The Insect Play. An Appreciation.

Workers' Dreadnought

CO-OPERATION, NOT COERCION.

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"The Insect Play."

THE MEANING OF THE PLAY.

By E. S. P.

The insect play is a great satire. One leaves it stunned and subdued, so vivid is its portrayal of the brevity and littleness of the individual life to-day, and of the ugly ceaseless struggle for existence of the millions who compose society.

The prologue opens quietly, with the tramp lying asleep and awakened by the silly old lepidopterist, catching butterflies to put in his collection, for love of nature. Author and adapters have done their work well, but Mr. Claude Rains over-emphasises the absurdity of the lepidopterist. We wonder, for instance, why he should choose to say "nay-chooer."

The tramp soliloquises on men and things with a touch of poetry and much point, observing that he is a "lord of creation" who is ordered to come here and go there in cursory fashion.

Act I., "Among the Butterflies," is new and unaccustomed, even a trifle startling. On a hill-top, draped at the rear with flowered gauzes, is a bar, with bright-coloured drinks, around which are posing some gay young women and their male admirers, some of whom are no longer young. Men and maids are all wearing butterflies' wings and the long antennae of insects upon their foreheads, but in other respects they are as typical a crowd of frivolous modern pleasure-seekers as one could meet in Piccadilly. Some of the men are in evening dress, one wears the bright red of an Army sapper. A poet is in white tennis flannels.

In the prologue the tramp, Mr. Edmund Willard, described the butterflies as playing: the lepidopterist corrected him. The butterflies were engaged, he said, in the contest of sex; the female flees the male, then alures him; then turns to flee again. So it is in the flirtations of these human butterflies. The play of sex is carried on crudely and merrily, without a suspicion of sentiment. When the bright-coated sapper is eaten up by a bird, the bobbed-haired beauty whom he was chasing over the hill-top at the time giggles with glee in recounting the story.

The poet in tennis flannels, celebrating his changing amours in snatches of verse, declares his adoration of the unattainable, and is as trivial as the rest. He shouts out his verses through the strains of the band, as the dancers whirl around him and then pose airily mouth to mouth, whilst he sinks down in tears.

The scene is bewildering; it would gain in subtlety and effectiveness if the poet, Mr. John Gielgud, would refrain from shouting his lines. They would thus be more audible. The poet should at least make an attempt at beauty and clarity of diction. The actor's present method is altogether too clumsy.

The intonation of the two principal women butterflies is too harshly ill-bred. Something more ethereal in tone is necessary fo a butterfly, even though she be an arrant flirt.

With these reservations, the act is well presented. The author's conception is crude, but not more crude than the thing it satirises. Cruel and biting as it is, the joke is apt. The vulgar, shallow life of the pleasure-seekers, who toil not, neither do they spin, is not over-drawn.

When one reaches the Second Act, "Creepers and Crawlers," one has become atuned to the play. This act is immensely clever, and is also well presented. We have grown tiny; the flowers and blades of grass appear as tall trees towering above us. The holes of the ichneumon fly and the cricket would have been more effective had they been made a little more realistic, and this could easily have been arranged; but that is a very minor matter.

A chrysalis, Miss Joan Maude, with a beautiful voice, cries out at intervals that something wonderful is going to happen, that she is being born, that she will inspire, that she will create, that she will do something remarkable. "I . . . I . . . I . . ." The cry of the aspiring young egoist.

"She thinks she's the earth," says the tramp.

The beetle, a fat old fellow, a typical small shopkeeper or publican, and his wife, who have grown old and fat in avarice and ceaseless attention to penny-getting, have put together a great ball of mud, which they worship as their "pile," their "capital," their "little all." They roll it about with them, proud and fearful for its safety. The husband suggests they should now make a second pile, and even a third, burying the one they have made, lest anyone should steal it.

Mr. Bromley Davenport and Miss Maire O'Neill are highly successful as Mr. and Mrs. Beetle. The tramp observes that the old beetle cannot take his pile with him when he dies.

The beetle leaves his wife in charge of the mud ball to search for a hole. The wife also leaves it for a few moments. A robber beetle seizes the opportunity to roll it away, declaring that it is his "capital." The beetle's wife, returning in distress, runs off to look for her husband, who she thinks has taken away the pile. The husband comes back and rages: "Where's my pile, my pile? My wife don't matter; where's my pile?"

"THE GAP."

Specially drawn for the "Workers' Dreadnought" by Manner.

The ichneumon fly, a very rapacious business man, cleverly done by Mr. Ivan Berlyn, explains that his object in life is to work for his daughter, a white-faced, over-fed, soft-bodied larva, who says: "I want—I don't know what I want. Oh, daddy, I'm so bored!" Her desire is to kill something moving and alive. Miss Lanchester succeeds in making the larva as repulsive as she was intended to be.

Mr. Cricket, and pretty helpless little Mrs. Cricket, Angela Baddely, are newly married. They appear to take the house of a former cricket who was eaten up by a bird. Mrs. Cricket dances and sings very prettily, and Mr. Cricket is very loving and solicitous. He goes off to earn their living. The ichneumon fly stabs Mrs. Cricket and takes her down his hole to the larva, crying: "See what daddy has brought you!"

Meanwhile the "parasite" has appeared. Some pro-capitalist reviewers have wrongly termed him a Bolshevik. On the contrary, he is a parasite of the poorest sort, slavish and ignorant. In real life he would certainly vote Tory, and blackleg in every trade dispute. He joins the tramp in decrying the murder of Miss Cricket, denouncing the ichneumon fly and all who have larders whilst other folk are hungry. When the ichneumon fly returns, however, the parasite fauns on him.

Mr. Cricket comes in seeking his wife. The ichneumon fly approaches to stab him in the back. The tramp rushes forward to prevent the murder, but the parasite throws himself upon the tramp, saying: "Don't interfere: what will be, will be."

