

THE Communist

An Organ of the Third (Communist) International

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

No. 100

SATURDAY, JULY 1st, 1922.

[Registered at the G.P.O.
as a Newspaper]

TWOPENCE

ALBERT INKPIN RELEASED

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

By FRED H. PEET

ALBERT INKPIN, Secretary of the Communist Party has been released. Due to leave Pentonville early Friday morning, news was received on Thursday afternoon that he would be liberated by 6 o'clock that evening. Only four of us were able to be present to greet him.

His release brings to mind the exciting days around Black Friday, the raid on the Party headquarters, the throwing into prison of scores of our members, and the general persecution of Communists all over the country—Inkpin himself being convicted on charges arising from the publication of the Statutes and Theses adopted by the Second Congress of the Third International.

Albert Inkpin looked pale and wanted shaving. Obviously he was excited but happy; and spoke in the high-pitched, highly-strung tone of a man who had had only himself to commune with for some time.

I told him I had been asked by the Editor to interview him for the COMMUNIST. He agreed; but, in fact was more anxious to question me than I to question him. Said I, "What sort of treatment have you had?" "Well," he replied, "with the exception of the first two days I served the whole of my sentence in the hospital cell and have had no cause for complaint at my treatment within the regulations; but as comrades know whose lot it has been to suffer imprisonment for advocacy of Communism, the regulations are an abomination. The prison system of punishment—the silent system, the hours and hours spent in complete solitude, the uniformity of food and the general treatment of the prisoner as a mere number in my opinion in no way act as deterrents to crime but are only calculated to leave the average victim of the system embittered and without hope. As for myself, to be almost completely cut off in the midst of an active life from all contact with the outside world was the hardest thing to live down. I should like to say, incidentally, how bucked I was on May Day to hear the strains of the Red Flag and Marseillaise being played by the contingent that passed by the prison."

I talked with Inkpin about the exciting times during and immediately following the raid on the Party and his arrest. "What do you feel now about the charges against yourself?" "It is quite obvious that the prosecution was not so much of myself as of the Party. It was due to our activities during the miners' lock-out, and arose immediately out of the deputation headed by the Duke of Northumberland which interviewed the Prime Minister to demand immediate and drastic action against the Communists and to which the Home Secretary and Sir Basil Thompson were summoned. This became clear as the prosecution developed. It became evident that the very existence of the Party and its freedom to carry on its work was involved—hence, although my own inclination when convicted was to serve the time and get back as quickly as possible, I concurred with the view of those responsible comrades who held that the conviction should be contested to the very last point.

"Literally taken, the charge hit our freedom to publish the decisions of the second congress. These one could say rightly were the basis of our existence as a section of the International. I can see now that had

a good fight not been put up by us the Government would have been encouraged to drive the Party completely underground—as is the case with the Party in some countries."

I was asking what were his general impressions after two days' freedom, when he interrupted by an anxious enquiry as to the truth regarding our Comrade Lenin. Rumours had reached him that Lenin was dead. I replied that information conflicted but it was clear that the effects of the bullets of the would-be assassin were causing grave anxiety.



THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN: Yet Solomon in all his glory was not hoorayed as one of these

"That brings me to your question," he replied. "Of course, I am all anxiety to know what has happened. It is impossible in two days to get a clear idea of what has transpired. I gather, however, that among the principal events you have in mind is the attempt to unite the Internationals in a united working-class front against Capitalist imperialism."

"I must confess to astonishment that the united front (as appears for the moment) should have broken down upon such an issue as the trial of the Social Revolutionaries. That the leaders of the Second International, who have always been so loud in their condemnation of violent methods, should show so much concern for members of a party which I have always understood made political assassination one of the main planks of its programme, is only further evidence of their hypocrisy."

Inkpin expressed his indignation at the silence of these people when Communists and other revolutionary workers have been hanged, shot, and imprisoned for long terms by governments with whom in some cases these leaders have been actually collaborating. "I have just picked up an old copy of the *Herald* where in one column is a tirade of the Second Inter-

national against the Soviet Government for not releasing the Social Revolutionaries and in another a message to the effect that Lenin's life is in jeopardy as a result of the bullets fired into his body by a member of the S.R. Party."

"I am disappointed too," he went on, "at the attitude adopted by the E.C. of the Labour Party on the question of our affiliation. After careful examination of the replies to the Questionnaire presented by the Labour Party Executive, I think the Party has gone as far as it could—consistent with its principles and existence as a separate political force. When I look back to the discussion that took place at the joint meeting between the representatives of the two Executives I feel bound to say I thought the way seemed much easier and that if the questions were replied to—as in fact they have been—in accordance with the views expressed by our representatives on that occasion, the other side would have been equally ready to give practical expression to the general desire for a united working-class front. From the attitude of the Labour Party Executive one can only draw the conclusion that the Labour Party leaders were resolved beforehand never to budge an inch from their determination to keep the Communists out."

"This should only make us determined to redouble our activities inside the trade unions and local Labour Parties. The very struggle to defeat this attempt to isolate the Communist Party will attract larger and larger sections of the workers to our side."

Our comrade then discussed the policy conference and said he was anxious to understand the proposed changes in organisation, adding, that from what he had gathered, they augured well for the future of the Party.

"I should like," he said, "through the columns of the paper, to express appreciation of the efforts made to secure my release and to convey my best thanks to all comrades and friends, too many to write to individually, who have written or telegraphed congratulations on my release."

Questioned whether his opinions had at all changed, our comrade laughed, and asked if I was serious, adding: "To me the cause of the workers—the cause of Communism—is worth every sacrifice it is in my power to make. I only feel more determined than ever to continue the work to which my activities have been devoted for the last eighteen years."

Comrade Inkpin is one more demonstration—added to scores—that prison fails utterly to crush the ardour and determination of a convinced Communist. Rather does it by its injurious insult added to insulting injury reveal the pettiness of the malice of the Bourgeoisie compared with the moral grandeur of the struggling Proletariat. In so doing it prepares and hardens its victims for ever more intense and unflinching devotion to the Revolutionary Struggle.

ALBERT INKPIN

The Central Branch are holding a Social Dance in honour of Comrade Inkpin on Thursday, July 6th, at 7.30 p.m., at 107, Charlotte Street, W.

Tickets, price 1/6, can be obtained from the Secretary, Reception Committee, Central London Branch, c/o 16, King Street, W.C.