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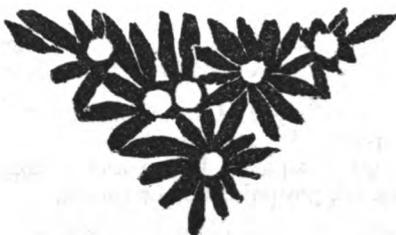
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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

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

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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

*Editor: THOS. BELL*

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## THE EDITORIAL VIEW

**T**HE simultaneous occurrence of two such great events as the installation of the first Labour Government in Great Britain and the death of the great leader of the revolutionary proletariat, the Bolshevik Lenin, is a matter of more than passing interest or mere coincidence. It brings to mind the contrast in the politics of Bolshevism, *i.e.*, of Lenin, of revolutionary action with the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, and that of Reformism, *i.e.*, MacDonald, of gradualism, or constitutional democracy.

It has always been the proud boast of the reformists in this country, chief of whom is the Prime Minister, that the workers can get all they want in Great Britain without resorting to methods of revolution and violence. The constitutional means provided by the Mother of Parliaments—the House of Commons—is the *via media* we are told, for the efficient and lasting redress of all proletarian grievances. And so sedulously has this theory been propagated, that it has almost become an article of faith, particularly in the I.L.P., to speak of British socialism as distinct from Continental socialism, the inference being that there is something peculiar in the British workers' way of doing things compared to the workers of other countries. We say quite dispassionately, no greater fraud was ever perpetrated upon a suffering working class than the suggestion that progress in Great Britain has always been of the orderly, peaceful and gradual character depicted by historical or political romanticists or romantic historians and politicians.

\* \* \* \* \*

From the days of King John and the great Charter, the peasants' revolt under John Ball, the Wars of the Roses, Cromwell, the coming of the factory system with the smashing of the machines and the burning of factories; the struggles of the early trade unions and the Chartists to the modern strikes and political

revolts, progress in Great Britain has always been the outcome of struggle, at times more violent than others, but always militant.

All these instances we have cited show violence and militancy to be as much a British product as anything classed as "Continental." The plain truth is that this doctrine of constitutionalism is the very essence of reformism, and the basic politic of the reformist International of which His Majesty's Ministers are members. Where it is not due to an exclusive Liberal ideology, as in the case of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, it is a cloak for timid respectable careerists in the Labour Movement—a veritable coward's castle.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was to this doctrine the Mensheviks of Russia, including Georgia, appealed when faced with their treasonable conduct to the Russian revolution. It was to this doctrine the Social-Democrats, Ebert and Kautsky of Germany, appealed, when urged by Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and the Spartacists to do as Lenin and the Bolsheviks did in 1917. In Finland, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, not to speak of Australia and New Zealand, we have seen this doctrine applied, and in every case the constitutional patience of the workers has been outraged to the profit and advantage of the capitalist class. We need not here recite the events in either the colonies (Australia or New Zealand) or in Europe, with their stories of jailing, hanging and political oppression. The more recent experience of Germany will suffice to point the moral.

In Germany the Social-Democrats, the one-time powerful model party of the Second International, like the Labour Party of to-day, had greatness thrust upon them. The whole machinery of capitalism had come to a standstill. A social crisis was imminent. Who will save Germany? Why, who is better fitted than the great Social Democrats? Had they not proven from their patriotic endeavours during the war, that they could be relied upon to carry out the constitutional traditions of the country? True, these might be modified by some cheeseparings measures here and there, but better a few sops than risk a social revolution. Social revolutions are fundamentally dangerous to private property, and besides they are contagious. Moreover, we have to remember the good old Liberal maxim that "Giving people power develops their sense of responsibility."

It was in this way and with such language the German workers were persuaded to followed the "Constitutional" path, and with

what results? To-day, they are reduced to the level of a European colony of coolies, to be exploited at will by the bourgeoisie of the world, and none more ruthless than their own. Once the German workers had taken the constitutional path, bit by bit the gains of the democratic revolution disappeared. Nationalised industries, workers' councils, 8-hours day, not to speak of the various reform measures granted under the duress of the revolutionary atmosphere—all have been thrown overboard and, forsooth, to the tune of "saving the constitution."

To-day we can say that to this doctrine of Constitutionalism, we owe the appalling depths of poverty throughout Central Europe, as well as the economic political and social slavery of the subjected peoples in the colonies, particularly of the British Empire.

\* \* \* \* \*

Lenin, in 1920, discussing the possibility of a Labour Government and what MacDonal, Henderson, and Snowden were likely to do, told us that the working class of Great Britain was more likely to be convinced by hard experience than eloquent speeches or brilliant articles. Our lessons have already begun. Although our first Labour Government is scarcely a month in office, we need not wait any longer to form our opinion of what is going to be its policy or its fate. Its policy is already quite clear. In its anxiety not to depart from the practice of its Liberal and Tory predecessors, it is playing the parliamentary game to the limit, from donning the knee-breeches, and graciously kissing the hand of "our Sovereign Lord and Master," King George—symbol and incarnation of everything capitalist—to the establishment of committees on society etiquette for the improvement of proletarian mothers.

The vast and elaborate machinery by means of which the exploitation of the British masses is carried out, still runs as usual and unimpaired. True, Russia has been recognised, but it did not need much courage to do what every diehard Tory was agreed should have been done long ago. The more important questions of extending credits and the repudiation of various debts, still call for the kind of definite action such as one might expect from one Workers' Government to another.

In the language of Liberalism, the Indian natives struggling for liberation from generations of Imperialist slavery, are warned not to expect any more sympathy from this government than from Liberals or Tories, should they persist in direct action. The German workers are told, "You must continue to work, to pro-

duce reparations for the British and Allied Imperialists as before," whilst the unemployed at home are asked to be quiet with the abolition of the "gap!"

\* \* \* \* \*

We have often said that the day the Labour Party assumed the reins of office, that day would mark the beginning of its real troubles, but surely the spectacle of the Minister for Labour meeting in all the panoply and solemnity of State, the members of his own Party engaged in a struggle for a bit more bread and butter, is too funny for words.

How are we to explain this phenomenon to either the workers of Germany, Russia, India, or for that matter to the unemployed at home? There is only one explanation, and it is supplied to us gratis by the "New Leader," the official organ of the I.L.P., of which body most of the Government are associates.

\* \* \* \* \*

Discussing Mr. MacDonald's outline of the Government's policy, the "New Leader" puts it in a nutshell, and declares that for a period the Party programme in full must be curtailed. "We have to win the country's confidence." Win the country's confidence! Admirable phrase! "And note," says the "New Leader," "the best way of answering those who suspect us of planning a violent revolution, is to take up the exactly opposite course of restoring the reality of parliamentary government." And so to remove all suspicion of violent revolution, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald—I.L.P'er and erstwhile leader of the Second International—goes all out to out-bourgeois the bourgeois in his anxiety to prove that His Majesty's Government has no connection with any other firm! Thus, we get resignations from trade union positions, resignations from editorial positions ("Mr. MacDonald," says the February "Socialist Review," "has gone up higher"); resignations from the Executive of the Labour Party, divorcement of the Labour Cabinet from the Party, and to complete the assurance of "no violent revolution," resignation from the hybrid Labour and Socialist International. Could capitulation before the bourgeois class be more abject and complete? It is true that Labour (for Labour read MacDonald) is in office, while the House of Commons is in power, but when His Majesty's Ministers try to make capital out of that fact, it leaves us cold. Everyone knew from the day the election results were declared that our first Labour Government could only be a Government by consent of the capitalist parties. But, is that any reason why the Government should go out of its way to apologise for its existence, and kow-tow

before the images of bourgeois democracy? Has it not been a cardinal principle of even the Reformist I.L.P. that capitalism and its officers are a usurpation?

Mr. MacDonald and his Labour Cabinet must remember that before winning the confidence of the "country" they must win the confidence of the working class organisations that put them in office. We can leave the "country" to look after itself. Asquith, Baldwin, the F.B.I., and the "City" can be safely trusted to do that. What we can't afford is any toying with the Labour Movement because ministers may feel tempted to succumb to the expedients of the passing moment, or fall for the plums of office. The strengthening of solidarity in the ranks of the whole British working class, the strengthening of the movement for the liberation of the exploited within the confines of the British Empire, is a matter of urgent and vital importance, and we believe, can best be secured by an audacious policy pursuing definite class aims.

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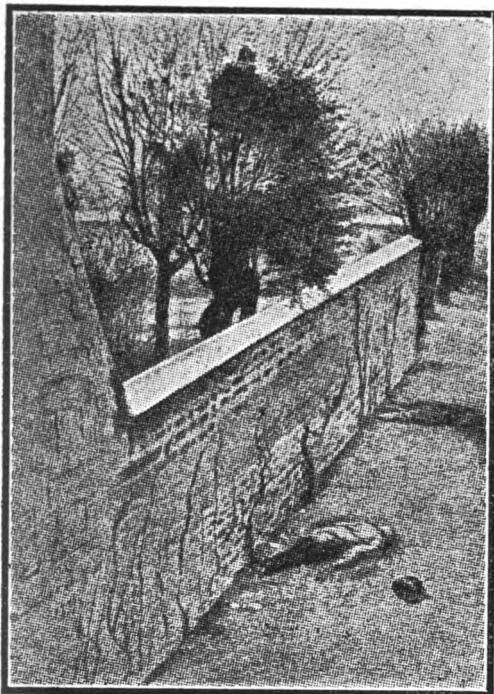
Again, the complete detachment of the Labour Cabinet from the Party and the Trade Union Congress is something that never was contemplated even by the most moderate of trade unionists. It is a matter of serious concern for the whole Labour movement and cannot be allowed to pass. Mr. MacDonald cannot plead that the setting up of a *liason* committee to go between the Party and the Cabinet is either a matter of machinery or of tactics, because neither the Tory Baldwin, nor the Liberal Asquith would ever dream of such a thing. For our part we regard the *liason* committee—mostly I.L.P. members we note—as tantamount to a complete surrender of power and control by the party or the Trade Union Congress, out of its own hands, not, as might be conceivable into the hands of one of its own representatives, but a handing over of the sovereign authority of the Party and the Congress to a monarchical puppet of Labour's inveterate enemies—the bourgeoisie.

Either MacDonald and his Cabinet are responsible directly to the Party and the trade union organisations that put them in office, or as they appear to think, they are responsible only to King George, *i.e.*, to the "country," the ruling capitalist class. The latter is certainly intolerable, and the working class organisations affiliated to the Party must say so emphatically, if the results of all the efforts in the past to secure a *real* Labour Government are not to be regarded as sacrifices in vain.

# The Message of March

## THE COMMUNE—AND AFTER.

March 18th, 1871 : March, 1917 : March, 1924.



*The Army of "Order" has Passed  
by here.*

In those far-off days before the War to which we now look back with almost wistful affection, those of us who did profess and call ourselves Marxists, and Revolutionists, made it a religious duty every 18th of March to keep undying the memory of the martyred Commune of Paris. It stood for us a sign and a symbol: an undeniable and irrefutable sign of the fact of irrepressible antagonism between the working mass and those who lived by their exploitation; a symbol of the storm and struggle which lay ahead of the working class, as soon as they acquired sufficient courage and

understanding to threaten seriously the permanence of the social order based upon their exploitation. To celebrate the Commune became thus a ritual practice whereby those who had become convinced that The Vote was not all-sufficient for the workers' emancipation gave open demonstration of the faith that was in them.