Mr. Cricket is murdered and cast down the hole to the larva. The ichneumon fly runs off, saying that he is too busy to stop, and will not return for an hour.

The parasite again denounces the murder, roaring out what he will do next time, and what he "nearly said" this time. Then, with a sly grin, he says he must just have a look, and creeps down the hole.

After a time he returns, hiccoughing, with distended stomach, and tells the tramp that the fly had collected a famous larder down there for his white-faced daughter, but he, the parasite, has eaten her up with the rest.

"These insects are all working for themselves. They have no common plan. They don't know how to combine for the good of the State," says the tramp at the beginning of the third act. Then we find ourselves in the world of the ants, who are worshippers of time and speed and discipline. Telegraph poles and mill chimneys surround the observatory. The blind timekeeper counts time for the soldiers filing past, and the engineers explain that everything is subordinated to the good of the whole. War is declared. The engineers rejoice. The war is for the possession of a piece of mud between two blades of grass. The soldiers march to the front. The emperor and his assistant, who is decorated for the service, shout patriotic lies through megaphones to the soldiers. We are back in the days of 1914-18. News comes that regiments have been wiped out. The megaphonists declare those regiments are victorious, and have covered themselves with glory. A woman sells flags for the wounded. The inventor comes in; his head is so large that it will burst. He raves of inventions to kill more millions.

The emperor thanks the god of the ants for his victory. His soldiers are routed. They rush through in panic. The yellows appear. The emperor falls dead. The yellow commander decrees the killing of prisoners and gives thanks to the god of the ants.

The tramp rises up and crushes the yellow commander, saying: "You insect!"

It was but a pretence, this "good of the whole," the ambitious strive of the individual was keener than ever; it had harnessed others to be its tools.

Through the strife sounds the voice of the chrysalis: "I am being born—I . . . I . . . I. . . ."

* * *

The epilogue: "Life and Death" concludes the play. The tramp wakes in the darkness under the trees. The may-flies dance in the pale rays. The winged creature breaks forth from the chrysalis. She dances a brief space. "I will tell you the meaning of life," she cries out; then falters. She's dead. The may-flies die one by one. The tramp also feels the approach of death. He struggles with the unseen visitant. "I have learnt how to live," he protests; but he dies like the may-flies.

* * *

The snails come out and talk banalities. The sun breaks forth: it is full day. The woodman finds the dead tramp. A young country woman appears carrying her sister's baby to the christening. She bids the woodman stand before the body to hide it from the children on their way to school: "They mustn't see it, poor dears."

There is a wholesome, kindly, workaday humanity about her. She and the woodman are far removed from the many sorts of parasites.

When the children are gone she lays a flower on the dead tramp's breast and kneels beside him.

So quietly the drama closes. But a little while and our strife with our fellows is over.

If your correspondence is being spied upon, do not be offended, fellow-worker. It is done on high authority. The Post Office does not open all, or some of your letters, without a warrant from the Home Secretary.

A specimen of electoral leaflets used by Italian Fascists to induce voters to go to the poll.

Chi per le due

non ha votato

verrà scovato;

se è ammalato

sarà purgato;

caso contrario

sarà legnato.

Translation.

Who hasn't voted—by two o'clock—we will find out.—If he is ill—he shall be purged—if he is not—he shall be birched.

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GERMINAL.

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UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES.

A new frame-up is being developed in Los Angeles. Sixteen I.W.W.s who had been in the county gaol three months, and were arrested for selling I.W.W. papers or possessing I.W.W. cards, have been charged with conspiring to wreck the Signal Hill Oil Wells. None of these men were arrested in the oil wells, but it was suddenly announced that they were arrested there only two days before.

The accused ought surely to be able to prove that they were arrested three months earlier than the police state, out U.S. Court methods are passing strange.

Tom Connors, I.W.W. Defence Committee secretary, of Chicago, is in gaol in Sacramento, California, charged with criminal syndicalism and tampering with a jury. The first charge is based purely on his membership of the I.W.W., the second on the fact that he distributed circulars attacking the criminal syndicalism law in Sacramento County, where three I.W.W.s were on trial. These circulars were distributed broadcast in the streets. A juryman exhibited one in Court. Hence the charge.

P. J. Wiefander, who was assisting Connors, has been arrested on similar charges, and ten voluntary workers who were in the Defence office at the time of the arrests are charged with vagrancy.

The innocence of Sacco in the frame-up murder charge, for which he and Vanzetti were sentenced to death, is now proved by the microscope. Photographs of the fatal bullet have been examined under the microscope and compared with bullets fired by Sacco from his gun. Sacco's bullets all show identical gun-barrel markings. There is a wide divergence between these and the markings on the fatal bullet. The bullets have also been measured under a high-power microscope, and show that while Sacco's bullets are all the same, the fatal bullet is different. Mr. A. H. Hamilton, the expert who has made the examination, says: "A gun-barrel leaves marks on a bullet as clear and unmistakable as those left by a man's fingers."

Sacco is now declared mentally diseased, and the authorities refuse to give him a retrial till he is cured. Sacco is said to be suffering from prison psychosis, brought on by confinement.

HOUSING THEMSELVES.

In the southern environs of Vienna is a new suburb, "Altmannsdorf-Hetzendorf," of 400 houses, built by those who live in them. Four hundred houses are in course of construction, and another 400 will be built by the end of the year. Men drifting back from the war could find no homes. They squatted on this land, built little huts there, and then, with the help of wives and children, transformed them into cottages. Finance being a difficulty, the builders produced as much as they could themselves, and after a time formed a co-operative society amongst themselves to buy as cheaply as possible. The municipality has now granted £36,000 towards the enterprise. The houses are said to be splendidly built, and the communal workshops well planned. The settlers have banned alcohol from their community. Each one is now obliged to do from 1,500 to 2,000 or even 3,000 hours of voluntary work. Whether these latter conditions have been imposed by the municipality as a condition of its grant we do not know.

