THE WORKERS'

DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

Vol. V.—No. 32 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd, 1918 Price Twopence.

BEFORE THE BENCH AT RENISHAW.

IS SOCIALIST PROPAGANDA ILLEGAL?

The little village court was crowded with men and women.

A man was being tried for singing by the roadside. "I didn't think I was doing any harm; I thought this was a free country," he said. He was fined.

A man was charged with letting his fox terrier be out at night "not under proper control." The policeman said it was running about, nosing in and out of the cottage gardens. (Oh, fie, for shame!) The mother of the prisoner, who opened the door for that naughty little quadruped, had been summoned to the last sitting of the court, but she had been able to prove that the dog was not her's, but her son's, so now the son was in the dock. He was fined 9*s*.

Half a dozen men were charged with playing "heads and tails"—there is not much else to do in these villages. There they stood in a row, all cowed, one of them on the verge of tears and with shaking knees. Their betters—perhaps even the magistrates themselves—play billiards, bridge, whist, or cribbage, and gamble on the stock exchange; but "heads and tails" is a vulgar, poor man's game. The defendants were fined from 12*s*. to 30*s*. each. Would they be able to pay, and, if so, what would their wives and children suffer with the weekly wage thus docked?

Evidently there is not enough real crime in the district to keep the Petty Sessions going, so these trivial matters are dragged into Court. It is time this stupid old machine were stopped!

But the Petty Sessions has now a real criminal before it. Here is the summons, stamped with a crown, that has brought her here:—

IN THE COUNTY OF DERBY.

Petty Sessional Division of Eckington.

To Sylvia Pankhurst of 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, London, E.

Information has been laid this day, by *Frederick James Andrew* of *Renishaw* in the said county of Derby, Supt. of Police, for that you, on 28th day of *September*, 1918, at the Parish of *Creswell* in the county of Derby aforesaid did unlawfully *attempt to cause mutiny, sedition or disaffection amongst His Majesty's Forces or amongst the civilian population contrary to regulation 42 of the Defence of the Realm Regulations* and contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided.

You are, therefore, summoned to appear before the Court of Summary Jurisdiction, sitting at *Renishaw* in the said county of Derby on *Monday*, the 28th day of *October*, 1918, at the hour of Eleven o'clock in the forenoon, to answer to the said information. *Dated* the 19th day of *October*, 1918.

GEORGE STEVENSON,
Justice of the Peace for the County of Derby.

The charge has arisen from a speech made under the auspices of the Cresswell Labour Party on September 28th. The meeting, be it observed, was held more than a month ago. The summons was issued on October 19th and delivered by the Bow police on October 23rd. We did not receive it till late that night. We were overwhelmed with other important work and wrote asking for an adjournment, since the notice to us was very short. The authorities, who had taken so long to arrange their own proceedings, refused the adjournment.

THE OFFENDING SPEECH.

The words complained of were not disclosed to us; it was therefore impossible to prepare a defence. At the trial the prosecuting counsel put in the following passages, condensed from the notes of a local newspaper reporter. These notes taken from their context, are not a verbatim report; the phrases are not exactly ours. But we do not quarrel with them, because we agree with their substance:—

"Miss Sylvia Pankhurst addressed a meeting at Creswell on Saturday the 28th, September, 1918, under the auspices of the Local Labour Party. Mr. W. Godfrey presided over a crowded attendance.

"Miss Pankhurst opened with a reference to food prices, and said when Mr. Runciman was President of the Board of Trade he attributed the high prices to the American Market. America was then neutral and he said that whatever the Allies might do they could not prevent the upward tendency in the cost of food-stuffs. America had since joined the Allies, and now they were told that the result of Allied co-operation in the matter of food was going to be still higher prices. It appeared as though they were coming to the end of the war, continued the speaker, and it was high time. It had been the greatest crime of civilisation and was absolutely a Capitalist War. It was not a War of Freedom or of Liberation. It was not a War for subject nations. It was a sordid scramble between two rival groups of capitalists who were struggling to get control of the world's raw materials.

"The Bolsheviks—who were the majority Socialists—had published the Secret Treaties which the Czar's Government had entered into with Britain, France and Italy; and therefore they clearly knew the War Aims of the Allies. They had not yet seen the Secret Treaties of the Central Powers, but they know they were of the same type. The Secret Treaties had proved that the War was a Capitalist War. The Allied Governments were not troubling about the people of Alsace, they were worrying about what they could get there in the shape of mineral deposits. Austria had asked for a non-binding and secret discussion on the question of Peace but the Allies had rejected the offer because they did not approve of secret diplomacy. That was rather a joke. It was nonsense for them to talk about secret diplomacy when they were so deeply steeped in it.

"If the Allies were going to fight on in order to get better terms in the direction of German colonies where there was rubber, or in the direction of the oil-fields of Mesopotamia, or the steel or iron of Alsace-Lorraine, it would be of no benefit to the working people who had a right to tell the Government to make Peace as quickly as possible and to allow them to express their views as to whether the peace terms were just or not. Annexation on the part of the Government had always been the rule. That was why we had an Empire on which the sun never set. Russia was being dragged into the War again because the Governments of the Allies were fighting against her. What we were fighting for out there was for British capital and for concessions in the East. She was one of those who believed in the old saying: 'Let those who make the quarrels be the only ones to fight.'

"Alluding to the Police strike in London Miss Pankhurst said it was most remarkable to see the police taking people out of prison instead of putting them in. When you have a police strike, she continued, you are not far from a Soldiers' strike. I advise the Government to be a little wiser in the way it manages this War, or the soldiers will take the management of it upon themselves.

