

# THE RISING OF THE MOON

By T. A. JACKSON

R. W. POSTGATE, rising from the editorial chair to introduce his successor, likened the transfer to the setting of the Sun and the rising of the Moon. Whether he meant it so or not, the image carries a hint that things romantic and insurrectionary are expected from me;—things like Fenians drilling by night behind the turn of the hill; the glint of pikes at the "rising o' the moon," while a "soft wind shakes the barley."

True, he may have been "pulling my leg." Long gazing at a pile of typescript on the shelf—all that is finished of a history of Ireland—may have led him to tremble and quake at the thought of what you might have to suffer if "copy" does not arrive in a copious stream. Possibly it was no more than a hint:

"Ah, Moon of my Delight that knows no Wane,  
The Moon of Heaven is rising once again,  
How oft hereafter rising shall she look  
Through this same Garden (\*) after me—in vain!"

Or (cruel thought), he may have half insinuated that "the suns rim dips, the stars rush out, at one stride comes—the dark!" But this would be too bad.

The cold fact remains that I am installed in charge; a little lonely, a little awed by the magnitude of the task, but determined and confident that, with the help of all good comrades (among whom I am happy to number *all* the ex-Editors and contributors to the COMMUNIST), the official organ of the Communist Party will not suffer from the transition.

It is for several reasons expedient that I should begin by defining the scope and policy of this paper.

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Francis Meynell, called upon (at a Party Conference) to define the policy of the COMMUNIST said:—

"The policy of the COMMUNIST is the policy of the Communist Party

"It is the policy of the Third International

"The policy of revolution, of class war

"The policy of the intensive culture of class hatred and class contempt."

I cannot find words which express my intention more finely.

To produce a weekly bulletin-review in which is demonstrated the theory and practice of the workers' class struggle; to give to all who suffer a word of hope and a spur to action; to give to all who struggle news of the whole battle; to explain the general directions of the central command; to hold up the banner of the revolutionary ideal; and to express, in fact, in argument, in retort, and rejoinder the innermost soul of the workers' emancipation struggle—that is a programme to tax the capacity, not of one man, but of a thousand.

Let me say at once that *one* man is not going to attempt the impossible.

I am, I suppose, possessed of all the faults of common humanity, with a few special to myself; but an inflamed ego-complex is, I trust, not among them. I shall have to aid me, as their circumstances will permit, all who have hitherto helped to make these pages noteworthy and attractive. My editorial predecessors will be available for aid and advice—Fred Willis near, Francis Meynell and Postgate, if not before me, easily within call. And those whom they gathered as contributors will be available equally for me.

With them will be—if my luck holds, and there is any virtue left in my powers of persuasion—all the new talent that will be gathered at every stride forward that we make.

\* (Covent Garden)—R.W.P.

Postgate, last week, made an appeal for a closer contact between the readers of this journal and its editor. I echo his words and endorse his appeal:—

"The readers make the paper; the paper only lives if the readers are a part of it."

We want not only every Communist, but every class-conscious worker to feel that this is *his* (and *our*) paper.

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That we shall give from week to week a survey of high politics from the standpoint of working class-consciousness, goes without saying. That we shall say what the Communist Party thinks upon the broad issues of domestic politics and industrial conflict, goes without saying, likewise. But we shall, with your help, do more.

Every week, we shall give the cream of such items of fact or comment, supplied by our readers, as will make real and concrete the bitterness of class war and the joy that comes with the abiding hope that Communism brings—and Communism alone.

We want, we intend, and with your help we shall make a new departure. We will build up a voluntary co-operation of readers and writers which will make of the COMMUNIST, not merely a sword flaming in the vanguard of the revolutionary struggle. We will make it the most complete and thorough going expression of working class psychology which has yet been produced in this Bourgeois-blighted land.

Critical destructions of the claims of the capitalist apologists we shall give as we have given. Positive indications of Communist policy on every concrete issue as it arises. These we shall give, and these we know will be welcome—to such as have learned enough to value them. But, even more than that we aim at making every page *alive* with the sense of injury and of revolt, of scorn for the oppressor, and of joy anticipant of the coming triumph of the World Proletariat.

