THE WORKERS'

DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

Vol. V.—No. 26 SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st, 1918 Price Twopence.

ABOUT SMALL HOLDINGS. By W. N. Ewer.

Schemes for settling discharged soldiers on the land are just now as plentiful as blackberries. They are the latest manifestation of that itch for rural reconstruction which has afflicted the "old" political parties for the last thirty years or so. And so far they are meeting with the same fate that has attended so many schemes since Mr. Jesse Collings preached the gospel of three acres and a cow. The schemes are there, but the men are not forthcoming. One gentleman who achieved great publicity for an ambitious scheme of employing and training ex-soldiers laments in *The Daily Express* that he has only had a dozen applications. None other than Mr. Hodge admits that the soldiers are not attracted to life on the land, and attributes it all to the dulness of rural life: no cinemas, you know, and all that sort of thing.

Now, Mr. Hodge is not quite so simple as he sometimes sounds. And he probably realises quite clearly that the true reason is that, in plain terms, the thing is not good enough. It is not a question of cinemas: it is a question of arduous work and long hours for—in many counties—a wage of 30*s.* a week. It is not the kind of job you would jump at when there was any chance of something better turning up. Only, of course, the Right Hon. the Minister of Pensions cannot admit this, because—unless I am much mistaken—he voted against even a 30*s.* statutory minimum, and so committed himself to the view that a man ought to work, and can keep a family decently, on 25*s.* (say 12*s.* at pre-war standard) a week.

"Oh, but," you are saying, "no one expects the soldiers to go back permanently as labourers. We're going to turn them into small-holders!"

And there we are, in the middle of it. Small-holdings: that is the beginning and the end of 90 per cent of land reform schemes, Liberal or Tory. The Tory, with his land-owning traditions, favours small ownership: the Liberal feels most frightfully daring and progressive when he insists that the land must belong to the County Councils and the holder be a tenant from them: the Land Taxer abhors such schemes, but hastens to assure you that, for some reason I have never been able to track down, taxation of land values will produce a plentiful crop of small-holdings.

Now, why this passionate belief in the small-holding, both as offering an attractive career and as affording a means of reviving agriculture? Largely, of course, it is a matter of sentimentality—of vague town folkish ideas of sturdy yeomanry, mingled with some vague belief in Arthur Young's "magic of property that can turn sand into gold." It is notable by the way, that agriculture is the one industry over which our predominantly urban people sentimentalise. In France people write novels like 'La Terre': in Ireland they write plays like 'Birthright.' In mediæval England Piers Plowman gives grim vignettes of rural life that any modern realist might envy, and it is city life, with its gold-paved streets and its Dick Whittington's career that is food for romances. But to-day we keep our sentimentalising for the land and our common sense for the towns. And that is perhaps the chief reason why the small-holding notion scarcely ever gets applied to the other and unromantic industries. A few craftsmen, indeed, urge a return to hand manufacture in certain trades; but that is quite a different story. The one-man business got a little boom over the Military Service Act, but that was a passing matter, and when the Government pledges had been duly given and duly broken, it ceased to interest most people. Certainly there is no clamour for reconstruction of industry on a basis of one-man businesses. Let alone such trades as mining and textiles and engineering, you never even heard of a Bill to help shop assistants to set up on their own by providing them with cheap capital or with shops on easy terms.

But for the agricultural labourer there has been Bill after Bill, scheme after scheme, to assist him—or some of him—to turn into "sturdy yeomen." Every one of them has been trumpeted as the dawn of a new era; every one of them has been, in slightly varying degrees, a failure. You will hear all kinds of explanations from the politicians, but very seldom the true one, which is simply this: that on the whole the agricultural labourer has no particular desire to be a small-holder.

You see, he happens really to know something about his own trade. He knows that the life of the small-holder, except in very special circumstances, is by no means an enviable one; that, producing as he does on a hopelessly uneconomic scale, it is only by the hardest toil and privation that he can hope to compete with his larger neighbours; and that any stroke of ill-fortune—a bad harvest or a serious illness—will probably drive him off his holding or into irredeemable debt.

Half the romance of the peasant, half the legend of his sturdy independence is the outcome of a deliberate blindness to reality behind the outward appearance. Everywhere that a peasantry exists it is in greater measure or less in the grip of the moneylender. The gombeen-man of Ireland has his Indian counterpart. The bankers of France and Germany and Austria could throw curious light on the status of the peasantry there. Even in Belgium—before the war the admired model of small-holding advocates—it is significant that the small proprietor was gradually being converted into a small tenant—a change that makes one suspect mortgages and preclosures.

The peasant's lordship of the soil—his mastery of his own life—are myths made not without purpose. In truth he is the servant—all but the serf—of some stronger economic group. And, indeed, it must be so; for it is sheer impossibility for an individual with small economic resources to maintain singlehandedly a successful struggle in a world of competition.

Nor, of course, was it really expected of him that he should become really independent. From Stein to Stolypin the statesmen who during the nineteenth century created the peasant system of Europe were far less concerned with the well-being of the peasantry than with the security of existing institutions and the military power of states.

So it comes that while in England small-holdings are advocated as the remedy for agricultural troubles, on the Continent—and in Ireland—men are seeking remedies for the evils of the peasant system. And they are seeking them precisely in those methods of co-operation which are at bottom the very negation and antithesis of small-holdings. For co-operation is based on the recognition of the economic impotence of the single individual. And the logical and inevitable sequence of co-operation between small-scale producers will be co-operation in large scale production. The fate of the peasant is the fate of the proletarian: either he will sink to become again a mere serf of a triumphant capitalism, or he will become a free partner in a democratic association—in an agricultural guild. There is neither a third nor a middle course possible for him.