Even at a time when Lloyd-George was breathing forth "threatenings and slaughter," against the dukes, and the appearance of three-and-thirty Labour Members in the House of Commons at once made timid Primrose Dames begin packing their morables, we held to our faith.

We were denounced, we were laughed at. Worst of all, we

were ignored. Very few and very motley were the groups that gathered to hear over and over again the story of how power fell into the hands of the armed workmen of Paris; of their child-like trust in the goodness of their own intentions, their appalling faith in the susceptibility of their foes to humanitarian appeals—a faith only rescued from denunciation as criminal folly by the still more awful fate that engulfed them all. Again and again, we told the tale of the slaughter—of the tigerish ferocity of Thiers (“that monstrous gnome!”) of the insatiable bloodlust of the panic-maddened bourgeoisie. Yet not one of us even in our boldest flights ever dared to predict so terrible a confirmation of our faith as we have lived to see.

### NATIONAL WARS A GOVERNMENTAL HUMBUG.

“The highest heroic effort of which old society is still capable” (wrote Marx in the manifesto issued by him as General Secretary of the International—the most movingly human of all his works) “is national war; and this is now proved to be a mere governmental humbug, intended to defer the struggle of the classes, and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out in civil war. Class rule is no longer able to disguise itself in a national uniform; the Governments are *one* as against the proletariat!”

One did not need to possess the genius of a Marx to see that fact plain even in 1871. One must have a genius for stupidity to fail to see it now. We have seen the very counterparts of the Commune, reappearing just as it appeared after disastrous war, in two-thirds of Europe. In every case (just as though history had conspired to echo his words in brutal jest), we have seen the alliance of Bismarck and Thiers—conqueror and conquered—repeated with new and garish variations. And just as (the Socialist) Louis Blanc, and the “humanitarian” Mazzini spent themselves in denunciation of the “folly” and “criminality” of the Commune, so, too, the Social-Democrats of all lands have spent themselves in their denunciation of the “folly” and “criminality” of every *Communard* and Communist uprising, from Vladivostock to Hamburg, from Helsingfors to Munich. It was the Social-Democratic “Vorwaerts” (and not the Berlin counterpart of the *Morning Post*) that published with the corpses of the slaughtered Berlin workmen lying thick in the streets, and the groans of the wounded in their ears, the infamous incitement to the Junker Guard to persevere in their en-

deavour (only too successful as it proved!) to discover the hiding-place of the *Spartakus* leaders:—

“ Five hundred corpses in a row!  
Liebknecht, Rosa, Radek and Co.—  
Are they not there also?”

### PARIS AND PETROGRAD.\*

The events that culminated in the rise and fall of the Commune in 1871 are paralleled closely by those that led up to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. True, the Tsar was not captured with his army—did not, in fact, attempt leading his troops in person. That after all was an anachronistic incident due solely to the fact that Napoleon III. was a “Buonaparte,” and his fate was so far useful to his kind that it preserved his successors (even when they were Hohenzollerns) from risking a similar calamity. But in each case—France in 1870 and Russia in 1914—war entered upon in a mood of extravagant optimism brought its Nemesis in a series of unparalleled military disasters, and in the revulsion of disillusion, gisgust and rage induced by these (and the suffering involved in and consequent upon them) each Empire fell.

A comparatively slight uprising by the proletariat of the respective capitals—Paris in September, 1870, Petrograd in March, 1917—revealed each Empire as a thing of straw, collapsing ludicrously as soon as the wind came from the proper angle. So, too, in November, 1918 (although in this case with more of the obvious awkwardness of new stumbling through a repetition of a part invented by others) after military disasters, and before a relatively slight blast of anger, the Hohenzollern Empire fell—also at the hands of the proletariat of the capital.

In each case, the fall left a void which the real conquerors found embarrassing to fill. In France the military situation and the total lack of class egoism by the Parisian proletariat permitted the bourgeois deputies from the capital to constitute the “Government of National Defence.” Not until six months of siege and slaughter had elapsed did the men who had actually made the revolution—the Parisian workmen—realise the full extent of their “folly.” Then this precious “Government” fled, and once again Paris was in the hands of its armed proletariat.

In Russia, the collapse of Tsardom left a similar embarrassment. A group of Duma deputies were similarly allowed to go through the motions of forming a Government, and these in their

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\* In honour of the memory of Lenin now known as Leningrad.

turn similarly directed their first efforts to re-establishing a general obsession of "national defence," and "winning the war."

In their case, however, the feat was impossible. The war disasters had been too vast, the economic chaos too complete, the suffering too intense. And, besides, the Petrograd proletariat had in 1917, just the one thing that the Parisian proletariat lacked in '71—a revolutionary leadership which made it impossible for them to lapse into the sublime imbecility of class self-sacrifice.

Alike in '70 and '17 the revolutionary crisis found the proletariat lacking its tried and accepted leaders. August Blanqui, who as Marx says, "would have given the Commune a head," lay in prison during the whole process—Sedan, the fall of the Empire, the rise and extermination of the Commune. All the best-known and trusted Russian Socialist and revolutionary leaders were, in 1917, in exile—in Siberia, in Switzerland, London, Paris and New York.

#### THE "CLOSED CARRIAGE" MYTH.

Happily for the Petrograd workmen, the fall of the Tsar brought their immediate return. Cunning or stupid, the German militarists permitted the whole company of exiles in Switzerland to cross their territory. In the light of subsequent events, the British bourgeois press have invented the myth that they did so that "their agent," Lenin, might disorganise the Russian battle-front. At the time, it was clear that the Germans were too hard-pressed to be able to risk offending a valuable neutral in Switzerland, and the Swiss bourgeoisie were eager to be rid of the whole brood—Social revolutionary, Menshevik and Bolshevik alike. In the famous train travelled not only Lenin (doomed to set loose the forces that bent Hohenzollern and Hapsburg to follow Romanoffs, Buonapartes and Bourbons into oblivion), and his colleagues, but ten Mensheviks and Social revolutionaries for every Bolshevik. It was truly strange policy—if the Germans really sent Lenin to break up the Russian front—to send with him ten others (all then better-known and more highly rated) to restore it. But the British bourgeois press proceeds in its propaganda upon a logic peculiarly its own.

However, it chanced the Russian workers had what the Parisian workmen lacked—a revolutionary leadership; with the result that when the successive Provisional Governments (beginning with Miliukoff and culminating in Kerensky) had succeeded in exhausting the patience of the proletariat (as had the French "Government of National Defence") these were able first of all to seize the State power without waiting for it to drop

into their hands, and, secondly, to follow up the seizure with a demonstration not only of their ability to protect themselves, but of their determination to pay back in kind and with liberal interest every attempt at their forcible suppression.

The Commune fell because it would fight only reluctantly, and with its back to the wall. The Bolshevik Revolution survived because it from the first made clear that it would go under only after the most desperate struggle.

Apart from that revolutionising distinction, the parallel between the situations of Paris after March, 1871, and Russia after November, 1917, is close indeed. Among the many illuminating incidents which the memoirs of Lenin have brought to light, is the fact that he counted the days after the establishment of the Soviet Republic until they had reached the full tale of 70 that covered the life of the Commune. After that he was content whatever befell—"We have lived as long as the Commune: that alone justifies our effort."

### BOURGEOIS VIOLENCE.

How the whole capitalist world combined to assault the Soviet Republic and how British and German troops, locked in a death grapple at the Western end of Europe co-operated in the assault in the East—just as Bismarck and Thiers had co-operated against Paris needs no telling. The parallel ends in that Paris fell and the Soviet Republic still stands. But even yet there is much to be said for the view that Russia still stands to Europe as in 1871 Paris stood to France.

Following the establishment of the Commune of Paris in 1871, there were similar attempts in no less than ten different parts of France. They were one and all bloodily suppressed. Following the Bolshevik Revolution came attempt after attempt to follow its lead.

The bourgeois press never lets us forget the few hundreds slain in the process of the Bolshevik Revolution: it never condescends to remember the many thousands slaughtered by the counter-revolution. Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Hungary, Bavaria, Bulgaria and the three bloody suppressions of the German proletariat—these with their victims running into hundreds of thousands are remembered no more than the 60,000 martyrs of the Commune, and the butcheries of Lyons, Marseilles, and the rest. The slaughters inflicted by the counter-revolutionary civil war in Russia itself are ignored, and their campaigns of individual assassination are remembered, if at all, only with commendation. Hardly a newspaper in Britain troubled to note the fact that

Lenin died prematurely from the consequences of a wound received at the hands of these counter-revolutionary assassins.

This, of course, we might have expected. We must learn also to expect "Socialists" of the Social-Democratic school to, in this respect, "out-Herod Herod."

As though the Commune had never sunk drowned in its own blood; as though the experience of the Russian proletariat in 1905 and again in 1917, had belonged to the history of another planet; the leaders of the German Social-Democracy met their opportunity in 1918. They took office without power—that in the then circumstances was unavoidable. But being in office not only did they refuse to build the proletarian armed power which alone could make possible the realisation of their long-proclaimed objectives—they did worse. They helped both the bourgeoisie and the Junker to recover from their fright, and in the name of National Unity rebuilt the armed force which destroyed every proletarian attempt to pluck advantage from the victory which originally the proletariat had won. The German Social-Democracy saved itself from the fate of the Commune by voluntarily providing the Thiers, MacMahons and Gallifets required for the "restoration of (bourgeois) order" To-day the famine-ravaged German proletariat keeping life in their bodies by a scanty ration of dog's flesh and offal reflects by the graves of their dead upon the bitter truth that "we learn from history that men learn nothing from history."

#### **COMMUNE'S REMINDER TO BRITISH LABOUR.**

It is recorded that in Mediaeval Italy men were never so merry as when the pestilence raged and the death cart ceaselessly made its round. The contrast of cap-and-bells and black-death recurs when we lift our eyes from Germany's Golgotha to fasten them upon the Government of Britain. Surely the Aristophanes of Heaven never conceived a more biting jest than to place the British Labour Party in office at just such a moment under just these circumstances?

Bloody but unbowed the heroic Soviet Republic mourns its mighty dead. Torn and mangled the proletariat of Germany turn from despair to desperation and back again to despair. And while, literally, millions in Moscow wait hours in the snow for a chance to pay their respects, to their beloved leader-comrade, and more millions in Germany wait hours in the frost for a mouthful of soup or a scrap raked from the ashbins of the rich; the British Labour Party (once patronised by and now fawned upon by the Eberts, Scheidemanns, Noskes and Wels) is busy with the

incidentals forced upon them by their accession to office. Lord after lord, knight after knight is added to the glorious company of Right Honourables who now swarm thick as Autumn leaves in the High Places of Eccleston Square. And while Ramsay Macdonald with a straight face deliberates the nomination to the post of Lord Chancellor of the Royal Household, the toilers of all other lands too far away to see and knowing only that a "Labour" Party is in "power" look eagerly to London for a sign that the hour of deliverance has come.

