

# The Seven That Were Hanged.

## Workers' Dreadnought

THE PRINCIPLE UNDERLYING THE CLASS-STRUGGLE IS SOLIDARITY.

VOL. X. No. 5.

SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 1923.

WEEKLY.

### LINES FROM EDWARD CARPENTER.

#### The Curse of Property.

Are they not mine, saith the Lord, the everlasting hills?  
(Where over the fir-tree tops I glance to the valleys.)  
The rich meads with brown and white cattle,  
and streams with weirs and water-mills.  
And the tender-growing crops, and hollows of  
shining apple-blossom—  
From my mountain, terraces as from a throne  
beholding my lands—  
Are they not mine, where I dwell, and for  
my children?  
How long, you, will you trail your slime over  
them, and your talk of rights and  
of property?  
How long will you build houses to hide your-  
selves in, and your baggage? to shut  
yourselves off from your brothers and  
sisters—and Me?  
Peware! for I am the storm; I care nought  
for your rights of property.  
In lightning and thunder, in floods and fire,  
I will ruin and ravage your fields;  
Your first-born will I slay within your house,  
and I will make your riches a mockery.  
Fools! that know not from day to day, from  
hour to hour, if ye shall live,  
And yet will snatch from each other the  
things that I have showered among  
you.  
For I will have none that will not open his  
door to all, treating others as I have  
treated him.  
The trees that spread their boughs against  
the evening sky, the marble that I have  
prepared beforehand these millions of  
years in the earth; the cattle that roam  
over the myriad hills—they are Mine,  
for all my children—  
If thou lay hands on them for thyself alone,  
thou art accursed.  
The curse of property shall cling to thee:  
With burdened brow and heavy heart, weary,  
incapable of joy, without gaiety,  
Thou shalt crawl a stranger in the land that  
I made for thy enjoyment.  
The smallest bird on thy estate shall sing in  
freedom in the branches, the plough-  
boy shall whistle in the furrow,  
But thou shalt be weary and lonely—forsaken  
and an alien among men:  
For just inasmuch as thou hast shut thyself  
off from one of the least of these my  
children, thou hast shut thyself off  
from Me.  
I the Lord Demos have spoken it—and the  
mountains are my throne.

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## A Few Words About Ireland.

Now that the Irish Republicans are widely said to be defeated, those upholders of the Free State who are uncomfortably conscious that the Republicans are in the right, but have not the courage to say so, are beginning to ask for clemency for them.

The "Daily Herald" is typical of these whom the conscience is pricking, and whose reputation-sense is becoming uneasy. Liam Lynch, Erskine Childers, Rory O'Connor, Brugher, and the rest, will rank amongst the greatest national heroes in Ireland now, especially if, as many hope, the Republican cause fades away from the realities of life and becomes but a mere poetic aspiration, towards which all may boast allegiance, without any danger of being called upon to give earnest in tangible sacrifice or service.

Everyone knows that, save in the six north-eastern counties, 999 Irishmen out of 1,000 wanted an independent Ireland, and that the Free State was only accepted as a measure of abject fear, because Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues threatened that the continued struggle for a republic would mean ruthless war to the point of extermination from the British Government. Immediate acceptance of the Free State Treaty, or immediate war, was the Downing Street ultimatum. Yet when the Irish negotiators caved in before this bullying of superior force, the "Daily Herald," under the editorship of Mr. George Lansbury—O apostle of love and righteousness, where wert thou napping?—hailed the dictated ultimatum as the great gift of freedom for Ireland, and, with hypocritical transports, proclaimed the cause of Ireland won.

When the Republicans began to rebel against the bogus Free State which had been forced on them from Downing Street, the same gentle "Daily Herald" called for "strong government" in Ireland. Now that the strong Government has done its work, waging warfare, but refusing the status of war prisoners to the Republicans, exterminating them when caught under arms, as though they were poisonous vermin; now the "Daily Herald," under the editorship of Mr. Hamilton Fyfe, the admirer of Mussolini, cries "mercy."

It is a little late in the day, but the "Daily Herald" promises that just as the sinner who declares a death-bed repentance is assured of a place in the kingdom of heaven, so shall the members of the Free State Government be washed white of all their sins and hailed as "really fine and generous" men. Let us quote the "Herald's" own words: we would not strain a point against the Labour Party organ; let it be judged out of its own mouth. Here is its editorial of April 16th. Note the title: "A Time for Mercy." Evidently our highly religious no-force-except-that-of-the-Government contemporary is of opinion that there are times for extending mercy, and also times for withholding it:

#### "A TIME FOR MERCY."

"Now that the De Valera rebellion has collapsed so dramatically, now that it has lost all of the real brains behind it (Erskine Childers and Liam Lynch have been killed,

Austin Stack is a prisoner), now that there seems a hope of real peace in Ireland, this seems to us to be the moment at which really fine generous action by the Free State Government might make that peace lasting and secure.

"With the danger that has threatened removed, that Government can well afford to show mercy. It can find ample reason for abandoning its policy of pitiless justice. That policy, it may claim, has succeeded. In Austin Stack's possession was a draft proclamation ordering abandonment of hostilities and the surrender of the insurgent force.

"Now, therefore, is the time for a complete reversal of plan. Surely it would have a magnificent effect if the Government said to the rebels:

"You have given us a great deal of trouble, but we have got you down. Now that you are down, we hold out our hands to help you up. We shall forget that you were rebels; we shall only remember that you are Irishmen, our fellow-countrymen, our brothers. We ask you to join us as brothers in making the best job possible of the freedom to govern ourselves, which together we secured. Let us put the past behind us, and, with comradeship in our hearts, work together again for the country we all love.

"Let the Free State Government say that, and we promise them the result will be a happy one both for Ireland and the world."

Our readers should observe that the forcing of the Downing Street constitution upon the Irish people, and the extermination of those who resisted that constitution, is described by the "Daily Herald" as "justice." Observe, too, that the "Daily Herald" recommends mercy to the Free State, on the ground that it is now quite safe to exercise it. It was not on this ground that the "Herald" many times asked the Soviet Government to show mercy to the counter-revolutionaries.

Mr. Lansbury on April 14th offered a prayer in the "Daily Herald" that we may be freed from murder. Refusing to see the Irish situation as it really is, Mr. Lansbury wrote:

"I do not feel good enough to try and apportion blame, or to judge others; all I contend for is recognition of the fact that not only has the British Government slaughtered Irishmen, but Irishmen in the name of liberty have slaughtered each other. In my view freedom and liberty cannot be established in that way."

What is needed is not to "feel good," but merely to recognise the truth, that the Free State constitution was only agreed to in fear of the British Army and Air Force, and that it was only when the threat of a British invasion came from Downing Street that the Free State Government took arms against the Republicans in the Four Courts. If the British Government had permitted the Irish to take a free vote on the Republican question there would have been no Irish Civil War.



Mr. Lansbury continues:

"Surely we who are Socialists must appeal to our comrades and friends in Ireland to be better men than those they have displaced. It is said the revolution is fast ebbing to its close. I hope and pray that President Cosgrave and his Government will show themselves great men in the hour of victory and give a better, much better, measure of mercy and peace to their beaten enemies than has been given Irishmen in the past by Britain."

Mr. Lansbury concludes:

"If the Free State cannot live with De Valera in its midst, let him be sent away and kept away."

Is that your idea of justice, Mr. Lansbury?

If Ireland cannot be kept as a Free State within the Empire whilst De Valera is in Ireland, then let De Valera be sent away from Ireland. The Irishman must be banished that the Englishman may retain his hold in Ireland. That is what it comes to in plain fact, whatever you may wish it to mean, Mr. Lansbury.

But a comrade asks us: "Why do you support the Republicans? What reason have you to expect anything for the workers' cause from the Republicans?"

We will deal with the first part of the question first.