British workers may desire to follow the example of the Vienna builders. Would British landlords and Government permit them to appropriate the sites? We think not. Law and order are too strong here. If British workers should decide to buy land to build on, they would, in most cases, find the prices altogether prohibitive if situated near to their place of employment. Land between Woodford and Loughton, an hour and a half or more by motor-bus from the centre of London, is to be sold at from £10 to £6 per foot frontage. Glasgow local authorities had to pay £2 per square yard for housing land.

THE SEVEN THAT WERE HANGED.

(By Leonid Andreyev, a Famous Russian Author.)

XII.

THE ARRIVAL.

The train advanced rapidly.

Sergey Golovin remembered to have spent the summer, some years before, in a little country house along this very line. He had often travelled the road by day and by night, and knew it well. Closing his eyes, he could fancy himself returning by the last train, after saying out late at night with friends.

"I shall arrive soon," thought he, straightening up; and his eyes met the dark grated window. Around him nothing stirred. Only the Tzigane kept on spitting, and his eyes ran the length of the car, seeming to touch the doors and the soldiers.

"It is cold," said Vasily Kashirin between his thin lips, which seemed frozen.

Tanya Kovalchuk bestirred herself in a maternal fashion:

"Here's a very warm kerchief to wrap around your . . ."

"Neck?" asked Sergey, and he was frightened by his own question.

"What matters it, Vasya? Take it."

"Wrap yourself up. You will be warmer," added Werner.

He turned to Yanson, and asked him tenderly:

"And aren't you cold, too?"

"Werner, perhaps he wants to smoke. Comrade, do you want to smoke?" asked Musya. "We have some tobacco."

"Yes, I want to."

"Give him a cigarette, Sergey," said Werner.

But Sergey was already holding out his cigarette-case.

And all began to watch tenderly Yanson's clumsy fingers as they took the cigarette and struck the match, and the little curl of bluish smoke that issued from his mouth.

"Thank you," said Yanson. "It is good."

"How queer it is," said Sergey.

"How queer what is?" askd Werner.

"The cigarette," answered Sergey, unwilling to say what he thought.

Yanson held the cigarette betwen his pale and living fingers. With astonishment he looked at it. And all fixed their gaze on this tiny bit of paper, on this evil curl of smoke rising from the gray ashes.

The cigarette went out.

"It is out," said Tanya.

"Yes, it is out."

"The devil take it!" said Werner, looking anxiously at Yanson, whose hand, holding the cigarette, hung as if dead. Suddenly the Tzigane turned, placed his face close to Werner's, and, looking into the whites of his eyes, whispered:

"Suppose, sir, we were to attack the soldiers of the convoy? What do you think about it?"

"No," answered Werner.

"Why? It is better to die fighting. I will strike a blow, they strike back, and I shall die without noticing it."

"No, it is not necessary," said Werner. And he turned to Yanson:

"Why don't you smoke?"

Yanson's dried-up face wrinkled pitifully, as if someone had pulled the threads that moved the creases in his face. As in a nightmare, Yanson sobbed in a colourless voice, shedding no tears:

"I can't smoke. Ah! Ah! Ah I must not be hanged. Ah! Ah! Ah!" Ah! I must not

Everybody turned toward him. Tanya, weeping copiously, stroked his arms and readjusted his fur cap.

"My dear friend, my dear friend, don't cry, my friend! My poor friend!"

Suddenly the cars bumped into one another and began to slow up. The prisoners rose, but immediately sat down again.

"Here we are," said Sergey.

It was as if all the air had suddenly been pumped out of the car. It became difficult to breathe. Their swollen hearts became heavy in their breasts, rose to their throats, beat desperately; and their blood, in its terror, seemed to revolt. Their eyes looked at the trembling floor, their ears listened to the slowly-turning wheels, which began to turn more slowly still, and gently stopped.

The train halted.

The prisoners were plunged into a strange stupor. They did not suffer. They seemed to live an unconscious life. Their corporeal being was absent; only its phantom moved about, voiceless but speaking, silent but walking. They went out. They arranged themselves in pairs, breathing in the fresh air of the woods. Like one in a dream, Yanson struggled awkwardly; they dragged him from the car.

"Are we to go on foot?" asked someone, almost gaily.

"It isn't far," answered a careless voice.

Without a word they advanced into the forest, along a damp and muddy road. Their feet slipped and sank into the snow, and their hands sometimes clung involuntarily to those of their comrades. Breathing with difficulty the soldiers marched in single file, on either side of the prisoners. An irritated voice complained:

"Could they not have cleared the road? It is difficult to advance.

A deferential voice answered:

"It was cleaned, Your Honour, but it is thawing. There is nothing to be done."

The prisoners began to recover their consciousness. Now they seemed to grasp the idea: "It is true, they could not clean the roads"; now it became obscured again, and there remained only the sense of smell, which perceived with singular keenness the strong and healthy odour of the forest; and now again all became very clear and comprehensible, the forest, and the night, and the road . . . and the certainty that very soon, in a minute, implacable death would lay its hands upon them. And little by little a whispering began:

"It is almost four o'clock."

"I told you so. We started too early."

"The sun rises at five."

"That's right at five: we should have waited."

They halted in the twilight. Near by, behind the trees, whose huge shadows were waving on the ground, swung silently two lanterns. There the gallows had been erected.

"I have lost one of my rubbers," said Sergey.

"Well?" asked Werner, not understanding.

"I have lost it. I am cold."

"Where is Vasily?"

"I don't know. There he is."

Vasily was standing close by them, gloomy and motionless.

"Where is Musya?"

"Here I am. Is that you, Werner?"

They looked at each other, their eyes avoiding the silent and terribly significant swaying of the lanterns. At the left the thin forest seemed to be growing lighter. And beyond, something vast and gray and flat appeared, whence came a moist breeze.

"That is the sea," said Sergey, sucking in the damp air. "That is the sea."

Musya answered by a line from the song:

"My love as broad as is the sea."

"What did you say, Musya?"

