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For International Socialism.

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THE INTERNATIONAL.

INTER-ALLIED LABOUR AND SOCIALIST CONFERENCE HELD CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER, SEPTEMBER 17TH TO 20TH, 1918.

It would be useless to shut our eyes to the fact that this Conference has been a triumph for the reaction. Its one useful achievement has been to show the unreality of the compromise by which ever since the outbreak of war astute supporters of the Governments have endeavoured to bring together two absolutely opposite standpoints. In this compromise the Jingo makes some slight verbal concessions to the pacifist, the pacifist accepts the entire active policy of the Jingo, and the views of the Socialist-Internationalist are altogether swept aside.

By its resolutions the Conference has done all that the Allied Governments could have desired of it.

1. *It has given the hallmark of its assent to the Allied invasion of Russia.*
2. *It has rejected the Austrian Peace Note.*
3. *It has pledged itself to support the Government in a fight to a finish.*
4. *It has adopted President Wilson's fourteen points as the terms of Allied Labour and Socialism, thus placing itself in line with the Allied Governments which read what they please into President Wilson's points.*
5. *It has abandoned the effort to secure a meeting of the International and again flouted the German Socialists.*

The Allied Governments have reason, indeed, to congratulate themselves on the docility of the Conference!

NON-REPRESENTATIVE VOTING.

It was a packed Conference; its voting provided no roughest numerical gauge of opinion in the Allied Socialist and Labour parties. Until the last hours of the Conference, and notably on such important questions as the Russian invasion and the Austrian Peace Note, voting was by show of hands, and "consultative delegates," representing no organisation, voted on equal terms with those sent by great federations of men and women. The British section took advantage of the fact that the Conference was held in London to send there forty-two representatives, including the entire executives of the Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, though at regular meetings of the International the maximum voting power allotted to the largest nationalities was twenty. This latest Conference contained 81 delegates in all. Therefore the British section possessed an absolute majority and the power to decide every question as it chose. France had 12 representatives, 6 from its Socialist Party (which possesses 100 Parliamentary deputies in a Parliament of 600) and 6 from the powerful Confederation Général du Travail. Belgium had 6 representatives, Greece 1, Serbia 1, and Canada 1. The American Federation of Labour had 5 representatives. The American Socialist Party had not been invited.

The Italian delegation was indeed a curious one. The Italian Socialist Party had refused to attend the Conference because the minority Socialist Parties of Britain had been excluded and the Italian Reformists, who are but a very tiny and new minority of Italian Socialists, had been included. The Italian Trade Unionists were not invited until a protest was lodged on their behalf, and they declined the tardy invitation which followed. The Italian Reformist Party, nominally consisting of 12,000 members, closely connected with the Italian Government, and formed because the Italian Socialist Party is opposed to the War, sent three representatives to the Conference. An organisation called the Unione Italiana del Lavora, and giving its membership as 160,000, sent one representative, a young soldier on leave, who gave to the delegates unpublished information, which he said the Italian Government had authorised him to impart. Five persons described as Social Democrats of the Irredenta, but representing no organisation, came as "consultative delegates only" and were given the power to vote. Two other "consultative delegates" came from a committee in France which is supposed to represent Roumanians living there. The unauthorised Italian and Roumanian delegations were thus able to cast eleven votes between them, and as their votes were almost always opposed to those of the French, these non-representative votes were able practically to nullify the twelve votes of the French delegation. Five "consultative delegates" were expected from the Russian Anti-Bolshevik parties, and the question as to whether they should vote was in abeyance. Delay by the British authorities made it impossible for them to reach the Conference. Why did the British authorities retard them?

PACIFIST INERTIA.

The air of the Conference was heavy with disillusionment and many are the reputations which would have been shattered by its proceedings had all the world been there to hear. Longuet, widely admired as the premier pacifist amongst Allied Socialists, allowed all the important decisions to pass either without a challenge or with a but timid, half-hearted one. He only roused himself to vigorous speech at the end of the Conference, when it was too late to affect its findings. He was entirely out-shone, both in tactical wisdom and genuine fidelity to principle, by the young and relatively unknown Serbian delegate, Doushan Popovitch, who put up a brave isolated fight which will bear fruit later on, and who, of all the delegates, alone emphasised the principles of Socialism. Merrheim shrouded himself in uneasy silence.

The British pacifists were remarkable for their inertia. MacDonald never emerged from obscurity and his only utterances dealt insignificantly with unimportant points. Kneeshaw made a courageous speech on the purposes of the War. Both he and Maxton, who supported him, showed independence of the prevailing hypnosis which held the majority of delegates enchained to the standards of patriotism set by the capitalist press; but Maxton and Kneeshaw, as yet, lack the agility necessary to achieve anything in such a Conference. Each delivered a good platform speech, but failed to come to grips with what the Conference would do, or fail to do, and neither so much as referred to the latest developments of the war game and the immediate action necessary. British Socialists (and British Socialists are not alone in this) most amazingly fail of vivid realisation that the battle of Socialism is to-day being fought out in Russia, and that we cannot establish Socialism here by avoiding conflict with capitalist prejudices.

