

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

Vol. V.—No. 23

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31st, 1918

Price Twopence.

THE EMBARGO. By J. T. Murphy.

An open letter to Skilled Workers
BROTHERS,—The extension of the "embargo" is suspended pending an inquiry. What "the inquiry" is going to effect I do not know; but we ought to proceed with an inquiry of our own. The embargo is what? The prevention of the employment of further skilled men at certain firms in order to give a drift to skilled labour in the direction of other firms. To achieve this an Order was issued by the Minister of Munitions.

WHY WAS THE ORDER POSTED?

Strange to relate, the Order was communicated to the workers. Had this not been done a crisis might not have developed at all. The workers would have gone to another firm, as they usually do when an employer ceases to want them, and it would have been some considerable time ere they discovered the move to be deliberate.

At first glance this generous disclosure of an Order for the direction of the commodity, labour through the channels of the labour market would appear to be one of those unique events which illustrate the "mutuality of interest" of employers and employees; but there is a fly in the ointment for, our Coventry comrades inform us that they were told by their capitalist "brothers" in industry: "This is your funeral, not ours." We are compelled, therefore, to look for another explanation of the incident. A little research into company reports and reconstruction publications will reveal the fact that many of the rank and file of the capitalist class, like the rank and file of the trade unions, object to executive control, and are ever "kicking against the pricks" of State interference. Seeing that the "mutual interest" explanation has fallen through, the accusing finger points to an old time trick of the employing class, namely, the use of the workers and their grievances to fight the battles of individual employers and groups of employers, while they enjoy "our funeral."

WHEN LABOUR IS SCARCE WAGES NATURALLY RISE, BUT EMBARGO PREVENTS WAGES RISING.

Now let us turn to the embargo. First of all it prevents the raising of wages through what is known as the normal action of the market. When labour is scarce, wages rise, and the effect of the shortage of 60,000 to 70,000 skilled men would naturally have been to induce employers who urgently wanted men to offer better terms in order to attract men from other employers. But there is a war on—and the Government being in need, as we are told, of munitions, &c., steps into the arena to help those who are short of labour.

ONLY THE MINIMUM IS GUARANTEED.

There is a guarantee that district rates shall be paid; hence it is asserted that wages are not lowered. This is very plausible, but the day-rate is the minimum which is guaranteed, and the existence of piece-work and bonus systems, &c., provides great scope for variations in earnings. The firms which offer the best conditions are usually well supplied. Thus the embargo coerces men into shops indirectly, without the corresponding return which the open market would have

brought to them under the stress of the shortage of labour. Again, the "mutuality of interest" theory breaks down and the employers reap the advantage of the interference.

EMPLOYERS WHO ARE SHORT OF LABOUR GET LABOUR; THOSE WHO HAVE LABOUR GET THE MEANS TO COERCE IT.

Those who are short of labour get their labour, and those who have their supply possess the weapon of coercion over their workmen. In the latter case it works as follows: "Well, if you are not satisfied you know you are at liberty to leave." The language is clear, the tone may be pleasant, the twinkle in the employer's eye may be merry, and the position of the worker appears cheerful. Actually, however, the worker has to choose between a worse employer and the Army. In these glorious days of "patriotism" even the man with a grievance grins and prefers to "endure the ills he has, &c."

EMBARGO AND LEAVING CERTIFICATES BOTH MEAN INDUSTRIAL CONSCRIPTION.

Extended far enough this coercion is undoubtedly a kind of Industrial Conscription. We sampled one kind of industrial conscription when the "leaving certificate" was in vogue. The difference between the leaving certificate scheme and the embargo scheme is as follows: The leaving certificate scheme was of a passive character and the embargo scheme is of an active character.

LEAVING CERTIFICATES CHECK, EMBARGO AFFECTS MOBILITY OF LABOUR.

The first was introduced and enforced to check the mobility of labour, its tendency to move in search of better jobs. The embargo is introduced to affect the mobility of labour, to coerce it into moving in the direction desired by the employing class.

LEAVING CERTIFICATES IMMEDIATE, EMBARGO GRADUAL IN EFFECT.

The first was made general at once. The second is more indirect and will be fully achieved only after a considerable time. Nevertheless the coercion is there and of a very contemptible kind.

HUMAN BEINGS TREATED AS COMMODITIES.