And the moral of it all: simply this, that it is scarcely logical or wise for a Labour Movement which is based upon the necessity for co-operation, to lapse in agricultural affairs into a crude individualism; that we ought to work, not for a system which will give nothing we want and which is foredoomed to failure, but directly and consciously towards a system of democratic association in which—and in which alone—the agricultural worker, like his industrial counterpart, can hope to find a real economic security and a real personal liberty—the liberty not of a visionary and impossible independence, but of a free interdependence with his fellows.

Note.—Just after writing this I see from N. Meshtcheriakoff's article in *The Herald* of August 31st that in Russia, "having obtained the land of the big owners, in many cases the peasants do not want to divide it into small holdings, so as not to impair the productivity of the whole concern. In those cases the management is conducted on the undivided property." That is very eloquent of what the peasant himself thinks about it, and he is a better judge than the doctrinaire statesman, or well-intentioned politician.

THE WORKERS' COMMITTEE CONGRESS. By W. F. Watson.

The Conference of Shop Stewards and Workers' Committees held in Birmingham on Saturday and Sunday, September 7th and 8th, was as encouraging and inspiring as the April Conference was discouraging and depressing. The intervening five months had worked wonders with the mental outlook of the various delegates. In April the Conference was by no means clear as to its functions and policy. In September the delegates had made up their minds on both. The emphatic way in which the Liverpool scheme was turned down and the resolution demanding the withdrawal of Allied troops from Russia was carried is conclusive proof of the clear-sightedness of the rank and file delegates. It was, perhaps, rather significant that within a few hours of the Trade Union Congress dissembling the Workers' Committee commenced operations, and in spite of the fact that the Trade Union Congress has enormously increased its membership, in spite of the fact that there were 1,000 or so delegates at the Trade Union Congress, I venture to say that the Workers' Committee Conference with its fifty representatives, each one directly representing the men in the shop, was of far greater importance. Several times during the Conference when a resolution was being debated it was asked: "Have we the power to put the resolution into effect? If not, what is the use of passing it? We don't want to pass pious resolutions like the Trade Union Congress"!!! The T.U.C. is overcentralised, and, as Jack Mills tells me, "the whole job is run for the 'stars'" and the delegates from the shops have but a poor chance of making themselves heard. As the Workers' Committee Movement grows in importance and influence the T.U.C. becomes less important and influential.

The Workers' Committee Conference was held in the rooms of the N.F.W.W. at Temple Row, Birmingham. Arthur McManus made a fine Chairman, striving all he could to avoid antagonisms. The fifty delegates present represented Barrow, Birkenhead, Birmingham, Bolton, Coventry, Crayford, Dartford, Invergordon, Leeds, Leigh, Lincoln, Liverpool, London, London West, Luton, Manchester, Newton-le-Willows, Sheffield, Southport, Southampton, Stoke-on-Trent, Warrington. The number of delegates was limited by the fact that instead of there being a steward for each union in a department there is now only one steward representing the shop. This is as it should be.

In his opening speech McManus said the character of the movement had completely changed. To-day we represented a definite idea, namely, workshop control. The chief business of the Trade Union Congress had been the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry *re* amalgamation, and listening to the speakers one might have thought they meant what they said; but the members appointed to the Committee of Inquiry were quite reactionary, and we could not hope for much from them. A delegate to the Trade Union Congress had frankly said that if the Trade Union Congress did not set about amalgamation the Workers' Committee would. The Shop Stewards' Movement had repeatedly stated that it was not out to smash the Trade Union movement, but apparently, that must happen. McManus ended by emphasising the necessity of vesting control of policy and action in the workshop.

The National Secretary, Geo. Peet of Manchester, then submitted his report, saying that the voting for national office bearers had been very unsatisfactory, only three committees having conducted the ballot properly. The other committees had cast the votes of the whole of the associate membership for selected candidates. The following committee and officers had been elected, but he thought the Conference should either ratify or reject them:—

National Secretary, George Peet (Manchester); National President, A. McManus (Glasgow); Assistant Secretary, J. T. Murphy (Sheffield); Treasurer, D. Ramsay (Dartford); National Administrative Council, Scotland (two members), A. McManus (Glasgow), Frank Smith (Invergordon); North of England (three members), Geo. Taylor (Barrow), F. Shaw (Leeds), J. Finigan (Liverpool); Midlands (two members), J. T. Murphy (Sheffield), Tom Dingley (Coventry), ; South of England (two members), Frank Dickie and W. F. Watson (both of London).

THE LIVERPOOL SCHEME.

J. Finigan moved a resolution to adopt nationally an organisation scheme which had been established in Liverpool. The Liverpool Committee, organising regardless of craft or sex, had formed Workshop Committees and issued rules on a red card. It then approached the Local Federation, offering to throw in its lot with it if the Federation would organise on the lines of the red card. The two committees had met and framed a scheme for Local Engineering Councils to be composed of two delegates from each society and an equal number of representatives drawn from the shop, who must be shop stewards. The Council would assume responsibility on all questions of wages and would negotiate on all questions with the employers and Government. The plan had worked well in Liverpool. H. King (Coventry) supported the Liverpool proposal.

(Continued on page 1083).

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

EDITOR: SYLVIA PANKHURST.

Published by the Workers' Socialist Federation,

400 OLD FORD ROAD, LONDON, E.3

Telephone: EAST 1787.

Annual Subscription - Post Free, 10s. 10d.

Back Numbers, 1½d, post free.

All business communications should be sent to the MANAGER, 400 Old Ford Road, London, E.3

Vol. V., No. 26. Sat., September 21st, 1918.

WHO WORKS FOR A PEOPLE'S PEACE?