Most of the pacifists will awake to the fact that they are interested in the Austrian Peace Note six months after it has been rejected by the Governments, and forgotten by the public at large. Gompers and many of his fellow Jingoes have this to their credit: they are determined; they intend that what they believe in, meagre as it is, shall be realised. Therefore they prevail; therefore they dominate the assembly. Success is always to those who will; never to the half-hearted. Gompers is ridiculed for his extravagances, his conceit, his old-fashioned folly and blindness; yet the resolutions which go out from the great Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist parties to the world are heavily stamped with his impress.

THE AUSTRIAN PEACE NOTE.

The policy of "peace by negotiation" has been pioneered and agitated by the prominent people in the I.L.P. and U.D.C. ever since the outbreak of war. The Austrian request for a preliminary discussion to discover whether it is possible to enter into a formal peace treaty is surely in line with that policy. As far as the vague and shadowy Lansdowne policy, which has been so enthusiastically hailed by Mrs. Snowden and others, is at all defined, it is the policy of the Austrian Peace Note, which is an attempt to explore the avenues that may lead to peace. The Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Conference was the most effective place for the I.L.P.-U.D.C. section to work for the acceptance of the Austrian Note, but it by no means grasped the opportunity. It is true that Mrs. Snowden and Mr. Ben Turner moved resolutions for reference to the Commission which was to present a report on the Note, but neither of these resolutions plainly urged that the offer should be accepted and negotiations begun. Mr. Turner asked the Allied Governments to send a "joint and reasoned reply" to the Note, but humbly refrained from suggesting what the reply should be. Mrs. Snowden asked that the Allies should be wise and sympathetic, and should make a joint statement of Allied peace terms. But this resolution was an evasion of the point at issue. The Commission appointed to deal with the various resolutions consisted of Huysmans and Vandervelde for Belgium, Longuet and Renaudel for France, Henderson and Hill for Great Britain, Rassoni and Rosetti for Italy, Popovitch for Serbia, Bain and Wallace for the U.S.A. The following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Commission:—

> This Conference has given fullest consideration to the Note which the Austro-Hungarian Government has addressed to each of the belligerents.
>
> By proposing to the latter a *secret Conference* for the discussion of the possibilities of peace, the Austro-Hungarian Government evidently wishes to give the appearance of satisfaction to the desire of the peoples for peace, and to throw on the Governments of the Entente the responsibility for the continuation of the war.
>
> The fact that it is not yet known whether the initiative in this peace offensive comes from Austria only or conjointly from the two Central Powers appears to indicate that the Austrian proposal has been dictated more by anxiety to strengthen the internal cohesion of the Monarchy than by the desire to co-operate effectively in the settlement of the world conflict.
>
> This Conference is of opinion that the Allied Governments would be assuming a heavy and perilous responsibility by adopting a purely negative policy.
>
> The Allied Governments, in reply, should make clear the identity of their views by close and continuous co-operation and a public and collective declaration of their aims and intentions. They should subscribe to the 14 points formulated by President Wilson, thus adopting a policy of clearness and moderation as opposed to a policy dictated exclusively by changes in the war map; and, finally, they should interrogate their opponents in regard to their general and particular War Aims, which have never been defined, thus imposing upon the working classes the responsibility of choosing between the solutions proposed.
>
> The Government of the United States has already been able to reject the proposal of the Austro-Hungarian Government by observing that, having clearly and publicly formulated its own War Aims, it did not see the use of reproducing the same declarations in a secret conference.
>
> It is by defining their own War Aims jointly with the United States, with the same precision and clearness, that the Allied Governments will give to the workers of the world the conviction that they are resolved to continue the struggle, not in order to meet the aggression of the Central Monarchies by undertaking in their turn a war of conquest, but for the single purpose of establishing on an unassailable foundation a peace which will be just and lasting, and in conformity with the aspirations of international democracy.

The important part of this resolution is the definite rejection of Austria's request for negotiations, coupled with the decidedly provocative statement that the request is not a genuine peace effort, but only a pretence to disarm the Austrian pacifists. Longuet might surely have been expected to refuse to append his name to this resolution. Merrheim complained of the passage asserting that the Austrian Note was animated, rather by care for the monarchy than by a desire for peace, and protested that the Allies always met peace offers with such rebuffs; yet he accepted the resolution—a fact with which Vandervelde mockingly taunted him. J. R. MacDonald, who, in a very special way, has made the policy of peace by negotiation his own, also accepted the resolution, making no protest at the rejection of the Austrian Note. Perhaps he intended to reveal his regret at the rejection by saying that the Conference ought not to be satisfied by merely attacking the Government that tries to manipulate the situation from interested motives, but should use the opportunity thus created for its own ends. But if he regretted the rejection of the note why did he not say so? He urged that it would have been better to refer to Labour's war aims adopted by that Conference than to President Wilson's fourteen points which had never been officially before it, though he believed them to be the same.

Albert Thomas, speaking of course with a Cabinet Minister's knowledge of the inconvenience which may be caused through independent action by one of a group of Governments pledged to act together, protested that the United States ought to have waited to answer Austria in conjunction with the other Allies. One wondered in hearing him whether some of President Wilson's points are displeasing to the French Government, and whether the French Government is not beginning to fear that America's zeal for a fight to a finish may not outlast its own. He asked the United States delegates to bring before their Government the necessity for acting with its Allies.