Belief in Communism does not rob us of the sense of abstract justice: having that sense, we must uphold the Irish against the British domination when the Irish do not like to remain subject to the British Empire. We must uphold the Irish who object to a Free State constitution dictated from Downing Street, submitted to by those who have submitted only by fear of invasion, and foisted upon the people to the accompaniment of considerable trickery.

Moreover, we recognise that a Republic is a step in advance of a Monarchy in social evolution. When the Irish prefer a Republic of their own to a share in the British Monarchy, we welcome that effort to advance in social evolution.

Had the political ideology of the Irish Republicans been much more retrograde than it is, they might have endeavoured to create a kinglet from some old Irish family, or they might have asked a member of some European ruling family to become King of Ireland. Perhaps some British Conservatives would have had more respect for the Irish rebels had they been fighting for a king.

Further, we regard the British Empire as one of the great bulwarks of the Capitalist system. Its downfall would make the advance of Communism easier. We should gladly see it broken up. For this reason, as well as from a sense of abstract justice, we support any subject-peoples within the Empire that desire to break away. If Britain were reduced to dependence upon its own resources, instead of being able to draw wealth from the Crown Colonies and Dependencies, Capitalism in this country would have to face a life-and-death struggle. Those who endeavour to retain Ireland in the Empire are largely actuated by the fear that if independent of British naval control, Ireland might be used as the base of hostile operations by some country at war with Britain. Let it be so: should this country again go to war, let it be beaten. Then assuredly we should see the revolution and the end of Capitalism.

We can never make common cause with the Irish Republicans, however, for they are merely nationalists. We can only make common cause with those who are struggling for a Communist Republic, and it is a sad fact that the Red Flag in Ireland has been largely smothered by the Green.

The Irish Republicans have no programme beyond their nationalism. The Free Statists are definitely out for Capitalist enterprise to make the country what is called prosperous on the old accepted Capitalist lines. The Republican movement combines people of all sorts of views: believers in small private en-

terprise, co-operative production, co-operative trading and manufacture on C.W.S. lines, co-partnership of employers and employed. Some Republicans are believers in State Capitalism, some even are Communists.

Had Republicanism triumphed in Ireland, many rival policies would immediately have been striving for acceptance. The nationalist struggle once ended by the creation of a Republic, the question of social structure would then have come to the front in Ireland as never before. Till Ireland is out of the Empire, the nationalist struggle will continue, even though at times only smouldering; and attention will be diverted into that by-path, instead of being directed along the main road of social evolution. That is another reason for disliking the Free State compromise which maintains the nationalist question still unsolved.

Whilst the Free State lasts, the British Army is always at the disposal of the Irish Government; and since all Capitalist government rests on force, the Irish workers will find a stronger barrier to their advancement than if they were only faced by a small independent national Government.

### SOCIAL AND DANCE

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There was a great opportunity to set up the Irish Soviets during the struggle that has been going on in Ireland. In the struggle of rival political systems the economic pressure upon the workers has been acute, whilst stable government has been largely overthrown in the contest. The workers have realised this instinctively. Hence their boldness, their holding up of trains to prevent the transport of tainted goods, and even their seizure and working for long periods of farms, creameries, fisheries, and so on. The opportunity was presented to the workers by the material conditions; they availed themselves of the opportunity; but spasmodically and without coherent purpose.

The Irish Labour Party and Trade Unions are following along the traditional lines of the same organisations in England. They seek Parliamentary reforms and palliative industrial action. They were not minded to use the opportunity of the Civil War to make an attack on the citadel of Capitalism.

The Communist Movement of Ireland recent, weak, and without vigour, has hardly affected the situation.

Of one thing, however, we may be confident: slothful peace, the peace of apathy and stagnation, will not settle permanently upon Ireland. Whilst the irritant of the imperial yoke remains, the fire of revolt will not wholly die. The opportunity to hoist the Red Flag of the Soviets whilst the Green and the Red, White and Blue are contending, will never be far removed from Ireland.

The great need in Ireland, as in Britain, to-day, is to make converts to Communism.

### MUSSOLINI OR MILL?

"Men nowadays are tired of liberty; for the intrepid, restless youths who are now in the dawn of a new history, other words exercise a greater fascination, namely: order, hierarchy, and discipline."—Benito Mussolini.

"The form of association which . . . must be expected in the end to predominate, is not that which can exist between a capitalist as chief, and workpeople without a voice in the management, but the association of the labourers themselves on terms of equality, collectively owning the capital with which they carry on their operations, and working under managers elected and removable by themselves."—John Stuart Mill, Principles of Political Economy.

### THE TITHE TAX.

"The tithe is the first charge upon the land."

The words were those of the rector of the parish. The parishioners sat and waited, as villagers will, for what would come next.

It came, plainly enough:

"And I shall continue to take the tithe on the charity land as a duty to my successor."

We all sat still, without moving.

Some of us felt our hearts burn within us. It is almost unbearable to sit still and listen to some things.

The reverend gentleman charged his tithe on the charity land, and it was paid. He also charged his tithe on some other land: to wit, a cottage garden, which was not paid; the owner thereof refusing to pay, without even saying why.

And was never asked.

An old acquaintance of hers, farming sixteen acres, overrun with the squire's rabbits, hares, partridges, and pheasants—not to mention the docks and thistles that nearly choked what was left after the game had had all they wanted—had to find five pounds for the parson every year.

Not that the finder of the five pounds ever had anything in return. He never went to church until he was carried there; and the tithe tax, heavy as it is, does not pay for the prayers for the dead. Those are extra.

My old acquaintance was over eighty. I know a man who helped him thresh. He said he didn't like taking his day's pay from the old man. He was afraid the yield would hardly pay for the threshing.

You see how it was: the pheasants pulling the corn out of the ground, the rabbits and hares nipping off the tender shoots as they came up, the old man of eighty too feeble to work his land himself, too poor to employ some of the score of village youths spoiling for want of a job.

But "the tithe tax is the first charge upon the land," and whatever else was neglected, the parson's five pounds were paid.

A well-known Norfolk landlord, speaking at a public meeting last election time, referred to the heavy burden of taxation borne by the land. The tithe tax alone on one of his farms was over £100—the farm being of about 200 acres. Evidently, one supposes, the tithe was one of the ten shillings per acre tithe charges that obtain in some parts of Norfolk.

£100 on a 200-acre farm! The men working on this farm claim that their labour should be the "first charge on the land." Instead of their being "locked out" because they cannot see their wives and children brought down from one abyss to another, while the squire's gamekeeper and head gamekeepers can bag pheasants by the thousand, and can poison the dogs and cats of poor people till, as a schoolboy said: "We are fed up with mice and rats."

It is a case for another "Piper," truly! Certainly he should pipe the parson's tithe, the landlord's game, and the docks and thistles away to the Weser!

This reminds me that the game and the docks and the thistles disappeared when the German prisoners worked here.

Perhaps one day the tithe may disappear too, with the big men on top, who sit so heavily with their bloated capital on the worker down below.

To come back to the 200-acre farm, with its £100 tithe. If the Church were disestablished, the £100 tithe could then be added to the wages bill, and would mean a 20 per cent. increase; the labourers think that too good to be possible, so downtrodden are the sons of the soil, so safe the profits and privileges of the tithe-takers, the "first charge upon the land."

A. K. H.

ESSEX HALL.

Thursday, April 26th,  
7.15 p.m.

Debate on Third and Fourth Internationals.  
Sylvia Pankhurst and Henry Sara.



## THE SEVEN THAT WERE HANGED.

(By Leonid Andreyev, a famous Russian Author.)

### IX.

#### THE HORRIBLE SOLITUDE.

Under the same roof, and to the same melodious chant of the indifferent hours, separated from Sergey and from Musya by a few empty cells, but as isolated as if he alone had existed in the whole universe, the unhappy Vasily Kashirin was finishing his life in anguish and terror.

