to do?

MARK STARR.



# INTERNATIONAL REVIEW



## THE ELECTIONS IN FINLAND.

It is not too late to speak of the elections in Finland, though held in the early part of April. The capitalist press has been quiet on the results. The Social-Democrats have on the other hand gleefully hailed the "defeat" of the Communists, who now only number 18 deputies in place of 27.

876,000 electors went to the poll. The four bourgeois parties (Nationalists, Coalition Progressive, Swedish Nationalists and Agrarians) have secured 529,000 votes, a reduction of 10,000 compared to the previous election.

The Social-Democrats secured 253,000 votes, a reduction of 37,000 compared to the previous election.

The "Electoral Unions of Workers and Agricultural Socialists" received 92,000 votes, whilst at the last election the Socialist Labour Party, which took its stand on the platform of the Third International obtained 120,000 votes.

It has to be remembered that the Finnish bourgeoisie dissolved in August, 1923, the S.L.P. which adhered to Communism, imprisoning all its known militants and its deputies, altogether some 200 comrades; suppressed the Party's papers and seized its printing plant. Those workers who adhered to the Party had thus to go to the poll for their party which was illegal.

The Social-Democrats encouraged these repressions, and never made the slightest attempt to obtain the liberation of the prisoners, and even recognised the right of the police to dissolve the electoral committees formed by revolutionary workers.

Since the atrocious repression in 1918 of the Soviet revolution, the

Communist Party of Finland has been underground. The elections have thus been held in an atmosphere of white terror, which explains the abstention of a good many working class electors.

### 1,126 POLITICAL PRISONERS ARE IN JAIL.

At the opening of this year there were lying in the prisons of Democratic Republican Finland:—

483 workers condemned following the events of 1918;

450 political prisoners, condemned between 1918 and 1922;

120 political prisoners, arrested before the month of August, 1923;

63 Socialists arrested in August, 1923;

10 militants arrested since August.

Why does the International Socialist Press which has hailed with delight the electoral successes of the Social-Democrats—accomplices of the counter-revolution—maintain an obstinate silence on the persecution of the workers? K.M.

## ZAGHLOUL, THE EGYPTIAN CONSPIRATOR.

Since his advent to power, Zaghoul, the man of liberal ideas, the man who stood for "complete independence," the "father of the people," has revealed himself the most inveterate of opponents. He has made use of the utmost demagoguery to deceive the Egyptian people in order to place himself in power—this being the his one single object—and once having attained his object, he has employed all his energy in strengthening the profiteers and exploiting the people.

Being naturally unable to fulfil his promises to the people, Zaghoul endeavoured by all means possible to crush any movement, which, sooner

or later, would demand a rendering of accounts.

To accomplish this he began with an attack on the Egyptian Communist Party, realising that that was the only party which at the opportune moment would know how to profit from this deception—a deception practiced upon the Egyptian people, now disgusted with his promises and hypocracies—and lead the people along the only road to safety, the revolutionary road.

At first he tried a very naive plan. He went so far as to pretend to the General Secretary of the Party, that, through the medium of a private secretary, he had had an interview with the English King, who was "an ex-Socialist, but whose duties kept him apart from the movement meantime," which otherwise he would have graced with his august patronage. Naturally this offer was declined. Zaghoul then tried another scheme. He had the Secretary of the Party brought up before the Governor-General, and ordered the king's prosecutor to menace him, going so far as to threaten hanging.

When he found these methods failed to intimidate the Party, he then created a special department and spent as much as 1,000 Egyptian pounds a month in attempts to corrupt individual members of the Party, and to create a circle of agent-provocateurs, in order to work up a plot which he promptly named "a conspiracy against the safety of the State and the King." By these means he succeeded in manufacturing his "plot," which led to the imprisonment of a large number of

our comrades, including the General Secretary of the Party.

Without any real evidence, on the merest presumption, by false reports and false witnesses—persons put there by himself and paid for it—he has succeeded in keeping our comrades for the last three months imprisoned, with no communication whatever with the outside world. They were torn away from their families and their work and ill-treated. They now lie in prison awaiting their trial, which is still to take place. In the meantime, Zaghoul is busy preparing false documents and evidence, and a whole army of corrupt witnesses.

