ONE PENNY

Workers' Dreadnought

FOR GOING TO THE ROOT.

Vol. XI. No. 4. April 12th, 1924. WEEKLY.

THE IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION.

By Sylvia Pankhurst.

When urged by the needs of Poplar poverty the Labour Government rescinds the Mond Order and remits surcharges against the Guardians; when pressed by the urgent clamour of its Clyde supporters, themselves pressed on by the distress of evicted tenants, the Labour Government attempts a Rent Bill, and then, with glaring sharpness, stands forth the impossibility of affecting any great ameliorations within the capitalist system. Then it is clearly revealed that to lessen the hardships of one section of people is thereby to create hardships for others.

In the debate upon the Rent Act introduced by Mr. Wheatley, Mr. Clynes, the Lord Privy Seal, in his efforts to conciliate the various interests and to save the Government from defeat, appeared like a poor little mouse, running hither and thither in the vain quest for a hole in which to hide himself.

The main point in Mr. Wheatley's Government Bill was that an unemployed tenant might not be evicted unless it were proved to the satisfaction of the Court that it would cause greater hardship to refuse the eviction than to grant it.

The conscientious application of that provision would entail the examination in Court of the income and family circumstances of both the landlord and the tenant. The landlord in many cases is himself merely a tenant, who has taken a house, not too large for his needs, but too costly for his purse; who therefore sublets a part of it, and who himself may become liable to eviction should his tenant fail to pay his proportion of the rent.

In other cases, the landlord is not merely a tenant sub-letting, but is admittedly making a living out of the rents he draws from house property. We may rightly consider that people should not live on rent, interest, and profit; we may rightly consider that everyone should work for a living; but the present system of society is built up on a rent, interest, and profit basis. If Society says to the owner of working-class house property: "You must not live on the rent paid by people who live in those houses; you must go out and get yourself a job at some useful work." Then Society ought to be able to ensure that the house owner will be able to get a job when he seeks for it, and that he will not simply be reduced to the plight of the unemployed man whom Mr. Wheatley's Bill was designed to protect.

Mr. Wheatley's Bill does not make any provision for the unemployed in those cases—they would undoubtedly be many—in which the Court would decide that the refusal to evict would cause greater hardship.

The Clyde protagonists of Mr. Wheatley's Bill declared that in Scotland, at any rate, and in Glasgow in particular, the bulk of the working-class house property is owned by wealthy people. Lord Glenconner is said to be the biggest property owner on the Clyde. Unfortunately the great property owners are so powerful that all Governments shrink from attacking their interests, and if they are ever made to suffer disadvantage in one direction they find means to mulct the community to recover the loss from another quarter.

The Labour Government in defending its Bill was faced with the logic of the argument that if the landlord must go on supplying his rooms, though no rent is paid because his tenant is unemployed, the same demand might justly be made of the butcher, the baker, the milkman, the clothier, the shoemaker, that they continue to supply the essential needs of their unemployed customers, although their customers cannot pay.

Let it be so, we are not dismayed by such demands; but obviously the private-property system cannot remain solvent if such requisitions are to be made upon it. Obviously it must be replaced by Communism as soon as the people seriously insist that there shall be plenty for all irrespective of other considerations than simple humanity.

More compelling to the Labour Government, however, than any logic or any argument, was the ultimatum that Liberals and Tories would combine to defeat the Government if the disputed clause were not withdrawn.

Mr. Clynes offered that the Bill should be amended so as to remove the burden from the landlord, and provide that before making an order to evict an unemployed tenant the Court must be satisfied that the tenant has had time to apply to the Poor Law authorities, and that those authorities have had time to consider the application. The Government, he promised, would take steps to provide that the Poor Law authorities, both in England and Scotland, when granting relief, shall grant the relief necessary to protect the tenant from eviction. This, he said, would be done in the first place by administrative action, and only if necessary would legislation be introduced.

Tory Mr. Neville Chamberlain asked whether the rent money was to come out of national funds; if so a financial resolution must be submitted to Parliament, he insisted.

Anxious to avoid another devastating ultimatum from that terrible arbiter of Parliamentary majorities, Mr. Asquith, whose thunder is often aroused by Tory questions, the Lord Privy Seal replied that the financial burden would rest not upon Parliament but the local authorities. The attempt to secure cover in that direction proved abortive. Liberal Mr. Sturrock immediately rose in protest: "Is the whole burden to be placed on the parish councils and the ratepayers? Are we to have no help from national funds?"

The desired assent of Mr. Asquith's party was not yet won for the Government compromise, for Sir John Simon now observed that the amendment must be seen before it could be supported, in order to make sure the burden would be fairly spread. Meanwhile, Mr. David Kirkwood thundered the complaints of the Clyde that the parish councils of Scotland are not even able to meet the burdens now imposed on them, and cannot afford to pay the tenants' rent.

Mr. Clynes doubled again. He protested that he only meant the local authorities would pay in the first instance. The Government would consider whether it should recoup them out of national funds later on.

Mr. Chamberlain protested that Mr. Clynes had at first replied to him that the Government would not recoup the local authorities. Mr. Clynes protested he had not heard the question. Asked whether the Government would merely lend the rent money to the local authorities, or whether in the last instance the money would come out of national funds, Mr. Clynes replied that it was too early to say. Mr. McEntee (Lab.) then asked whether the English Boards of Guardians in necessitous areas will also be recouped for the rent payments they have made? The question opened up an enormous vista of monetary obligation for the Government; and immediately Mr. Harcourt Johnstone (Lib.) was asking whether, whilst English local authorities are raising rent allowances out of the local ratepayers, the English taxpayers are to be mulcted for paying Scottish rents?

Mr. Clynes was reduced to protesting

> "It is really too early to discuss the method or the procedure. This is not the time to determine whether money will be advanced or refunded after actual payment."

Mr. Baldwin asked that the Minister of Health would prepare a memorandum in time for the next discussion on the Bill, and Mr. Clynes agreed.

The plea of the unemployed for protection against eviction places the Government in a three-fold dilemma. It is faced firstly with the demands of its own Left Wing and the workers outside; secondly, with the resistance of the landlords and of the capitalist parties; and thirdly, with the exigencies of Mr. Snowden's Budget, the estimates for which are already largely, if not completely, closed.

The more the Labour Government applies itself to an honest attempt to ameliorate social conditions the more it is seen that the only hope of real **all-round** improvement is to attack the system **at the root.**

THE GOVERNMENT DEFEAT ON THE RENT BILL.