"Thy shores of life cannot contain
My love as broad as is the sea."

"'My love as broad as is the sea,' repeated Sergey, pensively.

"'My love as broad as is the sea,'" echoed Werner. And suddenly he exclaimed in astonishment:

"Musya, my little Musya, how young you still are!"

(To be continued.)

INTEREST.

One carpenter, James, at the expense of ten days' labour, makes himself a plane, which will last in use for 290 of the 300 working days of the year. William, another carpenter, proposes to borrow the plane for a year, offering to give back at the end of that time, when the plane will be worn out, a new plane equally as good. James objects to lending the plane on these terms, urging that if he merely gets back a plane he will have nothing to compensate him for the loss of the advantage which the use of the plane during the year would give him. William, admitting this, agrees not merely to return a plane, but, in addition, to give James a new plank. The agreement is carried out to mutual satisfaction. The plane is used up during the year, but at the end of the year James receives as good a one, and a plank in addition. He lends the new plane again and again, until finally it passes into the hands of his son, "who still continues to lend it," receiving a plank each time. This plank, which represents interest, is said to be a natural and equitable remuneration, as by giving it in return for the use of the plane, William "obtains the power which exists in the tool to increase the productiveness of labour," and is no worse off than he would have been had he not borrowed the plane; while James obtains no more than he would have had if he had retained and used the plane instead of lending it.

Is this really so? It will be observed that it is not affirmed that James could make the plane and William could not, for that would be to make the plank the reward of superior skill. It is only that James had abstained from consuming the result of his labour until he had accumulated it in the form of a plane—which is the essential idea of capital.

Now, if James had not lent the plane he could have used it for 290 days, when it would have been worn out, and he would have been obliged to take the remaining ten days to make himself a plane, which he could have used for the remaining 290 days. Thus, if we take a plank to represent the fruits of a day's labour with the aid of a plane, at the end of the year, had no borrowing taken place, each would have stood with reference to the plane as he commenced, James with a plane, and William with none, and each would have had as the result of the year's work 290 planks. If the condition of the borrowing had been what William first proposed, the return of a new plane, the same realtive situation would have been secured. William would have worked for 200 days, and taken the last ten days to make the new plane to return to James. James would have taken the first ten days of the year to make another plane which would for 290 days, when he would have received a new plane from William. Thus, the simple return of the plane would have put each in the same position at the end of the year as if no borrowing had taken place. James would have lost nothing to the gain of William, and William would have gained nothing to the loss of James. Each would have had the return his labour would otherwise have yielded—viz., 290 planks, and James would have had the advantage with which he started, a new plane.

But when, in addition to the return of a plane, a plank is given, James at the end of the year will be in a better position than if there had been no borrowing, and William in a worse. James will have 291 planks and a new plane, and William 289 planks and no plane. If William now borrow the plank as well as the plane, on the same terms as before, he will at the end of the year have to return to James a plane, two planks, and a fraction of a plank, and if this difference be again borrowed, and so on, is it not evident that the income of the one will progressively decline, and that of the other will progressively increase, until the time will come when, as the result of the original lending of a plane, James will obtain the whole result of William's labour—that is to say, William will become virtually his slave?—From Henry George, Progress and Poverty.

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Our View.

A Question of Liberty.

THE COURT OF APPEAL has decided in favour of the letter of one of the old English liberties for which our forbears fought. The Irish deportations were so flagrantly illegal that the Court had no alternative; and the House of Commons, with all the prejudices attaching to that body, preferred to wash its hands of the matter. The Home Secretary has flagrantly defied the Habeas Corpus Act, and for that offence is legally liable to heavy punishment. The Government, however, is strong, and what is called public opinion torpid. The leader of the Labour Party, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, did not claim the resignation and punishment of the Home Secretary when he raised the question in the Commons. He merely inquired what sort of Indemnity Bill the Government meant to bring in to rectify the Ministers' mistake.

Labour Members are pressing, not for the resignation of the Home Secretary and the Government, but for compensation to the deportees; and the Labour Party is the official Opposition, with all the responsibilities for upholding popular liberty against the encroachments of the Government which is supposed to attach thereto. The Labour Party is not a success in that position, even from the Parliamentary standpoint.

In announcing that the House of Lords had refused to reverse the Appeal Court decision, the Tory "Daily Telegraph" observed: "Some of these deportees will wish that their friends had not been so zealous on their behalf." Undoubtedly the Government, smarting from its rebuke in the Appeal Court, will be specially anxious to vindicate itself by securing convictions and harsh sentences of punishment against the deportees. Mr. Art O'Brien has already been re-arrested. To intern without trial is, however, much easier than to present evidence capable of securing a conviction in law and of standing the test, not only of lega , but of public, examination. Can the Government present such evidence in the case of the Irish deportees?

* * *

The Russian Situation.

THE RUSSIAN WAR SCARE has passed. We did not take it seriously. We do not anticipate an early war with Russia. We do not think the Government is yet prepared for war except against defenceless tribesmen.

Nevertheless, the official refusal to state the number of aeroplanes and torpedoes under construction is one of the many indications that war is again looming ahead in the not very distant future.

The proposed Russo-British Conference cannot bring forth anything for the advancement of Communism. The British Government representatives will use it for the purpose of drawing from Russia further capitulations to Capitalism and special advantages for British Capitalists. The moment to press for the latter is no doubt considered opportune, since France is busily engage in squeezing out advantages for French Capitalism from Germany in the Ruhr. It is the established custom of Capitalist diplomacy that a robbery from a weaker neighbour by one Great Power gives licence to a similar robbery from another weak neighbour by another Great Power.

It is hardly inspiring that the present contest with Soviet Russia should have arisen from the Russian claim to prevent foreign vessels fishing within twelve miles of her coasts. That is not the attitude one would expect from a great friendly Communist country.