Mr. T. Richards, M.P., in truly insular style, dissented from the implication that the American Government alone had defined its war aims. He said that Mr. Lloyd George had done so as clearly as President Wilson, and that the British Labour Party's war aims had been published before President Wilson's. Gompers declared that the American Federation of Labour had defined its aims before any one. He thought the assertion contained here that America alone had defined its war aims unjust to Great Britain. The credit of French, Belgians, Italians, Serbians and other non-English speaking peoples is obviously of little importance to him. He added, with an air of proud reproach: "If the men of Great Britain could allow that aspersion to stand, I have no right to intervene.... *We* are behind our Government 100 per cent. We stand four square behind

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the Allies in this War!" He observed that Labour's war aims, as defined by the previous conference, had not been referred to now "because we did not desire to enter into controversial matters at the outset."

We have a shrewd suspicion that President Gompers and his American co-delegates have not troubled even to read 'Labour's War Aims.'

The discussion quickly revealed the fact that even the most war-like French and Belgian delegates, like Albert Thomas, Renaudel, and Vandervelde, are more intelligently moderate than the American and British Jingoes. Renaudel and Vandervelde both admitted with regret that the Allies have not yet defined their terms. Renaudel said that when, about a year ago, the French Socialists approached Ribot, asking him to establish a close co-operation with the United States Government, especially in regard to the Society of Nations, Ribot had replied that he anticipated difficulties especially on that point. Does this mean that President Wilson's Government is far in advance of the French on this matter or far behind it? Are Wilson's fourteen points but camouflage? Renaudel did not enlighten us.

THE ALLIED INVASION OF RUSSIA.

The Commission dealing with Russia presented the following majority resolution:—

This Conference sends an expression of deepest sympathy to the Labour and Socialist organisations of Russia, which, after having destroyed their own Imperialism, continue an unremitting struggle against German Imperialism.

It declares that if the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk stands, it would confirm the collapse of the Russian Revolution, and would most gravely compromise the future of the democracy of the world. It invites the workers of the Allied Countries to refuse to recognise any Peace Settlement which does not secure the complete freedom of the Russian People.

On the other hand, it puts the workers of the Allied Countries on their guard against the tremendous dangers of a policy of intervention in Russia which, instead of supporting the efforts of democratic Russia, should favour the reactionary tendencies that aim at the re-establishment of the Monarchy, and even under the pretext of fighting Bolshevism, should serve the reaction against Socialism and Democracy.

It declares in advance that to such a policy the working classes of the Western democracies would have the elementary duty of offering opposition without stint.

BELGIUM: HUYSMANS, VANDERVELDE.
FRANCE: LONGUET, RENAUDEL.
GREAT BRITAIN: HENDERSON, HILL.
SERBIA: POPOVITCH.

The United States representatives on the Commission, Messrs. Bain and Wallace, dissented from the last paragraph and presented the following alternative:—

"It is of opinion that the Allied Governments should make very explicit pronouncements to the peoples of Russia to the effect that armed intervention is taking place with the hope of counteracting the sinister influence of the Central Powers upon the so-called Bolshevik Government which has suppressed the utterances and the aspirations of the great majority of the Russian working classes; and that no military successes whatever shall be made the excuse for arresting the march of the peoples of Russia towards true Democracy. It looks to the Allied Governments to give tangible proof of the sincerity of such declarations by their actions in the occupied districts of Russia."

Longuet spoke in support of the majority resolution, saying that it meant that the Conference desired to send its sympathy to all the Socialists of Russia making no distinction between the Bolsheviki and the various other parties. The resolution could be applied to the Bolsheviki because, though it has been said that they are pro-German "we know better." They were forced to agree to the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, the framing of which was "one of the most abominable things done since the beginning of the war" because Russia lacked the railways, arms, and so on which would enable her to fight. The resolution further meant that whilst the Conference expressed no view in regard to Allied intervention in the abstract, it was opposed to the present intervention because it was aiding the counter-revolution and the re-establishment of the monarchy.

Vandervelde replied that this was by no means his view of the resolution, which was in reality his own. He said that Longuet had presented to the Commission a resolution against any form of intervention but it had received no support, and therefore Longuet had withdrawn it. (At this both Longuet and Popovitch protested.) Vandervelde declared that the sympathy expressed by the resolution was intended to be confined to the anti-Bolshevik Socialists, whom he regards as belonging to the Allied belligerents. He declared that the resolution was intended to support the Allied Intervention, with a mere warning that it should not be used to re-establish the Czardom, and asserted that its meaning was precisely the same as that of the American amendment, which he was prepared to accept.