Who is working for a peoples' peace? Few indeed of those who, by aid of the rank and file, have become prominent personages now possess the courage and consistency to maintain an unswerving demand for it! The Russian Soviets, reviled and persecuted by the international capitalists, disowned by the weaklings and popularity hunters in the Socialist and Labour movement, enunciated the unassailable people's peace formula: "No annexations, no indemnities, the right of the peoples to decide their own destinies." The Inter-Allied Socialist and Labour Conference, in which the Soviets are unrepresented, from which even British Minority Socialists whose courage does not suffice for championing the Soviets are excluded, from which the Italian Socialist has seceded; even this Conference, in which the counter-revolutionary Russian Mensheviki are welcomed, has yet found itself obliged nominally to adopt the Soviet peace formula. Reforce obliged to accept that formula the Conference fell away from its broad impartial spirit in drawing up a detailed statement of aims. Then the delegates showed themselves biassed and narrowly imperialist and influenced by a nervous regard for what the capitalist press would say about them.

As we write, the findings of the latest Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Conference, called at the suggestion of Mr. Gompers of the American Federation of Labour, are still incomplete. It assembles at a most critical and urgent moment. Two logical courses are open to it.

It could renounce the timidly reformist policy in which it never at any point wholly breaks away from capitalist imperialism; it could boldly ally itself with the policy of the Russian Soviets, protesting against the invasion of Russia, demanding international negotiations on the basis of no annexations, no indemnities, and the self-determination of peoples, and calling on the peoples to overthrow the capitalist governments which have refused and will continue to refuse peace on this basis. This course would be best.

Or, maintaining the reformist policy, like the Austrian Socialists the conference might endeavour to secure the best peace of conciliation that could be secured under the present capitalist governments. It could demand that the Austrian suggestion to negotiate be accepted, and even though it lacked the nerve to ally itself with the Soviet policy, it could protest against the Allied invasion of Russia. Still urgently pressing for an immediate meeting of the Workers' International, it could endeavour to strengthen itself by entering into friendly relations of give and take with the reformist Majority Socialists of Germany who, though more advanced, have a policy similar to that of the British Majority Socialists.

At the moment of writing there seems small chance of the Inter-Allied Conference taking a strong line in either direction. Mr. Gompers, who boasts that he is not a Socialist, has again and again since arriving on these shores, declared that the War must be fought to the bitter end and expressed his determined opposition to conversations with the Socialists of the Central Powers. Mr. Henderson, too, though in some quarters he is regarded as a pillar of internationalism has of late adopted an increasingly truculent attitude. In *The Daily News* of September 16th he announces that the proposals in the Inter-Allied war aims Memorandum "remain valid whatever changes there may be on the international situation and that the present Conference

"will be justified in telling the parties of the Central Powers that mere willingness to discuss war aims in an international meeting is not sufficient. We require from them a public declaration of their agreement with this conception of a democratic peace."

This is really a monstrous piece of vanity and tactlessness. There can be no comradely relations between the Socialists of all nations whilst one group takes up the position of insisting that the other group must swallow its proposals without amendment. The fact seems to be overlooked that this Memorandum, greatly influenced as it is by the utterances of capitalist politicians, was drawn up at a conference at which the peoples dwelling in the greater part of Europe were unrepresented.

THE AUSTRIAN PEACE NOTE.

The Austrian Peace Note postulates that there is a growth of the will to peace amongst all the populations suffering from the War, that "the distance between the conceptions of the two sides has on the whole grown somewhat less," that "a partial turning from the extremist war aims is visible, and a certain agreement relative to the general basic principles of world-peace now manifests itself." Also it urges that "a further continuance of the bloody struggle must transform Europe into ruins, and a state of exhaustion that will lame its development for decades to come." And this without any guarantee of an ultimate decision by arms. Nevertheless, the speeches and counter speeches of the belligerent statesmen have lacked directness and the speakers have spoken "over each other's heads." This, it is urged, was because the speeches were public and delivered with a view to their effect on "the masses." The Austrian Government, therefore, proposes to all the belligerent Governments that they shall send delegates to a confidential non-binding discussion in a neutral place without intercepting hostilities.

Austria says that "the constant and close accord" existing between the Central Powers "warrants the assumption" that they share the views developed in the Note. That the German Government is disposed to welcome negotiations is indicated, amongst other things, by the announcement that it has decided not to send troops to eastern Karelia, if the Allies will withdraw their troops from Karelia and Murmansk. The speech of the German Vice-Chancellor, Herr von Payer, with its statement that as "the main thing is a lasting peace, there can be no peace of conquest," seems timed to appear in conjunction with the Austrian Note. Herr Payer's terms are presumably those, or some of those, which Germany would put forward at the peace conference, probably expecting to have to modify them. Briefly, they are as follows:—

The agreements made between Germany and Poland, Finland, Ukraine, Russia and Roumania are in Germany's view, the affair of these nations only and other Powers will not be allowed to meddle.

Germany must receive back all territories won from her since August 1st, 1914, including her colonies, but exchange of colonial possessions 'on the ground of expediency need not be excluded.'

Germany will evacuate the territories she has occupied. Belgium 'could be given back without encumbrance and without reserve,' provided no other State would be more favourably treated in Belgium than Germany and her Allies.

No indemnities.

The establishment of a League of Nations.

A complete reciprocity agreement for disarmament and de-navalisation.

The freedom of the seas and sea routes and the 'open door' for trade, &c., in all overseas possessions.

Protection of small nations and national minorities.

No doubt the German Government would be content to make peace on these terms in which whilst it would renounce all conquests on the west, new spheres of exploitation would be opened to German capitalists on the East. Moreover, the seas would become equally free to all nations.

The German Government no doubt expects to be forced to modify these proposals but, like all the other capitalist Governments, it means to modify them only as far as it must.

Mr. Balfour in a statement to the Press has replied both to the Austrian Note and to Herr von Payer. His reply amounts to a flat refusal to negotiate, and in the course of it he mades the following points:—

That the German colonies will not be returned.

[Germany is going to insist upon the return of her colonies....but I say emphatically that here again is a point....on which the Germans stand upon one side, and we stand on the other.]

Naval bases taken from Germany will not be restored.

Germany must give up Alsace Lorraine.