It must always be remembered, however, that Russia is not a Communist country. Russian friends in Russia tell us that in Russian Government circles Communism is now quite out of sight, and the possibility that the policy of the controlling party may eventually tend towards Communism no longer seems to exist.

It is interesting to observe that the "Daily Herald" has characterised the Curzon charge that Russia carries on propaganda as serious, and that Mr. Ramsay Macdonald has said if the charges are true the British Government is "entitled to make its most energetic and effective protest." Such observations come with little grace from the "Daily Herald" and from Mr. Macdonald, of whom we must ask: Did not the Second International Government of Georgia carry on propaganda with his approval?

The Right Wing Communist Party of Great Britain makes a great mistake in its undignified protests that it did not receive certain particular sums of money at certain specified periods. The C.P.G.B. would be well advised to reply that it is not answerable to Capitalist Government for the sources of its anti-Capitalist propaganda.

* * *

Reactionary Britain.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE that the British Government is proving itself a reactionary force in the affairs of the International Labour Conference. Representation in the Conference is given to the extent of one-half to Governments, one-quarter to representatives of employers' organisations, one-quarter to representatives of Trade Union organisations. The Conference is therefore by no means an advanced body. Nevertheless, the British Government is a drag on its progress. In the case of nine recommendations of the Conference, the British Government rejected four wholly and three in part, and only gave a complete assent to two. The fact is that the Government will assent to nothing that is a hair's breadth in advance of the present British Labour regulations.

* * *

Capitalism and Reform.

THE GOVERNMENT apparently believes that further reforms to benefit the workers cannot be granted under Capitalism. There is more to be said for that contention than the superficial observer is willing to admit. The recent fall of the Swedish Socialist Government added one more to the toll of Social Democratic Governments which arose in the after-war revulsion, only to make way for Capitalist Governments in a short period, instead of beginning a progressive development towards Socialism, as was hoped.

Why did the Social-Democratic Governments fail? Is the Socialist idea at fault, or what was the reason? The reason was that the reforms they strove to introduce could not be successfully carried through under the Capitalist system. The Government which endeavours to raise the working-class standard of living above the general level obtaining in the countries which are its competitors in the world market will immediately find itself faced with a slump in trade and a great unemployed problem. Moreover, the Capitalists will not produce without what they consider a fair margin of profit for themselves. By their vast economic power they obstruct and defeat reforms which they consider unnecessary. Thus the reforms introduced by the Social-Democratic Governments made the position of the workers no easier. If they got higher wages and added social services, they also got higher prices and more unemployment. Therefore, they turned back to recall Capitalist Governments, which they hoped would give them good trade.

The moral is: Destroy the Capitalist system.

* * *

Strike-Breaking by Whom?

IN THE SPECIAL CONSTABLES BILL debate Mr. A. Hopkinson replied to the protests of Labour Members that if essential services should be interfered with by a strike, either the special constables must replace those services, or private persons like himself must organise for the purpose.

Mr. George Lansbury replied that such organisations would not be necessary, as the Government and the local authorities could replace the strikers. He added that when a great strike was anticipated some time ago, the Labour and other Members of local governing bodies, irrespective of their political views, had met together to arrange machinery to carry on essential services. We put it to Mr. Lansbury that if the strikers are to be replaced by blacklegs, it is immaterial to the strikers whether the blacklegs are special constables or employees of borough councils on which there are Labour majorities.

This is a matter which the working-class movement of this country would do well to discuss in all seriousness. It is a matter on which those organisations which declare they are working for Socialism should arrive at a conclusion.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS IN THE SAAR.

One of the most amazing things about the decree which the Governing Commission appointed by the League of Nations has passed is that Social-Democratic Mr. Branting, ex-Premier of Sweden, as a member of the League Council, discussed it, suggested modifications, but made no motion to cancel it.

The amazing decree provides that whoever in a public meeting, or in public, in the Saar, "casts discredit on the Treaty of the Peace of Versailles, or "insults or traduces the League of Nations, its members or the State signatories of the Treaty, or the Governing Commission, or its members, organisations or officials," shall be liable to up to five years' imprisonment and up to 10,000 francs fine. Offenders are to be tried at "a special Chamber of the Saarlouis Supreme Court." This Court shall consist of five members appointed by the President of the Governing Commission on the advice of its Department of Justice. Meetings, processions and demonstrations may be prohibited if there is ground to apprehend that language constituting an offence under the decree may be used. For protesting against the decree the "Arbeiterzeitung" was prohibited in the Saar for two weeks, the "Berliner Tageblatt" for four weeks, and "Die Woche" for six months, because it published photographs of incidents in the Ruhr.

The Governing Commission under the League of Nations consists of five members—one Frenchman (M. Rault, formerly Prefect of Lyons and now Chairman of the Commission), one Canadian (Mr. Waugh), a Belgian, and a representative of the Saar population, who, according to the Peace Treaty, must not be a Frenchman, and is nominated by the Council of the League. The first Saar representative was Mr. Hecktor. A local newspaper observed that Mr. Hecktor had entered into compromising relations with the French during the war, and had failed to recover damages in a libel action respecting that allegation. Mr. Hecktor thereupon retired from the Commission on account of his health. Mr. Land was appointed by the League in Mr. Hecktor's place, although when Mr. Land was acting Mayor of a Saar town the President of the Governing Commission felt that he was not fit to be confirmed in his office.

Parliament As We See It.

The Government is very generous to the would-be Indian railway magnate. It is willing to lend him capital. It is also willing to guarantee the interest on "his" capital. The interest guaranteed by the Government to Indian railway companies with offices in London on share capital, debenture stock and debentures, varies from 2½ to 6½ per cent.

INDIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS.

In the effort to whitewash Visapur Gaol and its treatment of politicals, Earl Winterton (C., Under-Secretary of State for India) read extracts from the report of a Government-appointed committee, which stated:

"Medical and sanitary arrangements are adequate, **but the scarcity of water is a drawback.**"

"Fetters must continue to be employed."