On the day that Ramsay Macdonald took office the Federation of British Industries announced through Sir Eric Geddes, that it would be delighted to co-operate with the Labour Government. So, too, Hugo Stinnes was delighted to co-operate with the Social-Democrats. If there were nothing involved beyond the contrast between the pomp of the newly-promoted and the puny dimensions of the power the captains of industry are willing to concede then we could laugh, and laugh at the roaring farce.

But it is ill jesting by a deathbed and rag-time is misplaced at a massacre. The world's proletariat has all but reached the limit of manly endurance. A little more and to submit they must become less than men. Every hour we may hear that the German workers are facing their fourth blood bath.

Inexorably history brings on the moment when the British proletariat must play their part. Even in Eccleston Square, it is impossible entirely to ignore this truth. It would be a good deed if the whole Labour Cabinet could be forced to read again the history of the Commune, and a better if they could be made to follow it by a study of the descent of Social-Democracy into the pit.

Failing that the rank and file must save them—even in spite of themselves. The 60,000 martyrs of the Commune were awful enough. When it becomes a possibility that our thousands may be added to the hundreds of thousands whom the counter-revolution has slaughtered since 1917 the prospect becomes maddening.

Did the Commune die in vain? or have the British workers the will to live and thereby to save the world?

THOS. A. JACKSON.

# The Political Mind of Ramsay Macdonald

**T**HE mingling of disappointment and praise arising from MacDonald's first efforts as a government-maker is arresting. It will be observed that the disappointment comes from the ranks of the workers, the praise from the capitalist press. The full significance of his work in this direction, and his opening statement in the new Parliament, has probably not yet been realised by the workers who form the bulk of the parties in whose name he led "Labour" through the General Election. But to us they are not unexpected. His conduct so far is but the natural expression of the man, symptomatic of his outlook yet to be generally appreciated as non-socialist.

MacDonald has never departed from the Liberalism of his youth. His "socialism" is a dream and an emotion. His politics the embodiment of opportunism. Soar as he may into the clouds of fancy and wander as he may towards the far horizons of he knows not what, he treads always the beaten path of Liberalism. He denounces Capitalism only to embrace it. He sees the class war only to thunder moral denunciations against it from the olympian heights of his dreams, blind to the fact that he is thereby stifling the revolt of the slaves against their slavery—the very means of realising his dreams. He would deny the class war. He would assert that the revolt must be intellectual and proceed along lines which he prescribes. But then, as Trotsky once exclaimed, "MacDonald knows nothing about socialism—absolutely nothing."

## NO CLASS WARFARE.

In so far as he has any sociological principles, MacDonald is a follower of Spencer, regarding society as an organism analogous to the animal organism. Social phenomena are accordingly looked at from a biological point of view. Strikes, political upheavals, social breakdowns, are diseases of the body politic. Institutions are its limbs, and morality and intellect the only means to social development. He, therefore, rejects class warfare, and revolutionary action, sets himself above society in the realm of the intellect to lecture humanity on its wicked ways, exhibits patience whilst the germs war with each other, irrespective of his admonitions or sermons. "The watchword of socialism

is not 'class-consciousness,' but 'community consciousness,' " he says in "Socialism and Society," (p. 144).

To be logical he removes himself from realities to the realm of non-existent socialist order for his moral inspiration, only to return and patiently smother the workers with pacifism, and appeal to the ruling class to be more gentle.

"For Socialism," he declares, "is not fully explained as the result of Labour against capitalism: it is a conception of Society in which the antagonisms from which that revolt arises are harmonised. Did Socialism only mean to put Labour in power so that cramped working class interests could pursue the same self-regarding policy as capitalist interests pursued, stormy indeed would be the prospect. It is true that in the conflicts, which divide the workman from his employer in present-day society, Socialism has to take sides with the forces that are making for the new society; but it is above the conflicts in spirit, and it is steadily infusing in both sides the creative desire to get beyond present divisions, and reach a state in which all service will be done for communal ends by men who feel the community in their hearts, and know that its wealth means their own wealth . . . . Therefore, Socialism can only move men by education and moral idealism; its sound economic criticisms of the classes must be used as logs by which the fires of moral enthusiasm are kept blazing; it takes no part in a purely horizontal tug-of-war between the working and the capitalist class, but is Plutonic force beneath both, heaving them upwards." ("Socialism: Critical and Constructive," pp. 277-8).

What with the pull and the tug and the upward push, the undefined forces making for the community spirit, the negatives and the bonfires, and the moral urge, the mind of MacDonald repudiates first the working class as the force which alone can bring Socialism into being; second, he places himself at the head of the middle class as the harmoniser of contradictory forces; and third, binds himself to the Conservative methods and institutions of capitalism with formulæ which blinds him to the realities of the movement of social forces.

The proper organ for accomplishing socialism was the democratic State, which meant the organised political personality of a sovereign people. The State was *not the organ of a class*, but of the whole society. Indeed, Socialism could not be defined better than as the stage of social organisation when the State organises for society an adequate nutritive system; and democratic government is the signal that the change is taking place" ("Socialism and Government," p. 33). "Socialism would come through Parliament—or it would not come all." ("Syndicalism," p. 8.)

The answer to all this formulæ has been given so repeatedly in socialist literature, in the tragic experiences of the Second International (of which he is a prominent leader), and the history of social institutions, that we marvel it is still necessary to proclaim to the multitude that his confused revisionism is as fatal to the workers of Britain as the same revisionism of Kautsky, Bernstein, Adler and Bauer, has proved to the working masses of Europe.

Nothing could be more absurd than the assumption that the development of the Community consciousness, etc., uniformly keeps pace with the development of the forces of production and the social relations arising therefrom, that only a parliamentary majority will signify the ripeness of society for socialism. For more than thirty years, Socialists have affirmed that the economic life of man is ripe for socialisation. Yet the parliamentary majorities everywhere are against it. It is equally true that the history of Europe proves, that, immediately there is the slightest prospect of a parliamentary majority being in favour of socialisation, the capitalist forces dismiss the parliamentary institution and establish a dictatorship over parliament. The pitiable, contemptible experience of MacDonald's colleagues of the Second International in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy, in their relations with the militant bourgeoisie have taught him nothing—nothing better than to approach a tank with a sermon and the swindlers of the nation with a voting card.

To approach society without regard to classes stamps the mind of MacDonald with all the failings of the middle class, its vacillation, its ineptitude, its pathetic attachment to the class that holds power in its hands.

Marx, whom MacDonald speaks about occasionally, but whose works he shows no sign of having read, characterised his outlook in a manner which leaves little more to be said. "The peculiar character of the Social Democracy is summed up in this," says Marx:—

"That democratic republican institutions are demanded as the means, not to remove the two extremes—Capital and Wage Slavery—but in order to weaken their antagonisms and transform them into a harmonious whole. However different the methods may be that are proposed for the accomplishment of this object, however much the object itself may be festooned with more or less revolutionary fancies, the substance remains the same. This substance is the transformation of society upon democratic lines, but a transformation within the boundaries of the small traders' class. No one must run away with the narrow notion that the small traders' class means a principle to enforce a selfish class interest. It believes rather than the special conditions for its own emancipation are the general conditions under which alone modern society can be saved and the class struggle avoided. Likewise, must we avoid running away with the notion that the Democrats are all "shopkeepers" or enthuse for these. They may, by education or individual standing, be as distant from them as heaven is from earth. That which makes them representatives of the small traders' class is, that they do not intellectually leap which that class itself does not leap in practical life; that, consequently, they are theoretically driven to the same problems and solutions to which material interests and social standing drive the latter. Such in fact is at all times the relation of the "political" and the "literary" representatives of a class to the class they represent." (18th Brumaire, p. 53.)

Once MacDonald is understood as belonging to this class, his role in the I.L.P. and the Labour Party stands out as a warning to the rank and file members of those organisations. Here we get

the reason why Keir Hardie can move a resolution at the Copenhagen Conference in 1912, calling for a General Strike in the event of war, and MacDonalld remaining content in 1914 to talk diplomatically, and send a recruiting letter to Leicester. Herein lies the reason why a Smillie can speak with enthusiasm of the "glorious Russian revolution," while MacDonalld alternately sneers and denounces its methods and rejoices in everything which appears to be a return of strength to capitalism. Hardie and Smillie belong to the fighters of the working class, instinctively and consciously anxious to deliver blow after blow in the interests of their class as the instrument of liberation from capitalism, while MacDonalld only conjures the golden pictures of the future, from his imagination as ably as Lloyd George can picture the sunrise over the Welsh hills.

But the triumph of MacDonalldism in the I.L.P. is the defeat of the working class elements within its ranks and the party's surrender to the middle-class. Until the proletarian elements within the I.L.P. have shaken themselves free from the drug of social pacifism they can never again play the role of a proletarian party holding aloft the banner of socialism, as they did in the early days of the Labour Party.

When the Labour Party grew out of the Liberalism of the Trade Unions, MacDonalldism was its natural product in contradistinction to the destructive working class policy of class war, sounded by the early Socialists. The Labour Party succumbed before the I.L.P. and its middle class leaders. The passing of Hardie was the passing of the proletarian leadership of the Party. The coming of war found it incapable of a class war policy, wandering in the mazes of military conscription, religious consciousness, and passive resistance. It has never recovered. The proletarian elements of the Party have succumbed to the paralysing influence of MacDonalldism. The nearer it approaches the possibility of forming a Labour Government the more parliamentarism overwhelmed the Party until its leading organ becomes a strike breaker and its chief the creator of a Conservative-cum-Liberal-cum-Labour Cabinet, the defender of imperialism, the hope of capitalism.

Such are the products of the befuddled mind of MacDonalld, the idealist, the pacifist, the non-Socialist,—the Liberal.

J. T. MURPHY.

# LENIN'S FIRST BOOK

**I**T is just thirty years ago since Lenin issued his first book. The title of it was suggestive of combat. "*Who are these Friends of the People, and how they fight against the Social-Democrats.*" (The title also reminds us that in those days a "Social-Democrat" meant a revolutionary Marxist.) The work, of course, could not be printed, and published legally, so it had to be typed and "mimeographed," and in this form several hundred copies were issued in the spring of 1894, and passed from hand to hand among the Russian revolutionaries all over Russia. For the times were dark, the Czarist reaction was triumphant everywhere, and the least protest against the existing order was ruthlessly suppressed.

This book of Lenin's, as one who read it at the time expressed it, was a veritable "voice from the underground," a great decisive voice, *the first clear call to the proletarian revolution ever heard in Russia.* All the existing copies of this remarkable work had disappeared; it had not only gone out of print, but out of existence, until the October Revolution opened up the archives of the Russian police, and a copy of it was found last year and issued by the "State Publishing Department of the Soviet."