Germany's treaties with Russia, Poland, Finland, Roumania, Ukraine, must be revised as, Mr. Balfour puts it "in conformity with what we of the co-belligerent believe, the cause of justice, civilisation, right and peace!

In view of the Allied invasion of Russia that last phrase seems to us to ring with a very hollow sound! Evidently Mr. Balfour believes that in spite of the havoc wrought by the War, it is better to wait for the great harvest of victory promised by Mr. Lloyd George in his recent Manchester speech. Mr. Lloyd George declares that "victory is essential to a sound and durable peace"; that America is sending to Europe an army of at least ten million men, and that "there is no crack in the joy bells ringing in our hearts."

When will the people with hearts that grieve who bear the burden of work and war and have no more material interest in a victory, come into power? Herr Erberger, leader of the Catholic party in the German Reichstag, says: "If the war lasts much longer no single country can escape revolution." When will the great awakening come?

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

BACK TO THE LAND.

Soldiers and sailors will be well advised not to give up their pensions permanently for a piece of land, unless well convinced that three acres or less will maintain a family. It is better to rent an allotment homestead from the State, reserving freedom to come and go at will. In Denmark, where co-operation does wonders for the small cultivator, the income from a Small Holding of seven acres is rarely more than £65 per year, and, life is one long over-toil on the part of man and wife, little ready cash coming their way. In this country it is illusory to expect a small holder to earn as much as an engine driver, which he should do, considering the hours and skill he puts into his work. Small holdings will never secure to the land worker a six-hour labour day, with a standard of income equal to £3 per week, at pre-war purchasing rates. Science and mechanics must supplement the labour of the man on a big scale, and this is only practicable on the large farm, worked as a food production factory; where the growers have to concentrate on cultivation alone, leaving sale, distribution, &c., to a separate national agency.

After much observation and some experience I am convinced that the reconstruction of the country-side can be brought about on the sub-joined lines:—

1. Farm continuation schools, with free maintenance for young land workers, up to the age of 18.

2. Transference of these trained workers to highly equipped large National Farms, worked for the State by the workers on Guild, or workshop control lines.

3. The State to say what produce it wants, to furnish seeds, packing conveniences, &c.; to collect the produce, and to transfer it to the consumer.

4. All specified competing produce from over-seas to be imported through State controlling agencies, so that such produce may be blended with the home-grown product, thereby protecting the home cultivator without penalising the consumer, and ending at the same time the absorbing squabble over Free Trade *versus* Tariffs.

5. To encourage initiative and experiment a home garden plot should be attached to the land workers' cottage; and scientific research establishments should be erected in suitable localities.

Newton Abbot. ARTHUR HICKMOTT.

THE COTTON SPINNERS' STRIKE.

The patient long suffering cotton operatives who have had to face the rising cost of living with but small increase in nominal wages and an actual decrease owing to short time have at last revolted. They claimed an increase in wages and the restoration of the rota system which the Cotton Control Board abolished. The demand for the rota system has now been dropped; a fact which we regret, because this system securing that the workers should be employed in turn according to the amount of work available, and that none should be permanently thrown out of employmen, tpossessed an element of fairness and introduced the germ of that co-operative principle which we desire to see preserved and extended. The Spinners' and Twiners' Shop Stewards' Committee protests against the injustice of withdrawing the rota system, which laid on the employer, because of his economic position and because the prosperity of the trade enabled him to do it, the duty of paying levies partially to atone to the workers for the losses caused by the Control Board's restriction of output. It should be noted here that according to *The Times* special correspondent "more money has been made by the employers in the Lancashire spinning trade this year than in any other half year in the history of the industry." The shop stewards urge that to make up for the withdrawal of the rota system broken time must be paid for.

A D.O.R.A. injunction against strike pay has been issued and the Trade Union officials have decided to bow to it. Nevertheless, the workers strike. This shows the importance of the rank and file movement, and indicates that determination counts for more than large funds.

THE POLICE UNION.

The Government refuses to recognise the National Union of Police and Prison Officers, but has no objection to the police being members of it provided it does not interfere with regulations and discipline. A Metropolitan Police Representative Board is to be elected by ballot to represent the force "in matters connected with conditions of service and general welfare other than questions of discipline."

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE N.U.R.

The railway workers refuse to accept less than the 10s. increase demanded and firmly state that no settlement will be accepted which does not give women equal pay with men.

A THREAT.

Merseyside coalheavers who were on strike returned to work for a week pending negotiations. The Ministry of Labour threatened to introduce sailors as blacklegs.

THE "FIGHT FOR FREEDOM."

Eugene V. Rebs, four times candidate for the Presidency of the United States, has been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for a speech delivered at the Ohio State Socialist Convention on June 16th.

ITALY AND YUGO SLAVIA.

The Italian Government's declaration approving the creation of a Yugo-Slav State is described as "altruistic," but the news paragraphs which announce it inform us that the result will be the formation of a strong Yugo-Slav legion in Italy!

CONSCIENCE AT EIGHTEEN.

Surely it is self-evident that if a boy of eightee is too young to have a conscientious objection to war, he is too young to fight in it?

SOCIALISM IN THE MAKING.

DECREE OF THE RUSSIAN SOVIET GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE LAW COURTS.

The Council of the People's Commissaries have decreed:—

1. To abolish the Legal Institutions hitherto existing, such as the District Law Courts, Judicial Chambers, and the Government Senate with all departments, and the Military and Naval Courts of all kinds and also the Commercial Courts, replacing them all by Courts formed by democratic election. With regard to the further direction and motion of impending cases a special decree will be issued.

All current contracts are suspended from the 25th October of present year until the issue of a special decree.