The aim of the Party is known to everybody. The Party stands as the defender of the oppressed. It aims at the abolition of exploitation of man by man, and is composed of honest and sincere workers, who are conscious of their duty, and whose life, both public and private, testifies their complete devotion to these objects.

Zaghoul, who has done his best to discredit the Party, by false and wily accusations, is only discrediting himself. The Party is certain that this plot will be exposed, just as similar plots against our brothers in other countries have been, and that the Party will emerge from its trials more resolute, more steeled, to continue unwearingly its task towards accomplishing the revolution.

Long live our imprisoned comrades. Long live the Communist International. Long live the Egyptian C.P. Long live the world revolution.



# Review of Books

*My Past and Thoughts.* Memoirs of  
**ALEXANDER HERZEN.** Translated  
by Constance Garnett. 2 Vols.  
7/- Chatto and Windus.

These two volumes, the subject of the present notice, are translations from the sole complete and copyright edition of "My Past and Thoughts," which was published in the original Russian at Berlin, in 1921. We are promised in the future several other volumes, and as Herzen is extremely discursive in style, giving miniature and full length portraits of his fellow revolutionaries and friends, we almost feel at times as if the author and ourselves were sitting round the samovar sipping tea and having an intimate chat about the Russian Intelligentsia and Exiles of the Forties and Fifties.

These Memoirs begin with the story of Alexander Herzen's early life, his student years, of two exiles and of his later travels in Western Europe, with his settling (in the early 'fifties) in England. Herzen was born in 1812, and died in Paris in 1870; and he was from first to last a lineal ancestor of the revolutionary thinkers and active workers, who helped to make possible what he had the vision to foresee, the near and inevitable end of the political and social order of the European Christian and Feudal world, and its regeneration by the regeneration of Russian thought.

He was a member of a wealthy and aristocratic family, but quite early in his student years in Moscow, incurred the displeasure of Nicholas I. and was first imprisoned in the Krutitsky Barracks, and then exiled to Perm in April, 1835. This Nicholas, who introduced the death penalty into Russian criminal proceedings, began his reign with the execution of five leaders of a rising caused by his cruelties. Herzen, still a schoolboy, records: "*I do not know how it came to pass, but though I had no understanding, or only a very dim one, of what it all meant, I felt I was not on the same side as the grapeshot and victory, prisons and chains.*" And again, when taken by his father to the religious service in the Kremlin in commemoration of the victory of auto-

cracy, he wrote in his Memoirs in England in 1855: "*I was present at that service, a boy of fourteen, lost in the crowd, and on the spot, before that altar defiled by bloody rites, I swore to avenge the murdered men, and dedicated myself to the struggle with that throne, with that altar, with those cannons. I have not avenged them, the guards and the throne, the altar and the cannon all remain, but for thirty years I have stood under that flag, and have never once deserted it.*"

It need scarcely be noted that the flag of revolt in those days in Russia was inscribed with the quite mild Liberal demands for a Constitution, and for the freeing of the serfs; but that the young theorists, who even then were forming the soul of modern Russia, and incidentally of modern Europe, realised that their aim in a last resort was a social revolution, we have evidence again and again in these memoirs.

"The period that followed the suppression of the Polish insurrection educated us rapidly. . . We began with inward horror to discover that in Europe, too, and especially in France, to which we looked for our political watchword and battle-cry, things were not going well; we began to look upon our theories with suspicion. The childish Liberalism of 1826 which gradually passed into the French political theory . . . lost its magic power over us after the ruin of Poland. . . In the midst of this ferment, in the midst of surmises, of confused efforts to understand the doubts which frightened us, the pamphlets of St. Simon and his followers came into our hands. They impressed us." And later on, when writing of the student groups with which he came in contact: "But not all ventured with us. Socialism and Realism remain to this day the touchstones flung on the paths of revolution and science. . . There can be no talk of choice; it is harder to bridle thought than any passion, it leads one on unconsciously . . . If thought gets the upper hand in any-one he does not enquire about its

practicability, or whether it will make things easier or harder; he seeks the truth, and inflexibly, impartially lays down his principles, as the St. Simonists did at one time, and as Proudhon does to this day."