"Dealing with the Railway strike she said she did not think the trouble was over, and although it was true Mr. Thomas had shown a little more independence of the Government than some of the other so-called Labour Leaders, who had behaved as if they were capitalists themselves, she thought the fact that the workers had shown that they were not going to have the big men in London pulling the strings would have an excellent effect upon the Labour movement throughout the country. Mr. Thomas seemed to forget that he was the railwaymen's servant, not their King Emperor, and he had no right to order them back to work and say that he would not open negotiations until they went. Mr. Thomas had seen what she thought was the beginning of the end of the ultra-domination of the Labour leaders in this country. They were going to see a bigger independence of the rank and file in every industry and in every country.

"The speaker advocated the endowment of maternity by which the people who brought children into the world should not suffer, but said they would not get it until they had a strong spirit of Socialism throughout the country. The sooner they realised that the capitalist system under which they lived was played out the better. They should realise that the industries were theirs and that they could manage them. When they did that they would be able to hold out the hand of brotherhood to all those Russian people who were fighting to obtain control and who had been starved out. It was one of the greatest tragedies of the War that while the intelligence of the country was being sapped by the capitalistic system under which we lived, we were sending working-class soldiers to Russia....

"Replying to questions Miss Pankhurst said that so far as she knew the Labour Party had not protested against the Allied intervention in Russia. Miss Pankhurst was asked 'In taking over the industries of the country would you pay out the present capitailsts?' Miss Pankhurst replied: 'No, I would not, I would offer them work at a decent wage. What more do they want?' (Laughter.)"

The prosecuting counsel informed the Court that he had been instructed by the Director of Public Prosecutions in London and that proceedings had been taken with the consent of the competent military authority.

Having at length heard the words cited against us, we again applied for an adjournment. We wished to produce our authorities for the statements contained in these passages, every one of which is based on abundant evidence that we have culled from the speeches of members of the Government, and other prominent politicians, official documents, Parliamentary questions and answers, or the financial and news columns of the Press. We desired the opportunity to bring this evidence into Court; but it was refused.

The police put two witnesses into the box to state that they thought the speech objectionable: one of whom is a regular reader of *The Daily Express* and occasionally reads *The Daily Mail*, but "not," as he volunteered, "*The Daily Mail*." The other admitted that he goes so[illegible] and takes little interest in [illegible] witnesses, including the Treas[illegible]y-shire Miners' Association and a Cresswell Councillor, gave evidence that the meeting was orderly and enthusiastic, that the speech was "heard gladly," and with much applause; also that they agreed with it.

We explained to the Bench that we had spoken as an advocate of International Socialism, and that we had endeavoured to expose the evils of the capitalist system. In pursuance of that object we had, in our speech at Cresswell, drawn our illustrations from current events. We submitted that it was not illegal to advocate changes in the British Constitution. We pointed ont that we had made no such abusive attack upon members of the Government as, for instance, that made last Sunday by *The National News* upon Lord Milner. In the course of that attack certain utterances of Lord Milner were described as "treason talk," and it was said:—

"This barging-in of the Secretary for War is a sinister and disquieting fact. We have had quiet enough of the Hidden Hand....every patriotic man in the country welcomes Mr. Wilson's answer as a blow between the eyes for the Secretary of State for War."

We, however, had not directed our attack against individuals; we had sought to prove that the capitalist system is bad and must be changed. It was objected that we had characterised this as a Capitalist War: but that was, and is, our honest opinion. We submitted that there is overwhelming evidence in support of our contention. We were sorry that we were not then able to present copies of the secret treaties to each of the magistrates and to the counsel for the prosecution, but that omission can now be repaired. The prosecuting counsel took special exception to all that we had said about Russia. By reading to the Court the leading article in *The Manchester Guardian* of October 23rd, we were able to show that at least some of our views have been reinforced from an influential quarter:—

"If, after we have stopped fighting with the Central Powers, we persist in fighting against the Bolshevik Government, it can only be because our aim is to overthrow that Government. The overthrow of the Bolshevik Government would then stand revealed as an end in itself. Our objections to the Bolshevik Government must fall under one or more of three heads: we may object to the person and the practices of that Government; we may object to the Bolshevik Constitution; we may object to the Bolshevik social philosophy and economics. Is it our intention and purpose to wage war against Lenin and Trotsky, or against the Soviet system or against Bolshevik Socialism We have said very often that we have no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of Russia. The pretence has been very thin, since wherever the arms of the Allies reached, the Soviets were destroyed and a more or less reactionary authority was set up. But once an armistice with the Central Powers is signed no shadow of pretence can survive. If the Allied armies still remain in Russia and still operate in Russia, their purpose can only be to effect a revolution in the internal affairs of Russia."

When the magistrates retired many sympathisers, who had come from Sheffield, Cresswell, Clowne, and other places, declared that there could not be a conviction; but those who knew the calibre of the Bench thought otherwise.

The Chairman, returning with his colleagues, announced that we must be fined £50 and £8 12*s*. costs. We replied that we were not in a position to pay, and inquired as to the alternative. The Chairman replied "three months, imprisonment," and gave us seven days' grace in which to make up our mind whether to appeal.