Covered with sweat, his shirt adhering to his body, his formerly curly hair now falling in straight locks, he went back and forth in his cell with the jerkey and lamentable gait of one suffering atrociously with the toothache. He sat down for a moment, and then began to run again; then he rested his forehead against the wall, stopped, and looked about as if in search of a remedy. He had so changed that one might think that he possessed two different faces, one of which, the younger, had gone nobody knows where, to give place to the second, a terrible face, that seemed to have come from darkness.

Fear had shown itself suddenly to him, and had seized upon his person as an exclusive and sovereign mistress. On the fatal morning, when he was marching to certain death, he had played with it; but that evening, confined in his cell, he had been carried away and lashed by a wave of mad terror. As long as he had gone freely forward to meet danger and death, as long as he had held his fate in his own hands, however terrible it might be, he had appeared tranquil and even joyous, the small amount of shameful and decrepit fear that he had felt having disappeared in a consciousness of infinite liberty, in the firm and audacious affirmation of his intrepid will, leaving no trace behind. With an infernal machine strapped around his waist, he had transformed himself into an instrument of death, he had borrowed from the dynamite its cruel reason and its flashing and homicidal power. In the street, among the busy people preoccupied with their affairs and quickly dodging the tramcars and the cabs, it seemed to him as if he came from another and an unknown world, where there was no such thing as death or fear.

Suddenly a brutal, bewildering change had taken place. Vasily no longer went where he wanted to go, but was led where others wanted him to go. He no longer chose his place; they placed him in a stone cage and locked him in, as if he were a thing. He could no longer choose between life and death; they led him to death, certainly and inevitably. He who had been for a moment the incarnation of will, of life, and of force, had become a lamentable specimen of impotence; he was nothing but an animal destined for the slaughter. Whatever he might say, they would not listen; if he started to cry out, they would stuff a rag in his mouth; and if he even tried to walk, they would take him away and hang him. If he resisted, if he struggled, if he lay down on the ground, they would be stronger than he; they would pick him up, they would tie him. And his imagination gave to the men charged with this execution, men like himself, the new, extraordinary, and terrifying aspect of unthinking automata, whom nothing in the world could stop, and who seized a man, overpowered him, hanged him, pulled him by the feet, cut the rope, put the body in a coffin, carried it away, and buried it.

From the first day of his imprisonment, people and life had transformed themselves for him into an unspeakably frightful world filled with mechanical dolls. Almost mad with fear, he tried to fancy to himself that these people had tongues and spoke, but he did not succeed. Their mouths opened, something like a sound came from them; then they separated with movements of their legs, and all was over. He was in the situation of a man who, left alone in a house at

night, should see all things become animate, move, and assume over him an unlimited power; suddenly the wardrobe, the chair, the sofa, the writing table would sit in judgment upon him. He would cry out, call for help, beg, and rove from room to room; and the things would speak to each other in their own tongue; and then the wardrobe, the chair, the sofa, and the writing-table would start to hang him, the other things looking on.

In the eyes of Vasily Kashirin, sentenced to be hanged everything took on a puerile aspect; the cell, the grated door, the striking apparatus of the clock, the fortress with its carefully modelled ceilings, and, above, the mechanical doll equipped with a musket, who walked up and down in the corridor, and the other dolls who frightened him by looking through the grating and handing him his food without a word.

A man had disappeared from the world.

In court the presence of the comrades had brought Kashirin back to himself. Again for a moment he saw people; they were there, judging him, speaking the language of men, listening, and seeming to understand. But when he saw his mother, he felt clearly, with the terror of a man who is going mad and he knows it, that this old woman in a black neckerchief was a simple mechanical doll. He was astonished at not having suspected it before, and at having awaited the visit as something infinitely sorrowful in its distressing gentleness. While forcing himself to speak, he thought with a shudder:

"My God! But it is a doll! A doll-mother! And yonder is a doll-soldier; at home there is a doll-father, and this is the doll Vasily Kashirin."

When the mother began to weep, Vasily again saw something human in her, but this disappeared with the first words that she uttered. With curiosity and terror he watched the tears flow from the doll's eyes.

When his fear became intolerable, Vasily Kashirin tried to pray. There remained with him only a bitter, detestable, and enervating rancor against all the religious principles upon which his youth had been nourished, in the house of his father, a large merchant. He had no faith. But one day, in his childhood, he had heard some words that had made an impression upon him and that remained surrounded forever with a gentle poesy. These words were:

"Joy of all the afflicted!"

Sometimes, in painful moments, he whispered, without praying, without even accounting to himself for what he was doing: "Joy of all the afflicted!" And then he suddenly felt relieved; he had a desire to approach someone who was dear to him and complain gently:

"Our life! . . . but is it really a life? Say, my dear, is it really a life?"

And then suddenly he felt himself ridiculous; he would have liked to bare his breast and ask someone to beat it.

He had spoken to no one, not even to his best comrades, of his "Joy of all the afflicted!" He seemed to know nothing of it himself, so deeply hidden was it in his soul. And he evoked it rarely, with precaution.

Now that the fear of the unfathomable mystery was rising before him completely covered him, as the water covers the plants on the bank when the tide is rising, he had a desire to pray. He wanted to fall upon his knees, but was seized with shame before the sentinel; so, with hands clasped upon his breast, he murmured in a low voice:

"Joy of all the afflicted!"

And he repeated with anxiety, in a tone of supplication:

"Joy of all the afflicted, descend into me, sustain me!"

Something moved softly. It seemed to him that a sorrowful and gentle force hovered in the distance and then vanished, without illuminating the shades of the agony. In the steeple the hour struck. The soldier yawned long and repeatedly.

"Joy of all the afflicted! You are silent! And you will say nothing to Vasily Kashirin!"

He wore an imploring smile, and waited. But in his soul there was the same void as around him. Useless and tormenting thoughts came to him; again he saw the lighted candles, the priest in his robe, the holy image painted on the wall, his father bending and straightening up again, praying and kneeling, casting furtive glances at Vasily to see if he, too, was praying, or was simply amusing himself. And Kashirin was in still deeper anguish than before.

Everything disappeared.

His consciousness went out like the dying embers that one scatters on the hearth; it froze, like the body of a man just dead, in which the heart is still warm while the hands and feet are already cold.

Vasily had a moment of wild terror when they came into his cell to get him. He did not even suspect that the hour of the execution had arrived; he simply saw the people and took fright, almost like a child.

"I will not do it again! I will not do it again!" he whispered, without being heard; and his lips became icy as he recoiled slowly toward the rear of his cell, just as in childhood he had tried to escape the punishments of his father.

"You will have to go. . . ."

They talked, they walked around him, they gave him he knew not what. He closed his eyes, staggered, and began to prepare himself painfully. Undoubtedly he had recovered consciousness; he suddenly asked a cigarette of one of the officials, who amiably extended his cigarette-case.

(To be continued.)

#### THE CASE OF TIKON.

The Government and its Moscow representative have made themselves ridiculous by protesting against the Soviet reply that their championship of the Russian priests is insincere. The British Government cannot deny the Soviet charge that its own record puts it out of court in this matter.

The execution of the Patriarch Tikon appears certain. The Soviet Government has evidently made its arrangements to that end. We regret it. Killing is a drastic and a barbarous thing. We do not think the execution necessary to the maintenance of the Soviet Government. We think it is not good policy; it will be apt to arouse religious fanaticism and to nourish pity and championship for those who are the upholders of outworn superstitions and unjust privileges. There is nothing heroic in Tikon and his actions. Only his execution can weave any glamour about him.