The trouble arises because human beings are treated as commodities. On no previous occasion have the workers had their commodity status thrust so insultingly in their faces. "We have rationed butter, meat, sugar, and other commodities, therefore we must ration labour." The men were, and are, anxious to be treated as commodities in an open market with a shortage of labour, but are not prepared to be so treated when the commodities require controlling. We can't have it both ways.

STRIKERS AND FIGHTERS.

This confusion is no new thing. It is because we of the working class are human commodities that this confusion exists. It explains the difference in the attitude of the employing class

towards us when we apply for an advance in wages, and when we are going to win a war. In the first instance, our wages are our prices as commodities, and the employer does not like the price of his commodities to rise any more than we like the price of bread to go up. Hence when we strike, the employers view us as the "unruly mob," the "ignorant crowd led by youthful agitators." In the second instance we are the men and women of a great Empire, which the employing classes own and, as they do not want to lose it, and, in fact, may win some handsome prizes by fighting, we are viewed as heroes and heroines of a great race.

APPROVAL OF THE WAR IMPLIES RESPONSIBILITY TO PROSECUTE IT

There is a war on now and the workers of this country acquiesce in its prosecution. Such agreement implies responsibility, and when the governing body responsible for the conduct of the war makes certain demands upon them, they are faced with certain courses of action. They have either (a) to prove that the reasons advanced in support of the demands are not tenable; (b) to repudiate the prosecution of the war and accept responsibility for such a course; (c) to assent to the Government's demands; (d) to promise an alternative scheme for effecting the objects of the Government. No one has attempted to show that there is not a shortage of 60,000 to 70,000 skilled men and a need for more efficient distribution; nor have the workers adopted the other three courses. So we are in the midst of contradictions, an acceptance of the war policy and a refusal of responsibility. We have observed that a number of obnoxious consequences are involved in the embargo; but they do not justify an attitude of all round negation. So long as the human tragedy continues such an attitude is contemptible.

THE WAR V THE TRADE

But we are told the engineers are concerned for the future of their trade. So the issue changes to the war *versus* the trade. Let us face this issue squarely. The engineers along with the rest of the working class have acquiesced in the war and the existence of the War Cabinet to conduct it. That body has declared the war to be primary, the trade secondary. The workers have not objected. The engineers have agreed and acquiesced in the dilution of their trade by agreement. They have agreed to youths up to 23 years of age being taken for the army, all for the prosecution of the war. These are deadly facts to meet now with the plea of trade interests. So long as the war continues with the agreement of the workers the problems which arise will have to be accepted with all their consequences. That fact can never be forgotten.

THE CONTINUANCE OF THE WAR MEANS THE DEPRECIATION OF THE TRADE.

The only way in which this immediate problem can be solved is by the efficient distribution of the skilled labour which exists and the extension of dilution. The consequences are not to be forgotten either. They are the further depreciation of the trade and the possibility of a further withdrawal of skilled labour for the Army.

Continued on back page.

WHO FIRST USED POISONED GAS?

The German press has asserted that the idea of using poison gas originated with the British Admiral Dundonald. The British Ministry of Information replied:—

"that Dundonald, who was born in 1775 and died in 1860, and was an expert chemist as well as a great sailor, warned the British Government in the early part of the nineteenth century that it was technically possible to produce an asphyxiating gas which could be employed in military operations. Its employment by the British Government was never seriously considered, such a method of warfare being condemned as too inhuman. The fact that the Hague Convention of 1899, to which Germany was a party, expressly forbade the use of asphyxiating gas is sufficient evidence that the possibilities of gas as a weapon of offence were known to all the War Offices."

A German wireless message of the 17th inst. maintained that poison gases were first used on March 1st, 1915, by the British and French, whilst the first German attack with poison gas took place on April 24th, 1915. The British Ministry of Information's reply was:—

"The first portion of this statement is, of course, a deliberate falsehood, for which there is not the slightest vestige of justification."

But some people with good memories will surely have the recollection of hearing of the use of poison

gas in 1914. If they will turn to some of the newspaper files for September of that year they will find that they are right; for here is an extract from *The Evening Standard* of September 18th, 1914:—

TURPINITE.

FRANCE'S APPALLING NEW EXPLOSIVE. DEATH-DEALING FUMES.

Persistent and apparently well-authenticated reports from France declare that our Ally is in possession of the most appalling engine of destruction ever devised by man. This is turpinite, an explosive which is said to have killed whole battalions of Germans at a time.