We are determined to pay no fine; indeed, we cannot afford to do so; but almost before the Court had risen the local friends—working people remember—had collected £11, declaring that they could not agree to let us go to prison; as we should be doing better work outside. We are loath to let our comrades pay out this money; but, in the meantime, we have arranged to speak for the Cresswell Labour Party next Saturday, November 2nd; we, and they, are determined to maintain the right of free speech and to continue in our advocacy of International Socialism and in our exposures of all the many evils arising from capitalism, including the War and the intervention in Russia.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

TWO PILLARS OF CAPITALISM.

Lord Milner urged that the Allies should not press Germany too far, lest Bolshevism develop in Germany. Lord Northcliffe, however, declares that there is no such danger and dismisses Lord Milner's arguments as "extraordinarily unexpected Lansdownisms." We always suspected that Lansdowne had been seeing the Red Light when he wrote his letters.

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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PEACE COMING? WHERE IS THE LABOUR PARTY?

The most important point in President Wilson's ultimatum to Germany is the admission that the allied Governments are not yet agreed as to their terms, in spite of all the speeches Members of Allied Governments have made on them.

For the rest, Wilson's ultimatum is one to which only a defeated nation would submit; it is tantamount to unconditional surrender in our opinion. The German Government's reply is very stiff and reserved; it challenges the President to live up to his professed desire for "a peace of justice." It seems that Germany is ready to submit, but the War has brought many surprises. Austria appears anxious to be out of the War at any cost and that fact is, of course, influencing Germany.

The hands of the Governments, both of Austria-Hungary and Germany, are undoubtedly being forced by the pressure of popular unrest. Even though the news published here may be exaggerated, the Mutiny at Fiume, the strike at Krupp's, the calls for the abdication of the Emperors, and the riots reported from all parts are deeply significant. There can be no doubt that the people are at last taking the bit between their teeth, and that, though the Governments now hasten to enact long-refused reforms, the people remain unsatisfied and clamorous for more. We venture to hope that Germany and Austria-Hungary are on the eve of revolution.

In this country reaction and Jingoism are still in the ascendant. The Labour "War Aims" were never to our taste, and it always seemed to us that the voice of the leaders of the British Labour Party would be too timidly imitative of Government policy to make very much difference to the peace settlement; but, feeble as that voice is, it is not to be heard. Lloyd George and Balfour have gone over to Paris to make peace terms, and Mr. Havelock Wilson's Seamen's Union has prevented Mr. Henderson and Camille Huysmans, Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, from going across to consult the other Allied Socialists. Of course the Seamen's Union could not exercise this boycott if the Government chose that it should not. Nor could the Union have continued setting the Labour Movement at defiance, as it has done again and again, if the officials of the Labour Movement had taken strong action to stop it. Meanwhile Havelock Wilson himself has just been returned to Parliament unopposed. The Labour Party had not even the forcefulness to enter the lists against him and secure his defeat.

Henderson has been made a fool of; his feeble, vacillating policy, which, whenever a critical situation arises, always agrees in the main essentials with that of the Government, has been roundly defeated. The Henderson policy, tempered by the louder blasts of Havelock Wilson, Sexton, and others, has dominated the Labour Party. Either the Party must now declare itself politically bankrupt, or strike out on new lines in a spirit of sturdy, working-class independence, with International Socialism as its goal. The present officials appear incapable of such action. It is clear that only the rank and file can regenerate the Labour Movement. On, therefore, with the rank and file Workers' Committee Movement! Work for it till it dominates the industrial field!

The same must be said of the Workers' International. The Allied Governments will not allow it to meet till the peace terms are decided, and the present officials of the International will tamely submit to that prohibition. They have not the will to protest effectively. They have never taken the steps which would have given a powerful backing to their protest in the event of its being made. They have waited on the favour of Governments and discouraged independent thought and action on the part of the working class. The International must and will be re-created. Can the old organisation be transformed? Is the Zimmerwald nucleous ready and fitted to step into the breach? Must a new structure be created? Is the Shop Stewards' Movement the embryo of the new International? These are the questions we have to ask ourselves.

In the meantime our peace terms remain:—

[illegible] annexations.
[illegible] indemnities.
[illegible] right of the peoples to decide their own [illegible]s.
[illegible] International Federation of Socialist Republics.
[illegible] ments to [illegible] facilities for an inter[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] which farm[illegible]
[illegible] Major Astor tried [illegible]

It is for the workers to decide how the Workers' International shall be constructed; it is also for the workers to decide how the Governments shall be formed. On with the propaganda for Socialism: our only hope!

PARLIAMENT DOOMED.

The walls of Jericho are falling; the House of Commons has voted that women may become members of Parliament, and a Government Bill is expected to follow. How illogical now seems the recently-passed, fancy franchise, under which only half the women of these islands are permitted to vote!

But why has Parliament, with little or no visible agitation on the part of women, thus—hurriedly, eagerly, and with only 25 dissentients—decided to open its portals to them? The main argument against granting the vote always was that it would be followed by a demand to sit in Parliament, and hardly a dozen Parliamentary advocates of woman's suffrage were prepared to say that they would ever assent to that.

Then why this change? It is said that the War has taught politicians the value of woman. But women were used as wage workers before this War, and so recently as the Boer War it was seen that they could be Jingoes. It is said that many Members of Parliament feared to vote against women becoming their colleagues lest the women voters in their constituencies should reply by voting against *them*. It is said that the Government hoped to gain popularity by giving facilities for this measure.