The Soviet Government has now become a Capitalist Government; like other such, it maintains its position by force. It is poised between the haves and the have-nots. Like all private-property Governments, its principal duty is to protect property from the propertyless in the interests of the property owners. Its force is perpetually reared up against the have nots, who are constantly held in check by it. It is an institution imposed upon the people by force, because it has force at its disposal, and the majority do not rebel. That is the position of all Governments to-day. Those who were once of the ruling clique in Russia, and now find their position weakened, intrigue against the Soviet Government, and when they threaten its security it uses its force against them also.

When, in the hour of revolutionary turmoil, the Soviet Government shot obscure men for looting, no international protests were raised.

All Governments based on private property in a class society exist by force: they use just as much force as they consider necessary to their safety and prestige.

When the Soviet Government acts like other Governments, there should be no complaint from those who have striven to prevent Soviet Russia moving onward out of class society into Communism, in which there will be no Government based on force, because there will be no private-property and privileged-class system to maintain.



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**Our View.**

**THE SETTLEMENT** of the building trade dispute (if settlement it turns out to be), by bringing in the Lord Chief Justice to appoint an arbitrator, is a method that is quite the reverse of satisfactory in our opinion. The agreement was arrived at through the intervention of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and was evidently resorted to by him when the Labour Party attempt to secure the intervention of the Government, either through the Law Officers of the Crown or otherwise, had proved unsuccessful. Labourists of the school of Messrs. Webb and MacDonald apparently regard all Government interference in trade disputes as a step towards the Government control of industry, and the bureaucratic State Capitalism which they call Socialism, and at which they are aiming. Our aim is not theirs; but even were it so, we should regard the interference of the officers of a Capitalist Government as something to be resisted wherever possible. The workers will not obtain better terms through the medium of Government intervention than they could win by their own efforts. Appeals by the Labour Party for Government intervention in trades disputes play into the hands of those who would make striking illegal. The Government is only too ready to intervene when the employers are faced with a really critical industrial situation, and its intervention is always prejudicial to any substantial victory of the workers. To popularise the view that it is a good thing for the Government to intervene and for the workers to abide by Government arbitration is the very worst tactics. It was thus that the Italian metal workers were sold.

**THE "REUTER" REPORT** that M. Stambulinsky, the Bulgarian Premier, is passing a Bill to force Communists to practice Communism, is a very curious one. The proposal, according to "Reuter," is that in any village where there are more than ten Communists, the land and property of the Communists is to be confiscated by the Government and formed into a commune, in which the village Communists will be forced to live and obliged to do an equal share of work in their community. Such compulsory Communism by small groups amid a surrounding Capitalism must in any event be accompanied by many drawbacks which would not obtain under a general and free Communism. Moreover, we fear that, as the regimen will be enforced by those who are not Communists, there will be little genuine Communism about the compulsory communes, and that they will be really penal colonies. We anxiously await further particulars.

**THE BUDGET** is what might be expected from a Tory Government: 6d off the income tax, corporations profit tax reduced from 1/- to 6d., a penny a pint off beer, because, as the secretary of the National Union of Manufacturers said: "We shall never get a contented England until the price

of beer and tobacco is reduced." Taxation on cider and sweetened mineral waters is reduced, so that either those who make profit out of them, nor the Temperance Party, shall say that intoxicants are more greatly favoured. The taxation of food is not reduced: indeed, we are likely soon to see an increased import duty on food coming from outside the Empire, and the farmers are working hard either to secure bounties or taxes on all food grown outside the country.

It is important to observe that the total estimated expenditure of the Government for 1923-4 is to be £816,146,000, and that of this great total no less than £350,000,000 is to be spent on National Debt services. On March 31st last the National Debt stood at £7,773,506,000; of this vast sum, only £1,155,652,000 was external debt. The usurers at home have here a tremendous means of draining the substance of the people of the country.

**LIEUT.-COLONEL GUEST'S** admission that recruiting would be at a standstill were the boys under 21 debarred from recruiting, is not encouraging to the jingo patriot. It reveals the fact that this Capitalist Empire is only maintained by the poverty and inexperience of young lads who enlist when they are out of work, and the majority of whom would not be driven to enlistment even by unemployment, had they reached maturity, with its deterrent foresight and knowledge.

**If you are a churchgoer, read: "The Tithe Tax," on page 2.**

A recent editorial in the "Aeroplane" shows the sort of thing for which the unfortunate recruits are required:

"We cannot afford to let him [the Arab] go on kicking up a fuss, because we must have peace in Arabia if we are to build and operate our oil-pipe line from Basra to Jaffa. . . . The Air Force and the Navy will have to depend very largely and possibly altogether on Persian oil in the coming Race War, and that oil supply must be assured with absolute certainty. Consequently, we cannot allow Kurdish and Arab tribes in the Mosul district to harbour Turkish and Bolshevik agitators who are endeavouring to stir up these tribes to interfere with our territory. . . . Unfortunately we are to-day more than ever a nation of shopkeepers, and therefore oil is probably of greater importance than honour."

Very significant was the rejection by the Government and the House of Commons of an amendment to the Army and Air Force Bill permitting recruits to obtain exemption on enlistment from service against their home population in case of trade disputes or other social disturbance. A soldier is permitted no conscientious objection to fighting his brother.

**THE POWER OF THE LAW** is being invoked against the Norfolk farm strikers who are endeavouring to prevent the use of strike breakers. Labourers are being arrested and fined for "intimidating" and for "hindering" the blacklegs, and the great Labour Party and Trade Union movement remains acquiescent, as though nothing of importance were going forward.

**THE N.U.R. REFUSED** to discuss with the employers any question of reducing wages. Mr. J. H. Thomas, however, has rebuked his colleagues, telling them that to refuse negotiation is to negate the principle of collective bargaining. To bargain with nothing to offer is, of course, impossible: Mr. Thomas well knows that to begin bargaining about a reduction of wages with his "close friends," the railway directors, is to give at least something away. Anticipate, therefore, a fall in railway wages.

**THE GOVERNMENT HOUSING BILL** proposes to grant £6 per annum per house for twenty years in respect of houses built by local authorities, provided these are two-storied houses with a minimum of 620 and a maximum of 850 superficial feet, or one-storied houses with a minimum of 550 and a maximum of 780 superficial feet.

These houses are too small: the Bill puts a premium on the building of poky little dwellings not fit to live in.

The Bill also offers Government grants of one-half the loss incurred by local authorities in re-housing and slum-clearing schemes approved by the Ministry of Health.

The Bill also empowers local authorities, with the approval of the Ministry, to assist private persons or building societies to build little dwellings as specified above; by making lump-sum grants; by remitting or repaying rates for a period; or by paying interest on loans from building societies, or repaying the loans.

The condition is made clear that during five years from the payment of the grant the house shall not be used except as a separate dwelling house, and there shall be no addition or enlargement thereto. A man who is helped to build his house will not be permitted to extend it as his family grows!

Power is also given to the Ministry to make to private companies or to building societies the same grants as it would make to a local authority.

All this is very odd. Mr. Brown proposes to build a little house. The local authority can use the rates contributed by all the people who cannot afford to propose building houses for themselves, to assist Mr. Brown in his enterprise.

Brown and Co. may do the same thing. They may build thousands of houses, and the Government will assist them out of Mr. Baldwin's budget, to which, directly or indirectly, we all must pay our share. When Brown and Co. have built the houses with our assistance, they can charge what rent they please, for the Bill contains no rent-limitation clause.

It does not satisfy you, fellow-worker. Of course not; but then, why do you leave the management of your affairs in the hands of the employing class?

**SEND 6/6.**

For 6/6 a year, 3/3 a half-year, or 1/7½ a quarter, the "Dreadnought" will be posted to you weekly.

Is the "Dreadnought" on sale at all the meetings you attend? If not, take a quire or two with you.

Send us news of your district.

**COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT.****INDOOR MEETINGS.**

**Sunday, April 22nd.**—Minerva Cafe, 144 High Holborn, 4 p.m., N. Smyth will open a discussion on "Communism."

**Thursday, April 26th.**—Essex Small Hall, 7.15 p.m., Debate on the Third and Fourth Internationals. Sylvia Pankhurst and Henry Sara. Admission 6d.

**Sunday, April 29th.**—South London Socialist Club, 131 Newington Causeway, S.E. 7.30 p.m., Sylvia Pankhurst.

**OUTDOOR MEETINGS.**

**Sunday, April 22nd.**—Prince of Wales, Harrow Road, 7 p.m., A. Jarvis, J. Welsh, Beresford Square, Woolwich, 7 p.m., J. Bellamy, L. Goldstein.

**Sunday, April 22nd.**—Peckham Rye, 3.30 p.m., Sylvia Pankhurst and others.

**DANCES.**

Circle Gaulois, 12 Archer Street, Shaftesbury Avenue (at the back of the Lyric Theatre). Select West End Jazz Band. Single tickets, 1/6; double, 2/6. Refreshments at popular prices.

**Saturday, April 21st.**—7.30-11 p.m.

**Saturday, April 28th.**—7.30-11 p.m.



## TO THE DISCONTENTED WORKER.

You complain of the Trade Union officials, and you cheer to the echo advice to "watch your leaders."

You join the "Red International of Labour Unions" and pass resolutions to "make the leaders fight!"

You endeavour to secure official positions in the Unions for members of the "R.I.L.U." who used to denounce the present leaders. Meanwhile you are growing careful to avoid such denunciation in future, because you want to get your party affiliated to the Labour Party.

In your peaceful permeation of the Unions; in your attempt to push members of your Party into the official positions, you are following in the footsteps of the early Socialists who put Red Flaggers into office, and saw them gradually transformed into the Social Patriots you denounce to-day. Even some of you have had that experience; you, too, have been disappointed in your chosen candidates when they happened to get into office.

From time to time you make unofficial reform committees, or workers' solidarity leagues, and draw up programmes you hope may be adopted by the Union conferences to cut down official salaries and secure more control over the officials, and perhaps to do the same with Labour Parliamentary and local Government representatives.

You complain of the Trade Union structure. You say you want one Union for each industry, or one Union for all industries. Some of you advocated a "general staff for Labour." You jubilated when the Trade Union Congress Parliamentary Committee became the General Council. You demanded that it should have more power to dictate the policy of the Unions. The reactionaries on the General Council, by their reactionary tactics in some big strike, will presently cause you to regret the existence of the general staff.

Some of you demand one card for all Unions.

Comrades, you are like the Reformists who will accept any expedient which will keep the Capitalist system going and stave off the coming of Socialism.

You say you want an organisation that will cover each industry and all industries. Why then do you not work for that? Why do you work for any and every thing save that?

You complain of the Trade Union officials. Apparently some of you believe that the Trade Union movement has appointed as its officials only exceptionally bad and faithless men and women? Evidently that is what you think, since your only solution is to replace the present officials by others.

Some of you think that by reducing the salaries of men like Messrs. J. H. Thomas, J. R. Clynes, and Frank Hodges, and by passing a few resolutions to guide them, you will make them better servants to the rank and file, and more able to resist the insidious blandishments of the employing class.

You should probe more deeply into the matter, comrades. You are taking too superficial a view of it, or you would not dream that you can uproot the evils you complain of so easily as that.

You are dissatisfied with the Union officials—with all Union officials. Is it not time you ceased to blame particular individuals, and decided to abolish the institution itself?

A workshop council organisation requires no paid officials. A workshop council organisation governs itself: it is not ruled by officials in an office far away.

A workshop council organisation can extend throughout the industry and to all industries.

Some of you hesitate to set to work to form such an organisation, because you want to do something you think may be easier. All your fellow-workers are discontented with the Union officials, but they are discontented for a variety of reasons, some of them merely turgid and personal; some even reactionary. Your fellow-workers are not all converted to the idea of an All-Workers' Inter-Industrial Organisation of Job Councils.

To save the trouble of converting your fellows, some of you think the easiest thing to do would be to get all the discontented ones together into an organisation simply to criticise the Unions and their officials.

If you create an organisation of people who are discontented for all sorts of opposite reasons; an organisation of people who do not agree on a common aim, you will achieve nothing. Either the organisation will adopt a non-committal attitude and remain inactive, or the membership will drift away or become but a name. The few who are active and have a concrete policy will then be left to carry on. In effect, they will be the organisation. If the active few with a policy modify and distort that policy, in order to bring into their organisation persons who do not agree with that policy, they are simply stultifying their own usefulness, and playing the part of deserters towards their ideals.

Some of you propose to follow the already tried plan of acting as a ginger group inside the Trade Unions. That was very energetically tried in South Wales by the unofficial Reform Committee. One of its main methods is that of regular attendance at branch meetings, to vote resolutions, of which the majority of the members, too apathetic to attend meetings, knows little and cares less, till it finds itself committed to action towards which it is sometimes hostile. Events have shown that the South Wales unofficial reform movement could not control the Miners' Federation: it could only influence those members of the Federation whom it had converted to its views.

If, instead of working through the branches of the M.F.G.B., it had formed a network of groups in various pits, each group composed of workers prepared to act in conformity with the policy of the movement, the unofficial reform movement would have known precisely what its strength was, where it lay, and what it could do. Moreover, it would still exist, instead of having disappeared.

It is time that the awakened rank and file, who claim that the root of the matter is in them, should take courage to form their own organisation of action, instead of merely a grumbling organisation to criticise the Trade Unions.

Every group of workers who form a job council should do so with the determination to equip themselves to be able to manage that workshop capably, consciously, independently. Some day they will aim at improving it, transforming it, superseding it. The group should not aim at being a mere tool, to be ordered about by a directing intelligence from above, nor should it give all direction and responsibility to one of its number, its members either remaining apathetic or following a plan conceived by others. The group should be a group of co-operators, co-operating with other groups for common ends, and aiding those other groups to come to common decisions where joint action is necessary, each group being responsible for its own particular activities. Only thus can a fertile initiative be obtained.

The organisation of the Trade Unions is not of this character: it is on the Parliamentary model. The members of the Trade Unions resign all their authority, all their rights and liberties, as far as the Union is concerned, to the Union officials. This is an essential feature of Trade Unionism: it still remains even where, as in the railway and mining industries in this country, the Union approaches the stage of taking in all the workers in the industry.

The Parliamentary form of the Trade Unions, which removes the work of the Unions from the members to the officials, inevitably creates an apathetic and unenlightened membership which, for good or ill, is a mere prey to the manipulation of the officials. This tendency is intensified by the fact that the Unions not only aim at protecting the workers' interests, as opposed to those of the employer, but are also friendly benefit societies.

Workers who are indifferent to the ideal of solidarity join the Unions for the friendly benefits, and because the Unions are strong enough now to make membership of their organisation largely compulsory. The Union gives to the indifferent members little training in solidarity, less in the management of the Union, none in the management of the industry itself. The unawakened worker, in the main, remains unawakened by membership of the Union.

The apathy of the membership produces the official's lack of faith in the capacity of the membership, and, even apart from other causes, is a source of the cynical contempt for the rank and file which so many officials display.

When the revolution came to them, the Russian industrial workers were poorly organised; yet it was their workshop councils of mushroom growth which seized the workshops and carried on the industries; without them there could have been no revolution. They were little prepared for the work of administering production, still less prepared to administer distribution. The private salesman, profiteering out of the scarcity and turmoil, remained. The unpreparedness of the workers' councils for their task sapped the vitality of the revolution, and caused the people to suffer a multitude of unnecessary ills in addition to the hardships which were inevitable.

Gradually the officials of the Trade Unions, built on the Parliamentary plan, superseded the workshop councils. The State also came in with its experts, who were often the employers which the workshop councils had banished, in the time of crisis.