When a Labour Government has been defeated by Liberals and Tories it is unpleasant to criticise it. Even though it is altogether true that the Labour Government is quite incapable as an instrument for emancipating the workers. Obviously the intention of both the Liberal and Tory parties is to leave the unemployed to face the hardship of eviction. Therefore one's sense of solidarity with the unemployed lines one up against the Liberals and the Tories and makes one inclined to take the part of the Labour Government. Yet the action of the Labour Government on its Evictions Bill has been somewhat despicable. Firstly, it introduces a measure declaring that no unemployed person shall be evicted for non-payment of rent unless it can be shown that greater hardship will be inflicted by refusing than by permitting the eviction. There is no scientific justice about that measure, because one class of property owner is attacked whilst other property owners go free. The Government might have replied: We are sorry for that, but we choose the lesser of two evils. The Government did not make that reply; it replied that it did not wish to place the burden upon the landlord. Mr. MacDonald later declared that it was an emergency measure and the Government was giving the House an opportunity to find a way out. After a few days' respite, in which the Government considered the situation, a new clause was introduced to the effect that no unemployed person should be evicted until the Court was assured he had had an opportunity of applying to the Poor Law for help and of getting his application considered. The Government was exceedingly loth to state who should pay for that help; whether the local Boards of Guardians must pay it out of their own funds or whether the Government must find it. Finally, Mr. MacDonald, after much baiting by the Opposition, indicated that the Guardians would have to find the money out of the rates, by declaring that if doles were given to the Guardians for this purpose they would "simply play havoc with the honesty of those who receive them." Whether the honesty in ques-

tion is that of the Guardians or the unemployed, Mr. MacDonald did not make quite clear. Members of his party of both categories will resent the imputation, we believe.

Mr. MacDonald having let the cat out of the bag, Mr. Wheatley explained that though the intention of the Government was to bring the matter to the notice of the Guardians, the Bill did give the Government no power to compel the Guardians to make rent allowances. Moreover, Mr. Wheatley stated that the Guardians have no power to pay arrears of rent.

The point is that the Boards of Guardians in necessitous areas are already overwhelmed by the burden of supporting the unemployed. They have been compelled to drive the rates up to a figure imposing great hardship on poor residents, they have been forced to borrow, and in some cases they have been actually paying out to the unemployed more than this Labour Government is prepared to sanction. Poplar, as we all know, has been obliged to cut down its expenditure.

Therefore the mere statement that Guardians should make rent allowances will fail, broadly speaking, to provide an extra penny for the unemployed.

THE VIEWS OF PROUDHON.

In a previous article we discussed some aspects of Proudhon's views relative to the rising Capitalist system as he surveyed it in 1851. The solutions he proposed for the evils of the system he suggested should be brought about by Parliamentary measures. His programme was as follows:—

1. The Bank of France was to be decreed not the property of the State, but an institution of public utility, and the company was to be dissolved.

Henceforth the capital of the bank was to be furnished by its customers and it should only serve the interests of its customers. Proudhon proposed that the interest should be ½ or ¼ per cent. only.

The National Debt was to be wiped out, if possible, by decreeing that, though interest on it would be paid as before, this would not really be interest, but would come off the principal, which would be reduced by every payment.

Private debts, loans, mortgages, etc., were to be repaid by annual payments of 5 per cent. if under a certain sum, and 10 per cent. if above that amount.

The rent of buildings was to be converted into purchase money; that is to say, whoever paid rent for twenty years was to own the building. Land was to be bought in the same manner.

The buildings were finally to pass under the control of the town, which should guarantee all citizens a domicile at cost price. The land should pass to the community and charge the owner who works it an economic rent according to its extent and value. Proudhon would have it arranged that the conditions of land cultivation should be equal to all, but in spite of his desire his system does not appear to insure that.

Proudhon visualises a society mainly composed of small agriculturalists. Two-thirds of the French population, he says, are interested in land owning, and "even this proportion must increase." He regards agricultural labour as the most noble of occupations.

To him agriculture is essentially small agriculture; he declares that agricultural labour rejects the society form, and asserts: "Never have peasants been seen to form a society for the cultivation of their fields." Large scale agriculture is indeed outside his purview, but he recognises the necessity of large scale industry, and in respect of it finds himself obliged to modify his individualism, saying:—

"The degree of associative tendency among workers must be in relation to the economic relations which unite them, so that where these relations are appreciable or insignificant, no account need be taken of them; where they predominate and control, they must be regarded."

We can all agree to that, but we shall find in examining the proposition that not only has division of labour enormously increased since Proudhon's day, but that even in Proudhon's time the economic relations of the various sections of the community were much more closely interlocked than in some passages of his book he seems disposed to imply.

Though he recognises no reason for co-operation of land workers in the carrying out of their work, Proudhon advocates the paying of economic rent to the community for services to be rendered by it, agricultural banks and the maintenance of a rural police force under the control of the County Councils—a necessary accompaniment of the private property system from which he refuses wholly to break away.

On the land Proudhon probably visualised no hired workers, but each farm worked by a single family of parents and children. The hard narrow life of unremitting toil imposed upon two adults who have everything to do for a house and farm and family of young children was apparently so normal in Proudhon's eyes that he does not even refer to it. Whether the family may remain together as its children become adults and extends into a clan for associated labour is a question not mentioned by Proudhon, or whether if it does so a patriarchal tyranny or a mutual co-operation is to regulate the toil.

Recognising the co-operation of many workers as a growing necessity of industry, Proudhon discusses how this co-operation is to be achieved. He realises that either the worker must be a mere employee or he must become an associate having a voice in the Council. So far so good, but Proudhon desires the council of workmen to co-operate for the sale of their product. That is where, of course, we must differ from him. We sympathise with his desire for the autonomy of the workers, for their freedom to organise and originate in producing the product, but we regret his tenacious clinging to the production for profit principle. He says:—

"A railway, a mine, a factory, a ship, are to the workers who use them what a hive is to the bees, at once their tool and their home, their country, their territory, their property."

Yet the bees are producing for their community; they are by no means making a profit from each other.

The relationship he desires to establish between the industry and the community Proudhon sets forth as follows:—

1. "Large scale industry may be likened to a new land, discovered, or suddenly created out of the air, by the social genius; to which society sends a colony to take possession of it to work it, for the advantage of all.

2. "This colony will be ruled by a double contract, that which gives it title, establishes its property, and fixes its rights and obligations towards the mother country, and the contract which unites the different members among themselves, and determines their rights and duties.

3. "Toward Society, of which it is a creation and a dependence, this working company promises to furnish always the products and services which are asked of it, at a price as nearly as possible that of cost, and to give the public the advantage of all desirable betterments and improvements.

4. "To this end the working company abjures all combinations, submits itself to the law of competition, and holds its books and records at the disposition of Society, which, upon its part, reserves the power of dissolving the working company as the sanction of its right of control.

5. "Toward the individuals and families whose labour is the subject of the association, the company makes the following rules:—

"That every individual employed in the Association, whether man, woman, child, old man, head of department, assistant head workman or apprentice, has an undivided share in the property of the company.

6. "That he has a right to fill any position of any grade in the company, according to suitability or sex, age, skill, and length of employment.

7. "That his education, instruction and apprenticeship should therefore be so directed that, while permitting him to do his share of unpleasant and disagreeable tasks, they may also give variety of work and knowledge, and may assure him, from the period of maturity, an encyclopaedic aptitude and a sufficient income.

8. "That all positions are elective, and the by-laws subject to the approval of the members.

9. "That pay is to be proportioned to the nature of the position, the importance of the talents and the extent of the responsibility.

10. "That each member shall participate in the gains and losses of the company in proportion to his services.

11. "That each member is free to leave the company on settling his account and paying what he may owe; and reciprocally, the company may take in new members at any time."