2. To suspend the action of the hitherto Civil Courts, replacing the Justices of the Peace elected up till now by indirect elections, by local Courts, consisting of a permanent Judge and two Assessors invited in turn to each session from a special list of Judges. The local judges are to be elected henceforth on the basis of direct democratic elections, and until the appointment of such an election they are replaced by temporary district and parish Courts, and where such are absent, by canton, town or provincial Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates. The lists of the Assessors are formed by the Soviets which also determine the order in which the Assessors shall present themselves at the session.

Former Justices of the Peace are not deprived of the right to be elected as local Judges, if they consent to it, either temporarily by the Soviets, or finally at the democratic elections. The local Courts decide all civil cases up to 3,000 roubles and criminal cases, if the possible penalty does not exceed two years of deprivation of freedom and financial claim, and a fine of 3,000 roubles. The sentences and the decisions of the Local Courts are final and are not subject to appeal. In the cases where fines not exceeding 100 roubles are imposed or where deprivation of freedom not exceeding 7 days is the sentence an appeal is allowed. Appeals are made before the District Court or before the meeting of the local judges at the capital cities. For the decision of criminal cases at the front local Courts are elected in the same way by the Regimental Soviets, and where they are absent, by the Regimental Committees. With regard to the administration of justice in other judicial cases a special decree will be issued.

3. To abolish the hitherto existing institutions of examining magistrates, attorney's inspection as well as Commissioners of Oaths and private solicitors.

In future until the reformation of the whole administration of justice all the preliminary enquiries in criminal cases will be carried out personally by the local judges, whose orders as to personal arrests and arraignments must be confirmed by an order of the whole local Court.

All honest citizens of both sexes who enjoy all civil rights* and may participate in the preliminary enquiries, are admitted either as accusers or defenders and in civil cases as attorneys.

4. For the overtaking and the further continuation of the cases, and execution of the Judicial Institutions of the Officials, of preliminary examinations of the Attorney's inspection, as well as of the Council of Solicitors, the respective Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates, elect special commissaries, who take under their jurisdiction the archives and the property of these establishments. All the clerks of the annulled establishments are to remain in their places and under the general direction of the commissaries, to carry out the necessary work attached to the pending cases, as well as to furnish information to interested enquirers on specified days.

5. The Local Courts decide all cases in the name of The Russian Republic and guide themselves in their decisions and sentences by the laws of the overthrown Government, in so far as such laws are not changed by the revolution, or do not contradict the revolutionary conscience.

Note.—All the laws regarded as annulled are those that contradict the decrees of the Central National Committee of the Soviets of the W.S.P.D. and Workers' and Peasants' Government as well as the programmes-minimum of the W.S.D.R. Party and S.R.G.

6. In all controversial civil as well as private criminal cases the parties apply to an Arbitrary Court. The order of the Arbitrary Courts will be determined by a special decree.

7. The right to pardon the condemned and the restoration of rights of power to condemn in criminal cases henceforth belong to the Judicial Authorities.

8. To fight all counter-revolutionary forces, so as to defend against them the Revolution and its conquests, and also to produce judgment in cases arising from the strife against marauding and rapacity, sabotage, and other abuses of tradesmen, manufacturers, officials and other persons are being established, Workmen's and Peasants' Revolutionary Tribunals, consisting of one Chairman and six Assessors in turn, which are elected by the Provincial or Town Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Delegates. To carry out preliminary enquiries in all these cases special inquiry committees will be set up at the same Soviets. All hitherto existing enquiry committees are annulled with the transference of their cases and executions into the newly organised committees at the Soviets.

The President of the Soviets of National Commissaries,

Commissaries: V. OULIANOV (LENIN).
A. SHLIKHTER, L. TROTSKY.
A. SHLIOPNIKOV.
I. DGEUGAVILI (STALIN).
N. AVILOT (N. GLEBOI).
P. STUCHKA.

Published in No. 17 Gazette of Provincial Government of W. and P., from 24th November, 1917.

*Full civil rights are restricted to those who earn their living by productive or social work, i.e., workers and employees of all kinds in industries, commerce, agriculture, and government departments. The disfranchised are those who hire labour in order to make profits, who live on income derived from capital, traders and their agents and clergy.

CORRESPONDENCE.

I was born a little Conservative. I was reared in the slums. Church schools tutored me in the three R.s and collects for the day. At 12 I was pushed into the university of experience. I found the sedies of the Sermon on the Mount were not law or custom there. A newspaper office erased from my mind my parents' political creed, and did not fill in any other. Disillusionment bred despair and doubt. There was something rotten in the British Empire. I smelt it in the slums where I was bred. It poisoned my soul in youth and early manhood. It was exhaled from the Press, the Pulpit and the Platform. I loathed my native land. To me it was a prison from which there was no escape. Was there anywhere hope of deliverance, if not for me, for my class? When I was 30 Socialist literature fell into my hands. I read revisionist and revolutionary pamphlets. I preferred the latter. They taught me Socialism could not come in a day, nor capitalism be destroyed in a night. But they proved that the civilisation which degraded and enslaved the working class was doomed, and would be replaced by an Industrial Republic of free men and free women who would control their own means of production, their own educational institutions, their own administrative organisations, and bring forth a literature untainted by falsehood.

Working for this state of society I never dreamed to see it realised in my time anywhere in the world. Yet it has happened in Holy Russia of all countries. Needless to say I have heartily welcomed the founding of the Russian Soviet Republic. I am delighted that the bourgeois method of government, geographical constituencies with control from above, has been superseded by the Soviet form, industrial constituencies with control from below. I have not anticipated the golden dream of a Morris Utopia would immediately follow the nightmare of Czardom but it is good to know that the Bolsheviks are, under the most adverse circumstances, putting into practice the kind of Socialism I want in this country—the administration of affairs by the workers democratically organised where they work. Therefore I cry, "Long live the Russian Soviet Republic!"