Later the workers' councils were ousted, ostensibly to increase production by means, first of management by superior committees from outside, then by single experts appointed from above. Production, however, failed to increase.

Then followed the new economic policy, the return to Capitalism, the decay of the revolution, the flight of freedom, the denial of Communism.

The workers can only free themselves from oppression when they learn independence of their oppressors.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

## EDWARD CARPENTER.

Mr. Edward Carpenter was at the Mortimer Hall last Wednesday, bringing with him the atmosphere of hills and forests, streams and meadows. Obviously desirous of hastening back to nature, he is ill at ease on the platform. He condemned the artificialities of present-day civilisation. The sole business of millions upon millions of people throughout Europe was to keep accounts against each other. Theirs was the most petty and idiotic life that could possibly be imagined. Under the surface was a much more important life that was gradually coming to the surface—a far greater life, moving us to important ends and aims. It might be said that if one were to follow his ideal of life, one would be on the losing plane in material things. It might be so, but one would gain in soul.

Mr. Carpenter read from his book, "Towards Democracy." "Have Faith," "Among the Ferns," "After Civilisation," "Artemidoras, Farewell," "The Curse of Property," and "Little Brook Without a Name."

The Colenso Trio played Beethoven music which inspired Edward Carpenter in writing the poems he read.

Was it not an injustice to coin the phrase "100 per cent. American" when so many of them have to be satisfied with a net profit of 50 to 75 per cent. per annum?

Why did the Soviet Government recently make an agreement with the Vatican welcoming back the Jesuits who had been expelled from Russia several generations before?



## ESPERANTO.

In the previous fourteen lessons we have covered practically all the essential grammar of Esperanto. The object we have had in view has been two-fold: (1) To teach Esperanto; (2) to explain in the simplest possible fashion the essentials of grammar. The latter task has up to now occupied most of our space. We hope in future to devote more space to the former. It is hoped that, through the preceding lessons, the learner has acquired some knowledge of the essentials of grammar which will be of value, not merely to apply to the mastery of Esperanto or any foreign national language, but also to the study of English itself. Indeed, Esperanto is, in the opinion of many competent judges, the best medium of acquiring the groundwork of grammar. In the Report on Esperanto prepared by the Secretariat of the League of Nations and accepted at the last meeting of the Assembly (September 1922), there appear two reports by Board of Education inspectors on the teaching of Esperanto in various elementary schools in this country. From one of these reports we quote the following:

"The teachers say that these children speak better, write better composition, and are better able to follow the intricacies of English grammar. With this statement the inspectors who have visited the three schools are in substantial agreement. . . .

"Finally, this language is grammar incarnate. It has few rules, and these rules have no exceptions. Every noun ends in *o*, every adjective in *a*, and each tense of the verb has its own termination. The parsing of such a sentence is akin to the 'colour parsing' which appeals so strongly to young children, and its study might well help to direct the explorer through the shoals and quicksands of English grammar."

The proletarian student of Esperanto will find that in studying Esperanto, "the Latin of Democracy," as it has been called, he is not merely acquiring a medium by which he will be able to communicate with some thousands of his fellow-workers all over the world, but is at the same time getting an insight into the mechanism of language in general. His chief task will be to bear the practical end in view, namely, that in Esperanto he has a medium of international communication. The other benefit will come without being specially sought after.

The writer of these lessons holds the view that the proper way to learn a language is to learn it in use, by conversation and reading, taking advantage of any available useful helps, such as pictures. Grammar should be studied at a later stage, after some fluency has been acquired in the use of the language. He has not, owing to the conditions imposed upon him, been able to apply the method in the present lessons; but the student is asked to bear in mind the necessity of seeking opportunities of hearing the language used, and of beginning to use it himself. Reading aloud, where possible, is excellent for the solitary learner; he should, however, see that his vowels have the Continental (Italian) sound, not the English.

Leakey's "Introduction to Esperanto" presents the language in brief compass. A more advanced text-book is "The Esperanto Teacher," by Helen Fryer (1/2, post free). M. C. Butler's "First Steps to Esperanto" (10d., post free) is excellent as a first book. For reading practice, "Tri Angloj Alilande" (1/2, post free), or "Unua Kursa Legolibro" (anecdotes) (price 10d., post free). The "Edinburgh Esperanto Dictionary" (price 1/8, post free) will be found useful.

Students seeking advice should write to "Esperanto Student," c/o "Workers' Dreadnought," enclosing a stamped addressed cover.

Lesson 15 will appear next week.

## LESSONS FOR PROLETARIAN SCHOOLS.

### EARLY

#### CIVILISATION IN MESOPOTAMIA.

The territory which was called Mesopotamia during the war, and which the British Government now officially designates, Irak, lies between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates in Asia. The southern part of this territory was called the Plain of Shinar during the earliest part of its known history, and later on was known as Babylonia. The Plain of Shinar is rarely more than 40 miles wide, and contains less than 8,000 square miles of cultivable soil, about the area of Wales. The rivers have since filled up from 150 to 160 miles of Persian Gulf, so that this strip of country is that much longer than it used to be. Central Mesopotamia is desert land, but the northern part, like the southern, is also cultivable.

Tradition has named Southern Mesopotamia as the site of the Garden of Eden. The decay of the civilisations which succeeded each other there for thousands of years has caused this territory to be neglected and to revert to the wildness of its state before Sumerian civilisation arose. In the wet season it is an impassable marsh, in the dry season a dusty waste. There is a plague of noxious insects and of poisonous reptiles. Fevers are prevalent. There are fierce tempests. The temperature alternates between extreme heat and arctic cold. It is recorded that a British soldier exclaimed: "If this was the Garden of Eden, it wouldn't want a blinking angel with a flaming sword to turn me out of it." This is why the British Government declares that it wishes control without occupation, and desires to police the territory and collect taxes from it by aeroplane.

Nevertheless, the country is of great fertility, said to have been the original home of wheat, which still grows wild there. Theophrastus, the Greek agriculturist, writing in the fourth century B.C., said:

"In Babylonia they reap two crops of wheat, then, in the third year, they drive sheep into the fields. This strengthens the straw, and otherwise it would run too much to blade. When little trouble is taken, wheat yields fifty to one; but under careful tillage it is a hundred to one. The treatment of the soil consists in running water upon it and letting it remain some time, so as to form plenty of slime. If, however, the earth is too fat and close, it must be loosened with the plough. Unlike Egypt, shrubs and weeds do not flourish. This is in consequence of the excellence of the soil."

Herodotus and Strabo gave still higher estimates of the yield of the soil.

The date-palm also flourished there. The Sumerians are believed to have been the first to cultivate it. It is a plant with two sexes, and the Sumerians are said to have been the first to apply the principle of pollination. The Sumerians were able to put the fruit, the leaves, and the trunk of the date-palm to manifold uses—an ancient song declared that it had as many uses as there are days in the year.

This plain was the scene of a continuous struggle between the non-semitic people living in the mountains, and semitic tribes of Nomads coming in from the Arabian desert. The mountaineers are shown on ancient stone monuments, wearing shaggy woollen kilts, with shaven heads. Whilst they were still using only stone implements, some of these mountaineers, called Sumerians, had settled on the Plain of Shinar. Before 3,000 B.C. they had reclaimed the marshes around the mouths of the two rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, and had gradually taken possession of the southern section of the Plain of Shinar, which came to be known as Sumar. They learnt to control the spring floods by dykes; to distribute the waters in irrigation trenches and to produce large harvests of

grain. They also grew barley and split wheat, calling the latter by its Egyptian name.

They possessed cattle, sheep and goats, oxen drew the plough, and donkeys pulled wheeled carts and chariots. The Sumerians are thought by some to have been the first to introduce the wheel as a burden-bearing device. The horse was not yet used. The Sumerians were already carrying on trade with peoples of the upper rivers, and this brought them metal, probably from Egypt. Sumerian smiths were already fashioning copper utensils, but had not learnt to harden copper into bronze by the admixture of tin.