While there is probably no truth in the statement that turpinite has actually been employed in the war, some remarkable details of the power of the deadly explosive have been received in London. It is named after its discoverer, M. Turpin, and a single 56 lb. shell is, it is said, able to kill every living thing in a space of 400 square yards. Experiments carried out with animals have proved the truth of this claim.

The effect of the gases generated by the explosion of the shell is to "petrify" every living thing within the radius mentioned. Like most inventors, M. Turpin received little encouragement from the authorities.

For many years he worked away in private in the little town of Pontoise, some twenty miles from Paris. The manufacture of the actual gun even

was left upon M. Turpin's own hands. Parts were made in different factories, and were then put together by him elsewhere. The finished article was handed to the French War Office almost on the eve of war. Attempts have been made by German agents to discover the inventor's secret. It is believed that France will only make general use of turpinite in the last resort. It is affirmed, however, that its deadly powers have been tested experimentally against the Germans on one or two occasions.

The moral of all this appears to be that atrocities are a feature of warfare; that war itself is the great atrocity, and that to go on fighting to punish the other side for its atrocities is hypocritical, wicked, and absurd.

THE COAL RATION.

The coal ration is unfair to the poor. If a single family occupies a twelve-roomed house it probably only requires two, or, at most, three fires at one time; yet it is entitled to 11 tons of coal per annum. A family of the same number of persons crowded into three rooms gets only 3½ tons a year. It is expressly stated that furnished bedrooms which are only occasionally occupied count as rooms!

GIVE THIS PAPER TO A FRIEND

WORKERS' SOCIALIST FEDERATION.

LONDON MEETINGS.

OUT DOOR.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 30th.
Morpeth Street, Green Street.—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 31st.
Great Push for Socialism, Peace, and Votes for All in Hammersmith.—Meet at 3 P.M. and 6.30 P.M. at the Grove (near both railway stations).
Speakers: Miss Birch, Miss Price, Mrs. Walker.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1st.
Osborn Street, Whitechapel.—11.45 A.M., Mrs. Walker.

Finsbury Park.—3.30 P.M., Miss Price.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd.
Armagh Road, Bow.—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th.
Queen's Crescent, Kentish Town.—6.30 P.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7th.
Great Push in the Tottenham District.

INDOOR.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2nd.
44, Malden Road, St. Pancras W.S.F.—2.30 P.M., Business Meeting.

PROVINCIAL MEETINGS.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1st.
Sheffield, Westbar.—11 A.M., Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Carford.
Sheffield, Rivelin.—3.30 P.M.

REMEMBER THE DATE!

YOU are cordially invited to our RUSSIAN "AT HOME," on Sunday Afternoon, SEPTEMBER 8th, at 4 p.m., in the Hall, 400 Old Ford, Road. E.3.

Music, Songs, Recitations, Refreshments. Short Speeches by Russian Friends. COME and BRING YOUR FRIENDS WITH YOU.

SHEFFIELD.

Sheffield W.S.F. is making great headway and THE DREADNOUGHT sales rapidly increase. On Monday, August 19th, meeting was held outside Vickers and on Thursday, the 22nd, outside National Projectile Factory, Templeboro. W. Carford took the chair and R. H. Goldstone spoke. Meetings will be held in future every Sunday, 11 A.M., at Westbar, and every Sunday at Rivelin at 3.30 P.M. Speakers, Goldstone, Carford, Barton, Fletcher, and others. Hon. Secretary, Mrs. L. Carford, 183, West Street, Sheffield.

PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES.

It has been stated that a candidate has been put forward by the W.S.F. in a Lancashire constituency. The National Executive of the W.S.F. has sanctioned no such candidature.

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

FAMILY LIMITATION DOCTRINE. Post free, 13d. —Malthusian League, 48, Broadway, Westminster.

WOMEN WORKERS should spend their holidays at "Sea View," Victoria Road, Brighton.—Hostess, Miss Turner.

ANTIQUES.

For Genuine Old English Furniture and China.

MARY CASEY,
29b Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.2.

Greer's Agreeable
BAKING, CUSTARD, EGG AND
BLANCMANGE POWDERS

In 13d. Packets. Obtainable from all grocers, wholesale only from
D. W. GREER & CO.,
London, S.E.5

INTERNATIONAL YOUNG AGE PENSIONS.