Kerensky, who had been invited as a visitor, was now introduced with some applause. He who was once a central figure of the revolution might now have been taking a leading part in the great effort to establish Socialism in Russia. He has now fallen to a position of impotent insignificance. Kerensky told the Conference that he had been, and remained, an ardent advocate of intervention. When he came to this country on June 1st the organisation of "Socialists, Liberals, and Democrats" with which he is associated for the overthrow of the Bolsheviki, was as yet in a "conspiritorial stage." Therefore he could not speak publicly of its activities, but he had described them in full to "Allied Governments and to single political leaders." "The secret work of the Union" was now public. Under the Presidency of Mr. Avksentioff, former Minister of the Provisional Government, a conference is sitting at Oufa. It consists of the members of the Constituent Assembly dissolved by the Bolsheviki, of representatives of the old Zemstvos, or County Councils, and of the late municipalities of towns and provinces (in short, the people who have been superseded by the Soviets). An anti-Bolshevik Government has been set up in Siberia. Mr. Kerensky complained that it has applied for recognition by the Allied Governments, but this has not been forthcoming. He complained that the Allies are supporting "isolated persons and private organisations" which desire to seize power in Russia, as he said, "by Bolshevik methods, that is to say, by violence." Yet he referred with approval to what he called "the heroic attempt against the life of the German Ambassador and the revolts at Moscow and Petrograd" by his own friends. Are these not violence? He complained that an Allied representative, Mr. Chaplin, had attempted to upset the Government of Tchaikovsky, who at Archangel had "overthrown the Bolsheviks and prepared the way for the landing of the Allies." He said:—

"Representatives of the Allies in Russia and especially their military representatives ought to receive a categorical order from their Governments to give up all political relations with separate persons and private organisations and to act in accordance with the agreement come to with the existing Democratic Government."

What is that agreement? The people of this country should be informed as to its terms. The nature of Mr. Chaplin's activities should also be disclosed. Kerensky's speech reveals the fact that he urged the Allies to intervene in Russia in order to help him and his party to overthrow the Bolsheviki. He is angry because the Allies are giving their support to a third party.

After Kerensky had spoken Stuart Bunning repeated Longuet's point that the resolution did not declare either for or against the Allied intervention; but Renaudel insisted that the resolution was intended to support it.

Popovitch declared that, on behalf of the Serbian Socialists, he must vote against the resolution. It was absurd for Socialists to say to capitalist Governments: "Make war, not for your capitalist interests, but for our interests as Socialists." The Serbian Party was against any form of intervention, for there was no good intervention and no good war; all were bad. In the hands of a Capitalist Government intervention, if successful, would restore reaction. Socialists had been told that if they supported their Governments in the war the Governments would support their Socialist ends; the result had been the Secret Treaties, including the Italian Treaty, to which the Italian Reformists here represented had given their support. (The Italian Reformists were loudly trying to shout down the speaker; an exercise in which they indulged very fully during the Conference.) Popovitch expressed deep regret at the reports that the Bolsheviki had murdered thousands of people, but said that the capitalist governments had murdered millions. He concluded by declaring that if Vandervelde wished his interpretation of the resolution to be accepted he should abandon it and adopt the American amendment.

After the speech of Popovitch, which had thrown the hall into an uproar, and in which he clearly voiced the Socialist position, not hitherto heard in the Conference, it was evident that the compromise resolution could not go through unchallenged, as that on the Austrian Note had done. Albert Thomas, who after Kerensky's speech and though a supporter of the "fight to a finish," yet said that we must oppose the Bolsheviki because we must oppose "the doctrine of violence," protested that "Longuet must not snatch our text for his meaning." Williams of the British Musicians' Union moved that the resolution be referred back to the Commission. This was done, and when the resolution appeared next day the last paragraph took this smug, hypocritical form:—

"The Conference is of opinion that in conformity with Article 6 of the 14 points of President Wilson the present effort of the Allied Governments to assist the Russian people must be influenced only by a genuine desire to preserve Liberty and Democracy in an ordered and durable World Peace in which the beneficent fruits of the Revolution shall be made permanently secure."

This was agreed to by all the members of the Commission, with the exception of Popovitch, the Serbian delegate—a fact which should be noted by those whom the Commissioners represent.

Williams moved that the resolution be voted on without discussion, and this was finally agreed to, in spite of much protest by Longuet, the closure was carried by show of hands, to the surprise and dissatisfaction of many delegates. The Russian resolution itself was then passed in the same way. Many of those who might have been expected to vote against it abstained, including J. R. MacDonald. Mrs. Snowden objected that speakers whose names had been handed in on the previous day had had no opportunity to express their views.

Jouhaux of the French Confederation of Labour complained that the voting system was unfair and gave the British Section an absolute majority on all questions. Longuet said "while one nation has control of all arrangements, these unpleasant incidents are bound to happen." The French delegates threatened to leave on the ground that Britain held an absolute majority of votes, and on the motion of Renaudel it was agreed to revert, for future questions, to the voting system used by the International before the War, giving to America twenty votes like Great Britain. The incident should prove to us that no more than those of other nations, can British officials be entrusted with an all-powerful position, and for its own dignity the British Labour Party and Trade Union Congress should see to it that its officials do not again acts unfairly towards our comrades of other nations.

CALLING OF FUTURE CONFERENCES.

Henderson then moved that two delegates from each country should be appointed at that Conference for the calling of future conferences and to be responsible for the carrying out of the present resolutions. The resolution was adopted. Italian Socialism and Labour will therefore be represented on the committee by the delegates of non-representative organisations, the Italian Socialist and Labour Parties being excluded. Some may reply that the fault is their's for staying away, but the retort falls flat, since the entire Socialist and Labour movement of Italy is concerned!

WAR AIMS AND CAUSES.