The houses of the Sumerians were of bricks baked from the clay mud that was everywhere about them, and their books and letters to each other were tablets of the baked clay.

The cities, in course of time, sank into the swampy land, and were submerged, and a succession of other cities was built upon their foundations. These successive cities have been excavated, and the clay books have been found. The characters written upon the clay when it was wet, and then baked in the furnace, have survived the ravages of time. They still remain, and their meaning is gradually being unravelled. From the clay tablets and from the remains of the buildings, and the tools and utensils discovered in the buried cities, knowledge of the bygone peoples is being pieced together.

The writing of the Sumerians upon their clay tablets was done with a feed cut square at the end, and is called "cuniform" writing, from the Latin cuneus, meaning wedge, because the lines made by the writer were wedge-shaped. Cuniform writing is a development of hieroglyphic, or picture writing, with which we shall deal in some subsequent lessons, with illustrations.

Many Sumerian tablets have been found recording contracts, judicial decisions, and laws in cuniform, or wedge-form, writing.

## FROM THE PUBLISHERS.

**The Secret History of a Great Betrayal**, by E. D. Morel, M.P., "Foreign Affairs," 1/-.

The array of carefully marshalled facts presented in this pamphlet shows how the people of this country were lead blindfolded into the war of 1914-18, for which the Government was secretly making preparations.

**The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and in Peoples**, by Miguel de Unamuno, translated by J. E. Crawford Flitch, M.A. (Macmillan, 17/-.)

Miguel de Unamuno is regarded by many critics as one of to-day's great literary figures in Spain, side by side with Baroja, one of whose novels we reviewed in a recent issue, and Ortega y Gasset, Argala, Valle Inclán, and Blasco Ibañez. Unamuno is a writer of essays, poetry, criticism, novels, and philosophy. He also lectures and speaks at public meetings. He is Professor of Greek at the University of Salamanca. Unamuno is a Conservative, and an upholder of religion. He is an admirer of Dean Inge. He is an opponent of progress, though he declares that he has an "inextinguishable thirst for truth."

An introductory essay on its author is added to this book by Salvada de Madariaga, in which he speaks of Unamuno's "eternal conflict between faith and reason, between life and thought, between spirit and intellect, between heaven and civilisation." Unamuno stands, in fact, for the evils and ignorance of the past veiled by sentiment.

The book is that of a scholar who has read widely. The author is profuse; indeed rather too profuse, in his quotations from the great writers of all times and peoples.

It is said that Sir Eric Geddes will be asked to advise the Italians on railway organisation when the dictator Mussolini carries out his promise to transfer Italian State railways to private enterprise.



# Parliament As We See It.

## THE BLESSINGS OF A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT!

The doubling of the Indian salt duty has been again rejected by the Indian Legislative Assembly. The Governor-General has, nevertheless, "certified" it "in the interests of British India," and so it comes into operation. Oh! manifold are the blessings of bourgeois democracy wherever it obtains!

### DRIED EGGS.

Dried and frozen eggs and liquid egg-yolk are imported from China. They are sold to the public and used in the confectionary trade.

It pays better to preserve them and bring them from China than to produce them in this country, because the landlords, railways, and middlemen here take so large a share. The Unionists cried out for Protection in order to save the farmer from foreign competition.

Communism is the only hope of the worker!

### GETTING A LITTLE BIT BACK.

The "Evening News," out of the huge profits made from the public, gives back the price of 80,000 bulbs to be planted in Hyde Park. The "Evening News" did not obey the commandment not to let its right hand know what its left hand was doing. A question by the Unionist Captain Terrell drew a story of the gift from the First Commissioner of Works, who showed by his compliments that he was nothing loth to give the desired advertisement to the enterprising journal.

### LAW AND LOUCHEUR.

Mr. Bonar Law evaded all questions as to his conversations with M. Loucheur. When asked whether he had expressed British Government approval of French action in the Ruhr he evaded the question.

### GERMAN TRAWLERS.

The Government refused to take any action regarding the dumping of fish from German trawlers, except to use the police against the fishermen who are being robbed of bread by this competition.

### SPECIAL CONSTABLES.

In the debate on the Special Constables Bill it transpired that there are now enrolled 100,000 special constables, costing £28,000 a year in the provinces, and 17,000 in London, costing £38,000 a year. These were enrolled during the war. The present Bill is to give power to recruit more specials. The Home Secretary said that the war-time Act came to an end last year. He observed that the Acts of 1831, 1835 and 1882 already gave power to justices to swear in special constables in time of tumult, and watch committees annually appoint special constables to assist their constables. No reason was shown why the war-time legislation should be continued, and why more special constables are likely to be needed.

The reasons, of course, are the growing poverty of the people and the intention of the employing classes to depress wages still further, to increase indirect taxation, and perhaps to take other unannounced measures to rob the Have-nots in the interests of the Haves.

### TO ABOLISH ARMY AND AIR FORCE.

Mr. George Lansbury moved the rejection of the Army and Air Force Annual Bill, on the ground that he does not wish such forces to remain in existence. On the Speaker declaring the motion out of order, Mr. Lansbury moved the adjournment of the debate. He was defeated by 155 votes to 73.

Would Mr. Lansbury move such a motion if the Labour Party were in power? How does he reconcile his support of the Irish Free State with opposition to the Army? He must be aware that but for the threat of armed force and the use of armed force by Britain, Ireland would to-day be a republic, not a Free State within the British Empire. The same thing applies to all parts of the Empire.

Does Mr. Lansbury agree with us that the British Empire should be broken up for the good of the world?

### NIGHT BAKING.

When Mr. Groves (Lab.) brought in a Bill to prohibit night baking, Mr. Herbert (U.) opposed it, on the ground that night baking is healthy, and that its abolition would be a source of inconvenience to those who break-fast early.

If such persons would take a turn at the bakery, or, better still, on the roads, their appetites might be good enough to eat yesterday's bread in the early morning.

### IMPERIAL PREFERENCE.

Viscount Ednam (U.) moved a resolution calling for an extension of Empire trade, which was seconded by Sir H. Britain (U.). Sir P. Lloyd-Greame, for the Board of Trade, replied with cordiality that the Government was anxious to do everything possible in that direction. He said there was a deficit in export trade of 35 per cent. at the beginning of 1922, of 25 per cent. at the end of 1922, and of 20 per cent. in the first month of 1923. He claimed that the only way to cure unemployment was to wipe out the deficit, and do something more also, because the efficiency of production is so much greater now than ten years ago, that the same volume of trade will not employ the same number of people. This country, he said, is over industrialised; the balance of population is "not only unsound, but actually dangerous." The population must be distributed throughout the whole Empire. The Government intended to devote large credits to speeding up the development of the Crown Colonies, which would take much longer if the Colonies were left to their own resources—or, rather, as he meant, to the resources of the private British Capitalist. The Government is always ready to assist big Capitalism to find more capital! The Imperial Conference, shortly to be held, he said, would consider the possibilities of Preference, and its extension. The Government would endeavour to make the Empire as self-supporting as possible. The position of the cotton industry was "dangerous," because the industry was relying to a preponderating extent upon American sources of supply. That could not be allowed to continue. The Empire contained soil of the very right stamp for growing that cotton.

### LABOUR SUPPORT FOR IMPERIALISM.

Mr. A. Short (Lab.) said the Labour Party would offer general support to the resolution! They were interested no less than hon. Members opposite in the development of the British Empire. They were concerned with the development of trade, and with the provision of employment, at remunerative rates and under proper conditions, for the people of this country. No one who observed the economic breakdown of Europe could ignore the desirability of that House devoting its attention to the consideration of the means which should be employed to further the trade interests of this country and of the world.