That is a much more complete, logical and workmanlike plan for organising industry on a community basis than most of the Reformists who pose as intellectual Socialists are capable of to-day. It is, however, vitiated by its adherence to the wage system and production for sale and profit.

Let us regard the scheme again and alter some of its clauses. Let us delete from Clause 2 the words "that which establishes its property."

From Clause 3 delete from the words "at a price as nearly as possible that of cost" down to the end of the clause.

Clause 4 is by no means satisfactory, but let us delete the first part of it stating that the company "abjures all combinations and submits itself to the law of competition."

From Clause 5 delete the words "share in the property of the company" and substitute "in organising the workshop and its products."

From Clause 7 delete "and a sufficient income."

Delete Clauses 9 and 10 in their entirety.

Delete Clause 11 and substitute that each worker may leave the workshop at will.

Transformed thus, the workshop plan is more in accordance with the Communist ideal. Since, however, Communism aims at providing plenty for all, in drafting any industrial scheme it must include provision for harmonising the production of the various workshops in order that the total product may be in accordance with social needs. Many of us will feel that the power reserved to Society by Clause 4 to dissolve the working company is unnecessary and likely to cause trouble. We shall also probably dislike the notion of a fixed contract as proposed by Clause 2. We shall say that all that is required is a general contract to co-operate in supplying social needs.

Whilst advocating competition Proudhon felt the need for the State organisation of low prices, but apparently that was a transition measure.

Surveying the Greater Capitalism, we can see the impossibility of Proudhon's dream of enchaining production for profit so that all might take part in it on a small and equal scale and neither great nor small fortunes result from it. Yet we can also see the truth of his condemnation of Parliamentary Government; of the sanction of Governments to rule by virtue of the majority vote, of legislation of State judgment and punishment and of the State Church.

The ugliness and tyranny of the so-called democratic government which arose from the ashes of feudalism is apparent to all candid observers of the Capitalist system.

Proudhon's proposal of the Social Contract is based on the theory of the self-respecting intelligent independence of every individual in the community. In the days when it was formulated the trend of opinion was streaming in the direction of State worship. The democratic State based on the majority vote seemed all that was required to ensure the freedom and well-being of all. Now that that fallacy has been exposed we can return with interest to Proudhon's Social Contract. What is it?

It is simply that each individual shall freely and personally enter into each social obligation or association which he or she elects to undertake, whether it be the association of a community for the upkeep of the roads, or the association of a group of workers for the planting of a forest, the building of a town, the running of a factory, the working of a mine.

To that principle we can assent; it will be part of the basis of the autonomous workshop councils through which production will be carried on in the industrial society of the future.

Proudhon sums up his views in the following passage:—

"1, The indefinite perfectibility of the individual and of the race; 2, The honourableness of work; 3, The equality of fortunes; 4, The identity of interests; 5, The end of antagonisms; 6, The universality of comfort; 7, The sovereignty of reason; 8, The absolute liberty of the man and the subject."

Again he says:—

"It is industrial organisation that we will put in place of contracts. No more laws voted by a majority, not even unanimously; each citizen, each town, each industrial union, makes its own laws.

"In place of political powers we will put economic forces.

"In place of the ancient classes of nobles, burghers and peasants, or of business men and working men, we will put the general titles and special departments of industry: Agriculture, manufacture, commerce, etc.

"In place of public force we will put collective force.

"In place of police we will put identity of interest.

"In place of political centralisation we will put economic centralisation.

"Do you see now how there can be order without functionaries, a profound and wholly intellectual unity?"

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FROM THE PUBLISHERS.

So Big. By Edna Ferber (Heinemann, 7/6).

During the votes for women struggle many novels written with a feminist purpose appeared, but most of these, though stuffed with propaganda discussions, still revealed the old conception of womanly helplessness and passivity. This view of woman was of course always purely that of a middle class people, but most novels, after all, are written by middle class people. The working woman cannot be helpless—everyone knows that. She would be utterly submerged if she were. Nevertheless she has been, and still is, widely regarded as a drudge and an inferior by men of her class and others.

The true feminist novel, the novel which portrays women who are the equals of the most notable men, in achievement and in character, and who play a leading *rôle* by their will and intelligence is only produced successfully by a novelist who is wholly free of the old notion that woman is essentially the inferior sex, at least the passive, helpless sex. The novelist who has lived amongst women of independent character, making their own way in the world, is best able to cast off the old prejudices. Edna Ferber's *So Big* is distinctly a feminist novel. Its women are its most active, able and assertive characters; yet one does not feel that this is a case of propaganda. The characters are a natural part of the story. Apparently the writer is creating her people as she sees them in real life. The capable woman who works and wills is the woman whom she admires and whom she seeks out both in literature and in the real world of flesh and blood. Not merely is Edna Ferber a feminist, obviously also she chiefly admires productive and creative work and the people who take an active share in it. She has a healthy contempt both for the man who gets rich by buying and selling stocks and shares, and the idle woman, whose only business in life is to dress and to entertain. The producer and the artist: these are the two types which appeal to Edna Ferber. Therein she displays much wisdom, and since we believe that the novelists play a very large part in moulding the ideas of their time, we hope that many others of her profession may adopt Miss Ferber's opinion in that regard.

The most important personality in this book is not Sobig de Jong, after whom it is named, but his mother, Selina, who, surmounting untold obstacles, becomes a successful farmer and market gardener, and a pioneer of scientific cultivation in the United States Middle West.

Miss Ferber gives a very graphic picture of the hard life of the small farmer and farm worker, and especially of the heavy toil which falls to the lot of the women of the agricultural class.

Socialism and the Mining Industry. By Emrys Hughes. Sixpence. I.L.P. Information Committee. This is a very brief account of the history of the mining industry, the Sankey Commission and the rival schemes of nationalisation laid before it. That of the Miners' Federation representatives was briefly to assess the value of the mines on the basis of five years' profits, the price not to exceed 10/- per ton of output in the larger mines and 12/- in the smaller. The schemes recommended are not Socialism, but State Capitalism.

Socialism and Finance. By F. W. Pethick Lawrence, M.P. I.L.P. Information Committee. 6d. This pamphlet deals briefly with the functions of money, partnerships, limited liability companies, shares and debentures, title deeds of wealth, banks, bank notes, cheques, credit, the bank rate, paper currency, etc., etc. In the main it is an explanation of simple facts connected with such things. It puts forward, however, some proposals for the stabilisation of prices, and attempts to "indicate the direction in which Socialist finance must proceed and the first steps which can and must be taken by a Socialist Government."

With these proposals and indications we wholly disagree.

Mr. Lawrence advocates the attempt to stabilise prices by manipulating the bank rate. Thus when prices are rising he proposes to raise the "bank rate," *i.e.*, the rate of interest charged by the Bank of England, thereby discouraging credit which tends to inflate prices. When prices are falling it is proposed to lower the bank rate. He also proposes manipulating the currency by issuing and withdrawing Treasury notes for the same purpose. He insists that lowering and raising of the bank rate should be done in consultation with and under control by the **Treasury.**

Mr. Lawrence believes that if all countries adopt the like expedients prices can be stabilised internationally.