But is there not also another and weightier reason? Does not Parliament begin instinctively to know itself a doomed machine? "Bolshevism," only Socialism under another name, but actual Socialism, entailing transformation—not a mere patching up—of the social system, looms on the horizon. When they are in trouble men call for the help of those they flouted. Outside the party game the more active, independent women remain a discontented crowd of rebels; inside, is it not hoped that they will settle down in conformity with its rules? In every country Parliaments are threatened, and that mysterious, unaccountable thing, the mass people's will, surely and with growing velocity, moves onward towards a newer social organism. Realising this the old fogeys of Parliament, and the powers behind them are saying: "We must do something to popularise the old institution; let us bring in the women."

So the women will enter Parliament; some fully understanding why they are invited, entirely supporting the capitalist system and ready to be its bulwarks; others wanting reforms, even desiring Socialism, and believing that through their action in Parliament they can obtain it; some wire-pulling, self-seekers; some sincerely enthusiastic; some mere wind-bags—they will go in and play the sad, old Parliamentary game that achieves so little. Soon we shall see them rushing around in motors to election meetings, dressed for the business of vote-catching, trimming the sails of principle (if they have principles) to the winds of press criticism in order to "get in"! How many of these bustling new recruits to the ranks of Parliamentary candidates will realise that women, who have been debarred from Parliament for what will prove to be the greater part of its existence, have now time to do little more than be in at its death?

We have heard another voice, the voice of the future, that comes with good, inexorable steps, bringing the elements which shall form the social structure of the twentieth century. The old husks of the nineteenth do not charm us.

We are waiting for the Soviets, as they are called in Russia, the councils of delegates, appointed and instructed by the workers in every kind of industry, by the workers on the land, and the workers in the home. Through the medium of these workers' councils the machinery of the coming of the Socialist Commonwealth will be evolved, here, as in Russia. The expected General Election interests us only so far as it can be made a sounding-board for the policy of replacing capitalism by Socialism, and Parliament by the Workers' Councils. We shall be at the elections, but only to remind the workers that capitalism must go.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

MY IMPRESSIONS OF THE WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

By MELVINA WALKER.

Whilst on my way to the Caxton Hall I thought: this is the first Labour Women's Conference held under the auspices of the New Labour Party. I looked at the Agenda and thought what a milk and water thing it was. I was only partly in sympathy with most of the resolutions; with some I entirely disagreed. Furthermore I know that resolutions are all talk and no doing.

You may ask: "Then why go to the Conference at all?" My answer is that I realised the great opportunity of meeting working women from all parts of Britain; of being able to hear directly what they were thinking although they might not agree with me or I with them. I should be able to express my thoughts and views to those women who are toiling in their homes and workshops and who have the same struggle as I to live and who like myself have been chloroformed in the past by parsons and pious ladies who tell poor women that if they want better homes they must wait till they get up above for heaven is their home.

I wondered whether the working women I was to meet at the Conference had found the remedy for evil social conditions or whether, like some of our fortunate sisters who have been *educated*, they would be merely waiting for a change of heart to come over our employers, landlords, and profiteers under whom we have lived for centuries. I wondered whether the millions of toiling women who have just got the vote will put their trust in Liberal and Tory politicians as men did and whether the women at this Conference would blindly follow official Labour men. Would these women be prepared to accept a Ministry of Health, Maternity and Child Welfare, and all sorts of other pettifogging Acts instead of the real Act of emancipation which would set up a Socialist State like that in Russia?

All Labour men are not Socialist, and I for one am not prepared to vote for a Labour man unless he will stand by the workers and help us in our fight for Socialism which is our only hope.

We must not leave the work for Socialism even to Labour and Socialist Members of Parliament; we, the workers, must take the power into our own hands and destroy the capitalist system which is destroying the lives of our infants and our boys. We can only establish Socialism by organising as a class to take possession of the earth and the machinery of production and to abolish the wage system.

With these thoughts in my mind I arrived at the Caxton Hall. Dear old Caxton Hall; how many times during our fight for the vote have we working women stood up in that hall and declared our desire for emancipation. I sat close to the door and watched the groups of women coming in. I could pick out the Cockney women, the women from East and West London, from Wales and Scotland. I saw comrades who had given me hospitality in the Provinces: it really was a reunion.

Then the Conference started. Dr. Ethel Bentham was in the chair. At the back of the hall we heard very little of what she said, for she spoke in such a low voice and what we did catch was broken off by her continually looking down at her notes on the table, so I cannot comment on her opening remarks.

Miss Mary McArthur moved the first resolution of the civic rights of women. She made a very stirring fine speech, urging the right of women to sit in Parliament, and the need for Adult Suffrage. She also touched on the great joy of motherhood, and I noticed some of the educated spinsters on the platform looking at one another and smiling as if they entirely disagreed with her. The working women in the body of the hall showed their agreement by rounds of applause.

Mrs. Sydney Webb seconded the resolution. I was not at all taken up with her remarks. We heard something about women with superior brains. One couldn't help feeling we had had enough of "superior brains" in the past: we want practical knowledge.

The speeches from the platform were far too long and when we adjourned to lunch, delegates were saying that they had not come to hear the platform but the rank and file. The afternoon speeches were just as long and very wearisome and we decided to stop that the next day.