This is an altogether amazing point of view to be put forward on behalf of the Labour Party, which some people claim is a Socialist Party now! Is this the view of the chairman, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald?

According to the Census of Production of 1907, Mr. Short continued, the cotton trade, to the extent of four-fifths, was working for foreign markets, the machinery trade to three-fifths, and the woollen trade to one-half.

These Capitalist economists, including Labour Party Mr. Short, see no future for the workers of this country save to go on turning out enormously vaster quantities of commodities than this country can consume. To produce for our own use, and the little surplus that may be needed by the peoples who as yet are unable to supply all the manufactured goods they require or to get them from other than British sources; and to enjoy the use of

the greater part of our own abundant production, is a project which does not enter into the calculations of those who regard production for profit, the trade, in which Mr. Short affirmed his interest, as the inevitable and permanent pivot of society.

Mr. Barker (Lab.) was not quite so much satisfied with the position as Mr. Short; he pointed out that in South Africa there is great unemployment; and the emigration of the unemployed to Australia, where there are also unemployed, is said to be the only hope for South Africa!

### RED FLAGGING ON A SNAP DIVISION.

The defeat of the Government, and the Labour Party scene next day, arose on a minor point, but one of such clear injustice that a large number even of Liberals and Tories, had pledged themselves to vote for redress. Temporary Civil Servants, who were promised permanent posts on passing an examination, have been put back to a commencing wage of £80 a year, which, with bonus, is brought up to £120 in the provinces and £144 in London. Some of these ex-temporary Civil Servants are 30 years of age, are married, and have served the Government several years in the Civil Service and the Army.

A Liberal Member, Mr. Duncan Millar, had moved a resolution of protest; but this was not voted on. A motion was taken that the Speaker leave the chair. This was challenged by the Labour Party, and the Government was defeated by seven votes.

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald then proposed that the House adjourn, in order that the Government might prepare a statement of its intentions. A Government representative replied by moving the adjournment.

Mr. Pringle (Ind. Lib.) moved that the House adjourn till Thursday. According to the "Daily Herald," messages were then sent from Mr. Macdonald to the Liberals "to get Mr. Pringle to stop," because the Parliamentary wisdom of Mr. Macdonald had discovered that, if the Government measure went through as it stood, next day the House could only meet to adjourn. The "Herald" further stated that, according to the rules of the House, the Government must now either resign or prorogue Parliament and begin a new session.

This would have been a curious position for a Government which still has at its back an obedient majority, and which was only defeated because a few of its supporters deserted it on a minor point at a time when a division was not expected.

As a matter of fact, when the House met next day the Government behaved as though nothing of importance had happened. It prepared to open a debate on agriculture, and promised a statement on the ex-temporary Civil Servants next day.

The Labour Members would not let the Government defeat be passed over so casually, and a considerable scene developed, in which Mr. Murray (Lab.) and Mr. Walter Guinness, the Tory brewer, are reported to have come to blows. The Speaker, who could scarcely make himself heard above the din, adjourned the sitting, first for an hour, and finally for the day.

There was nothing very remarkable about the occurrence. The House of Commons is always apt to be noisy, and many a scene equally boisterous has taken place within its walls.

The outcome of the incident is that the committee which is to consider the wages of Civil Servants, instead of being a committee of private gentlemen, as the Government announced it would be, is to be enlarged to admit nine Members of Parliament, five from the Government side, four from other parties, and two women chosen by the Government. The committee will be specially instructed to look into the salaries of the ex-temporary Civil Servants and to deal with that question first.



### DANGEROUS SUGGESTIONS. ASKING THE LAW OFFICERS TO INTERVENE.

Several Labour Party Members made the unwise demand that the Law Officers of the Crown should intervene to interpret the building trade agreement. The Government refused to agree. The demand was most ill-judged. The Law Officers will, on the whole, be always against the workers, and to allow them to interpret the meaning of contracts between employers and employed is to submit the case for decision by the advocates of the employers. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald asked the Government to prevent the lock-out taking effect for seven days. All such proposals create precedents which are certain to be used against the workers when they consider it to their advantage to strike. The Emergency Powers Act was passed to enable the Government to make striking illegal and punishable, but so far the Government has only contemplated such action in strikes of critical importance. If the Government and the Law Officers are to be encouraged by Labour Parliamentarians to step in wherever a dispute occurs, the workers will shortly be altogether deprived of the strike weapon.

#### THE RUHR.

Sir P. Lloyd-Greame (U.), President of the Board of Trade, repudiated the suggestion that the British Government should make things difficult for the French in the Ruhr. The German Government, he said, had made a suggestion which was tantamount to asking the French to say they had no right in the Ruhr, and that they should exercise none of their functions there, nor make any change. The answer of the British Government was that that was quite an impossible proposal.

The attitude of the British Government towards the Ruhr occupation, which at first was ostensibly one of mild regret and disapproval, appears to have become exceedingly cordial.

#### SOLDIERS' PUNISHMENTS.

On the Army and Air Force Bill amendments were moved to abolish field punishment No. 2, to abolish the death sentence in the Army for cowardice, casting away arms in face of the enemy, etc., to permit the death sentence to be suspended for six months, and to give the soldier sentenced to death the right of appeal to the Central Criminal Court. All these amendments were resisted by the Government and rejected. Lieut.-Colonel Guinness (U.), representing the Government, said that a man could not be allowed to exchange the hell and danger to life in the trenches for the safety of a prison, and that the capital penalty is a safeguard to the Army.

#### TO FIRE ON FELLOW-WORKERS.

Mr. Lansbury moved a clause giving every recruit upon enlistment the right to refuse to assist the civil authorities in dealing with a trade dispute. Lieut.-Colonel Guinness said the Government could not accept the amendment, as the work in question "must, in the interests of the community, be carried out." The clause was rejected by 197 votes to 101.

#### TO STOP ENLISTMENT UNDER 21.

Mr. Morgan Jones (Lab.) moved an amendment to prevent the enlistment of recruits under 21 years.

Lieut.-Colonel Guinness said the Government could not accept the amendment, as it would bring recruiting to a standstill, since few of the recruits have reached the age of 21 years. When men reach maturity they are too wise to join the Army, it seems.

Mr. Jack Jones (Lab.) opposed the amendment moved by his colleague. The amendment was defeated by 222 votes to 90.

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### CORRESPONDENCE.

Dear Comrade,—

Statements in the "Workers' Dreadnought" have caused a lot of talk in the workshop among readers of the paper. In the March 3rd issue, an article, "Has the Race Lived in Vain?" by John Croll, stated that Christ was released before death, and took refuge among the Trade Unions and lived to the age of fifty.

Would the writer state where he got the information?

In the March 31st issue, in "Parliament as we see it," it is said that T. Johnson seconded the motion of Philip Snowden, and made a number of apt quotations. One of them has upset friends and comrades. They think it must be a mistake. It seems impossible.

It is the quotation from Lord Leverhulme: it says that we could provide for all, the wants of each in food, shelter and clothing, by one hour's work per week.

Please answer in the "Dreadnought" whether it was in a book, paper, or speech that Lord Leverhulme made such a statement. One hour per week! It is enough to make us cry it from the housetops!

I notice in the pamphlet containing Snowden's speech, T. Johnston's part is left out. What a pity! What a loss of information! One hour per week. Why, it is enough to cause a revolution!

In Jack London's Revolution, he states two or three hours' work per day would be necessary! Anyhow, let us have more of it, comrade. I am glad to see the paper, which is known to us as "The Fighter," still alive.

Yours fraternally,

Glasgow.

A. B. H.

[The statement made by John Croll is to be found in Osborne Ward's book, "The Ancient Lowly." Lord Leverhulme's statement occurs in his preface to Professor Spooner's book, "Wealth From Waste."]

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