We do not think such experiments would achieve the objects in view. We imagine that those who have had official experience of finance in Germany, Austria and Russia during the post-war years are unlikely to support the suggestion offered by Mr. Lawrence, although it is put forward by Messrs. Cassel, Hawtrey and Keynes. We wonder what Herr Hilferding would say after his brief experience in office.

Mr. Lawrence says that:—

"to begin with the Socialist will aim at working through the existing financial institutions rather than by superseding them. There is good ground for believing that this will be quite possible. . . . If, however, a Socialist Government were to be confronted with anything in the nature of deliberate sabotage of its proposals on political grounds by a Money Trust it would have to prepare for resolute action."

If a Socialist majority in Parliament were to attempt a serious attack on vested interests there is no doubt the banks would practise sabotage, as Mr. Theodore, of the mild Labour Queensland Government, can testify.

Mr. Lawrence's whole conception of Socialism, as revealed in these pages, seems to us essentially non-Socialist, but a species of Fabian Reformism.

The I.L.P. Information Committee is developing into a very efficient vehicle for purveying Reformist literature. Comrades should give us assistance in the issue of a more robust type of propaganda.

Russia's Counterclaims. By W. P. Coates. "Hands Off Russia" Committee. Gives some useful facts about the various post-revolutionary invasions of Russia by Capitalist Powers.

THE TRIUMPH OF FASCISM.

It is plain that Mussolini is going to win a decisive victory in the Italian election, but I think it ought to be said that, so far as foreign observation goes, his success has been achieved by methods which would hardly commend themselves to other Parliamentary countries.

Not only has his Government used postmarks as a means of advertising itself, but anyone who has had occasion to pass through Italian railway stations, to say nothing more, must be aware that Fascism has in it an element of terrorism.

If supporters of Mr. MacDonald were to be seen walking up and down the platform at Euston openly carrying revolvers, and being rude in a very peremptory manner to passengers, we should consider it a very remarkable thing. But that is what is happening in Italy.

It is not for us in England to judge whether it is a good thing for the country or not, but at any rate we ought to realise exactly what Fascism amounts to.—*The Evening Standard.*

IMPORTANT.

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Our View.

DIVORCE AND THE WOMEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

On April 2nd Dr. Spero asked leave to introduce a Bill to grant divorce after five years' separation under deed or order of the Court, or after seven years' absence, during which nothing has been heard of the absent party.

Major Birchall seconded the motion.

The women Members of Parliament have all pleaded for the suffrages of the electors on the ground that they would give special attention to questions specially affecting the interests of women as women. Here is precisely such a question. The existing divorce law differentiates against women. Moreover, since woman, as mother, is handicapped in the labour market, and as wife has usually abandoned gainful occupation for domestic work, she is usually the economically dependent party in the marriage relation. Therefore the question of divorce is a question of more vital moment to the woman than to the man.

It was at least the duty of the women Members of Parliament to take some action on this question. Nevertheless, out of eight women Members of Parliament only three recorded a vote on this Bill. These three, the Labour women: Misses Bondfield, Jewson, and Laurence.

The Duchess of Atholl, Mrs. Philipson, Lady Terrington, and Mrs. Wintringham absented themselves from the division on the Divorce Bill, though later in the day they were present to vote against the Capital Levy. Obviously those women had not the courage to let their views on the Divorce Bill be known. Probably they thought they would lose a few votes next election whichever way they voted.

As for Lady Astor, she also absented herself. No doubt she thought it wisest to do so, having regard to the criticism levelled at her when she voted against a Bill to give divorce to women on the same terms as men, although she took advantage of the law of an American State giving divorce for incompatibility of temper in order to rid herself of her first husband.

For our part we deplore the fact that marriage should be the subject of legal contract at all. The legal marriage is the outcome of the private property system, and will disappear when Communism has freed the family from economic dependence upon the father.

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THE GOVERNMENT AND PEACE TREATIES.

On April 1st Mr. Ponsonby, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, made some important statements on the subject of those foreign treaties, commitments, and understandings which the Government is not at the present time compelled to submit to Parliament. Mr. Ponsonby said:—

"During our term of office we shall inform the House of all agreements, commitments, and understandings which may in any way bind the nation to specific action in certain circumstances."

This is important; it rules out secret agreements; it gives an opportunity at least for agreements to be known before they are ratified. Nevertheless, we must not over-rate the advantage to be gained thereby, for "public opinion" is very pliant to the propaganda of the Press, Members of Parliament very complacent to the Party Whip, and the people without any means of controlling the actions of Parliament which is supposed to represent them.

Mr. Ponsonby observed that there are three methods by which the foreign undertakings might come before Parliament: first, by legislation. He dismissed that method except in those cases where it is already legally necessary, saying:—

"We should plunge the House into a morass of constitutional controversy, in which, *no doubt, we should be accused of invading the prerogatives of the Crown.*"

That is a remarkable statement. The prerogatives of the Crown are generally assumed to be purely formal, and to have been really absorbed by the Government, which is supposed to advise the Crown as to how it must act.

The "prerogatives of the Crown" certainly require investigation. We wonder whether any member of the Labour Government, or any Labour Privy Councillor, is bold enough to make disclosures.

* * *

PRIVATE ENTERPRISE.

Those who hesitate to support the complete abolition of the capitalist system because they believe that much good is wrought by the energy and enterprise of the man who runs his own business, and has all his capital wrapped up in it, should remember, as pointed out by Mr. Pethick Lawrence on the Capital Levy debate, that only 9 per cent. of the total national wealth is held by persons having their money all wrapped up in their own individual businesses or partnerships, and a further 6 per cent. in private companies.

The rest of the wealth is in that impersonal big business that few people pretend seriously to defend.

* * *

2,000,000 HOUSES IN FIFTEEN YEARS.

Fifteen years is a long time to wait for the 2,000,000 houses required by the country. The war time shells were not produced at that deliberate pace. All Parliamentary parties as well as the building employers and Trade Unions are said to be co-operating in the Government's fifteen years housing scheme.

* * *

REPARATIONS AND POINCARE.

The facts as to the reparations proposals of the conquerors' expert committees are beginning to leak out, and in reply to them statements are coming from Germany that Germany cannot pay the vast sums demanded.

There are indications that the German politicians are already losing faith in the great help which they anticipated would be given to them by the British Labour Government. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's statements that it is "unthinkable" that the Allies should fail to agree on reparations show that the Germans have cause for their despondency.

M. Poincaré resigned, but M. Poincaré is as securely seated in office as ever, and his policy is, we believe, unchanged. He has taken into his Cabinet some of the political associates of M. Briand, who are supposed to be further to the Left than the grasping and bellicose French Premier. Yet there is every indication that these Briandists will work in complete harmony with M. Poincaré, for it is rightly said that his policy is in truth what is called a national policy; that is to say it is the policy broadly agreed to by all the Nationalist Capitalist parties and interests of France.

Exploitation of the industrial wealth of the Ruhr and the Rhineland is obviously the present guiding motive of French policy. British capitalist interests and the Foreign Office officials and clique of diplomatic families which minister to those interests are of course fencing with the French to gain as much and lose as little by the settlement as their diplomacy, backed by the wealth and power of Britain, can achieve.