When the Report of the Commission on War Aims came to be made, Popovitch, the Serbian delegate, was again the only dissentient. The British Section was represented by Sexton and Webb.

The Report began by recording its agreement with the American Federation of Labour that this war is:—

"A conflict between autocratic and democratic institutions; the contest between the principles of self-development through free institutions and that of arbitrary control of government by groups of individuals for selfish ends. [This reads curiously in view of Kerensky's statement that it is just such "groups of individuals which the Allied Governments are supporting in Russia.]

The Conference further pledged itself:—

"to assist the Allied countries in the marshalling of all their resources, to the end that the armed forces of the Central Powers may be driven from the soil of the nations which they have invaded and now occupy; and, furthermore, that these armed forces shall be opposed so long as they carry out the orders or respond to the control of the militaristic autocratic Governments of the Central Powers, which now threaten the existence of all self-governing peoples."

The phraseology of these passages is, of course, that of Gomper's.

Kneeshaw made a strong attack on these passages and on the war itself, pointing out that the struggle of democracy is continuing in each country, and that the military victory of one group of capitalist governments over another will not affect it. The British people had been told that we entered the War because Belgium was invaded, but in August of this year Mr. Lloyd George had informed the House of Commons that we went to War because we had made a compact with France. This remark drew from Albert Thomas the retort that "French members of Parliament well remembered the deep anxiety they felt on on August 4th, 1914, the very day on which Britain entered the War, as to whether Britain would join France in the War." He read correspondence between Sir Edward Grey and Sir Francis Bertie, in which the latter conveyed the French desire for an assurance that Britain would fight with France, and Sir Edward Grey had replied that this would be difficult. He also read a letter from Bonar Law to Asquith, in which the latter declared that it would be fatal to hesitate in supporting France and Russia, and promised that his party would support

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the Government in going to War. We are not surprised to learn that the Tory Party wanted this country to join the War, but it is interesting to have the proof.

Kneeshaw declared his conviction that even if France herself had invaded Belgium, the position in Europe was such that this country would have supported France against Germany. He asked why the fourth part of the resolution did not demand the withdrawal also of the Allied armies from occupied territory—from Persia, from Mesopotamia, and so on. The Allied Governments had met to discuss getting control of oil and mineral deposits, but they had not met to discuss how to establish the League of Nations and to secure the reduction of armaments, the promise of which had been used to obtain democratic support for the war. The War was a capitalist war.

Sidney Webb and J. H. Thomas, M.P., protested that Kneeshaw had not voiced the views of British Labour, which they said was supporting the War as a war of democracy. Thomas observed that Labour repudiates the Secret Treaties, oblivious of the fact that the Allied Governments do not. He feared that Kneeshaw's speech might prejudice the Conference in the eyes of the world. Grey, one of the American delegates, said that such views as Kneeshaw's had become "an infectious disease"; no such "infection" must be allowed to go out from this Conference. Mr. Sexton declared that Kneeshaw and the other delegates who were members of the I.L.P. had no right to speak for organised Labour, forgetting that the votes of Trade Unionists, who support their policy, had placed them on the Executives of the Labour Party and Trade Union Congress. Gompers replied with an attack on the German trade unionists; he had urged their President to bring pressure to bear on the German Government to stop the submarine warfare, but the German had replied with an appeal for the lifting of the Allied blockade, because it would starve the men, women, and children of Germany. The passages under discussion were carried by a show of hands, in which many delegates did not vote.

PRESIDENT WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS.

The Report next proposed the adoption of President Wilson's fourteen points. Popovitch, for Serbia, objected that these points are by no means so irreproachable as is suggested. Serbian Socialists desire a republican federation of the Balkan peoples who were originally one people. Only Socialistic Government by the working class can free them. Popovitch also complained that the British Government had done his people great injury, by prohibiting the import of food into Serbia, on the plea that Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria would take the food for themselves. Belgium had not been thus cruelly treated. He had no sympathy with the Governments of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, but his experience went to show that they had not confiscated Serbian food; on the contrary, they had sent food into occupied Serbia.

THE INTERNATIONAL ABANDONED.

The Conference affirmed that "a world Labour Conference should be held at the same time and place as the Peace Conference that will formulate the Peace Treaty closing the war," and appointed Vandervelde, Albert Thomas, and Henderson (an indeterminate trio) to arrange this with the Governments. The International Meeting, on which so many hopes for ending the War and creating a people's peace have been built, was virtually abandoned. It is true that a protest (in which the Americans would not join) was made against the refusal of passports by Governments; but the Conference itself rejected the International.

The discussion took place on Friday, Troelstra's further message having been published in Wednesday's newspapers, stating, on the authority of Ebert, Chairman of the German Social Democratic Party, that the German majority accept the neutral memorandum, and make it their own, except in regard to compensation for Belgium, which they are willing to discuss with a view to affecting a "compromise," and on the question of Alsace-Lorraine, which they are willing to discuss, explaining their standpoint. There had also been published in Friday's press a written statement by Ebert in *Vorwarts* to the same effect. The debate centred around the following paragraph:—

"The Conference.... expresses its deep regret that the reply of the German majority—though their published letter expresses their willingness to attend an International—does not accept the London proposals, and fails officially to accept even the neutral proposals as a basis of discussion. So long as these points remain unanswered they create an obstacle to the holding of an international Conference."