Lenin's first work should be widely known among Western Communists—and not only this, but his others mark the giant strides of the October revolution. When we read them, everything accidental falls away from the Russian revolution, and the genius of Lenin inspires it, not as one who *happened* to get a train through Germany, and *happened* to land in time, but as the inspiring directive force of the revolutionary advance guard from the very dawn of the workers movement in Russia. Having read this and others of his early brochures, we will not say that the secret of Lenin's power lies in the fact that he was right on Brest Litovsk, or right on the new economic policy; we will say that the secret of his power begins thirty years back. For he, least of all, has not reaped where others have sown. Let us look back then and see how Lenin came to write this book with the provocative title, "Who are these Friends of the People?"

## THE PEASANTS IN THE 'SIXTIES.

Seven years before he wrote it, that is, in 1887, on a day in March, half a dozen young revolutionaries belonging to the movement of the "narodovoltzi" (will of the people-ites) might

have been seen sallying out into the streets of Petrograd with bombs in their hands disguised in the shape of books. They were intent upon the assassination of Alexander the Third, one of the cruellest of Russian Czars. But a spy was among them. They were all arrested on the way to the rendezvous, and executed a few days afterwards. At their head was Alexander Oulianov, then a young student, the elder brother of our Vladimir Oulianov-Lenin.

The "Narodniki" knew nothing of proletarian socialism—for the town proletariat in Russia were yet few in numbers—and their methods of struggle were hopelessly ineffective. In the sixties and the seventies, the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia did not resort to individual acts of assassination. They told the peasants of their oppression and placed their hopes in them. They "went to the people," and they believed that once the peasantry realised the facts of the situation, they would rise in their masses and liberate the country from Czardom. But the peasants, whom the revolutionary intelligentsia had idealised as Communists by nature, and by occupation, turned out to be just ordinary producers. In spite of the common *ownership* (but extremely individualistic *use*) of village land, the germs of class division were already apparent among them, and, therefore, they were unable to achieve more than isolated and purely local "mutinies."

After the failure of the revolutionary wave of the sixties and the seventies, the Russian intelligentsia decided that the work of emancipation from Czardom must be done by themselves single-handed. They gave up preaching to the peasants, and resorted to individual acts of terror, shooting generals and bureaucrats who had made themselves notorious for their brutality. In 1881, they succeeded in assassinating Czar Alexander the Second. But again they were bitterly disappointed, for the peasants did not rise even to this supreme act. The chains of oppression were drawn still tighter, and it seemed as if oppression were indeed eternal. This was the mood of the revolutionary youth when Alexander Oulianov, representing the last of the heroic age of the revolutionary Narodovoltzi, conspired against the Czar, knowing beforehand—as all the devoted participants in these acts of terror knew—that whatever the result he would lose his life.

Some time before his execution Alexander Oulianov had come across a copy of Marx's "Capital" and when he was home on his vacation he discussed it with his brother Vladimir. Here was another power of emancipation besides the dumb power of the peasantry, and the nerveless power of the unaided intelligentsia—the *iron power of the industrial proletariat*.

The final parting of the two brothers, one to Petrograd, the other to Kazan University, symbolises the break between two distinct epochs in the revolutionary history of Russia.

Seven years later we hear of Lenin in Petrograd, having meanwhile been expelled from Kazan University for agitation among his fellow students. When he wrote "The Friends of the People," he had already formed a group of workers and intelligentsia, and had begun work among the factory hands. This work was not the teaching of abstract Marxism, but formulating on behalf of the workers of the most primitive demands, such as the abolition of the system of petty fines in the factories. Then, as always, Lenin, saw the emancipation of the workers behind every working class protest against their condition, be it only a protest against factory fines.

But it is not this side of Lenin's work, his work as organiser of the proletarian struggle, that his first book chiefly reveals, it is his relations with these "friends of the people," as he called them.

#### **RELATIONS WITH THE "FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE."**

By this time the revolutionary phase of the "narodniki," or populists, was past. Great names among the "narodovoltzi," Zheliabov, Khaltourn the working man, etc., names honoured today by the Bolsheviks, who raise monuments to their memory; these men had passed away, and the "narodniki" against whom Lenin wrote were what he called "populists." They had become respectable, had degenerated into opportunists of the most ordinary type, and even were able to sustain a legal press passed by the censor. At their head was Michaelovski, who carried on a literary warfare against Russian Marxism, and against the young groups of Social-Democrats then forming in the big cities.

Since the liberation of the serfs, class divisions within the peasantry had become clearer and sharper, and the narodniki while resolutely refusing to see these class divisions, had themselves, as Lenin showed, come to reflect the ideals of the richer peasant and small merchant capitalist of the villages.

Not that the parlour narodniki did not read Karl Marx. Indeed Karl Marx, was in great vogue in those days, not only among the Marxists but among both the narodniki and the advanced wing of the liberal bourgeoisie. While perverting Marx, they were compelled to use the terminology of Marxism to a large extent; they spoke of "capitalism" and "the bourgeoisie," etc., with a familiarity that surprises an English reader, for the British bourgeoisie have been shrewd enough to refuse to accept these

terms as terms representing facts, but only as terms of abuse. The narodniki had even corresponded with Marx, before their most opportunist phase had set in.

As Lenin points out in another of his books, against the "narodniki" ("*Marxism reflected in bourgeois literature*,") the petit bourgeois everywhere have a capacity to see the class division clearly so long as it is in another country, while they are utterly blind to it in their own country.

The revolutionary narodovoltzi based their socialism on peasant economy, on the mir or village commune. They believed in the mission of Russia to contribute something wholly new to the world, and not merely receive from the West its culture. The narodniki continued on this line of thought and derided the idea of a proletarian movement; how could a million proletarians emancipate a country of over a hundred millions, they demanded. They pleaded that Russia so far was as a "tubula rasa," (a clean slate), on which it was the duty of the classless intelligentsia to write their own will, instead of importing Western European civilisation as a whole, with its capitalism and its "plague of the proletariat." The bourgeoisie were already in Russia, it was true, but it was not too late to "return to the true path." Their duty was to "find a way to the fatherland." One narodniki, Yoshakov, even declared that stagnation was better than the line of development through capitalism. All this, of course, was clothed in a mass of learned philosophy and abundant eloquence.

Russia was in a period of transition. The student youth, played a far more decisive role in the revolutionary movement in Russia than in the West owing to the general illiteracy of the labouring masses. These students were looking for new political faiths, and it was imperative, as Lenin elsewhere expressed it, to stop the confusion of advanced public opinion by "these Friends of the People," in order to win over the youth to revolutionary Marxism.

### LENIN'S EVANGEL OF MARXISM.

Plekhanov and others had for several years constituted a group in Genoa, and his writings as a "populariser" of Marx, are even referred to in Lenin's book. But Lenin himself burst upon the political arena, a master Marxist, Plekhanov explains the new weapon, Marxism, as the fencing-master teaches the youth. Lenin is no "populariser" of Marx. His is Marxian in action; he takes up the weapon to go forth to combat. All his brochures, bear the stamp of having been written at high pressure. They are sparks from the struggle, not abstract studies, whatever he may have

learnt in subsequent years, this work shows that he had nothing to *unlearn*. It contains allusions in some form or other to every strategy of the revolution later developed and associated with Lenin's name. It was not until six months after the appearance of Lenin's "Friends of the People," that Plekhanov first published a book in Russia: it was "The Monistic View of History," and was published legally.

Semashko, the present Commissar of Health in the Soviet Government, says in his "Dawn of the Workers' Movement in Moscow," and quoted in the introduction to the present edition,

"Our Marxian equipment at that time was pretty weak. When Michaelovski in 1893 began his celebrated campaign against the Marxists, our position seemed to be very much under fire. We had only a few foreign publications (chiefly Plekhanov's "*Our Differences*," the popular exposition of Guesde, Marx's "Capital," etc.), but these publications penetrated into Russia, of course, only in the form of great rarities, and besides that, did not give definite answers to those concrete questions which the Russian situation demanded. . . . And when Comrade Lenin's brochure appeared, "Who are these Friends of the People," directed against the narodniki, and containing illuminating statistical material, it was for us a veritable evangel. We reprinted it on the hectograph, in spite of its size, through whole nights, hiding it in places most inaccessible to the police in case of search, and learning it almost by heart."

Especially interesting now is the reminiscence of Martov, the Menshevik leader, and Lenin's principal political opponent, writing in his "Memoirs," lately published in Berlin, also quoted in the introduction to the present edition:—

"Unlike the academic polemics of Strouve, from this brochure full of caustic characteristics of the theoretical and political tendencies of the narodniki leaders, there emanated a real revolutionary passion, and a plebeian roughness. The brochure showed both literary gift and the ripened political judgment of a man woven of a fibre from which party leaders are made. I was interested in the person of the author, but the level of conspiracy at that time was so high that I was only able to learn that it came from the group known as the "elders." It was a year later that I heard that name of V. I. Oulianov."

The reference to Strouve serves to remind us how long ago it is since this book was written, and Lenin had formed a literary alliance with the Left wing of the Liberal bourgeoisie, for such Strouve was in spite of his Social-Democratic veneer.

Lenin early defined Strouve's tendency as one "towards bourgeois democracy, for whom the break with the narodniki signified their conversion from petty bourgeois (or peasant) socialism, not to proletarian Socialism as with us, but to bourgeois Liberalism." For Strouve gradually verted to the Right, joined the Cadet Party after the 1905 revolution, and was a minister in the governments of Wrangel and Denikin. Many uses may be made of Marx, besides proletarian use, of which fact Marxian colleges and classes should take note. Trotsky recently advised the youth to enter the study of Marxism through Leninism, as the only safe entry.

At that time, Lenin and Strouve were in the literary trenches

together, firing at the narodniki, and in his second brochure, "*Marxism reflected in bourgeois literature*," we see Lenin giving Strouve an occasional pat on the back for a good shot, but more often a box on the ears for bad aim. Strouve is said to have stiffened up a little towards the end of the century, for he attended the first Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party, at Minsk, in 1898.

This is the fascination of Russian revolutionary history: the whole process, which in England has taken centuries, is here squeezed into the lifetime of a man of genius, constituting an epic which the youth of the future will value more than all the epics of romance.

### WAS CAPITALISM INEVITABLE?

If, as Engels averred, France was a country in which all class struggles had a tendency to be fought out to the finish, Russia, is a country, in which the class struggle has been fought out not only to the finish, but from the very beginning practically in a lifetime. For a considerable portion "who are these Friends of the People," is devoted to the controversy raging as to whether or not capitalism was inevitable in Russia; the Narodniki crying that it was not inevitable, and the Marxists with Lenin at their head saying it is already here long ago.

It is a long time indeed, a century squeezed into thirty years, since the chief defender of the capitalist line of development were the revolutionary Marxists. Lunatcharsky has described how he and a few other young students at that time heard that a certain nail factory, which was to replace handicraft production, had been forced to close down, and what a cloud of doubt this news cast over the faith of the young Marxists.

This is not the place, nor perhaps is it necessary to enter into explanation of this historical fact, of revolutionary Marxists—who were later without changing front to kill capitalism—here fighting "a reactionary social-political theory," as Lenin described "populism." That is they were defending capitalism in its progressive stage, fighting "the enemies of our 'enemy.'"