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They tell me that there are some who think that the COMMUNIST has been somewhat too "high-brow" too pre-occupied with high politics, to notice the little things that count for everything in the toiler's life. If it be so, it is a grievous fault. And, you, comrade, reader, must help us to cure it.

Do we omit anything?—write to us about it. Do we seem too calm?—write and wake us up.

Is there a case of special hardship among your neighbours or workmates? Is there a special instance of boss-class brutality or rapacity in your workshop; are your fellow-workers doing anything specially noteworthy in their sector of the class struggle? Are your trade union officials gifted with heads made of bone, even more solid than is usual? Or, is your Labour Member paralysed by red tape and blue funk? Is there *anything* you think the working class ought to know? If so—write to us about it and we'll do the rest.

Don't bother to apologise for bad writing and spelling, don't wait until you've had a course of lessons in composition. Get the facts down: get your feelings on paper. Write as you speak to your workmates. If you can't call a spade "a spade" but have got used to saying "b—shovel," write that and "damn the consequences." We shan't print all you send, of course. We may print none of it—but it will be here to keep us in touch with the state of working class feeling outside these walls.

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For two years now the workers have been on the retreat. Since Black Friday, they have, in Britain, been on the run. Defeat upon defeat, disaster upon disaster; until whole districts, once centres of sturdy re-

sistance, lie supine before the arrogance of the triumph-intoxicated bosses.

This has got to end. And we, more than any, must help to end it. The COMMUNIST is the medium of a call and rallying cry to the workers—flogged and demoralised. Already we see in the engineers and shipyard workers' struggle—which the bosses fondly hoped would result in the total destruction of the organised workers' movement—a sign that the tide has turned; that the workers, having touched bottom, have begun to rise again.

It is our function to accelerate and intensify the recovery, just as we tried to retard and minimise the collapse. It is a magnificent task. It is work that gives promise of an adventure such as should inspire strong men to put out their strength and weak men to take heart and become strong.

With your help, that work we shall do.

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The essential thing is that the workers as a mass should recover self-confidence; that they should look upon the conquest of political power and social mastery as not only desirable but as just and necessary—as, whatever the cost, indispensable and inevitable.

Detached critics will urge that this should be the work of the "Labour Party." That is, of course, true. Were *names* the only things that matter, the work of rousing, rallying, organising, inspiring, and leading the working mass in the struggle for that social mastery and control, which is involved in the much-tortured word "emancipation," would be the first and only work of the "Labour" Party—the Party of the Workers.

It should be—it would be—if . . .

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The plain truth is that the bulk of the Labour Party have no better idea of how the Party was engendered, than has a newborn babe. [And they ought to be getting grown up by now.] If the methods and mental stock-in-trade of the Labour Party were things fixed, fast and frozen, it would be, without question, the paramount duty of everyone seeking working class emancipation, to destroy it at the earliest possible moment.

But they are—methods, ideas, and programmes—none of them incapable of change. From its nature, the Party, must be capable of complete mental and spiritual transformation, once the consciousness of the rank and file becomes sufficiently aroused and concentrated to compel a change. To that end the Communist Party has set itself. It has demanded as a right that it should be admitted to membership, and it is difficult to see on what logical grounds their application for affiliation can any longer be resisted.

Now, especially, when every effort is needed to stop the retreat and get the workers once again to form a front against the foe, it would be little else than treason to pretend that the Communist Party is not fit for inclusion in the Labour Party because it is over-eager for the battle—because it is all too impatient for the day of the workers' triumph.

For the moment it is not a question of triumph. Revolution is not in sight. To-day it is a question of re-starting the fight itself; and on this ground every man and every party claiming to advance the workers' cause, can, and must combine.

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That, then, is the task immediately before us. And (a personal note in closing), the policy of this paper will be, while going straight at the enemy, to have a welcome and a word of encouragement for every fighter, whatever his label, who will help in the work.