Bouderon moved an amendment to substitute some milder word than "obstacle"; to say that the German reply is of a character to retard, or to place a difficulty in the way of an International Conference. The amendment was seconded by Longuet, who spoke, not to it, but to a much stronger amendment which neither he, nor any one else, had moved. He declared that the French majority desired the reunion of the International at once and without conditions. In the French Socialist Party 16,000 had voted for the International Meeting, only 12,000 against it, and the Confederation Général du Travail had voted unanimously for the International. He said:—

"We want the International to end the war. We want it not only as Socialists, but as Frenchmen. Because we love and are proud of our country, we don't want to see it die! We are thankful for the kind and nice things that you here say of France; but one million seven hundred thousand Frenchmen are dead! Even before the war the population of France was not growing. Unless the war stops soon there will be no French people to enjoy the clean peace that is talked of! M. Thomas says that the International is not possible. I say that on several occasions peace has been refused because of the Imperialistic designs of our own Government. We appeal to the International effort of the working class to end the slaughter. One of the minority represented by Renaudel and Thomas said: 'Oh, you majoritaires, you believe in the International like the Christians!' A poor modest workman replied: 'As the Christian without Christ, is the Socialist who does not believe in the International"

Longuet had roused himself at last. Had he done so at the outset; had he fought thus for the International on every resolution, and moved amendments in conformity with his speeches, he might perhaps have changed the atmosphere of the Conference and modified its history. Even as it was, his words caused profound dismay. Thomas and Renaudel protested loudly. Middleton paced nervously up and down. Huysmans wandered about the room complaining that Longuet had ruined the Conference. Henderson wore a look of mingled anger and resignation. Was he afraid the press would say next morning that by helping to call the Conference he had provoked this sort of thing?

The thought grew upon one: "These are but puppets upon a stage; all this will shortly pass and give way to something real and vital. All this is talk divorced from power."

Henderson savagely called Longuet to attention, declaring that there could be no conference because the German Majority Socialists had not agreed to compensation for Belgium and to the transfer of Alsace-Lorraine to France, "not as a territorial adjustment, but as a question of right":—

"If Longuet wants his International Conference he can have it; but he ll meet with the bitter opposition of British Labour."

Was Henderson justified in speaking thus for British Labour? We do not think so. "I've worked for a conference," he said, "I've sacrificed for it; but for no unconditional conference. I hope this amendment will be overwhelmingly defeated." He ended with a warning, the sort of warning that in the early days of the War, he and other Labour Ministers, used with magic effect to Labour conferences: "The situation is so delicate ....I believe we are moving in the direction of peace....Any mistake made in the direction of this amendment would not expedite a democratic world peace....I warn Longuet he is going the right road to split this Conference."

Surely this meant that Inter-Allied Labour, in Henderson's view, may hinder, but cannot help the peace settlement. Can there be any doubt that Henderson has abandoned the International? He was right: the Conference might have been mended or ended then by a few determined International Socialists, but only Gompers, with his ideas echoing from the past, dominated it: "I would rather my sons should die now than...." The old men sacrifice their sons!

Popovitch said: "I am convinced that the German Socialist Majority is only a formal one, and that the Minority is the real majority. If we wait for the German Majority to give a satisfactory answer we shall have peace before the Conference. And if the Conference is held and the German Majority is left alone in its obstinacy, what matter?"

Wise words, but the Jingoes in all the countries are as obstinate as in Germany. Bouderon's amendment was lost by 25 votes to 65.

Rivelli of the French Seamen's Union protested against the refusal of the British Seamen's and Firemen's Union to allow delegates appointed by that Conference to sail. Huysmans reproached the Trade Union Congress, a body representing four and a half million workers, for tolerating this affront from one of its affiliated organisations. Does Mr. Huysmans realise that the power resides in the people who hold the tools?

International Conferences as they exist to-day will never move till the people behind move them. The Revolutionary Socialist Movement of the rank and file will be holding its own International one day.

The first of a Series of Articles on "Capitalism and the Counter Revolution" by Walton Newbold will appear next week.

LIFE STORY OF CATHERINE BRESHKOVSKY held over until next week.

The Bolshevik Constitution.

The Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. Decree of the 5th All Russian Congress of Soviets passed at the Sitting of July 10th, 1918.

The full Text is published for the first time in English in the Special Russian September Number of

THE SOCIALIST

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THE MILK MUDDLE.

Mr. Clynes informed a Labour Conference on September 21st that milk will cost 9*d.* per quart in October and 10*d.* in November and said: "I reach this decision with great reluctance.—I would rather give a few extra coppers to milk producers than run the risk of any serious milk shortage.... The very poor who are not able to pay any price for milk can get it free or can get it at a low rate if the local authorities will use to the full the powers that have been given to them...."

Those who are able to pay any extortionate price for milk will never find a shortage; but by increasing the price to 9*d.* and 10*d.* per quart Mr. Clynes creates an artificial shortage for those of small means. The promise of free milk is not pleasant when coupled with the usual cross-examination as to private means &c. Further does Mr. Clynes imagine that new milch cows can be produced at six weeks' notice?

FOOD COUNCIL *v.* CONSUMERS' COUNCIL.