Here one would like to use a word one often meets in Socialist theory, the word "dialectic," and the "dialectical method" but that hitherto these words have had an extremely abstract meaning for the average reader. Lenin himself, however, devotes much space to the "subjective," and "dialectical" methods here in this controversy with Michaelovsky, the leader of the narodniki, and we need not fear anything abstract for with Lenin everything is

joined up with concrete cases, and the mystery of "subjective," and "dialectical" methods is cleared up as with a magic wand.

Michaelovski had said that "sociology must begin with some utopias," and he is agitated as to why Russia should go through the capitalist stage of development, and Lenin quotes him, giving us a cameo of the petty bourgeois ideologue's political habit of thought :

"Our task," says Michaelovski, "is not necessarily to grow a self dependent civilisation from our own national soil, but neither is it to transplant into our soil Western civilisation en bloc, with all its frictions and contradictions. We must take the best from everywhere, from wherever we can, whether our own or foreign, this is not a question of principal, but practical convenience."

"This pure metaphorical philosopher," says Lenin, "looks upon social relations as a simple mechanical aggregate of this and that institution, a simple mechanical linking together of this, that or the other social forms, like bricks taken from one building to form another. To this type of mind," continues Lenin, "the dialectical method of thought, speaking the language of Marx, is utterly foreign, which looks upon society as a live organism in its functioning and in its development."

### LENIN AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM.

"Historical necessity" and the "dialectical method" are not mere words between scholars; Lenin desires to show the revolutionary youth where the course of the struggle is set; there where historical development has decreed in the "new social power: the class of the factory worker, the city proletariat." Subjected to the same bourgeois exploitation that in substance is the exploitation of the whole of the labouring population of Russia, this class is placed however, in especially favourable conditions for its emancipation: it is altogether divorced from the old society, a society wholly based on exploitation; the very surroundings of its life organise it, compel it to think, and give it a means to enter into political conflict." Lenin calls upon the revolutionary intelligentsia to join this class in its struggle.

In another brochure against the narodniki—"What is the heritage that we reject?" (the narodniki had accused the Marxists of breaking with the revolutionary heritage of the seventies). Lenin makes the following striking distinctions:—

"The bourgeois philanthropists of the seventies *believed* in the present line of progress (through capitalist democracy), because they did not see the contradictions inherent in it.

The narodniki *fears* the present line of social development because he sees the contradictions inherent in it.

The Marxist *believes* in the present line of social development because he sees that the only guarantee for a better future lies in the fullest development of these contradictions."

But the doctrine of historical necessity with Lenin is not a

cover for academism, no encouragement to leave things to the "elements," to sit at home by the fire and read Karl Marx until the next strike, brings along something interesting. Indeed, the isolated strike, while fulfilling him with pride of the workers, rends him with impatience at the absence of a directing proletarian Party.

Michaelovski accuses Marxism of turning men into marionettes and is concerned about the "conflict between historical necessity and the role of individuals." Lenin shows the futility of opposing historical necessity to personal effort. Historical materialism shows us under what conditions are personal activities assured of success, "in what consists the guarantee that personal effort does not remain an isolated act drowned in the sea of opposing acts." For Lenin, enemy of the Great Man Theory, history nevertheless is made by living men. For his dialectical materialism does not replace, but guides personal efforts. He, least of all, believes in the "elements" clearing up the mess. He calls on men to act or the occasion will pass. His is the grand impatience of the revolutionary who believes that the revolution is inevitable "only if men will be men and not puppets." And this is the new life that Marxism, especially Marxism as previously understood in England and America, imbibes from Lenin.

This controversy with the narodniki is of far more than historical interest, it is a guide to petty bourgeois ideology. In his work Lenin brings much statistical material on handicraft and peasant production, to show the "narodniki," who decried capitalism as a foreign interloper, that their so-called "peoples industry," was none other than capitalist production, exploiting the village masses all the more intensely by their partial dependence on the land. The "narodniki" stood for the non-alienability of the peasants from his land-plot, which Lenin denounces as a relic of feudalism. Looking forward and stepping backward is indeed the universal petty bourgeois trait. Lenin in the satire: "Pearls of a Populist Utopia," 1897 says:—

"On the one hand, verbose declamations on the dangers and folly of class division, and on the other hand—unmitigated *class* utopias. In these eternal waverings between the old and the new, in these curious attempts to jump through with its own head, that is, to stand above all classes, consists the substance of every petty bourgeois system of thought."

Lenin raps out the words, "struggle, struggle, struggle," in reply to a particularly pretty "narodniki" scheme for circumventing exploitation, which he compares (in Russian equivalent) to the good old recipe for catching rabbits (capitalism), namely, to put salt on their own tails. "Struggle, struggle,

struggle," of the exploited against their exploiters, and how to struggle that is the keynote of this book.

### FORMULATES THE UNITED FRONT.

The "narodniki" passed into history, nor did they survive as such into the new century. They left the field pathetically, complaining that the Marxists wanted to "squeeze every moujik through a factory boiler!" But Lenin never lost the occasion to emphasise that, though combating populist errors, the cause of the petty producers would be safe in the hands of the revolutionary Marxists. They would take up the democratic demands of the populists, sharpen them and make them more profound.

And Lenin, here foreshadows the principle of the United Front, he calls upon the democratic elements to form their own party, and at the same time calls upon all Socialists to break with the populists and form their own party. To the suggestion of an alliance of all parties, in the fight for political freedom Lenin replies that such an alliance can only occur on concrete issues, but a general movement of union there could not be.

This book, like all Lenin's teachings, is a corrective against the tendency to base party tactics on the naked opposition of two classes, capital and labour irrespective of survivals and intermediates, which Lenin elsewhere describes as a "vulgarisation of Marx." But on the other hand, the spirit of this book, which cannot be conveyed in any description, is the foremost antidote to any degeneration of the United Front tactics into wholesale promiscuity.

It was written in the most difficult environment imaginable, with every excuse for alliances, and every Marxian precedent to put forward the bourgeois parties as a screen against absolutism. Capitalist Imperialism tends to repeat these conditions *in part*, the political part; and this no doubt has influenced some American comrades to speak of a "La Follette revolution" (*Liberator*, October 1923). Lenin points out the duty of the proletariat to join in the struggle for the overthrow of absolutism, not only as a struggle for representative institutions, but *mainly* for the abolition of the social oppression hampering the village labouring masses in order that these allies of the proletariat may enter the struggle. It may not be superfluous to mark this distinction. The passage is worth quoting as it also contains the first reference to the Workers' and Peasants' Alliance which was more definitely formulated in 1905:—

"The workers should know that without the overthrow of these pillars of reaction (feudal institutions) it will not be possible for them to carry on a

successful struggle against the bourgeoisie, because so long as they prevail, the village proletariat, whose support is essential to the victory of the working class, will not be able to emerge from the condition of a flogged and down-trodden people capable, only of dumb despair instead of national and persistent struggle."

The distinction, however, is vital only so far as it serves to point to the moral still more sharply. For neither to the Liberal bourgeoisie nor to the small bourgeoisie does Lenin entrust any *revolutionary* task. The words "bourgeois revolution" or "democratic revolution," as applied to Russia *are not mentioned once in this book*. In a country of feudal despotism, economically the most backward in Europe, where the most elementary democratic rights had yet to be won, this "voice from the underground" declares that the conquest of democracy is the task of the working class. Hear the great brave words with which he concludes:—

"It is to the class of the workers that the Social Democrats devote the whole of their attention, and the whole of their activity. When the advanced representatives of this class imbibe the idea of scientific socialism, the idea of the historic role of the Russian worker, and when this idea receives the widest dissemination, and a firm organisation of the workers is formed, transforming the present isolated economic conflicts of the workers into a conscious class struggle—then the Russian worker, placing himself at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism, and will lead the Russian proletariat (along with the proletariat of all countries), by the direct road of open political struggle to a triumphant communist revolution!"

One is at a loss which to marvel at most: Lenin's great faith in the proletariat, or the proletariat that vindicated that faith. Lenin and the Russian proletariat "climb the hill together," from the very foot; and it is not in a spirit of empty laudation, but from a sense of perfect mutual understanding with their leader, that the Moscow workers have inscribed upon one of their tramcars the words:

*"Ilytch, the brain of the Proletariat!"\**

D. IVON JONES.

\* Short for "Vladimir Ilytch," (Vladimir, son of Ilya).

# Programme of International Land and Forest Workers

[At the beginning of the Autumn last year, a magnificent exhibition of Agriculture implements and products was held at Moscow, which was attended by representative agriculturalists from all parts of the world. An opportunity was taken on the occasion to hold a conference of all Land and Forest workers anxious for the establishment of an International movement comprising such workers, on similar lines to the Transport workers, the Metal workers, etc.

Our Russian comrades took the initiative in sending invitations to representative bodies of agricultural workers in every country, including Great Britain, and a splendid Congress was held—though to our disgrace, no representative from either of the sections of agricultural workers in Great Britain could be induced to attend.

The publication by the "Communist Review" of the following programme of action will, we feel sure, be taken up by the farm workers and agricultural labourers of this country and lead to steps being taken to link up with the International Revolutionary Land and Forest Workers.—Editor.]

## I.

**T**HE International Conference of Revolutionary Land and Forest Workers asserts that (a) The economic situation, the conditions of labour, and the wages of the land and forest workers are growing steadily worse in every capitalist country. World capitalism, which is proving incapable of surviving the economic chaos and is now in its last phase of existence, is seeking a means of prolonging its existence by lowering the wages and conditions of the proletariat. In the case of the land and forest workers, who are less strongly organised than the industrial proletariat, this appears more clearly than in the case of the other workers. In all the capitalist countries, real wages are steadily sinking (by direct cutting of wages or progressive depreciation of currency). The housing conditions are also becoming increasingly intolerable and working hours are continually lengthened.

The reformist leaders of the land and forest workers' trade unions, who try to help the decaying capitalist system and dread the coming offensive of the revolutionary proletariat, have exhibited unexampled treachery throughout the struggle of the land and forest workers. The reformist leaders must therefore bear a considerable part of the responsibility for the present grave economic situation of the land and forest workers.

(b) Contrary to the situation in the capitalist countries, in Soviet Russia a gradual improvement of the conditions of labour and wages of the land and forest workers has been taking place

along with the general economic revival of the country, ruled by the revolutionary government of workers and peasants.

These facts lead the land and forest workers to the following two main conclusions :

(1) Reconstruction at present is possible only under a revolutionary government of workers and farmers ;

(2) The proletariat cannot expect a lasting improvement of its economic situation ; it cannot even stop the progressive worsening of the situation without conquering political power and abolishing the capitalist system. To accomplish this, the united militant front of all the exploited and oppressed must be established, especially the united front of the land and forest workers.

## II.—MINIMUM PROGRAMME.

To establish the united militant front and improve the economic situation of the land and forest workers, both in the various countries and on an international scale, the International Conference of Revolutionary Land and Forest Workers appeals to all the men and women in the agricultural and forest industry to join in the struggle for the following minimum program :

1. (a) The payment of wages or salaries to all the workers and employees in the agricultural industry sufficient to guarantee the living minimum fixed by the revolutionary labour unions.