The Labour Prime Minister is doubtless doing his best according to his lights, in exercising perhaps a moderating influence upon the more rapacious hotheads, and in endeavouring to secure as large a measure as possible of the terms desired by British capitalist interests.

In all this the working class has no part or lot except in so far as it may be regarded as supported by its employers, and, therefore, gaining by the gains of its employers. The Trade Union politicians adopt in the main the view that the interests of the worker are bound up with and dependent upon the fortunes of his employer. The theory is put to a severe test when the employing class is seeking means to profit not by the labour of British workers, but by that of workers in other countries in competition with the British product. Patriotism and the general theory that the prosperity of the British employing class will eventually increase the prosperity of the British worker removes in the long run any doubts which the Trade Union officialdom may feel as to following a British policy when the spoils of industrial wealth outside this country are being fought for.

Those who take that view will continue to support the Capitalist system. Those who desire to end the Capitalist syatem will recognise that the interests of the employer and the wage worker are fundamentally opposed.

The inclusion of certain Briandists in the new Poincaré Cabinet indicates not that the country is moving leftward, but that a demonstration of national unity in support of M. Poincaré's policy is thought advisable. Just so the indications that the League of Nations may be invoked more prominently than the various bodies set up by the Allies for the coercion of Germany is not a sign that Germany will receive more lenient treatment, but that an attempt is to be made to bring into line, or at least to placate the more kindly and liberal sections of thought in all countries when Germany is forced into compliance.

The strongest proof of this contention is the recent revival of the military control of Germany, which since the Ruhr occupation had been allowed to lapse. Mr. MacDonald took a prominent part on the re-enforcement of this control.

The *Christian Science Monitor*, one of the most reliable newspapers existing, publishes the following notes upon this question:—

BY SISLEY HUDDLESTON.
By Special Cable.

"PARIS, March 6th.—The *Christian Science Monitor* representative is able to reveal the contents of the note of the Conference of Ambassadors which was sent to Germany respecting disarmament. It is based on the British memorandum, in which Ramsay MacDonald agrees as to the need of ascertaining the present condition of armaments in Germany, and proposes changing the Inter-allied Commission of Military Control for a smaller committee of guarantees, only when satisfaction is given by Germany. Later it will be possible for the League of Nations to take up the work.

"The tone of the note is fairly severe and an early reply is demanded, but the effect is softened in the final paragraph by assurances to Germany that if proper co-operation is given, the moment when Germany will be released from the present method of control will be hastened. The same offer as made some time ago is repeated, that the Allies are ready to substitute a committee of guarantees if Germany agrees to carry out the various points mentioned in the note of September, 1922. What the Allies want is an inventory of all the armaments in Germany and also of the munition factories. This inventory will permit the Allies to judge of the measure in which the Treaty is being fulfilled.

POLICE AND ARMY.

"It is declared that there must be no confusion between the police and the Army. It is charged against Germany that various auxiliary forces have sprung up with the object of escaping the provisions of the Treaty. As to the munition factories, they are to be thoroughly transformed into industrial factories. In the next place, the undelivered war material is now to be given up. But particularly on the next two points do the Allies lay stress in their note to Germany. They demand the delivery of all documents showing the material of war at the armistice and the list of war factories which were working during the hostilities, and since. The fullest statistics are demanded. Also, Germany is called upon to promulgate the necessary laws to prohibit the importation of war materials and to prevent recruiting and organisation, contrary to the Treaty of Versailles. There must be suppressed all plans for mobilisation which are actually in existence. Superfluous officers, who may be the framework of a larger army, are to be dismissed.

"The note further points out that the Allies cannot accept simply the word of Germany that these points are fulfilled. They mean to ascertain this for themselves.

* * *

ALLIES NOT RESTRICTED.

"Moreover, these five points were not the only ones which were raised. They formed part of the bargain which Germany had not accepted, and therefore the Allies were not compelled to restrict themselves. It is for the Allies to judge when the conditions of the Treaty are fulfilled and to decide when it is safe to replace the present control commission.

"Such is the substance of the Allied reply, which shows that the British Labour Government is not prepared to be lenient to the German militarist, and on the contrary is ready to support the French view that Germany is committing wilful breaches of the Treaty with a view of revenge. It will be remembered that the present note is practically embodied in the memorandum forwarded by Mr. MacDonald on February 25th, and therefore it is England which has taken the initiative.

"When Labour came into power, Germany had refused to allow the resumption of military control, and in spite of certain correspondence, there was not much prospect of such resumption. Germany on January 9th informed the Allies that it considered the task of the Commission of Control ended. There is much praise here of Mr. MacDonald's desire to have a thorough investigation to reveal the truth about Germany's preparing for war."

* * *

THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE.

The rivalry of French and British Capitalism is by no means ended. The crushing of Germany indeed accentuates it; but for the time being they will bury the hatchet in the prostrate body of Germany.

The only alternative to such Capitalist manœuvring is Communism. Only thus can the peoples be freed from war and exploitation. The only safety and consistency of proletarian parties must lie in absolute refusal to engage in Capitalist diplomacy, in absolute refusal to take part in the enforcement of the Treaty of Versailles or other such Capitalist Imperialist agreements.

"No annexations, no war indemnities," was a good slogan. It is a pity that any party calling itself a Labour Party should abandon it. Let us remain in the wilderness working for the fraternity of peoples, till the peoples are ready to take action in that cause.

* * *

THE GROWTH OF PAPAL POWER.

Under the Mussolini dictatorship the growth of the reactionary Papal Power has been immense. It is working hand in hand with the reactionary powers of secular government not in Italy alone, but also in France. The Pope's public consistory in Rome and the presence of the French Marshal Foch thereat are evidences of this fact.

TREAD MILL PROGRESS.

The minimum war pension for dependents is to be raised from 4/2 to 5/- weekly, and parents drawing need pensions may look to receive increases of from 2/6 to 5/- a week.

Meanwhile the cost of living rises.

* * *

THE SHIPYARD DISPUTE.

The shipyard dispute, in which twelve separate unions are taking balots of their members, is another reminder of the need for rank and file Workshop Committees, in order that the workers may decide their own affairs for themselves.

The Wembley action of the Trade Union officials in repudiating the Wembley strike and their refusal of strike pay is another case in point.

* * *

THE REPARATIONS EXPERTS' REPORT.

The Experts' Report on Reparations proposes a scandalous exploitation of German resources which of course can only be made at the expense of the workers. If the Labour Government agrees to the proposals it will go down to posterity branded as a traitor Government, for it came in under the banner of peace and good-will, reconstruction and conciliation.

The only hope of the German workers is the International overthrow of Capitalism.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

SPICE.

Italy Terrorised by Assassins.

Fascist victory at the polls.

* * *

British Foreign Policy is Continuous.

Miss Scott Troy and Mr. Theodore Rothstein, deported by Capitalist Governments, can testify to that fact.

* * *

Wembley.

Imperialism amongst officials triumphed over solidarity with their members.

M. Poincaré.

No change.

* * *

Ludendorff's Acquittal.

Because he was a reactionary.

WORKERS' COMMUNIST MEETINGS IN HYDE PARK.

"Communism was represented by a little woman wearing a bright green coat and a red tie, who was speaking on behalf of the 'Communist Workers' Movement.'"