Does the formation of a new Food Council to aid Mr. Clynes mean that the Consumers' Council is to take a back seat because it has dared to differ from Mr. Clynes on the question of meat prices and a meat subsidy, and has even secured 1 vote of the Trade Union Congress against his policy? There are neither Labour representatives nor women on the new Food Council.

FROM HADFIELDS.

The newly formed Literature and General Science Club is actively distributing Marxian Socialist literature and the works of Jack London, and in spite of the removal of Ibbotson, Jim Harker and others great progress is being made. Hadfields workers should all get into touch with Comrade Goldstone.

* * * *

DEAR EDITOR,—Would it not be well for the Shipowning and other Company Combines to be brought under the same laws as Co-operative Societies, viz., no shareholder shall own more than a limited amount of shares. Co-operators limit is £200 at 5 per cent interest. They divide surplus earnings among the members. But the State, I think, should take the surplus earnings (after paying 5 per cent interest on shares), then divide these earnings equally between every person, man, woman or child of the community. Of course, a Parliament must be elected that will make this law.—Yours, &c.,

ELIAS T. SELLEK.

[Our correspondent's maximum limit of 5 per cent on £200 a year produces an income of £10 a year only. Therefore the people who at present do no work, but exist by the interest on money which they have invested would be forced to get off the back of the workers except to the extent of £10 a year. The scheme, therefore, leads us in the right direction, but why not go the whole way and establish Socialism?]

PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF.

The Christian Science Monitor of Boston says: "How a statesman of the experience of Lord Lansdowne can have joined the ranks of the pacifists, who imagine that it is possible to reason with Germany, it is difficult to see." But what about Christian Science?

THE FALLING BIRTHRATE.

The Registrar General states that the birth-rate of 1917 was 24 per cent below that of 1917, and that every day that the war continues means a potential loss of 7,000 lives to Britain, France, Italy and the Central Empires. "While the war has filled the graves, it has emptied the cradles," he says.

WORKERS' SOCIALIST FEDERATION.

LONDON MEETINGS.

OUT DOOR.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27th.
Hague Street, Bethnal Green.—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28th.
Great Push in S.E. District for Socialism, Peace and Votes for All.—Meet at 3 at the Clock Tower, Lewisham, and 6.15 P.M. at 85, Camberwell Grove. Meetings at 3.15 and 6.30 P.M. Speakers: Mrs. Cole, Miss Price, and Mrs. Walker.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29th.
Osborn Street, Whitechapel.—11.45 A.M., Miss Price.
Flagstaff, Hampstead.—3 P.M., Mrs. Walker.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1st.
Armagh Road, Bow.—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4th.
Grundy Street, Poplar.—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5th.
Great Push in Tottenham.

INDOOR.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th.
44, Malden Road, St. Pancras W.S.F.—2.30 P.M., Business Meeting.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3rd.
29B, Lincoln's Inn Fields.—7.30 P.M.

PROVINCIAL MEETINGS.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29th.
Sheffield, Westbar.—11 A.M., Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Carford.
Sheffield, Rivelin.—3.30 p.m.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1st.
Walthamstow League of Rights, William Morris Hall, Somers Road.—2.30 P.M., Mrs. Sizer and others.

* * *

CENTRAL BRANCH.—On Thursday, James Tochatti gave a live lecture on the Land, followed by a hot and interesting discussion.

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

WORKSHOP NOTES: By W. F. WATSON.

THE NEW COMMISSIONER OF POLICE.

Our Parliamentary Correspondent writes:—The appointment of Sir Nevil Macready to succeed Sir Edward Henry as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police was the subject of a good deal of discussion in political circles yesterday. The suggestion made in some quarters that the War Office welcomed an opportunity of making a change in the office of Adjutant-General was not generally accepted. There is reason to believe that Lord Milner parted with General Macready's services with the greatest regret, and that the War Office generally deplores the loss of a first-class administrator, whom it will be difficult to replace. The reason authoritatively given for moving General Macready to Scotland Yard was that the condition of affairs which the strike revealed at the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police indicated the necessity of a complete reform of system, calling for administrative ability and experience of a high order. It was recalled that General Macready had been called upon by the civil authorities twice before, at Tonypandy and in Ulster, to deal with specially delicate situations.—*The Times*, September 3, 1918.

Particular note should be taken of *The Times* correspondent's concluding sentence. We also remember the "delicate" situation in Tonypandy and the terrible way in which it was dealt with!

AIRCRAFT WORKERS PUT OFF WITH THREE AND SIXPENCE.

On June 25th the Aircraft workers applied, through the National Aircraft Committee, for an increase of 4*d.* per hour which is equivalent to 100 per cent on pre-war rates and amounts to 17*s.* 6*d.* per week—for all male workers, and a flat rate of 10*d.* per hour for women workers. On September 18th the Committee on Production announced the award, viz., 3*s.* 6*d.* per week to date from August 10th for the men and nothing at all for the women. The Bus and Tram workers through taking drastic action secured the five bob they asked for, whereas the Aircraft workers who patiently stuck to constitutional methods have been put off with just one-fifth of their demands. We assume that the reason the women were left out of the award was because they have recently been awarded 5*s.* per week through the N.F.W.W. Here is an illustration of overlapping and consequent wastage of energy and time. The workers must develop their shops committee and organise in the shops regardless of union or sex.