"The present gaol should not be continued at Visapur, nor should a gaol of regular type be built there."

"Latrine arrangements should be improved by the provision of more seats . . . privacy . . . , an adequate supply of water. . . ."

"Prisoners should have a weekly bath, if this is possible."

"The superior staff, as far as possible, should check and punish unnecessary hustling of prisoners during the night, at early morning and latrine parades."

"The treatment of prisoners, except some of those under ex-warder Sabrao, has been humane. Only as regards ill-treatment in the grinding sheds do we consider the complaints of any prisoners examined by us disclose any serious grievances."

Colonel Yate (C.) asked whether the authors of a pamphlet denouncing the treatment at Visapur will be punished.

Earl Winterton said the Government is considering whether further action against them is desirable.

TRADE WITH RUSSIA.

Agricultural Machinery Exported to Russia.

(a) United Kingdom manufacture:

	Tons.	£
1913	26,729	1,103,293
1920	149	15,000
1921	—	—
1922	13	4,991

(b) Foreign or Colonial manufacture:

	Tons.	£
1913	8,932	273,118
1920	—	—
1921	369	26,843
1922	993	70,014

Goods Exported to Russia from United Kingdom.

1913	£5,537,000
1920	7,854,000
1921	4,031,000
1922	6,775,000

From Germany.

1913	£43,277,000
1920	320,000

GERMAN POLICE.

The Allied Conference at Boulogne allowed Germany 150,000 police, with 1 rifle for 3 men; 1 short pistol per man; 340 heavy machine-guns; 150 armoured cars.

These are for use against the German people, of course.

INTERNATIONAL POLICE CONFERENCE

General Sir T. F. Horwood, Commander of the Metropolitan Police, has gone to U.S.A. to attend the International Police Conference.

Look out for more Americanism in police methods!

BURNING T.N.T.

Complaint being made that the burning of T.N.T. at Bramley Camp causes dense volumes of smoke to be blown across the district, and heavy explosions which are causing damage to houses, Major Boyd-Carpenter (C.), the Under-Secretary for War, said that the alternative was to dump the shells at sea, which would be costly in transport and entail the loss of the steel shells which case the T.N.T. The burning at Bramley, he said, is only a small part of what has to be done in some districts in England and France.

You must remember, good people, that you are simply pawns: you do not count!

LANSBURY AND THE GENERAL STRIKE.

On the Police Bill Mr. George Lansbury uttered some very remarkable statements, which are worthy of careful consideration.

Mr. A. Hopkinson (Lib.) had argued that in a great strike, when the food and necessaries of the people might be held up, the special constables must do the work of the strikers. Otherwise private persons like himself must organise to prevent starvation. Mr. Lansbury replied:

"Speaking for myself, I think that in the circumstances where the capitalists of the country have failed to provide a great national service and to organise it peacefully, it is the duty of the State not to take sides against the workmen, but to organise those services quite apart from the capitalists who have failed to organise them. There is no need for the setting on foot of voluntary organisers in that sort of way. During the period when it appeared likely that there would be a great general strike in this country, **all the people who were taking part in local government, especially in London, were asked to undertake the organisation of essential services, and I believe that all the local authorities, whether Labour or Tory, certainly in the metropolitan area, came together and formulated a scheme whereby these essential services could be carried on.**"

Mr. Lansbury here raised a point of great importance to the workers, which has its roots deeply embedded in the Capitalist system. Mr. Lansbury objects to the special constables replacing the workers on strike, but he has actually assisted in preparations for the local authorities to do it. To the workers whose strike is broken it really does not matter whether the strike breakers are special constables, members of a voluntary middle-class association, or employees of a borough council.

Mr. Lansbury, of course, argues that the local authorities who replace the strikers are acting purely in the public interest and apart from the employers. What, however, will be the result of their action? The workers have gone on strike: their effort is to create a situation in which the employers will give way to them, because they are losing profits, because their plant, as in the case of mines, may be injured by neglect, because they fear that home or foreign competitors will use the strike to annex their custom, because public opinion brings pressure to bear upon them, or the Government intervenes to insist upon a settlement.

If the local authorities intervene to carry on, the employers will have no fear that permanent competitors will oust them, the pressure of public opinion and Government pressure are ruled out. In the case of mines and such plant which might spoil for lack of attention, in the case of perishable foodstuffs, the local authority steps in to do what is necessary. The contest becomes one between the employer's capacity to lose profits and the workers' capacity to lose wages. One day it will be a contest to end Capitalism.

Some people may argue that even if the position of the striker be worsened by the intervention of the State or local authorities, the intervention is necessary in the interests of the whole people.

Those who hold that view ought not to occupy the position of **Labour** representatives.

Strikes are, of course, nasty things; but then, of course, so is Capitalism. So long as we have Capitalism we shall have the warfare between Capital and Labour.

MINES BILL.

The Mines (Working Facilities and Support) Bill is a measure agreed on by the mining, railway, and canal companies. It gives compensation to these great interests for any loss; but the person who has built a house in a mining area, because he works there, is expressly debarred from compensation, if his house falls down through mining operations. If it is decided to "let down the surface" in the interest of mining, the matter will be referred to the railway and canal companies for decision; farmers and dwellers on the surface will not be consulted. The Bill also gives power "to use and occupy the surface for spoil heaps." The refuse from the mine should not be left on the surface, it should be stowed below to prevent subsidence of the surface, and the collection of dangerous gases in the empty workings.

Mr. George Hardie (Lab.) described the Bill as "Thieves Consolidation, Unlimited."

Nevertheless, two Labour Members, Mr. Frank Rose (Aberdeen, N.) and Mr. G. A. Spencer (Broxtowe, Notts.), voted for the Bill. Mr. Spencer said he believed that "where the national interest is concerned, it must be understood that the people who own the coal should be properly protected." He agreed that people who suffered damage through subsidence should be compensated, but if the Bill were defeated those people would not be any better off.