Comrades will notice in the above passage from the *Daily Mail*, Comrade Norah Smyth, who is holding Sunday afternoon meetings in Hyde Park on the gravel by the Marble Arch, and who needs more help both from speakers and from literature sellers at the gate.

Everyone goes to Hyde Park at some time or other, and the seed sown there may thus be spread all over the country.

"DREADNOUGHT" £1,000 FUND.

Brought forward, £200 15s. 10d. F. Clarke, 2/6; Misses Hodson, £1 11s. 6d.; S. London Socialist Club, collection, 6/1; Hyde Park, 2/-; Mr. Harrby, 2/-; S. Palmer, 1/- (monthly); Herman Gorter, £8; Mr. Rackovitch, 2/6; Tom Mann, 13/-; Hampstead Collection, 5½d.; Irish Social and Literary Club, 3/6; F. Brimley, £1 11s. (monthly); C. Hart, 3/- (monthly); E. T. Leonard, and Workmates, 5/-; Anon., 2/6; Office Collecting Box, 1/3; Mr. Bailey, 10/-; F. T. Steed, 2/-; Anon., £2; Mr. Powell, 5/-; S. Pankhurst, £5. Total for four weeks, £21 5s. 1½d. Total, £222 0s. 11½d.

GIVE THIS PAPER TO A FRIEND.

PARLIAMENT AS WE SEE IT.

IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS.

Mr. George Lansbury (Lab.) asked the Secretary for Scotland how many political prisoners convicted in Ireland are in Scotch prisons, what offences they are charged with, what punishments they are subjected to, and whether he will ask the Northern Irish Government to take them back to Ireland or sanction their release?

All information was refused, and it was replied that this was the business of the Government of Northern Ireland.

LAUSANNE TREATY.

Mr. Ponsonby (Lab.), introducing the Bill for the Lausanne Peace Treaty, observed that the Government was obliged to introduce it, but did not defend it; it was a Tory Treaty. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, on the other hand, defended the Treaty, saying it was the best that could be got, and praising Lord Curzon for negotiating it. Some of the Liberals opposed the measure because the Treaty includes a guarantee by Britain, France, Italy, and Japan to meet, by means decided by the League of Nations, any attack which should imperil the freedom of the Straits or the security of the demilitarised zones round Constantinople.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald told members not to bother about this guarantee, as the League of Nations Council can only make unanimous decisions, and as Britain is represented on the Council it can prevent any decision it does not like. The conclusion seems to be that the Turks have been done. No one in the House seemed to be ashamed of the disingenuous bargain.

Capitalist diplomacy!

THE WEMBLEY STRIKE.

Sir P. Sassoon (C.) complained that the building workers' strike at Wembley will delay the opening of the Exhibition.

Mr. Tom Shaw (Lab., Minister of Labour) said the strike was "unofficial" and "in every sense a regrettable one," and "all the machinery of the Ministry of Labour, and I think I may say all the powers of the Government, will be exercised towards bringing it to as speedy a conclusion as possible."

Mr. J. H. Thomas (Lab., Secretary of State for the Colonies) urged "everybody outside the House and inside it to remember the obligation to the Empire" to have the Exhibition open on the appointed day.

He said there were no brickbats thrown, no buildings damaged, as reported in the Press; but he deplored the fact that a number of young girl artists were stopped from working. Steps would be taken to stop that in future.

Mr. B. Smith (Lab.) said that when a trade union official went down to try to stop the strike he was ordered away by the contractors, Messrs. MacAlpine and Company.

Mr. Jack Jones (Lab.) asked:

"Is a workman simply a slave that he must work when you tell him he must, or that he must work and starve when you think he ought to?"

Meanwhile, the union was refusing strike pay!

On April 2nd Mr. Shaw said some of the Wembley strikers had returned to work. The Labour Government would afford the blacklegs "the fullest measure of protection" against blacklegs. Steps would be taken to prevent intimidation.

A LITTLE ITEM.

£46,000 was voted for the annual expenses of the residence of the Governor of Northern Ireland.

EQUAL GUARDIANSHIP OF PARENTS.

The Bill to give equal rights of guardianship to mother and father passed its second reading. The Government promised to bring in a somewhat different Bill of its own to deal with the matter.

An old injustice will thus be dealt with, perhaps as far as the law can deal with it, but the root problem can never be solved till Communism emancipates domestic life from control by the breadwinner.

THE CAPITAL LEVY.

A motion discussing the Capital Levy in an academic way resulted in 325 votes being cast against the Levy, 160 for it.

DEATH PENALTY IN THE ARMY.

Mr. Thurtle (Lab.) moved a resolution to abolish the death penalty in the Army, in precisely the same terms as those moved by the member who is Financial Secretary to the War Office to-day. It was opposed by the Labour Government and voted against by those persons who have been given posts in the Government and many Labour members who have not got posts.

An amendment to give to soldiers the right of appeal against the death penalty to the Court of Criminal Appeal was also resisted by the Government and defeated.

SOLDIERS AND TRADES DISPUTES.

A proposal to allow recruits, as a condition of their service, to abstain from agreeing to aid the civil power in trades disputes also met with Government opposition, and was defeated by 236 votes to 67.

RECRUITS UNDER 21 YEARS.

A motion prohibiting the enlistment of soldiers under 21 years, and demanding the return to their homes of young persons enlisted under that age was met by the Government objection, voiced by Mr. Stephen Walsh, that the proposal would "take away more than one-half the material on which the Army is built up."

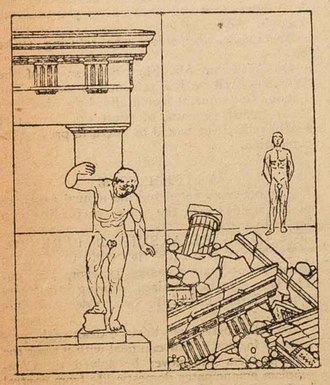
The Government also resisted a motion to free soldiers from the obligation to attend Church parade, and, of course, it was defeated.

Many people who support war and its equipment, and overlook its great hardships and injustices, grow shame-faced at the minor hardships and injustices which are imposed on the soldier. Governments are all stony-hearted towards the soldier. Army discipline with them over-rides all humane consideration.

A pathetic figure was that of Lieut.-Colonel Meyler, who, believing that his superiors would commute the sentence, sentenced to death a feeble lad of 18 or 19 years who was found in a dug-out when he ought to have been with his regiment in the trenches. When the sentence was confirmed, Lieut.-Colonel Meyler had to order out the firing party to execute this lad of whom he had charge in the line. The Colonel pleaded :—

"I was called to Brigade Headquarters before I ever sat on that court martial, and I was told that General Headquarters expected that the court martial, if it found the man guilty, would sentence him to death and leave it to them to decide if it was to be carried out."

The affair has made a very deep impression on Lieut.-Colonel Meyler.



WHAT WE STAND FOR.

The abolition of the capitalist or private property system.

Common ownership of the land, the means of production and distribution. The earth, the seas and their riches, the industrial plant, the railways and ships, aircraft, and so on, shall belong to the whole people.