Women wanted to know why, since this was a Labour Conference, and the Chairman changed at each session, working women could not be in the chair. "Oh!" said one woman, "You see the reason for that is that we are not educated and couldn't conduct the business properly!" Said a miner's wife, "Why I could do it better than ——! Why she had —— alongside of her, telling her what to do all the time and knocking her foot, and when —— left the platform for a few minutes she didn't know how to carry on." "Yes," said a docker's wife when we were having tea, 'its —— all the time in the chair; the Chairman is just an ornament.' "Well, I know," said a tramway man's wife, "if I was in the chair I wouldn't be guided by no one but my self, and I wouldn't want to hear so much of the platform, but more of the rank and file!" "Why shouldn't we have," said a delegate from Nottingham, "a railway man's wife in the chair at one session and a docker's wife at another session; why have we got to listen to all these people who don't understand us?" A woman from South Wales said: "All these women who have captured office in the Labour Party are not Socialists, and my advice to you women is to give up the Labour Party!" "No," I said, "that must not be. We must do what Havelock Wilson said the I.L.P. had done, 'captured the Labour Movement.' We Socialists must stay in the Labour Party." I gathered from the working women at the Conference that they want the Labour Party to be a real Socialist Movement and are not going to be contented with such sops as a Ministry of Health. As one of them said: "Give a man £5,000 a year to be Minister of Health; create a staff with £500 a year each, to throw the likes of us a few quinine pills! What's the good of a Ministry of Health, while we live under the capitalist system?"

Working women, wake out of your long sleep; keep your eyes open; organise yourselves; don't be led away by people with "superior brains." We have something more than that; we have practical experience. The more humble your station in life may be, the more bitter your struggle; the greater is your experience. Don't let us be discouraged, but let us face the future never being ashamed to show under what banner we stand.

The Scottish Edu[illegible]
[illegible] much debate pa[illegible]

THE WOMEN'S LABOUR PARTY.

The Women's Section of the Labour Party held its first Conference at Caxton Hall on October 15th and 16th, and summoned thereto representatives of sixty women's organisations unconnected with, and on the whole not specially sympathetic to, the Labour Movement. Such a procedure shows that the old idea that women have no strongly defined political opinions or interests is still current in Labour circles, for it would have been unthinkable for the Labour Party to call similar organisations of men to one of its official conferences. However, the officials of the Conference exercised such a firm, not to say autocratic control, over the proceedings that there was no sort of possibility of its departing far from the official resolutions. The Standing Orders Committee refused to allow the moving of a host of amendments printed on the agenda and admitted some which were not printed. On the barren request for a Ministry of Health; which may mean anything or nothing, according to the nature of its powers and administrators; the Standing Orders Committee prevented the moving of W.S.F. amendments, affirming that the problem of health can never be satisfactorily dealt with till poverty is abolished, which can never be completely effected under capitalism, and urging that, as under the Soviet Government of Russia, unemployment and sickness benefit shall be equal to the ordinary wage, and also urging the establishment of child pensions and the endowment of motherhood. This is but one example of the drastic measures taken by the Standing Orders Committee in the case of amendments to all resolutions.

The officials of the Women's Labour Party attempt to exercise a more complete control than do the officials of the Labour Party itself; but there are signs that ere long they will have a more difficult team to drive. Several times during the Conference the rank and file working-women delegates who are supposed not to understand politics thrust aside red tape and officialdom. When it was proposed that the platform movers and seconders of official resolutions be allowed twenty minutes and ten minutes respectively, and other speakers three minutes, there were many protests and eventually the time allotted to movers and seconders was cut down by half. When Miss Allison Neilans was speaking on 40 D., and it was seen that she possessed special knowledge of the subject, delegates clamoured for her time to be extended, and though the president verbally refused more time, she yet, in fact, conceded a short extension. When both on the first and second days, the president refused a hearing to Mrs. Walker (W.S.F.), the delegates clamoured till she was allowed to speak, a line of conduct which might often have been adopted with advantage at recent Labour Party conferences. Thus on questions of procedure the rank and file delegates (and the objectors were in the main the Labour and Socialist women) showed signs that when they become more accustomed to conferences they will not remain in leading strings. In the more important matter of policy we must wait and see. The official policy of the women's section is at present closely tied to that of Mr. Henderson and the centre group of the official Labour Party, but its outlook is rather more parochial. The middle-class woman who wants to help the working-woman, but who has not got beyond Fabianism in political theory, still holds sway. There is indeed nothing revolutionary about the official group in the Woman's Labour Party!

The Conference carried a resolution urging women "to throw their strength into the development of a strong political organisation embracing both men and women and not to follow the lines of sex division." An amendment that separate women's organisations will remain necessary until women are fully enfranchised, and have gained a fuller political experience of politics was defeated; yet there we were meeting as a separate conference of women, and, we presume, the women's section of the Labour Party intends to hold further special conferences and functions for women and to maintain its identity as a women's section. Really, to be candid, it was tantamount to saying, "Join our women's party, but no other." Miss Susan Lawrence, the president for that session, and several other speakers spent some time in attacking the Women's Party. Miss Lawrence quoted from speeches of members of the Women's Party in which it had been said with light-hearted inconsistency that "the women of this country have never been contaminated with [poli]tics, and that is why the Women's Party has [been] formed!" also that the Women's Party is supporting Lloyd George, [illegible] wishes to see Mr. Henderson s[illegible]cking [illegible] constitu[illegible] We of the [illegible] kers' S[illegible] pealed to the [illegible] ference [illegible] waste time in advertising a par[illegible] which [illegible] is manifestly and confessedly a Tory [illegible] ingo[illegible] ialist-Tariff-Reform organisation, is of c[illegible] metrically opposed to the International S[illegible] We pointed out that the so-called Wo[illegible] Party is displaying tremendous energy, [illegible] the delegates to display as [illegible] fighting their own cause, not to dissipate it in this way. In our view it is the business of the individual woman to say what sort of organisation he or she will form or join, but we were never able to assent to the old-fashioned suffragist standpoint that the political activities of woman must begin and end with two subjects, votes for women and venereal diseases!