Dear Friends of Humanity.—In order to relieve the terrible poverty and suffering that is devastating Europe, let us endeavour to place the children and all those who are helpless in comparative safety by securing SEVEN SHILLINGS A WEEK each for them from the State, that we may be free to work for other reforms. At present, whilst they are exposed to cold, poverty and hunger, we can think of nothing else. 7s. a week would ENABLE FAMILIES TO MOVE AT ONCE INTO BETTER HOUSES, and to obtain better milk and food. This would stimulate local trade and reduce expenses of WORKHOUSES, HOSPITALS, PRISONS and LUNATIC ASYLUMS, and do away with all poor rates to such an extent as to be A GREAT SAVING to the taxpayers, and would enable sensible girls to marry where they would otherwise not dare to do so, and to bring up healthy happy children to become stalwart citizens and parents in their turn, besides relieving untold pain and suffering, and being an estimable benefit to the State.

The fact of a married man becoming automatically POORER at the birth of each child constitutes a cruel wrong to all children, and until each child has 7s. a week in its own individual right, as an infant citizen, suffering, war, disease, and poverty can never be abolished. Let us all demand this from our different Governments now, before it may be too late.
S. MACKENZIE KENNEDY.
[Adv't]

Phone: Central 3820 TOYE & Co. Established 1855
57 Theobalds Road, London, W.C.

Sole Manufacturers of
Banners and Flags for Demonstrations.
Metal and Enamelled Badges for all Societies.
Medals, Celluloid and Buttons.
Flags for Charity Collection Days.

WRITE for CATALOGUE, DESIGN & QUOTATION

To Dreadnought Readers in the Borough of Croydon.

Do you know Croydon's own Socialist Weekly Newspaper?

THE EPISTLE (estab. 1916).

The Editor, Contributors, Publishers and Printers are all Socialists.
Price 1d. weekly, delivered anywhere in Croydon.

Send post card 112, Woodville Road, Thornton Heath, for weekly delivery.

"DREADNOUGHT" ON SALE

At Mrs. CARFORD'S,
183, WEST STREET, SHEFFIELD,
Wholesale and Retail.

MEETINGS.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1st.
Kingsley Hall, Bow.—8.15 P.M., Muriel Lester on 'God or Mammon.'

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd.
Walthamstow League of Rights, William Morris Hall.—2.30 P.M., Mrs. Sizer, Miss Lambie.

A MOTHER'S CRY.

A soldier's mother writes to the Secretary of the League of Rights:—

"I received my boy's money alright, 7s. 7d. a week, but that does not give me my boy in his home, his right place, or the money he used to give me. He is in France now: God knows what his ending will be—like thousands of other poor lads. Every mother for her own."
MRS. RAYNER.

AN OUTRAGE.

"SEND YOUR OWN HORSES FOR THE FIRE ENGINE."
"Owing to the shortage of horses in the town," says an advertisement issued by the Goole Urban District Council, 'persons requiring the services of the fire brigade must send a pair of horses equipped with harness to draw the engine.' The council until recently relied on a motor to haul the fire engine, but this has been sold for war work.
Are poor people to be burnt?

LEANEY'S LTD.,
WHOLESALE NEWSAGENTS.

City Agent for the Workers' Dreadnought.
9 and 10, ST. BRIDE'S AVENUE, E.C.4.
(Late City and Suburban Publishing Co.)

Printed by J. E. Francis, 11 and 13 Breems' Buildings, London, E.C.4. and Published by the Workers' Socialist Federation, 400 Old Ford Road, London, E.3

DARDANELLES HERO INTERNED.

Justice Sankey's Advisory Committee for interned alien enemies has just got to work and already 300 orders of internment have been handed to the Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, and during a week 59 orders have been carried out. This is what happened in one case: A family of Galician Poles came to this country some nineteen years ago. They had with them a little son born in Austria. Afterwards four children were born to them who are held to be British subjects. The lad born in Austria was 17 when the war broke out. He enlisted at once, but became ill and was discharged. On January 27th, 1915, he enlisted in the Royal Fusiliers and was sent to the Dardanelles, where he remained from October 24th, 1915, to March 23rd, 1916. He was twice wounded and suffered from enteric and shell shock. After being in hospital in Malta he was transferred to hospital at Wandsworth. He was now a nervous wreck and therefore said: "I am an Austrian subject, but I have done my share to help this country." He asked for his discharge, which was granted on May 11th, 1916. He made no application even for temporary pension. Returning home he was altogether changed, and caused his family untold suffering. "He was mad, not ill," says his mother. He broke into uncontrollable passions, breaking the furniture or anything that was at hand. One night in his sleep he almost strangled his younger brother. His parents, hearing the sound of moaning, were but just in time to prevent