Production for use, not for profit. Under modern conditions more can be produced than can be consumed of all necessaries, if production is not artificially checked. The community must set itself to provide all the requirements of its members, in order that their wants may be met without stint and according to their own measure and desire. The people will notify their requirements, and the district, the country, the world must co-operate to supply them.

Production for use means that there will be neither barter nor sale, and consequently no money. An immense amount of labour in buying, selling and advertising will therefore be saved.

Since there will be plenty for all, there will be no insurance, no poor and no poor law, no State or private charity of any kind. Humiliation, officialdom and useless toil, which means putting parasites on the backs of the producers, will be obviated thereby.

There will be no class distinctions because there will be no economic distinctions. Everyone will be a worker, everyone will be of the educated classes, for education will be free to all, and since the hours of labour and relatively monotonous tasks will be short, everyone will be able to make use of educational facilities, not merely in early youth, but throughout life.

There will be no patents, no "trade secrets," scientific knowledge will be widely diffused. Since the class war will be no more, the newspapers will be largely filled with scientific information, art and literature, historical research.

Society will be organised to supply its own needs. To-day the essential needs of the people are supplied by private enterprise. Ostensibly we are under a democratic Government, but the most outstanding fact in the average man's life is that he is largely at the disposal of his employer. The government of the workshop where he spends the greater part of his time and energy is despotic. Under Communism industry will be managed by those at work in it. The workshop will contain, not employees, subject to the dictation of the employers and their managers, but groups of co-workers.

We stand for the workshop councils in industry, agriculture and all the services of the community. We stand for the autonomous organisation of the workshops and their ordered co-ordination, in order that the needs of all may be supplied.

Under Communism Parliament and the local governing bodies will disappear. Parliament, with the monarch, the Privy Council, the Cabinet, the Houses of Lords and Commons, provides no true democracy. "Self-government is better than good government," and the only genuine self-government is literally self-government, in which free individuals willingly associate themselves in a common effort for the common good. On the basis of co-workers in the workshop co-operating with co-workers in other workshops, efficiency of production and distribution, which means plenty for all, can go hand in hand with personal freedom.

Elected on a territorial basis, Parliament is not able to manage efficiently the industries and services of the community. The services at present controlled by it are managed by salaried permanent officials. The condition of the worker employed in such services is the same as in privately owned industry.

A centralised Government cannot give freedom to the individual: it stultifies initiative and progress. In the struggle to abolish capitalism the workshop councils are essential. The trade unions are not based on the workshop, and are bureaucratically governed. Therefore they are not able efficiently to manage the industries. Not being able efficiently to manage the industries they are ineffective implements in the effort to take industry from the management of the employers and vest it in the workers at the point of production.

Therefore we stand for—

The abolition of the private property system,
Production for use, not profit,
The free supply of the people's needs,
The organisation of production and distribution on a workshop basis.

OUR BOOKSHOP.

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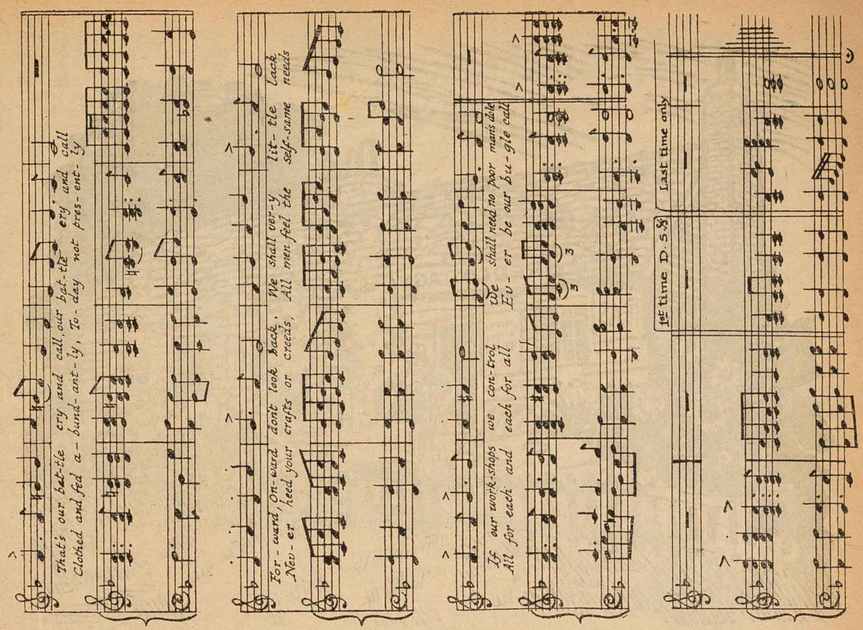
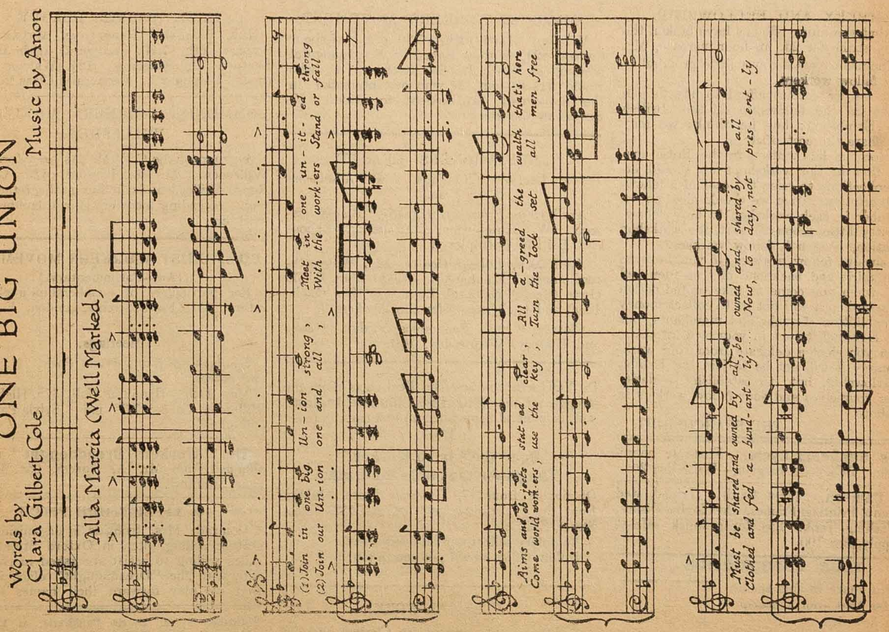
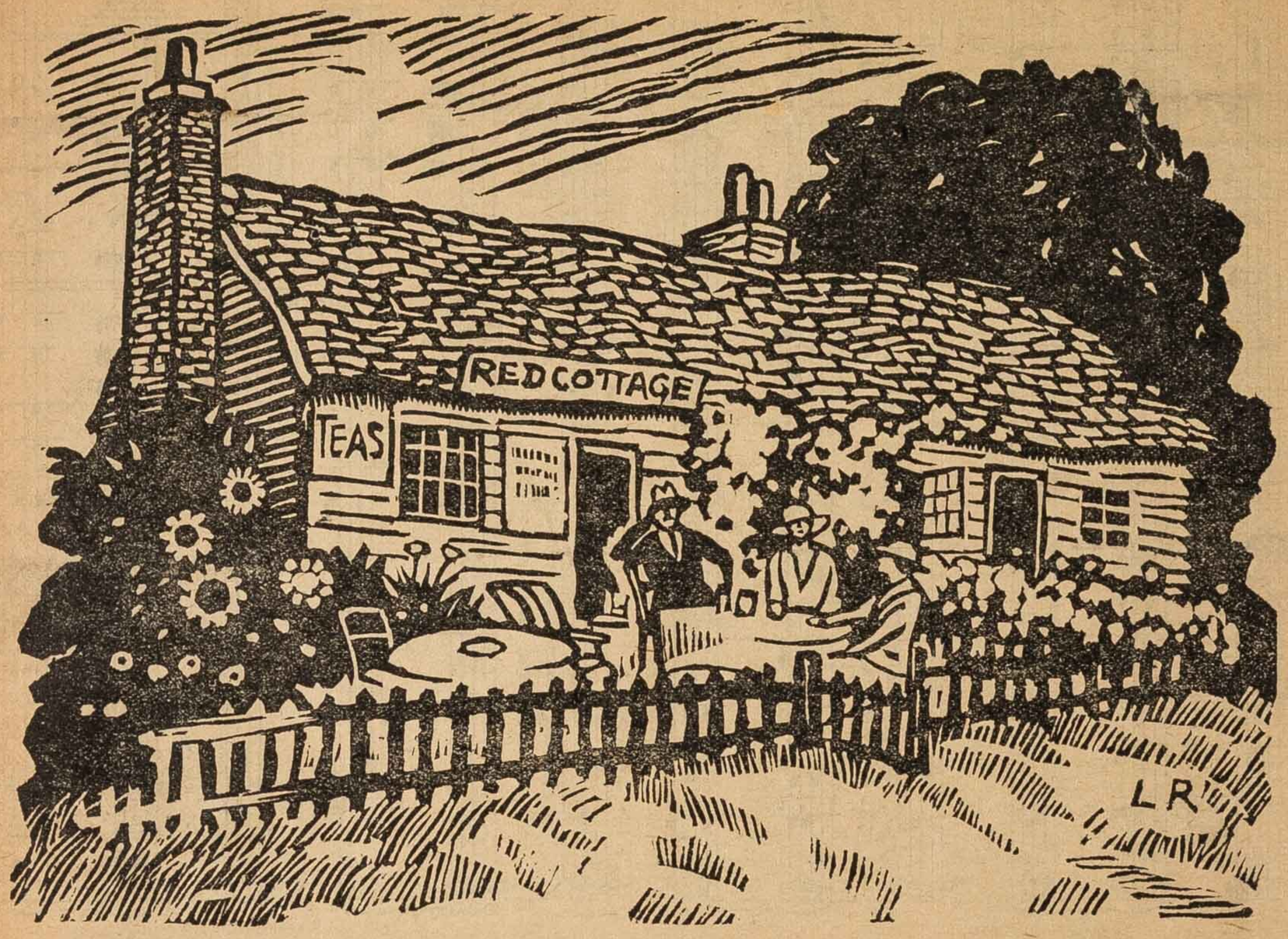