(b) Additional twenty-five per cent. on to the above wages to secure the acquisition of primary necessities and clothing, which it has been impossible to obtain during the recent years owing to small wages.

2. Reward for labour in accordance with a uniform principle for all the land and forest workers, including shepherds, cattlemen and employees of the largest districts (uniform pay in each district), with higher pay for skilled men.

3. Short term wage agreements, with provision for the payment of wages in cash.

4. Equal pay for equal work, *i.e.*, equal pay for native, foreign and coloured workers, for women and children, day and night workers, where they perform similar work.

5. Abolition of forced labour for the women and children of the agricultural workers ; prohibition of child labour.

6. The organisation of local committees in all the large farms and enterprises, independent of the agrarian capitalists ; the right of these committees to participate in the hiring and discharging of workers, in which they should be aided by the trade unions.

7. The establishment of the eight hour day as an average for adults, and of the six hour day as an average for children under sixteen, irrespective of whether they are day or permanent workers. The workers' committees to fix the number of working hours during the various seasons of the year.

8. Work for the capable unemployed land and forest workers or full maintenance by the state.

9. A minimum leave of two weeks per year to all adult land and forest workers and employees with full pay. Children under sixteen to be allowed two weeks leave after every six months of work. The time when the leave is to be taken to be fixed by the workers' committees, with the consent of the beneficiary and of the administration.

10. The building of adequate houses fit for human residence, which are to be provided for the workers and employees in accordance with family requirements. Wherever there are dormitories, a special agreement to be entered into regarding the housing accommodation in the dormitory, supplementary to the employment agreement. The Workers' Committee to have the right to participate in and control the housing question.

11. An extension of the number of village schools with the participation of the educational committees of the agricultural workers.

12. The unlimited right to organise and strike, and complete freedom of assembly. The organisation and activity of the government and private strike-breaking organisations to be stopped; the immediate disbandment of the existing strike-breaking organisations, especially of the official ones, such as "The Technical Aid," in Germany.

13. Non-taxation of the plots of land turned over to the land and forest workers as part of their wages.

14. Industrial courts (of representatives of the workers) regulating all wage disputes.

15. Inviolability of the land and forest workers' representatives defending their interests.

16. A holiday on May 1st.

### III.—METHODS OF STRUGGLE.

1. These demands can be won only by a vigorous class struggle; "business co-operation," with the bourgeoisie and agrarians is absolutely useless.

2. In view of this, the revolutionary land and forest workers consider it absolutely necessary to reject all thoughts of "business

co-operation " between their union organisations or individual members and the economic organisations of the bourgeoisie and landowners.

3. All the land and forest workers and employees should give their utmost support in the struggle, which should be carried on resolutely and steadfastly on the widest front.

5. The greatest possible number of workers should be drawn into the struggle, including unorganised workers, who are to be given all possible assistance by the union in their class fights.

6. Participation of all the land and forest workers in the general boycotts and strikes declared by the trade union centre.

7. Mutual support of the land and forest workers, and of the industrial proletariat in the struggle for the general and partial demands.

8. Participation of the land and forest workers and employees in all international proletarian activities.

9. No Fascist bands to be allowed to organise in the large estates and government forests.

10. Food and fuel should be supplied to the struggling industrial workers by force, if necessary.

## **STATE INSURANCE OF THE AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST WORKERS.**

From the reports of the representatives of the various countries, the third international conference has become convinced that, with but few exceptions, in all the countries the agricultural and forest workers have been excluded from the general scheme of state insurance against disability, old age and sickness, and receive no government aid in case of unemployment. No country besides Russia has yet passed laws protecting agricultural workers, children and maternity. Working children below the age of sixteen are forced, in capitalist countries, to work the same number of hours as adults, but for less pay.

There are no laws for the protection of women who are engaged for 14-16 hours per day in feeding and caring for cattle.

In view of this, the conference urges all the land and forest workers' organisations to put forward the following demands for all the agricultural and forest workers.

(1) General state insurance, and government insurance against unemployment.

(2) General legislative obligatory insurance against sickness, accidents, disability and old age.

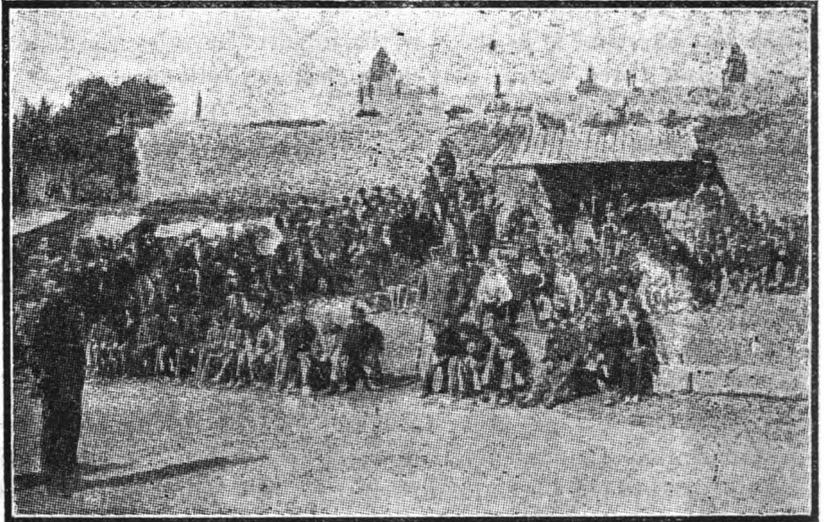
(3) Legislative protection of maternity, allowance eight weeks before and eight weeks after birth, during which period the women to be released from all work, and a nursing allowance for 39 weeks. Nurlings to receive free care for a period of ten months.

(4) Reduction of the working hours of women employed in feeding cattle in barns to six hours per day.

(5) Legislative protection of the working youth under the age of sixteen by the introduction of the six hour day.

(6) The state insurance fund to be maintained at the expense of the employers.

The ruling capitalist class gets all the profit produced by the working class, and is accumulating wealth without regard for the workers; the capitalists should therefore bear the entire cost of social insurance.



**CONCENTRATION CAMP FOR CHILDREN (CHANTIERS), VERSAILLES.**

Not content with exterminating everyone caught who had taken the least part in the Commune, the Versailles completed their foul work upon innocent victims. Hundreds of Women and Children were shot, others more fortunate were arrested and thrust into jail by the triumphant bourgeoisie. Many of these young martyrs were no more than 12 years of age. But what matters age or humanity when property is endangered?

The Commune of Paris shot less than 90 persons (spies, provocateurs, and hostages).

The Versailles troops lost during the battle in the streets, 83 officers killed and 430 wounded; 790 soldiers killed, and 5,990 wounded.

There were massacred 30,000 men from the working class population of Paris.

Thirty-eight thousand all told, with 850 women and 650 infants were summarily arrested, of which 19,000 recognised even in the eyes of the reaction as innocent were released.

Twenty-eight thousand were transported across the seas to penal settlements.

# JUTE INDUSTRIES, Ltd.

(WHY DUNDEE IS GOING RED).

(Continued from last month.)

**L**AST month we dealt with one of the largest Dundee jute companies. This month we give some indication of the situation of the industry as a whole. During the last century the strong position of the British bourgeoisie enabled them with jute (as with many other raw materials) to draw the raw material to their British factories to be manufactured.

The first import reached this country in 1822; by the eighteen-nineties it had risen to as much as 228,000 tons per annum. These were the peak years. It was gradually falling before the war, and after the war the imports have been still less. For the last three years, they have been as follows:—

Raw Jute Imports.					Tons.
1921	...	...	...	...	103,790
1922	...	...	...	...	148,889
1923	...	...	...	...	138,411

Now this fall has been due to two causes. In the post-war years it has been due to the general mess in the capitalist world, abroad, because Dundee used to export over 50 per cent. of its manufactured goods to markets that have now been impoverished, and, at home, because "it is no use buying bags when you have nothing to put in them which you can sell."

But a more fundamental long-range cause has been at work, That is the growth of manufacturing by the Indian and British bourgeoisie respectively, in India itself. This growth can be seen in the following tables taken from an article by Dr. John Day in the "Manchester Guardian" Commercial Reconstruction, March 29th, 1923 (p. 793).

## OVERSEAS TRADE IN JUTE GOODS.

	Piece Goods.	Bags.		Total (with other)
	M/n yds.	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
1913	173.5	3,066	1,225	4,558
1920	150.0	6,724	2,709	10,337
1921	72.0	2,226	667	3,221
1922	137.1	3,031	962	4,259
1923	157.4	3,033	771	4,337

	No. of Establishments.		Persons Employed.	
In India	1913	1922	1913	1922
Jute Mills	64	76	216,288	276,079
Jute Presses	120	211	30,953	33,316
Import of Jute machinery into India in Laks of Rupees.				
	1920-21		1921-22	
	278		432	

The relative importance of various areas is shown in the next table.

Raw Jute : Estimates of Consumption.

		Season 1913-14		1922-23
		July/June		July/June.
		1,000 bales		1,000 bales.
Indian Mills	...	...	4,425	5,000
Indian Locals	...	...	500	500
Continent of Europe	...	...	2,600	1,600
United Kingdom	...	...	1,400	850
America	...	...	650	800
Total	...	...	9,575	8,750

Exports of jute bags from India compared with the exports from United Kingdom also show the growth of competition.

		From U.K. (jute and other materials prior to 1920.		From India.
1875	...	...	3,680	1,605
1900	...	...	2,334	16,909
1910	...	...	3,698	30,364
1920	...	...	3,115	28,561

The development of the Indian competition has been extremely profitable. In index number of the price of 32 Indian jute mills ordinary shares, taking July 29th, 1914 as 100, were

July, 1914	1918	Mar. 1919	1920	1921
100	467	383	295	375

The following table taken from the "Indian Financial Review," "Capital," (Calcutta, October, 11th, 1923) :—

PROFITS. JUTE MILLS IN CALCUTTA.  
Dividends per cent. for

Name	Managing Agents, Directors or Secretaries	1914	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22	'23
		Albion	Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.	16	38	70	70	145	80	95	50
Delta	" "	11	40	70	65	205	70	150	50	50	40**
Hooghly	Cullanders Arbuthnot	5	20	50	37 $\frac{1}{2}$ r	125	400	200	75	30	408
Kamarhatty	Jardine, Skinner & Co.	20	60	120	85	200	200	175	40	45	25s
Caledonian	Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.	—	—	6	16	140	85	140	40	70	37 $\frac{1}{2}$ **
Kanknarrah	Jardine, Skinner & Co.	20	60	120	85	200	200	175	40	45	25s
Kinnison	F. W. Heilgers & Co.	30	70	110	200	250	250	400	135	160g	

§ Capital increased. \*  $\frac{1}{2}$  year to 30th April. \*\*  $\frac{1}{2}$  year to 31st May.  
r 9 months. g  $\frac{1}{2}$  year to 31st March. s First  $\frac{1}{2}$  year.