These brief extracts synthesise some of the evolution through which Herzen passed before he came in contact with the great nineteenth century interpreter of the inevitable social revolution, Karl Marx. Most of us have passed through similar intellectual and spiritual experiences, and if we substitute the word Communism for Socialism (which latter word has become discredited by traitors to the cause of the People) we shall find, as did Herzen nearly a hundred years ago, that it is the touchstone on the path of revolution.

So much has been written about the horrors of Siberia under the regime of the Czars (our late allies) that the reading public must be satiated, but the account of the following scene witnessed by Herzen on his first exile journey to Perm throws a side light on the Czarist treatment of his Jewish subjects, which needs no comment. An officer, met at one of the etapes, invites Herzen to a cup of tea and confides his worries to our author :

"You see they have collected a crowd of cursed little Jew boys of eight or nine years old. Whether they are taking them for the navy or what, I can't say. At first the orders were to drive them to Perm, then there was a change and we are driving them to Kazan; a third were left on the way (and the officer pointed to the earth). A Jew boy you know, is such a frail, weakly creature, like a skinned cat; he is not used to tramping in the mud every day and eating dry bread . . . well they cough and cough until they cough themselves into their graves. And I ask you, what use is it to them? What can they do with little boys? They brought the children and formed them into regular ranks; it was one of the most awful sights I have ever seen, those poor, poor children. Pale, exhausted, with frightened faces, they stood in thick, clumsy soldier's overcoats, with stand-up collars, fixing helpless pitiful eyes on the garrison soldiers who were roughly getting them into ranks.

The white lips, the blue rings under the eyes looked like fever or chill. And these sick children without care or kindness, exposed to the icy wind that blows straight from the Arctic Ocean, are going to their graves."

Is it any wonder that the Russian Jews are among the staunchest and best of the world revolutionaries?

After Herzen's two exiles, and the death of his father (which made him financially independent) he decided to travel in Western Europe, where he was a witness of the slaughter of the Paris Communards, about which he wrote in his book "June Days." He eventually settled in England, and founded a paper called *The Bell*, which for years was smuggled into Russia, and had a large circulation there. That Herzen was a deep thinker and had the true international spirit is proved by two quotations from the volumes under review: "Only the mighty thought of the West, to which all its long history has led up, is able to fertilise the seeds slumbering in the patriarchal mode of life of the Slavs. The workmen's guild and the village commune, the sharing of profits and the division of fields, the *mir* meeting and the union of villages into self-governing *volosts*, are all the corner-stones on which the temple of our future, freely communal existence will be built. But these corner-stones are only stones . . . and without the thought of the West our future cathedral will not rise above its foundations. This is what happens with everything truly social; it inevitably draws the nations into mutual interdependence."

Herzen also foresaw that "The Pacific would be the Mediterranean of the future." We who are now alive see how right he was; and we are able also to realise that it was his exile in Siberia that gave him the necessary insight into Pacific conditions to enable him to make the prophecy. Kropotkin, writing of Herzen says: "I know of no Western writer with whom I should be able to compare Herzen"; and he was right, because to few Western writers has been granted the experiences in both east and west from which an international synthesis and forecast of revolutionary events could be formed.

Since the days of Herzen, another supreme writer and worker in the revolutionary cause arose at the

psychological moment, when war had disrupted the decaying power of Czardom; and from the moment when he led to power the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils to the day when overwork and overstrain removed him from the battlefield of life, Ulianov Lenin gave to the world a series of writings and appeals which form the most concrete, the most scientific and the most statesmanlike interpretation of post-war economic and political conditions that the rapidly concentrating forces of revolution could desire. All revolutionary students who would understand the present situation in Russia and in Western Europe should read these Memoirs of Herzen's.