FRED SILVESTER,
Sec. Birmingham Branch S.L.P.
8, *Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, Birmingham*

* * *

DEAR EDITOR,—Mr. Bernard Shaw seems to think that the old commerical, capitalistic, coercive, body politic, must ever remain, but Tennyson reminds us that even nature ultimately throws her types aside, and in every new life and rebirth we find some change and ever a march toward greater fitness and efficiency. We hope for the day when every man under his own vine and fig tree shall produce for his own needs, and receive according to his labour, and none shall be afraid of the plunder and aggression of rulers and governments.

Mr. Shaw says a single central organisation to pool and distribute the products of industry is as necessary to the idealistic state as a heart is to a man. I suppose that means that these capitalistic and commercial systems, which require, for instance, that gloves manufactured in any given part of the country shall be sent to the heart, to London, to be dispersed and sent back by the wholesale firms before they can be made available for the use of the people who made them, are a necessary condition of things. I cannot see that this great heart with its pooling and fooling serves any useful purpose, and I think it will soon become as obsolete as the dilapodos.

What the individual, the commune, the country and the whole world need, the willing concession is to each and all of equal opportunities, freedom and independence to live and enjoy the products of their labours and fancies. All that one can do, and what every true and honest man will do, is to refuse to dominate others.

With two hours unaided labour per day, I can produce all I require, and all I desire of material things. What I ask is time and opportunity to develop my heart, mind and soul, my moral and religious sensibilities, refusing to be mixed with the common herd, the vulgar throng who mingle in the bloody mire of temporal power for liberty which never there is found, but ever flees all the arts and hearts of capitalism, or commerce and of competition.

The Bolsheviks and the Sinn Feiners, too, are in the vanguard of liberty and freedom.—Yours, &c.,

H. CAUSEY.

THE WORKERS' COMMITTEE CONGRESS.

(Continued from front page.)

Tom Dingley (Coventry), E. Lismer (Sheffield), F. Smith (Invergorden), R. Ramsay (Dartford), Goodbold (Lincoln), and Murray (Birmingham) said it was impossible for the Workers' Committee Movement to work with the Unions. It was our business to build up a new organisation, not to put new life into existing unions. Wherever these combinations between the Unions and the Shop Stewards' Movement were made it was because the Allied Trades were afraid of the growth of the Workers' Committee. We must keep the movement free of the Unions.

Comrade Goodbold (Lincoln) said if we adopt the Liverpool Scheme we shall have to go back again and start all over again. We must proceed independently. T. Kime (W. London) said we should table all the forces we have to fight. The unskilled and women questions were important factors. We put too much stress upon engineering. The time is coming when engineers will cease to exist because of the development of machinery. J. T. Murphy (Sheffield) opposed the Liverpool scheme. We must be prepared to profit by experience and realise the impossibility of the Workers' Committee working with the Unions. The interests were divided and the Unions' representatives would be loyal to the Unions. When a dispute occurred some locked to the Allied Trades, some to Joint Committee, District Committee, Engineering Committee, &c., and these bodies were generally the forces of disintegration. We should gather together the elements of discontent. Any move tending to compromise with officials was doomed to failure. We must stick to clear-cut straight policy.

A. McManus said he wished to avoid a specific resolution. The crucial point had been missed. The discussion had concentrated around organisation outside the shop, whereas we should be discussing shop organisation.

Geo. Wilson (Crayford) moved that the scheme outlined by McManus be adopted. George Peet said he would oppose the Liverpool scheme because it was a perpetuation of the Allied Trades Movement. The Liverpool scheme was rejected by 40 votes to 9.

THE GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT.

On Sunday W. F. Watson, on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee, submitted the three following resolutions:—

"That in view of yesterday's discussion the N.A.C. be urged to issue a statement of the basis and constitution of the National Movement together with a few helpful suggestions for the guidance of local committees, and directions how to take the initiative in forming shops committees. We further urge the N.A.C. to adopt immediately a National Contribution card for the use of all Locals, and we are of the opinion that the uniform contribution and affiliation fees should be clearly stated thereon.

This was carried with a few dissentients.

"That at all future conferences delegates' expenses be pooled and equally shared by all Locals."

This was referred back to the N.A.C.

"That this conference of delegates is of the opinion that the N.A.C. should meet at least once each quarter and that a complete report of such meeting should be sent to each Local. That we urge all S.S. and Workers Committees to submit regularly monthly reports to the National Secretary. Also that the Agenda of Annual Conference should be sent to the Locals in reasonable time before the conference takes place."

The discussion of the first resolution centred around the relationship between the Workers' Committee Movement (now mainly confined to the Engineering Industry) and the Miners, Railwaymen, and Transport Workers. It was shown that analagous movements were springing up in each of these industries. A delegate here stated that the organised police in his district had applied for affiliation to the Shop Stewards' Committee. This was interesting and significant of the changed mental outlook on the part of the "boys in blue."

The second resolution was unanimously adopted, with very little discussion, and the third was referred back to the N.A.C.

It was decided that the delegate fee to Conference be 2*s.* 6*d.* per district.

The victimisation of Tom Dingley by the employers of Coventry was then discussed, the delegates pledging themselves to assist Coventry in its efforts to get Dingley re-instated. A resolution protesting against the persecution of Tom Mooney, John Maclean, and the Masons was unanimously adopted. Jack Mooney being present stated that Tom Mooney had been in jail two years and had now been taken to the death cell.

Florence M. Campbell gave a brief address, urging the Shop Stewards to assist in organising the women.

A resolution was adopted protesting against the action of the Government in taking the machinery of the Socialist Labour Press.

The Manchester delegates reported that there was a strike on at the National Aircraft Factory at Heaton Chapel, Manchester, the cause being interfering with the duties of chief shop steward; 1,800 were out, and efforts were being made to drive them back before negotiation.

RUSSIA.

The following resolution was carried by 33 to 13, but it should be stated that those voting against did so not out of opposition for the principle but because of expediency:—

"1. That this conference requests the British and Allied Governments to cease meddling with the internal domestic affairs of Russia carried out with the intervention of armed forces and calls upon the British and Allied Governments to recall the said armed forces landed in Russia.