It is impossible to say how far these companies are worked by British capital. But where this capital can be traced it has done extremely well. The "Manchester Guardian," (31st March, 1922, April 2nd, 1923), writes of three jute companies—the Samnuggar, Titaghur and Victoria: "Dundee concerns with mills in India," in these terms and gives the details of profits.

"The Samnuggar, Titaghur and Victoria Jute Cos. . . . made enormous profits in the years 1915 to 1920 inclusive, and rightly or wrongly one derived the impression that they hardly knew what to do with so much money.

In 1921, as might be expected, their profits fell heavily, and their taxation liabilities would also be much smaller. None are putting anything to general reserve, but the Samnuggar already has funds of £160,000. The Titaghur £250,000 and the Victoria £110,000.—"Manchester Guardian," 31/3/22. These reserves still stood in 1922.

Each gave a 50 per cent. share bonus in October, 1919.

#### SAMNUGGAR.

	1919	1920	1921	1922
Gross Profit	£665,734	£921,979	£186,229	£232,815
Brought Forward	58,268	41,009	98,300	85,259
Free Profit	403,987	426,025	208,997	279,380
To General Reserve	50,000	50,000	—	—
C. F.	41,009	98,300	83,997	—
Ordinary Dividend	*50 p.c.	45 p.c.†	20 p.c.†	30 p.c.†

\* 1918 50 per cent.

† Real profits got after taking bonus into account, e.g., 62½ p.c., 30 p.c., 45 p.c.

#### TITAGHUR.

Gross Profits	£676,198	£876,263	£178,680	£189,066
Brought Forward	83,245	83,463	125,165	120,371
Free Profits	448,141	448,490	234,108	268,614
To General Reserve	100,000	50,000	—	—
C. F.	83,463	125,765	—	113,514
Ordinary Dividend	50 p.c.*	45 p.c.*	20 p.c.*	30 p.c.*

\* 1918 70 per cent.

#### VICTORIA.

	1919	1920	1921	1922
Gross Profit	£407,660	£388,198	£94,036	£115,813
Brought Forward	44,229	29,377	65,915	55,898
Free Profit	269,793	278,515	134,060	152,475
To General Reserve	40,000	30,000	—	—
C. F.	29,377	65,915	55,698	103,094
Ordinary Dividend	50 p.c.*	45 p.c.*	20 p.c.*	30 p.c.*

\* 1918 60 per cent.

From "Capital" we take the following particulars of past profits :—

	1914	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20
Victoria* ...	10 p.c.	30 p.c.	40 p.c.	35 p.c.	60 p.c.	50 p.c.*	45 p.c.
Titaghur* ...	10 p.c.	30 p.c.	40 p.c.	40 p.c.	70 p.c.	50 p.c.*	45 p.c.
Samnuggar* ...	10 p.c.	30 p.c.	40 p.c.	35 p.c.	50 p.c.	50 p.c.*	45 p.c.

Managers, Thomas Duff & Co.

\*\* Bonus (see above).

One reason for this amazing prosperity is, of course, the sweating of Indian labour. The October, 1923 issue of the Indian Labour Gazette gives certain particulars of weekly wages for 1922.

Spinners ...	Rs. 5 0 0
Rovers ...	5 12a 0
Weavers ...	2 3a 3p
Corders ...	2 13a 6p

As the exchange at the time ruled at 16 pence per rupee, it will be seen that the best paid worker received about 6/10.

These are the rates which explain the low rates of the British worker. The Indian-British bourgeoisie are using the starvation rates of Indian labour as an excuse for cutting Dundee workers to a minimum. We give, in view of the coming dispute, the figures of the Dundee jute workers.

The jute Trade Board fixed minimum time rates for male loom renters of 21 years and over with a recognised full charge as from 8th January, 1923, at 56s. 8d. per week of 48 hours. As from 23rd February, 1923, the general minimum time rates (per 48 hour week) was fixed for other classes of workers employed in the preparing, spinning, or weaving of (a) jute or (b) jute or any other fibre except flax and hemp as follows :—

	per week
Male workers under 16 years ...	15/3
16 and under 18 ...	20/10
18 and under 21 ...	35/2
21 upwards ...	39/1

Decrease varying from 8½d. to 1/6½d. per week.

Female Workers. For spinning shifting mistresses ... 29/8½

For orra (or space) spinners of 18 years of age, plus according to size of bobbins, etc :—

Single Spinners ...	29/4 to 47/11*
Double spinners ...	31/3 to 45/10†
Other female workers ...	25/-

\* Decrease from 1/2 to 1/11 per week.

† Decrease from 1/3 to 1/10 per week.

Now can the British section of the imperialist exploiters "afford" more? The main problem of where the jute industry might be carried on most economically cannot be discussed here; it can be left to the economic organisers of the world proletariat. But two points may be noted. (1) The competition of India at present is largely based on sweating Indians—the moral is clear. (2) Though the jute industry is not on as large a scale as it was in its heyday, it is not unprosperous. The figures for 1921-1923 given above show an increase in imports of raw jute and exports of manufactured goods, and British factories will apparently turn out the better class goods. When Jute Industries, Ltd., with which we dealt last month was formed, the capitalists behind it presumably thought there was money in it. The following extract from the "Financial News," 8th Feb., 1923, which supplements the figures given last month, shows they were right.

"Apparently during the first six months of the year to September 30th last, the associated companies comprised in Jute Industries did very well, but in the second half of the year a strike on the part of the jute spinners of the Camperdown Works developed into a dispute which dragged on for twenty-three weeks, (this "strike" it will be recalled was really a lockout to enforce harsher conditions on the workers in regard to the working of machines). The report records that since restarting the mills have been working full time, and profit prospects for the current half-year are again satisfactory. Considering that they represent practically only six months' working, the figures for 1923 are by no means unfavourable."

	1923
Dividends from associated companies (tax free) ...	£243,694
Profit on merchandise ... ..	—
Transfer Fees ... ..	1,377
Brought in ... ..	14,297
	<hr/>
	259,368
Advertising, etc. ... ..	*10,751
Preference Dividends ... ..	†210,259
Written off preliminary expenses ... ..	30,000
Carried Forward ... ..	8,358

\* Includes £4,996 loss on merchandise.

† Includes £6,652 Imperial taxation.

The further sum of £30,000 now written off reduces the preliminary expenses item to £70,000. In the course of the year, the Board acquired at a cost of £45,466 all the Preference shares of

associated companies outstanding, with the exception of £17,880. Over and above land, buildings, machinery and plant, which are taken at cost—upkeep and renewals being debited against profits—the stocks, book debts, investments, and cost of the associated companies amounted on September 30th to £2,782,183, and their total liabilities to £1,144,760, leaving a liquid assets balance of £1,637,423, or less the Preference shares still outstanding, £1,619,543. The investments of Jute Industries in these companies at cost now stand at £5,629,330, representing the £4,500,000 of issued capital, plus £1,080,839, advanced by the associated companies. The net profit and loss balance shown is £142,983.

These results have been obtained by driving the Dundee workers. It is for the latter, working alongside their Indian comrades, who are in many cases exploited by the same capitalists, to get better by driving these capitalists from power and organising the industry for social use instead of private gain.

D. J. P.

N O W R E A D Y

## VOLUME FOUR

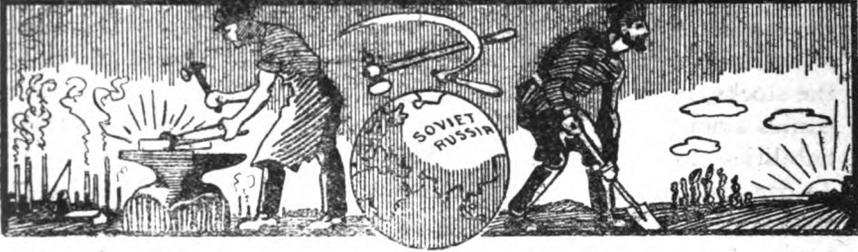
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# INTERNATIONAL REVIEW



## Reaction in Lithuania

One of the leaders of the Labour movement in Lithuania on passing through Berlin, has revealed in an interview with the correspondent to "L'Humanité" (P. Franklin), the effects of the reactionaries who are in power in Lithuania. This comrade told Franklin that the Christian-Democrats, who obtained a small majority at the last elections now exercise a veritable dictatorship.

The political police see in every member of the Labour movement or even bourgeois pacifist movement, an enemy of Lithuania, and without ceremony arrests them. Thus the ex-president of Lithuania, A. Smetana, has been thrust into prison and Professor Woldemaras expelled from Kovno because they opposed the new amicable policy of the government towards Poland, which as the world knows, is a mere tool of the French imperialists, who have also designs upon Lithuania.

Financial difficulties are made a pretext for removing every functionary that does not support the government. Numerous functionaries, specialists and technicians of the first order have been removed from office, until, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture does not contain a single expert; the Minister for Education, the celebrated pedagogue, Professor Masiotas has equally been relieved from office without any reason. Finally, a circular has been issued to all the lecturers in the schools of Lithuania to deliver into the hands of the political police or an ecclesiastical catholic a "certificate of good will." All those who fail to make out such a certificate are removed from their posts.

The Trade Unions and Labour organisations are particularly singled out for persecution. The Communist

Party has been dissolved. The government are intent upon action against the "Narodniki" (Populists) with the aim of liquidating this party.

During the elections to the Sejm (Parliament) all the workers candidates were arrested. On January 14th last the Socialist leader, N. Januschewitsh, formerly a member of the Russian Duma, was thrust into prison. His crime, being a candidate for a workers' party. Among other leaders of the workers in prison are F. Boltan (arrested since March, 1923, without any explanation); I. Stepaitis and W. Karopas. The latter is very ill, but confined in the prison of Kovno.

The prisoners are cruelly treated. Thus the militant socialist Mazkewitsch was forced to walk 50 versts to Kovno prison. He was then shut into a cell 18 degrees below zero and contracted typhus.

The Socialist fraction are interpellating the government on these arbitrary arrests. The government are disposed to raise the question of parliamentary immunity of the socialist deputies and talk of a process against them.

The workers of Lithuania are appealing to the workers of the world to denounce these reactionary exactions of the Lithuanian government.

## THE POSITION IN SPAIN.

### THE MILITARY COUP.

(What the New Regime has done up to Now).

On Friday last, by night, there entered in the New Regime. A military directorate has been nominated until such time as civilians are found worthy of the confidence of the present masters of the situation. Con-

gress and the elective portion of the Senate have been dissolved. A state of war has been proclaimed and constitutional guarantees suspended. A decree against separatism has been dictated. A great national militia is being formed. All public offices have been taken over by the military. The anticipated censorship of the Press has been established. A process has been entered against the ex-Minister of State, D. Santiago Alba. Copious declarations of the President of the Directory have been given publicity in the Press.

Thus succinctly does "La Antorcha," the Communist organ of Madrid state the situation as it was on 21st September last. That issue itself bears testimony to the sway of militarism, as it is very heavily censored, most of the front page being blank.

Further repressions followed, though apparently the censorship of the paper had been lifted in succeeding issues. A series of raids and arrests has been taking place up to the present time. Working class centres have been closed and obstacles placed in the way of the functioning of legally constituted organisation. Certain inexplicable restrictions were placed on the Party paper. Agents of the police informed them that no one was to remain after 10 o'clock at night at the office of the paper. This after only two weeks of the new regime. The following week the paper had dwindled to two pages only, soon, however, to resume its normal size.