a tragedy. But, as time passed, his madness waned and he settled down to work with his father, a fur dealer. One day, however, the lad was out with a friend, who was accosted by a policeman as an absentee. The friend tried to escape, but the policeman flung him to the ground. A fight developed. Some of the passers-by assisted the absentee, others the policeman. The lad was arrested and imprisoned for six weeks. He was accused of striking a carter: if he did so his mother, knowing the nervous excitability from which he has suffered owing to shell shock, claims that he did so as a result of his affliction. However, the lad served his sentence. At this time his father died, leaving him to carry on the fur business as the main support of the family. The boy pulled himself together, saying to his mother: "I will work; don't worry, don't cry." He became so devoted that the neighbours wondered. Last Monday, without warning, a police officer came to intern him. The next brother, aged 18, has not worked in the fur business and is now expecting to be taken into the army. Another brother, aged 16, is with relatives in France. A sister, aged 13, is at school. A brother aged 12, always delicate, is now in a convalescent home and is expected home shortly. The mother suffers from varicose ulcers, and knows nothing of the fur business. She is distracted with grief for the loss of her son and sees her little store of money disappearing. A Great Nation has done this!

THE MOONEY CASE.

The *Tri-City Labour Review* reports tremendous meetings on Mooney Day throughout America. The case has become above all a struggle between Capital and Labour. The decision of Governor Stephens to defer Mooney's execution from August 23rd to December 13th postpones the final choice till after the election. This the rival candidate, Judge Bordwell, has not failed to point out, accusing Stephens of moral cowardice. *The San Francisco Chronicle* says that Stephens has given "the Unions hope without destroying the hopes of the Chamber of Commerce." Tom Mooney asks the Governor to insist that Sickert the District Attorney responsible for the prosecution proceed with one of the other charges against him, in order that the whole case may be re-opened or that the State Attorney General shall do so. The defence is confident that Mooney will be vindicated.

Another crime maker Richard Hughes, a "private watchman," employed by the California has been found guilty of trying to incite marines to raid a trade union meeting of cotton operatives on the pretence that they were pro-German.

MONEY LENDING AND THE WAR.

In American banking quarters it is understood that Spanish banks have agreed to lend the Government of U.S.A. about £20,000,000. Chicago and New York bankers have lent £10,000,000 to the Chinese Government. Mr. Arthur Reynolds, Vice-President of the Continental and Commercial National Bank of Chicago, expressed the following view of China to a Press representative: "It has almost limitless undeveloped resources, men—everything but money. Given the money, it will be equipped as no other nation in the world. Other nations are having trouble to marshal the men, but China has the man-power, and, by financing that country, a great commerce can be developed between China and the United States.... In financing China in the original loan we felt that a tremendous amount of business would grow out of it, and we would like to have Chicago share in that business.... The Chicago loan... was made a popular loan for the purpose of popularising the Chinese Government in this country." China is in the War. We think Spain will shortly follow.

THE EMBARGO

continued from front page.

THE PROBLEM IS TO REPLACE THE LABOUR OF 70,000 SKILLED MEN.

The problem in essence is this—to obtain the rate of production which would be possible if there existed another 60,000 or 70,000 skilled men.

THE MONOPOLY POSITION OF THE TRADE GONE.

This achieved, the further extension of the process is a natural development resulting from the call for more men for the Army, the return of the discharged men, and the increasing employment of women. The monopoly position of tradesmen has gone never to return. Rapidly passing prior to the war, the war has accelerated every process and the sectional struggles against the process are as futile as an attempt to restore the Middle Ages.

TRADE UNIONISM BELONGS TO A PAST ERA.

In conclusion I must now ask whether the time has not arrived when we should face the facts boldly and realise that we are members of the working class which can never have real freedom so long as we are prepared to maintain methods of organisation and points of view which weaken instead of strengthen our position? Trade unionism belongs to an era that is past. We of the working class have nothing to gain by retaining obsolete weapons. The struggle is the workers' struggle. The weapon to wage the struggle efficiently is a workers' organisation. Let us, therefore, turn our attention to the building of the Workers' Committee, which must put on one side the recognition of particular unions and regard all questions from a new standpoint. Ask not "How does this affect my trade?" but "How does this affect my class?" Along these lines we march to the "Workers' Republic."—Yours fraternally.