"2. That the British Government shall officially recognise the All Russian Soviet Government and render all possible assistance by entering into economic relations with the Soviet Government of Russia."

Glasgow was selected for the next Annual Conference. McManus wound up with a stirring appeal to the delegates to be loyal to the findings of the Conference.

WORKERS' SOCIALIST FEDERATION.

LONDON MEETINGS.

OUT DOOR.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th.
Cobden Statue.—6.30 P.M., Miss Price.
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st.
Great Push for Peace, Socialism and Votes for All in the Holloway District.—Meet at 3 P.M. and 6.15 P.M. outside Nag's Head (corner of Seven Sisters' Road and Holloway Road). Speakers: Miss Price, Mrs. Walker, and Mr. A. Mackinlay.
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22nd.
Osborn Street, Whitechapel.—11.45 A.M., Mrs. Walker.
Finsbury Park.—3.30 P.M., Miss Price.
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23rd.
Hoe Street, Walthamstow.—7 P.M., Miss Lambie.
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th.
Rathbone Street, Canning Town.—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th.
Hague Street, Bethnal Green.—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th.
Great Push in the S.E. District.

INDOOR.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23rd.
44, Malden Road, St. Pancras W.S.F.—2.30 P.M., Business Meeting.
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26th.
29B, Lincoln's Inn Fields.—7.30 P.M. D. Teignmouth Shore.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24th.
Walthamstow League of Rights, William Morris Hall, Somers Road.—2.30 P.M., Miss Horsfall.

FEDERATION NOTES.

CENTRAL BRANCH.—The weekly meetings were resumed on Thursday, when Sylvia Pankhurst spoke on 'The Revolution.' On Thursday, September 26th D. Teignmouth Shore will speak on 'Real Freedom.' We want larger audiences at these meetings as we have a particularly good autumn syllabus.

On September 27th W. F. Watson will lecture at Chandos Hall on 'Is Political Action of any Value?' Tickets 6*d.* each. The hall must be full, so will any one willing to sell tickets, please communicate with The Secretary, 29B, Lincoln's Inn Fields?

HOXTON, 85, Hoxton Street.—On Wednesday, September 11th, a members' meeting was held when it was decided to re-organise the Branch under the name of the Shoreditch Branch, Mr. Cave, 2, Clifton Terrace, Finsbury Park, N.4, and Mr. Cox, 67, De Beauvoir Road, Kingsland Road, N., being elected to act as joint secretaries *pro. tem.* Next Branch meeting, Thursday, September 26th, at 7.45. It is hoped that all members will attend.

BOW.—*Hon. Secretary:* N. L. Smyth, 400, Old Ford Road. Members are asked to come to the Branch meeting on Tuesday, September 24th at 8 P.M. Important business.

COCKNEY FAIR.—All members and friends are asked to work hard for the Cockney Fair on Dec. 5th, 6th and 7th at Holborn Hall. Subscriptions towards preliminary expenses, materials to make up, goods for stalls, offers to stock and equip stalls are needed. Save up groceries, money, &c., every week to help to make it a big success. Last years' balance sheet:—

COCKNEY FAIR, 1917.

Sale of Tickets, £39 6*s.* 10*d.*; Donations, £33 2*s.* 11*d.* Nursery stall, £17 11*s.* 8½*d.*; Literature stall, £16 19*s.* 4*d.*; Curio stall, £12 4*s.*; Poplar stall, £12; Toys, £8 8*s.* 5*d.*; Hat stall, £6 18*s.* 3½*d.*; Tobacco stall, £6 17*s.* 11*d.*; Fancy stall, £6 11*s.* 9½*d.*; Children's plays, £5 3*s.* 10½*d.*; Games, £4 17*s.* 4½*d.*; Refreshments, £4 7*s.* 2*d.*; Fruit and Vegetable stall, £4 4*s.* 9*d.*. Grocery stall, £4 4*s.* 8½*d.*; Second-hand stall, £3 10*s.* 1*d* Bran Pie, £3 9*s.* 8*d.*; Collections, £2 12*s.* 8*d.*; Odd sales, £2 3*s.* 2½*d*; Raffles, £2 2*s.* 5*d.*; Entertainment tax (returned), £1 10*s.*; Fortunes, £1 8*s.* 2*d.*; Bags, £1 5*s.* 10½*d.*; Brush stall, £1; Peace campaign, 15*s.* 9*d.*; Adverts., 15*s.*; Flower stall, 14*s.* 5*d.*; Whelk stall, 8*s.* 4½*d.*; Programmes, 6*s.* 10*d.*; Smoking fines, 1*s*, 7½*d*; Electric battery, 1*s.* 6*d.* Total, £205 4*s.* 7¾*d.*, less Expenses, £72 8*s.* 4½*d.*, leaving Profit, £132 16*s.* 3¼*d.*

Central Workers' Socialist Federation.

A LECTURE:

"Is Political Action of Any Value?"

will be delivered by

W. F. WATSON,

AT CHANDOS HALL, MAIDEN LANE, STRAND,
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th, at 7.30 p.m.

Chair, NORAH L. SMYTH.

Admission 6d. Discussion Invited.

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

RUSSIA.

Woe and destruction to the Russian Workers' Soviets is day by day predicted, but we remain hopeful of their triumphant survival. Stories of massacres and executions must all be discounted, and though undoubtedly there is hunger the tale of it is certainly exaggerated and there is evidence that the attempt alike of the Germans, the Allies, and the Russian counter-revolutionaries to cut off from supplies of food and raw material Central Russia, the seat of the Bolshevik Government, is being frustrated. Arthur Ransome reports in *The Daily News* —

"The most important news from Russia is the summoning of the General Assembly of Don Cossacks with the object of 'putting an end to the treachery of Gen. Krasnoff and his followers," and the re-establishment of firm democratic rule in the Don country. The Central Soviet Government, in an order signed by Trotsky and other Ministers, have declared that there shall be a general War Council of Don Cossacks, which shall have full power and be composed of representatives of the working classes of the town and country districts, excluding officers and landowners. This is taken—in connection with the secession of four Cossack regiments to the Soviet side—as indicating that the tide has turned in the south, and that the Soviet will once more find friendly States between itself and the Caucasus."