Among the numerous arrests was one to which the police have given extraordinary importance—that of a comrade in whose house were found all the documents of the United Metallurgical Syndicate—a legally and normally constituted working class organisation. It is hardly strange that the official documents should be found in the house of a Committee member.

Similar raids and arrests followed in the case of other unions, and the paper itself suffered further attentions. They being ordered to submit all their account books to the "Security Committee." This was followed by further serious restrictions to Party work.

In spite of all, the Party, and the Paper continue to carry on bravely, and a great campaign is being organised for an amnesty and release of all political prisoners.

Apart from the disturbances caused by the military despotism, and the manifestations of working class indignation against the Moroccan war, there continues to be general industrial ferment. Numbers of strikes have taken place all over the country, some of them successful. Principal among these has been the protracted miners' strike in the Basque Province. Organised and unorganised, they all struck with one accord. The masters were cowed, victory was in the hands of the workers—when the so-called "Socialist leaders" of the strikers began to negotiate and give away points to the foe. It looked as though the pass were sold. But the latest news is that the workers are triumphant and in the settlement have won all the points they were out for. Meantime, an official "Committee of Enquiry," into the strike has been having a prolonged session, one of its members being Llaneza, a "Socialist" leader retained at a handsome daily fee whilst his fellow workers starve.

The Socialists, indeed, in Spain seem to have lost any working class character they ever had, and to have allied themselves with the bourgeoisie.

The C.P. is pushing the United Front with energy, but has to contend with an anti-working class united front of the Socialists and bourgeoisie. Feeling is very bitter on the subject.

There is a Young Communist movement, some of whose members have already suffered imprisonment, but their organ has had to suspend publication owing to apathy. It is hoped however, to revive it.

Before closing this review, the sad event of the death of Virginia Gonzalez must be noted. In her the C.P. have lost a noble and devoted woman comrade, who was known and beloved and whose loss is deeply mourned throughout Europe and South America.

# The Forum

*Under this heading readers are invited to state their personal opinion upon any question of vital importance to the working class*

## THE PARTY CONFERENCE.

Comrade Pollitt's reply to Comrade Murphy has induced me to enter the arena. In entering the discussion, I must confess that Pollitt starts off with an advantage. It is much easier for him to affirm, for public edification, the results achieved, than it is to publicly offer criticism and detail shortcomings, which might be construed as evidence of serious "splits" inside the Party.

No one can say that all is well with the Party. Despite the great play made by Pollitt upon "Political Thinking versus Action," I would affirm, if I were asked what was the greatest fault within the Party, that it is the lack of political discussion, and understanding. It is all very well to glorify action as against discussion, but unless the members understand certain things and why they are doing them, then their efforts are largely wasted.

The mere fact that comrades can get hundreds of resolutions passed by trade union branches does not necessarily mean that they have created a relatively strong movement amongst the workers. Only too often does it happen that comrades are called upon to move resolutions which they have not the political understanding to explain themselves.

We have got to face the fact that since the Battersea Conference, and the putting into operation of the organisational implications of the Commission's Report, the members have been so overwhelmed with a multitude of tasks that they have lost all real political contact. The comrade who said that he was too busy selling the "Workers Weekly" to read it himself, is not a myth.

There are hundreds like that.

The truth is we have become so involved in organisational machinery that the essential spirit and life of the Party is being sapped. Initiative is at a discount, and members are regarding themselves as mere Robots, creatures to obey the orders of the powers above, and not to think for themselves. Go to any local meeting.

Do we find them discussing the Party policy? Very seldom, indeed. The complicated machinery creates so many difficulties that it takes them all their time to keep it going with anything like semblance of order.

A month or so ago, I analysed the situation in London, and after reckoning the number of comrades engaged either on national committees, district committees, or local committees found that one in three members of the Party were acting as functionaries of some sort. This is distorting the idea that there should be no rank and file or officials to an absurdity.

Pollitt amuses me when he talks of our ability to discuss the situation in Germany, and not the intimate questions at home. If the Party organ is giving a lead to the members as to what they should think about, then it as much as anything, is responsible for our thoughts turning in that direction. In perusing the "Workers Weekly," for the ten weeks ending December, I find that in only one issue is the German situation not given prominence. In some cases it occupies more than a page. Then, again, did not the Executive of which Comrade Pollitt is a member issue instructions to the Party to get conferences convened on the German situation?

Pollitt says that the Commission's Report was based upon the Organisation Theses of the Third International Congress. I am not altogether sure that it is a correct interpretation of those decisions. But if they are, then so much the worse for those decisions. I believe I am not overstating the case when I say that the revolt against overbearing centralism, the mechanical implications of the organisational methods, the depriving of the membership of full opportunities for discussion, with consequent deterioration in political thinking, is universal.

In Russia, the tendency raised a storm of such power that the Central Executive had to agree to modifications.

I have before me the decisions of the recent Congress of the French

Party. If they were set down word for word they might almost serve as my indictment of the situation here.

"In relation to the central direction, one can say that the desire to avoid the federalism and the loose action of the old parties, there has been established an excessive centralism, a too mechanical discipline."

"The Political Bureau, overwhelmed by its many tasks has not been able to face the many events demanding solution. . . . The sections, believing themselves bound to wait on instructions from the centre, have too often abstained from doing anything."

"The Executive of the Party ought to exercise effective control of the political direction of the Party. The Political Bureau ought only to take decisions demanding immediate solution."

"It is in the political discussions of its sections that the Party and its adherents forge the arms with which they fight for the revolution." Russia, France and at home . . . everywhere is the same revolt against excessive centralism.

#### A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION.

"Down with the Old Time Branch" was the slogan of the Commission. "Make the Party a Working Party." That was agreed. Area groups became the chosen organisational basis. Branches were dissolved. Small groups were taken out of self-contained areas and attached to larger locals. This was a mistake. I am convinced that most of our present locals (especially in towns like London and Glasgow), are unwieldy. The average spare time local party committee cannot possibly comprehend and manage the intricacies of a locality covering in some cases eight or nine parliamentary constituencies, with an equal number of labour parties, trades councils and a couple of hundred trade union branches. Add to this the troubles connected with maintaining the area groups, financial and distribution problems—hundreds of good party members have been choked off by the seeming interminable string of troubles.

I am adverse to any cut and dried plan being adopted. No more wholesale meals like the Commission's Report. But as a general line, I would say that any organisational unit

which is to be based upon area should coincide with a Parliamentary constituency, or the area covered by a labour party or trades council. Far better to grow within such limits, than stagnate in the larger area.

Then, it is my experience that not more than fifty per cent of the members are maintaining contact with area groups. I doubt whether a larger percentage could possibly function. And it is also true that members cannot possibly fulfil the functions connected with area groups, and at the same time properly develop trade union nuclei and trades council fractions, etc.

I think the basis of organisation has got to be altered from the area groups to the functional groups inside the working class movement. Here, at one and the same time, you establish personal contacts, recruit from the best elements in the working class movement, and help to give a policy to that section of the workers which at any rate is organised and can be brought into action against capitalism. Therefore, I propose that taking local by local we should analyse the membership and establish the members in nuclei and fractions which at the same time could be the organisational units instead of the area groups.

I cannot develop this idea further within the limits of this article, but I do hope it will be considered at the conference, and I also hope that Comrade Pollitt will not reiterate one of his remarks "that the Party has grown in influence despite the lack of finance and the *influence of doubting comrades*." Such remarks are not likely to contribute to a proper discussion of our problems.

E. W. CANT,  
(London Organiser.)

#### THE DANGER OF AN ORGANISED COMMUNIST PARTY.

After the article by Comrade J. T. Murphy in the January number of the "Review," it may be as well to consider other views on the subject—those of a recent Party member—as it is probable that similar views are held by the twelve hundred or so members that have joined the Party since 1922.

It is common knowledge that Socialist Parties of varying shades existed in this country for many years, and that the extent to which

their influence had been felt, in spite of real hard work by members up and down the country, had been almost negligible. The cause appeared largely due to the fact that the Socialist societies had spent their energies in political discussions, but had failed to gather in any results from their labours because they had no systematic Party organisation.

The Conference of the Communist Party at the close of 1922, made an attempt to remedy this defect and to make provision for harnessing any influence that the Party might get by the work of its members; and just because an attempt was being made to direct and co-ordinate the efforts of Party members towards achieving the goal in view, persons interested in the professions of the Socialists considered it opportune to join the Party in preference to remaining merely interested sympathisers. In short, members were and are attracted by the workability of the plan.

Of course, the Party Commission's Report on Organisation needs to be applied with a dash of commonsense, just as any other prescription or instruction. Communists cannot live by Group Meetings and house-to-house canvassing alone. But nobody said they should. It is probably true that the chatty, discussion type of branch meeting filled the role of recreation in the workers' lives much more than the small Group meeting can.

However, the real purpose of holding Area Group meetings is to arrange for and conduct *work*, not recreation. This does not mean that members are never to have relaxation. On the contrary, if members are to work hard for the Party in what spare time is left to them, it is important that they should have recreation in order to be able to continue. *It would be better if the aim was made definitely to work well and to play well, but not to play at work.*

Political discussions have been a form of diversion for thousands of years, and dissatisfaction with existing conditions a pet theme, but any alteration has always been made by the Party that possessed machinery for translating discussion into action. Comrade Murphy says we "must release the Party from the mechanical formalism and make way for the

dynamics of life. . . . Where political tasks are understood and determined upon, organisation is the natural corollary to see them through." But my point is that organisation does not follow the recognition of political tasks as night follows day.

It seems important to bear in mind that organisation must not only precede action, but must be working so well as to be practically automatic, thus making it possible for action dictated by circumstances to be taken immediately and with the relatedness of purpose necessary to secure success. The only time organisation follows political action is when, after a failure or lost opportunity, people resolve to organise in preparation for the next time. This sort of thing has happened repeatedly, but cannot be said to be satisfactory.

If the job of the Communist Party is to discuss politics, then discussions and political training with this in view would be the logical requirement. It is not possible to think of organisation except as a means of achieving some definite purpose, but if the Party's aim is to secure power for the working class, then organisation is vitally necessary, and political discussions alone will not suffice.

PACKMAN,

Registration Dept.

#### PROPAGANDA LITERATURE.

Comrade,

In a recent contribution entitled "The Case for the Y.C.L.," the writer is somewhat concerned at the idea of the Y.C.L. issuing "Red Penny Dreadfuls."

Whether we like it or no the following facts must be recognised:—

1. That children are normally romantic.
2. That every publication catering for boys and girls contains fiction treated in such a manner as to result in an anti-working class outlook.
3. That such reading matter is bought and READ by the average working class child.
4. The best method of propaganda with adults is through economic conditions, and with children through their love of romance and adventure.

Therefore, an immediate task before the Y.C.L. is to issue reading matter for boys and girls calculated to produce a pro-working class outlook.

MACKAY BOGGIS,