LONDON WORKERS COMMITTEE.

Monthly meeting Sunday, October 6th, 11 A.M. Chandos Hall. Business: Report of Birmingham Conference, Election of all officials, and Statement of accounts. The Cedar and Eden Paul meeting postponed to October 19th. There will be tea at 6 o'clock, musical interlude by Cedar Paul and an address on 'New Tactics for the Social Revolution,' by Cedar and Eden Paul. The tickets are 6*d.* each, and can be obtained from T. F. Knight, 7, Featherstone Buildings, Holborn, W.C.1. The arrangements for the dinner and re-union on November 9th are well in hand, and those wishing to be present should apply at once for tickets, 5*s.* 6*d.* each. Musical programme and short speeches. Arthur McManus from the Clyde will probably preside.—T. F. KNIGHT, *Hon. Secretary.*

RESTRAINING INFLUENCE.

Recently the women who operate the lifts in Government Offices have been agitating through the N.F.W.W. for increased wages. Miss Macarthur states that at present the weekly wage is £1 9*s.* as compared with £3 2*s.* 6*d.* earned by a man for the same work. The N.F.W.W. was advised by the Office of Works to submit the case to the Conciliation and Arbitration Board of Government Employees. This was done, but the reply was that the War Cabinet had decided that the question of equal pay for equal work for Government employees is a matter of policy not within the competence of the Board to decide by arbitration. Miss Macarthur after tearfully referring to the difficulties of T.U. officials naively said that had it not been for the *restraining influence* of this federation there would have been a strike of women munition workers long since. Recently in one big munitions works the women took matters into their own hands. One afternoon they began knitting socks and did so for two hours. *The result was that their demands were conceded in 24 hours.*

Cannot Miss Macarthur and other officials see that for four years the "restraining influence" of Trade Union officials has prevented the workers getting their demands conceded? We suggest that all Trade Union officials take a well-earned rest for two or three years (the rank and file would not object to paying their salaries meanwhile) and leave the rank and file to take matters into their own hands.

HOW CRAFT UNIONS PREVENT REAL ORGANISATION.

One of the worst examples of official tyranny has recently come to light through the activities of the London Aircraft Woodworkers' Council. On Thursday, June 13th, a shop meeting of workers at Messrs. Lebus's was held at the 'White Ribbon.' Ash of the Islington Branch of the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners was elected to the chair. Brother Ash said that it was not a meeting of the Building Workers' Industrial Union, and that much time was wasted by different Trade Unionists in the firm attacking one another and nothing could be done unless the workers in the firm all come together. For this heinous offence Ash was summoned before the London Management Committee of the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners *and fined* £2 on the ground that he had aided and abetted the Building Workers' Industrial Union by presiding at the shop meeting. It appears that there is friction between the Building Workers' Industrial Union and the Craft organisations. It is simply monstrous that the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners Management Committee should penalise one of their members for attempting to organise the workers at Lebus's. As soon as the London Aircraft Woodworkers' Council heard of the case they instructed their Executive to go in a body to Lebus's and address a mixed shop meeting. This was done, and as several are members of the Amalgamated Society Carpenters and Joiners the Management Committee should treat them as it did Brother Ash. In the meantime what are the London members of the Amalgamated Society Carpenters and Joiners going to do about it?

IN CHRIST'S NAME!

The Austrian Note offers the opportunity of an unofficial discussion by belligerents and the possibility of a Righteous Peace.

Suspicion, distrust, memory of inhumanities, suggest refusal.

Christ counsels conference, reason, reconciliation.

The Military Way has been on trial for four years.

Ought we not to try Christ's Way now?

Fellow Countrymen do not let the opportunity slip.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation, 17, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.

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.

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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.

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NATIONAL GUILDS LEAGUE.

What promises to be a series of most interesting discussions has been arranged between members of the National Guilds League and their prominent critics. The series will be opened on Thursday, October 10th by Mr. Hilaire Belloc who will put the distributivist point of view. He will be opposed by Mr. W. N. Ewer. Chair, Mr. Ben. Smith, Organising Secretary of the London and Provincial Union of Licensed Vehicle Workers. On Thursday, November 7th, Mr. Hitchens, Chairman of Cammell Laird & Co., will speak from the point of view of a prominent employer: he will be opposed by Mr. G. D. H. Cole. Chair, Mr. A. B. Swales of the A.S.E. Executive. On December 5th, Mr. J. T. Murphy, the prominent leader of Shop Stewards, will put the point of view of the Marxian Industrial Unionist and will be opposed by Mr. Harold D. Clay of the Amalgamated Association of Tramway and Vehicle Workers. Chair, Mr. S. G. Hobson, author of National Guilds.

The discussions, in which the audience is invited to take part will be at the Kingsway Hall, Kingsway, London, at 8 o'clock. Tickets, 1*s.*; unreserved, or 5*s.* for the course reserved, to be obtained from the Secretary, National Guilds League, 17, Acacia Road, London, N.W.8.

FROM PARK GATE FORGE.

Workers here going strong. The shop committee has organised a propaganda and literature clubs in which the rebels are active.

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