The resolution which aroused most interest and produced the best speeches was that dealing with the food situation, though the resolution itself was in flat contradiction to the speeches; it expressed "agreement with the methods of the present food administration," with which every speech but one expressed profound dissatisfaction.

Mrs. Reeves, a member of the Consumers' Council, in moving the resolution from the platform, made a speech so racy and well-informed that it was worthy of the floor, which is saying a good deal, for in the main all the strikingly vigorous, deeply-felt speeches came from scarcely-known women in the general body of delegates. Mrs. Reeves complained that Mr. Clynes had fixed the price of milk without consulting the Consumers' Council and on the advice of the producers only. She protested: "I never met only one farmer who was satisfied, and he grumbled." "In four years from now we'll have no dairy cows," she said, lamenting the disastrous policy which has allowed the farmers to do just as their profiteering interests dictate with the cattle, and added: "I hate margarine; it wasn't my war and I feel mad that I've had to eat it!" The point of view of the majority of the people managing the food supply is: "Oh well, better have milk at a 1s. a glass than no milk at all." Such people did not realise the fact that others living on weekly wages must go without milk altogether if its cost is so high. In the Government estimates of cost profits were always multiplied with prices; if the cost of a commodity were doubled the Government, in fixing the price, always agreed to the profit being doubled also! In fixing sugar prices the high salaries of several men who never saw the sugar had been taken into account. The price of tea according to Government figures ought not to be more than 2s. per pound. Lord Crawford and Balcarres was one of those whom she had to meet at the Food Ministry; he had wished to fix a penalty of £100 for any woman who made a cake in her own kitchen, and to reduce the consumption of bread by rendering it more unpalatable. The United States had refused to bring any feeding stuffs for animals to this country, and the Government had fixed a higher price for damaged grain than for good grain.

Mrs. Ganley complained that the local Food Control Committee of which she was a member had said it was too big a problem to arrange for necessitous mothers and children to obtain milk at cost price; instead they had decided to supply dried milk at 1s. 11*d*. per pound. Some babies could not take dried milk. A Freedom League representative complained that a working-woman who bought a pound of bullock's liver had to exchange a coupon and a half, but that the person who could afford to buy a 10*s*. chicken had only to part with one coupon. The Government had fixed the price of fruit from the grower to the retailer, but not from the retailer to the consumer, therefore exorbitant prices had been charged.

Mrs. Foxworthy of Plymouth declared that the Local Food Control Committees "have got no control whatever!" They are allowed to fix retail prices but neither wholesale prices nor the first cost to the producer. The Plymouth Committee had fixed a maximum price of 8*d*. per pound for rabbits. The retailers had said that they could not buy rabbits to sell at that price. The Food Ministry had said: "We are looking on with great interest and hope the rabbits will flow to other industrial centres." This was precisely what happened; no rabbits could be bought in Plymouth for the London Committee had fixed the retail price of rabbits at 11*d*. per pound! "The London Committee ought to be whipped!" said Mrs. Foxworthy, and went on to complain that two women on a committee is not enough. "We want at least half the representation on the Local Food Committees!" she said. In those words we see the embodied demand for genuine equality which the women of to-morrow will undoubtedly make.

The official resolution asked for a continuance of the present food control methods after the war. The Women's Section of the Worcester Labour Party moved an amendment that the food production and distribution should be taken out of private hands altogether. Mrs. Walker, W.S.F. of Poplar, supported this amendment, since others more to her liking had been refused by the Standing Orders Committee. She said that when she read the official resolution she wondered whether the Ministry of Food had drawn it up. We were [told] that food was now as easily obtained in the cottage as in the palace! When there was any shortage in the East End she always went to see whether the West End was also going short. One day a provision merchant had told her that cheese was going to be as scarce as strawberries in November, and that he would only be able to supply his customers with 2 ounces a fortnight. She [went to] Selfridges and there saw cheese being [sold] without [illegible] must be registered there for cheese or present ticket. The answer was "No," and that she could buy as much as she liked. She saw plum pudding "black with fruit" for 2*s*. 6*d*. per pound. She had not been able to buy currants in Poplar for six weeks! "2*s*. 6*d*. a pound for plum puddings. I don't know how it can be made for the money: buy them now!" she said. "I button-holed Mr. Clynes," she added, "and kicked up such a row that we are going to have a pound of cheese a week per head in Poplar; and we are going to have currants, too!"

The Emergency Peace Resolution "rejoiced in the prospect" of speedy peace based on righteous principles; it urged "conciliatory as well as firm treatment of the Germans," and that not only shall naval and military guarantees be demanded but that peace shall be based on President Wilson['s] points, and shall "free mankind from the burden of armaments and the fear of imperialist aggression."

The resolution is merely a weak echo of anything that might be passed by the Men's or the Women's Liberal Association. It contains no distinctively workers' statement, or Socialist policy on the international situation, no protest against the war upon Russia, no immediate demand for peace. Virtually it says to the Governments, "We leave the business to you." The resolution could not be amended. The W.S.F. delegates opposed it [as] inadequate, and some half a dozen votes were recorded against it.