The scandal of Labour M.P.s voting in support of the employers of their members is a growing one.

TO END TITLES.

Mr. Ponsonby (Lab.) obtained leave to bring in a Bill to terminate hereditary titles "amongst His Majesty's subjects."

The measure is incomplete: why not terminate also "His Majesty's hereditary title and office"?

THE GAP.

Some Boards of Guardians refuse to grant out-relief to single men on the gap. The Minister of Health does not propose to take action.

GOLD PRODUCTION.

British Empire	£44,000,000
Other countries	21,000,000

BANKRUPTCY PETITIONS.

6,277 in 1922; liabilities, 16,314,660; assets, £3,969,173. A happy time under Capitalism!

RENT RESTRICTIONS (NOTICES OF INCREASE) BILL.

The Third Reading was passed.

EGYPT.

Mr. Morel (Lab.) asked why Egyptian political prisoners held without trial are not tried, since there are British judges in Egyptian Criminal Courts.

Mr. McNeill (Under-Secretary): "That is a very difficult question."

TORPEDOES.

The First Lord of the Admiralty says it is "not in the public interest" to state how many torpedoes were built for the Navy in the years 1920, 1921, 1922.

The same answer was given as to aeroplanes the other day. War is looming up on the horizon again.

BUILDERS: TOO MANY OR TOO FEW?

The Minister of Health says there are not enough workmen to build the houses required by the people. The Minister of Labour says there is not enough building work to employ the ex-Service men trained for the purpose. He cannot find jobs for them, although he has "a large number of trained canvassers going about the country" to find vacancies.

HOUSES.

Powell Duffryn Coal Co. has secured a Government guaranteed loan for building miners' cottages, and is erecting them within 200 yards of the pit shaft at Llantrisant and Pengarn.

The Government says it has "no power to interfere."

Swansea required 6,378 houses in 1919. It will get 988 shortly.

The Black Country in 1920 required 26,420 new houses. It has got 5,727.

South Wales and Monmouthshire in 1919 required 56,900 new houses. It has got 10,113.

Hull required 7,778 new houses in 1919. It has got 614, and will get 124 more.

DEMOCRACY.

The Treaty between King Feisal of Iraq and King George of Britain requires sanction by the Constituent Assembly of Iraq, but not by the Parliament of Britain.

Lieut -Commander Kenworthy asked why: "We are to be in an inferior position to an uncreated Legislative Assembly in Iraq."

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE.

The setting up of a League of Labour International Conference was represented in some quarters as a great victory for Labour. This Conference recommended that children under fourteen may not be employed in agriculture during school hours so as to reduce their total annual school attendance to less than eight months. A poor concession, indeed!

The British Government has not yet assented to the proposition, ostensibly because in Scotland school attendance exemptions are granted by local authorities. The Government is holding up ratification till power to give further exemptions is agreed to. The British Government is also holding up agreements to protect the workers in regard to white lead painting and sandpapering, and is refusing to ratify the weekly rest-day convention.

The British Government, which boasts of leading reforms, has refused to assent to three out of seven conventions for ameliorating the lot of the workers.

As to the three recommendations of the

As to the mere recommendations of the Conference; the British Government dissents from that, suggesting unemployment insurance in agriculture; it dissents from suggesting maternity insurance being given for twelve weeks instead of four; it dissents from suggesting that boys between 14 and 18 employed on night work shall have at least nine hours' consecutive rest; also from the recommendation that agricultural workers "living in should be insured separate beds and other amenities; it dissents from accepting the recommendations for agricultural workers' insurance, on the ground that the yare too broad; it dissents from the recommendation to provide at least 24 hours' rest every seven days in commercial establishments. Of the nine recommendations, the British Government accepts two entirely, three in part, and rejects four altogether.

There is no ground for the boast of Labour patriots gave that this is the best country in the world for the workers!

TREATMENT OF AN IRISH DEPORTEE.

Mr. Dunnico (Lab.) reported that Miss MacDermott, a London school teacher, was arrested and deported on March 11th. She twice applied to appear before the Advisory Committee, without result. On April 26th she was to be removed from Mountjoy Prison. She resisted being searched and stripped. Whereupon four women officers knocked her down, another sat on her, whilst the four others beat her from head to foot with her boots. They partially stripped her, and hurt her so much that she became unconscious. When she regained consciousness she was drenched with water, almost undressed, and surrounded by soldiers who, she says, were drunk. Miss MacDermott is a delicate woman. On May 5th her face still bore the imprints of the nails of her shoes.

NO INTERVENTION.

The Foreign Office says it "cannot properly intervene" in the case of Richard Brazier, Harry Lloyd, Burt Lorton, Donald Sheridan, J. A. MacDonald, and Charles H. McKinnon, British subjects who are war-opinion prisoners in U.S.A.

ESPERANTO.

Lesson 18.

NUMBERS (continued).

Cardinal Numbers.—1, 2 . . . 10; 100; 1000, unu, du, tri, kvar, kvin, ses, sep, ok, naŭ, dek; cent.; mil.

Ordinal Numbers.—1st, 2nd, etc. Add **-a** to the cardinal numbers—e.g., 1a (**unua**), 2a (**dua**), 3a (**tria**), **etc.**

-Obl- corresponds to the English **-fold** and forms the multiplicatives—i.e., **duobla,** two-fold (double), **triobla,** three-fold, treble, etc.; **centobla,** a hundred-fold, **miliobla,** a thousand-fold; duobla fadeno, a double thread, triobla fadeno, a treble thread.

Obl- can be used also adverbially (i.e., with the ending -e); thus, **duoble** dika, doubly thick; **duoble** du estas kvar, twice two are four; **centoble** dek estas mil, 100 times (a hundred-fold) 10 are 1000.

Po used before numbers means **at the rate of,** or (so many) apiece. Do not confuse it with the preposition **por.** Pomoj **po** 6d. per funto, apples at (the rate of) 6d. a (per) pound.