The following illuminating flash lights up the psychology of the seriocomic "Labour" Government, which in England is at present betraying the workers. "The Western European is not in a normal condition, *he is moulting*. Unsuccessful revolutions have turned inwards, none of them have transformed him, but each has left its trace and confused his ideas, while the natural historical process has left in the foreground the slimy stratum of the petit-bourgeois, under which the fossilised aristocratic classes are buried, and the rising masses submerged. Petit-bourgeoisdom is incompatible with the Russian character—and thank God for that . . .!"

DORA. B. MONTEFIORE.

*The World's Trade Union Movement.*

By A. LOSOVSKY. Published by the Trade Union Educational League, U.S.A. 50 cents.

This is a handy booklet of 125 pages summarising in eight chapters the trade union movement from a world viewpoint. The author, Comrade Losovsky, as General Secretary of the Red International of Labour Unions is exceptionally well placed to deal with the subject. The book in fact is a stenographic report of a series of eight lectures delivered before the school of the Russian Communist Party in Moscow during July and August, 1923. It was published in pamphlet form in the Russian language early this year, and is herewith presented in English for the first time.

It would be impossible in our very limited space to deal at length with this very comprehensive story of world trade unionism. Suffice to say

the author covers the field of trade union activity before the war and the period following its conclusion. We thereafter get a graphic picture of the rise of the Amsterdam International, its theory and practice, and the origin of the Red International of Labour Unions, which sought to crystallise all the revolutionary elements in the trade union and syndicalist movement. We see opposed to the reactionary trade union leadership with its slogan of "identity of interests between Capital and Labour," the R.I.L.U. or Profintern, for short, with its slogan of Unity upon the basis of the Class Struggle.

In the last lecture, No. 8, we get a useful compendium of the relation of the forces mustered under the Reformist and Revolutionary banners respectively.

No worker who wants a clear comprehensive statement of the difference between Amsterdam and Moscow can be without this book. B.L.

*Lenin: Our Master.* By G. ZINOVIEV.

Published by the C.P. of France. 120, Rue Lafayette, Paris. 2 francs.

Our French comrades have the knack of getting up in handy form all that is worth knowing about the Communist International movement. This latest brochure contains in addition to the text of the pamphlet on the life of Lenin, published in English, and, we hope, familiar to all English-speaking comrades, an account of the visit of the Central Committee to Gorki, where Comrade Lenin died. Zinoviev here gives us a vivid picture of scenes that attended the funeral cortege of Lenin to the Red Square, where a million people gathered to pay homage to their beloved Ilyitch. His discourse before the session of the Second Congress of the Soviets of the U.S.S.R. on January 26th and other two articles on "Lenin and the Workers," and "The Death of Lenin and the Duty of the Leninists," makes a useful contribution to the literature on Leninism. B.L.

*The National Debt.* By PETHICK LAWRENCE, M.P. 2/6. Labour Publishing Coy., 38, Great Ormond Street, London, W.C.1.

Pethick Lawrence has already become well known in connection with his publications on the Capital Levy. Those who want a handy theoretical

outline of the National Debt, and the principles of Debt in bourgeois society generally, should procure this latest little volume on the National Debt.

Propagandists will particularly be interested in the tables which form appendixes to the book. No. 1

traces the history of the National Debt from 1689 to 1924. No. 2 gives the details of the Debt as it stood on March this year. No. 3 gives the figures of the loans to the Dominions and Allies outstanding on March, 1923. A useful little textbook. B.L.

#### PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

*The World's Trade Union Movement.* By A. LOSOVSKY. 50 cents. Published by the Trade Union Educational League, 1113 Washington Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois.

*Public Finance.* By HUGH DALTON. Price 6d. Published by the Labour Research Dept., 162, Buckingham Palace Rd., S.W.1.

*A Guide to the Study of Marx.* By MAX BEER. Price 6d. Published by the Labour Research Dept., 162, Buckingham Palace Rd., S.W.1.

*The American Labour Year Book.* Vol. V. 1923-24. Price 3 Dollars net. Published by the Rand School of Social Science, 7, East 15th Street, New York, U.S.A.

*Notre Maître Lenine.* By G. ZINOVIEV. 2 francs. Libraire de L'Humanité, 120, Rue Lafayette, Paris.

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