Equally inadequate was the demobilisa[tion] resolution, which asked for "the provision [of] adequate maintenance during unemployment and free railway tickets to their homes for wo[men] employed elsewhere. We pointed out that "[ade]quate maintenance" means anything or nothing, and that certain representatives of indus[trial] women's organisations when war broke out found it consistent with their duty to take part in the Queen Mary Fund, which had fixed the rate of pay for women's relief work at 10*s*. a week. The Russian Soviets have fixed the rate of unemployment pay at not less than the trade union rate for the work previously done. The men's rank and file movements are demanding that the hours of labour shall be reduced, without reduction of [pay] till all the workers are absorbed into in[dustry]. We expressed our regret that the women should lag behind in adopting such advanced policies. The resolution was adopted with few dissentients.

On the motion of the W.S.F. a resolution was adopted expressing sympathy with the Chiswick rent strikers, demanding that rents should not be raised on any pretext and that legislation should immediately be adopted for the equalisation of local rates. We had other proposals to make on this question, but this was as much as the Standing Orders Committee would assent to.

TOTAL DISARMAMENT CAMPAIGN.

An organisation called the Disarmament Group is campaigning for Total Disarmament. Mr. W. J. Chamberlain, 66, Bournville Lane, Stirchley, Birmingham, Organising Secretary, will be glad to hear from persons willing to distribute literature.

SWEATING THE WOMEN.

The Middlesex Agricultural Wages Board has fixed a wage of 40*s*. a week, with 9*d*. and 11*d*. per hour overtime for men; and 5*d*. an hour, and 6*d*. and 7½*d*. an hour overtime for women; paying the men by the week and the women by the hour means that whilst the men get a regular wage, the women are not paid if weather conditions, &c., prevent their working.

Industrial Reconstruction.

"COMPROMISE OR INDEPENDENCE?"

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Next Week!

We are glad to ann[illegible]
next week the "[illegible]
will be enlarg[illegible]
crown quar[illegible]

WORKERS' SOCIALIST FEDERATION.

LONDON MEETINGS.

OUT DOOR.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1st.
Waterloo Road, near "Old Vic." (Food Campaign). 11.45 A.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2nd.
Great Push for Socialism, Peace, and Votes for All in the St. Pancras District.—Meet 44 Malden Road at 2.45 and 5.45 P.M. Speakers: Mrs. Cole, Miss Price, Miss P. Rickards, Mrs. Walker, and Mr. Moscovitch.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3rd.
Finsbury Park.—4 P.M., John McLean Demonstration.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5th.
Clock Tower, Burdett Road (Food Campaign).—11.30 A.M., Miss Price.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8th.
Queen's Crescent, Kentish Town.—5.30 P.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9th.
Great Push in Tottenham.

INDOOR.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4th.
44 Malden Road, St. Pancras W.S.F.—2.30 P.M., Business Meeting.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5th.
400 Old Ford Road.—3 P.M., Mrs. Brimley.
Bow Members' Meeting, 400 Old Ford Road, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7th.
29B Lincoln's Inn Fields.—7.30 P.M., E. G. Smith, "Dear Brutus."
76 Whitechapel Road.—8 P.M., Edward Fuller, "Sex and Social Liberty." Chair, Mr. Moscovitch.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10th.
400 Old Ford Road.—4–7 P.M., Irish At Home. (Full particulars next week.)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15th.
400 Old Ford Road.—8 P.M., General Meeting (London Section).

OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5th.
Walthamstow League of Rights, William Morris Hall, Somer's Road.—2.30 P.M., Mrs. Walshe.

PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT.

October 21st.—Mr. Balfour admitted that £4,239 had been "advanced" during the last twelve months to M. Nabokoff for the maintenance of the Russian Embassy. Mr. King (L.) pointed out that the present Russian Government has repudiated M. Nabokoff. From whom then does the British Government hope to receive repayment of this "advance"?

NOT A NATION!

The League of Nations, according to Mr. Bonar Law, is not to include Ireland.

WORKHOUSE FOR SOLDIERS' CHILDREN.

There are 993 children of men killed in the present war maintained by the Poor Law authorities, Mr. Fisher stated. The number of soldiers' wives was not known. Is this all that is left for some of the dependants of soldiers who are sent to "fight for their country"?

TEACHERS' PENSIONS.

A second reading was given the School Teachers (Superannuation) Bill. We must note first that it is not to apply to Ireland and Scotland! Mr. Fisher ste[illegible]ered the demand for the pension age to be [illegible] to 50 or 55 by explaining that teachers might [illegible] after thirty years service, perhaps at 55, and they would be able to look forward to a pension at 60. He forgot to show how an underpaid teacher [illegible] exist on nothing for five years.

* * *

The Midwives Bill was given a third reading and passed.

BELFAST PRISON BILL.

In order to redeem a "pledge" given before the Recess Mr. Shortt moved that the Belfast Prison Bill be read a second time. This Bill authorises an inquiry into the treatment of Catholic prisoners in Belfast gaol in June and July last. It seems that the Chief Secretary proposes to appoint a Presbyterian judge for this purpose, a fact greatly condemned by Mr. T. M. Healy (I.N.), who labelled the whole procedure as a sham. Mr. King (L.) compared the cruelty and inhumanity meted out to Irishmen in Irish prisons with the treatment of British prisoners in Germany!

SMALL NATIONS.

October 22nd.—Mr. Balfour stated that so far as this Government is concerned representation is assured to the Poles, Czecho-Slovaks and Yugo-Slavs at any settlement affecting their interests. We read this to mean the Peace Conference! The Irish now cannot be denied their claim to be represented.