ONE BIG UNION

Words by Clara Gilbert Cole

Music by Anon





THE RED COTTAGE, 126, High Road, Woodford Wells (opposite Horse and Well Hotel).
ovided Saturdays and Snndays from April 18th (Good Friday), Enquiries about Outings should be made to—
A.B., 37, Addington Square, S.E. 5.

WEMBLEY AND FELLOWSHIP.

Now that the union officials have broken the Wembley strike for 2d. an hour increase, Mr. J. H. Thomas makes a clever little proposal to all of us **fellow workers.**

He knows we cannot afford to pay to join the nobs in the fellowship of the British Empire Exhibition; but he thinks we may help to share the cost of it.

Therefore he has written to the Press suggesting that in the workshops we should organise collections to raise the cost of a fellowship subscription. Then we should elect one of our number in each workshop to be a fellow.

A pretty little proposal, that, for workshop organisation, is it not, fellow workers?

But surely, fellow workers, if you have in you the spirit and backbone of true men and women, when you come to take united action in the workshop it will not be to collect money for an exhibition of snobs and merchants, but to form a council to act in your own interests.

When you elect a delegate from your workshop, surely it will not be to join the Exhibition fellowship, but to establish solidarity between yourselves and your fellow workers in other shops.

THE SEARCHLIGHT.

Lady's Sunbeam Cycle. First-rate condition. £4 4s. A bargain,—Write Box 20.

Klito Camera. (Post Card). Tripod, Red Lamp, Printiug Frames, Developing Dishes, Washing Tank. 25s. for a quick sale.—Apply, Box 100.

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION

A blue mark in this space indicates that your subscription is now due.

The high cost of production **of the paper necessitates prompt payment.**

COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT.

Monday, April 14th, 7.30 p.m., Labour Centre, 124, Walworth-road, S.E. Inaugural meeting of South London Group. All who would like to join, or who are interested in the movement, are invited to attend. N. Smyth in the chair.

IRISH WORKERS' LEAGUE.

Public Lectures, Sundays, 7.30. *Admission Free.*

April 13th, Friars' Hall, 157, Blackfriars-road. W. Hutchinson, "Australian Labour and British Unemployed."

April 20th, Labour Centre, 124, Walworth-road (near "Elephant"). Liam Mar Giolla Gosa (Scots' National League). "The Gaelic Ideal and Its Message for the Workers."

Classes, 8 *pm.* Economics, Friday. Gaelic and History, Wednesday, 16th.

Do YOU want to learn The Real Facts about the struggle of the **Working Class** in **Ireland** and the general happenings in that country?

If so

Read the "Irish Worker."
The paper that tells the truth.

Obtainable from 17, Gardiner Place, Dublin, from the "Dreadnought" office, 152, Fleet Street, E.C., etc,

Voluntary sellers wanred everywhere.

Dublin Office would put you in touch.

CLERICAL WORK.

Volunteers are needed for Clerical and Organising work. Comrades should write to the "Dreadnought" office.

IRISH WORKER LEAGUE.

NEW WORKERS' REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT.—Sunday, 6th, 7.30. Inaugural Irish History Lecture. All welcome. 124, Walworth-road (near "Elephant"). Economics Class forming.

COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT, WILLESDEN.

A group of the C.W.M. has been formed in Willesden. Mr. A. Parsons, 182, Chapter Road, Willesden, is acting as Secretary pro. tem. Intending members should communicate with him.

COMMUNIST WORKERS MOVEMENT.

(Anti-Parliamentary.)

For particulars of membership apply Secretary, 152, Fleet Street, London, E.C.

Meetings.

Sundays, 3 p.m., Hyde Park. N. Smyth and others.

May 11th,—Hamilton Hall, 375, High Road, Willesden Green, 7-30 p.m. Sylvia Pankhurst and others,

The "Workers Dreadnought" may be obtained from Mr. A. Turner, 25' Windmill Lane, Stratford.

A LITERATURE PITCH.

Comrade Mrs. Ironside is organising a literature selling pitch in **Oxford Street.** Comrades willing to assist are **asked** to communicate with the "Dreadnought" office in order that we may forward their names to her.

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