From various sources news comes that Kazan is again in the hands of the Soviet and that Samara, in the heart of the great corn-growing district, will shortly follow.

SLANDERING LENIN AND TROTSKY.

The Times of September 16th republishes statements which have appeared in the American press, and are intended to discredit Lenin and Trotsky and to prove that they are the tools of the German Government. In considering such articles it is well to remember that the unreliability of the American press is a by-word in America, and that one is constantly being assured there that "no one believes the Press." Some seventy documents are said by the American press to have been collected in Russia by a Mr. Edward Sisson. *The Times* gives an extract from one of them, a communication from the German Reichsbank giving the resolutions of a conference of bankers. These resolutions demand from Russia certain financial privileges for Germans. The answer made by the Russian Government to the document or whether it was ever answered at all is not known, but *The Times* says the answer does not matter. On that basis we conclude that if the W.S.F. or some other Socialist organisation were to send a Republican resolution to King George, the King might be successfully charged with plotting against the throne!

MAXIM GORKY.

Maxim Gorky, like so many other famous Russians, was reported to have been murdered; but now it is announced that he has taken service in the Soviet Government Literary Publcations Department, which is issuing Russian classics at cost price. How Russian to be publishing classics instead of atrocity reports in the midst of a war! It has always seemed to us that Gorky's place was with the Soviets; we are glad that he has realised it!

THE INTER-ALLIED CONFERENCE.

The People's Russian Information Bureau draws our attention to the question of the representatives of the Russian "labouring classes" at the Inter-Allied Labour Conference. According to a Reuter message M. Roussanoff, Gavronsky and M. and Mme. Soukhomline (Mensheviks) have received passports by the aid of the British Government—hitherto the Bolshevik Government was supposed to have denied these passports for the Inter-Allied Conference.

The Bolshevik Government was never in a position to deny these passports for M. Roussanoff and M. and Mme. Soukhomline have been living in Stockholm for more than twelve months; further these delegates are not Mensheviks but Social-Revolutionaries of the "Right" wing. They represent nobody but themselves and have been guilty of terroristic acts during the first phase of the Revolution under Kerensky. Their party was guilty of restoring the death penalty in the army.

THE REWARD OF LOYALTY.

We take the following from *The Daily News*, September 11th—it speaks for itself:—

"In England, France, and America there are at the present time a large number of Russians who are suffering privation and hardship, due to the strong feeling of prejudice against them. Many of these in England came over under the old régime as naval and military attachés, or technical experts, in the engineering and textile trades, but the Bolshevik coup d'état took away their occupation and left them stranded. In some cases the more skilled men found work, but the men and girls who were working as clerks and typists in the Russian offices have found great difficulty in getting anyone to give them work.

"A large number of Russian girls of good position and education employed in the Postal Censor's Department were discharged after the Bolsheviks made peace with Germany, and have had ever since to live on their small savings.

"An official of a committee which has been set up in London, under Sir George Buchanan, the former British Ambassador in Petrograd, told a *Daily News* representative yesterday that efforts were being made to find employment for these people. 'They are all patriotic people and pro-Ally in their feelings,' he said. 'And to let them starve in England, and penalise them for being of Russian nationality, when they hate the Bolsheviks and the Germans, is not the way to retain the sympathy of those Russians who are friendly to us.'"

GERMANS IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.

The new Blue-Book on German cruelty to the natives of South-West Africa probably is, of course, from our point of view, a biassed document prepared for the purpose of discrediting the German rule. Nevertheless, it probably contains many authentic cruelties and instances of oppressive cruelty; for cruelty towards the subjugated native has been used by some members of every European nationality that has colonised, or has imported the peoples of another type of civilisation as workers. Individual atrocities are certain to be perpetrated as soon as one race has power to dominate another. 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and 'Red Rubber' were not written about Germany. And what of the massacres in Ceylon in 1915?

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

FAMILY LIMITATION DOCTRINE. Post free, 1½d. —Malthusian League, 48, Broadway, Westminster.

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

FOR SCRAMBLED EGGS, ETC., USE
Greer's
Agreeable Whole Dried Eggs,
2 whole eggs 2½d.
wholesale only,
D. W. GREER & Co., Camberwell, 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. 7*s.* 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 7*s.* 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. [Advt

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.

ANTIQUES.
For Genuine Old English Furniture and China
MARY CASEY,
29b Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.2.

An appeal from Bishop Weldon is published simultaneously with this West African Blue-Book. He says: "There is a growing conviction....that the colonies wrested from Germany in the War should not be restored to her when the War is over.... But in one respect, if in one only, *i.e.*, in relation to the liquor trade, has Great Britain adopted or allowed a Colonial policy hardly less unscrupulous than the German, for, if it is a sin to flog the guiltless African people with *sjamboks*, it must be equally a sin to destroy them by strong drink."

In pursuit of trade men would sell their very souls, it appears, if they were marketable!

PASSPORTS TO "WOMEN AND CHILDREN."

When Miss Bondfield was appointed to the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress as a delegate to America, Mr. Lloyd George stated that overseas passports are not being granted now to "women and children." Yet the torpedoing of the Galway Castle bound from this country to South Africa has revealed the fact that of the 749 passengers "the great majority were women and children." How is this to be accounted for?

In Our Next Issue
we shall publish
Catherine Breshkovsky's
Life Story.

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 Breams' Buildings, London, E.C.4 and Published by the Workers' Socialist Federation, 400 Old Ford Road, London, E.3