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Mr. Baldwin announced that he did not think it necessary to increase the old age pensions nor to increase the limit of means prescribed by the Act. Has he ever tried to live on 7*s.* 6*d.* a week?

PROVISION FOR IRISH SOLDIERS.

A Bill to reward Irish soldiers and sailors with some acres of land was read a second time. Mr. Shortt the Chief Secretary made a great effort with the object in our opinion of proving that the Bill was not prompted by Lord French's proclamation asking for recruits. The most violent attack on the Bill was Mr. Dillon's (I.N.). He denounced it as "window-dressing," grotesque and unworkable. It could not provide land for all the Irish soldiers, then who was to choose which should be favoured. Mr. Dillon asked if a similar reward of £300 or £400 was to be forthcoming for all British sailors and soldiers! We think he touched the real danger when he said that the Bill would be the cause of another "plantation." The debate was adjourned.

PENSIONS BILL.

Mr. Hodge introduced a Bill to put more power in the hands of the Pensions Ministry in respect [illegible] granting of pensions, disablement treatment [illegible] care of children. Great exception was taken [illegible] to introduce what Lord Cavendish-[illegible] "autocracy and bureaucracy." [illegible] said that if the Pensions Ministry [illegible] use of the machinery already [illegible] there might be reason in the Bill, [illegible] right it had to claim more [illegible] ition the Bill was read a

[illegible] us that Mr. Bonar [illegible] "Never Endians"— [illegible] statement

BRITISH RULE.

Mr. Ponsonby (L.) aptly suggested that Britain should not "lag behind" other European nations who are adopting a more democratic government. But Mr. Law thinks they are only trying to keep pace with Britain! And that after Mr. Hewins' statement of last week!!

WOMEN M.Ps.

The motion that women be eligible as Members of Parliament was introduced by Mr. H. Samuel (L.) He reminded the House that the barriers of religion, class, &c., had been removed, sex only remained. Lord R. Cecil (U.) and Mr. Asquith made speeches in favour of the motion which received 274 in favour and 25 against. Sir H. Meux (U.) was amusing in his opposition, whilst assuring the House that he "adored" women he said the House was not "a proper place for any respectable woman to sit in." Then our advice to him is to make it a fit place. We know women who would not stand for election because of the time frittered away in useless debates. It is interesting to note that women are eligible on the same basis as men! This momentous decision was followed up by the making of all galleries in the House available for men and women!!!

ILL-TREATMENT OF C.O.

October 24th.—Mr. T. Richardson (Lab.) drew attention to the alledged mishandling of W. A. Thiel, a C.O. in Wandsworth Civil Prison. It is said that he was kicked by the warder and dragged down several flights of stairs. Sir G. Cave said that the prisoner refused to leave his cell to appear before the Governor, and a visiting magistrate was satisfied that the allegations were untrue; he (Sir G. Cave) could not find sufficient reason for further inquiry into the matter.

* * *

The Recruiting Scheme in Ireland cost, from June 1st to October 21st, upward of £52,473.

"BOLSHEVISM UNMASKED."

According to the Lord of the Treasury, the War Aims Committee is having the recent press anti-Bolshevik allegations published, under the title of 'Bolshevism Unmasked: Lenin and Trotsky, German Agents.' Mr. King (L.) pointed out that the Foreign Office had rejected the information as not being authentic. Then why publish it?

SUPPLY.

The sum of £1,200,000 was moved to be voted, which Sir G. Cave said was in connection with the recent increase of pay granted to the Metropolitan Police. He admitted that the "troubles" with the police in London showed them that there would soon be a movement throughout the country for increased pay. Speeches of condemnation were made for ignoring the demands of the police and forcing them to take the line of force to attain their wants. Sir G. Cave however said that no application for increased pay had been received by him.

THE MILNER INTERVIEW.

The adjournment was moved to ask the Government whether Lord Milner's recent interview to *The Evening Standard* was a Government statement. It was also asked why Lord Northcliffe should speak at Washington Inn and state the British peace terms, when the House is always told that "it is not in the public interest to do so." Sir G. Cave, for the Government, had no better explanation to give of the utterances of these two officials of the Government than to urge what even the Prime Minister does not think it right at the present moment to speak about the terms of peace! Then why does he not see to it that his example is followed, not only by the House of Commons, but by his colleagues in the Government!

M. O'C.

AN APPEAL.

The joint demonstration organised by the Sheffield W.S.F. Discharged Soldiers and Sailors Federation, and the Shop Stewards Committee, was very successful from the propaganda standpoint, but there is a deficit of nearly £20 to be met. The money was advanced by Mr. A. Carford of the W.S.F. He is not in a position to bear the loss and we trust that the money will be collected. Please do your part.

JOHN MACLEAN.

We now learn on good authority that since [illegible] last July John Maclean has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding. Is this country to be the last in granting reprieves. Germany has shown the way by freeing Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When are we going to have our political prisoners returned? All sections of the community should protest against [illegible]

MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

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SPEAKERS:—
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Miss MAUDE ROYDEN Miss MARY MACARTHUR
Mr. E. B. TURNER, F.R.C.S.
Mrs. BRAMWELL BOOTH.
MONSIGNOR PROVOST BROWN, &c.
Chair - Mrs. HENRY FAWCETT.
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Look for further List of Speakers next week. Funds urgently needed. Forward donations to G. PAREITER (Hon. Treasurer), 38 [illegible] Road, Southall.

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