Most Esperanto grammars call **po** a preposition, but it is apparently an adverb (like the corresponding English word **apiece**), as can be seen from the following examples:

Li donis al ĉiu knabo **po** du pomojn, He gave to each boy two apples **apiece.**

Ili ricevas **po** tri funtojn ĉiusemajne, They receive (at the rate of) three pounds a (every) week.

If **po** were a preposition, we should not use the accusative **-n** in **pomojn** and **funtojn.**

Note the words **pogrande,** wholesale; **pomalgrande,** retail.

...**Fojo,** used with numerals, means **time** (occasion)—e.g., unu fojo or unufoje, once, one time; du fojoj or dufoge, two times, twice; tri foje or trifoj, three times. As we usually mean to imply "**on** two occasions," we generally use the word **fojo** with **-n**; thus, unu fojon, on one occasion, once; du fojojn, on two occasions, twice, etc. La unuan fojon, on the first occasion, the first time.

Dufoje du is practically the equivalent of **duoble du** in the sense "twice two."

-Op used with numbers means (so many) **at a time,** or **together,** thus: **duope,** by twos, two together, two at a time; **triope,** three at a time, three together; **kiomope,** how many at a time?

Vocabulary.

fadeno	thread
forta	strong
ekster	outside (of)
ordinara	ordinary
pago	payment
paĝo	page
se	if
legos	will read
finos	will finish
tago	day
tuta	whole
ni	we
tiom	so (as) many
semajno	a week
kuris	ran

Translate.

Triobla fadeno estas pli forta ol unuobla. Ni ricevas po kvin funtojn semajne (or ĉiusemajne). Por laboro ekster la ordinara) horoj ni ricevas duoblan pagon. Kvaroble dek estas kvardek. Kvarfoje dek estas kvardek. La hundoj kuris al ni kvinope. En la libro estas 300 (tri cent) paĝoj; do (then, so) se mi legos po 30 paĝoj ĉiutage (or en ĉiu tago), mi finos la tutan libron en dek tagoj. Ni legos duoble tiom; ni legos 60 paĝojn ĉiutage.

Jen dek du pomoj; donu al ĉiu el la ses infanoj po du pomojn. La "Daily X." kostas pogrande po 8d. por dekduo.

The British Esperanto Congress takes place this year at Bournemouth, May 18th to 22nd, Whitsuntide.

Tickets, 5/- each, obtainable of P. H. Lewis, Hon. Sec., 12 St. Clements Road, Bournemouth.

Arrangements made for return journey at a fare and a third.

LESSONS FOR PROLETARIAN SCHOOLS.

Some young comrades have written asking that a vocabulary should be added to these lessons. Young comrades should make it their rule to consult a dictionary in the case of any word that is not fully understood. If in the course of these lessons we use words which are not to be found in the ordinary dictionary we shall supply the meaning. In the last lessons we used some Babylonian terms of weight and measure. We repeat these below, with the approximate English equivalents:

1 cubit=18 inches.
1 gan=18 feet.
1 qa=$\frac{3}{4}$ pint.
400 qa=1 gur=3 1-3 bushels.
1 grain=1 troy grain.
180 grains=1 shekel=180 troy grains.
60 shekels=1 mina=22$\frac{1}{2}$ oz. troy.

Taking pure silver at 5/5 per oz., the values would work out as follows:

1 grain=half a farthing.
1 shekel=2/3.
1 mina=£6 15s.

E. Cuq. and B. Meissner have collected current prices from the contract tablets in the time of Hammurabi. From these the following table of average values at the time the code was first promulgated was prepared by Chilperic Edwards:

Corn, wheat, or barley, 7d. per bushel.
Oil (oil of sesame), 4d. per pint.
Toddy (fermented juice of dates), $\frac{1}{2}$d. a quart.
Sheep's wool, 4d. a lb.
Goat's hair, slightly cheaper.
Copper, 9d. per lb.
Iron, 12/- per lb.
A draught ox, 18/6.
A cow, 18/-.
A ram, 3/4.
A sheep, 2/3.
A lamb, 5d.
A male or female slave, £1.
A mantle (the ordinary garment), 1/8 to 1/9.
A house (covering 36 sq. yds., having one story and built of sun-dried brick), £1.
Rent of a similar house (tenant to do repairs), 2/- to 4/- a year.
A house, with land it stands on, £1 10s.
Agricutlural land, 8/6 per acre.

Whilst the price of an ordinary slave was £1, a slave with special qualifications might cost up to £6. It will be observed that an ordinary slave cost little more than an ox, and was the same price as a house, though in his lifetime a slave might build many houses!

By comparing the wages given last week from the code with the prices given above, it will be seen that a workman's wage was little more than a halfpenny a day, and that he would have to work thirty days to buy himself the cheapest sort of garment.

Some of our readers may have noticed that in last week's lesson we said that the Akkadians were a Semitic people. Some authorities declare, however, that they were a Turanian people allied to the Turks and Tartars, who had come down from the mountains in the north at some distant unknown period. These people were later conquered by Semitic tribes coming in from the Arabian deserts, and the Akkadian rulers were thereafter Semitic and bore Semitic names.

Having considered the code of Hammurabi, which the Babylonians believed they had received from a God, it is interesting to compare it with the Laws of Moses, which the Hebrews believed had been givn to them, through Moses, by their God Jahweh, or Jehovah, a name which arose purely from ignorance of the proper way to pronounce Jahweh.

Scholars now regard the Hebrew Pentateuch as having been written at several periods ranging from the eighth century B.C. to the time of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.). They consider that the so-called books of Moses contain at least four systems of legislation, in the following order:

The Book of the Covenant=Exodus xx. to xxiii., 33, and Exodus xxxiv., 26.
The Book of Deuteronomy.
The Law of Holiness=Leviticus xvii.-xxvi.
The Priests' Code=the rest of the Mosaic legislation.

Some scholars are of opinion that the Book of the Covenant was based on the code of Hammurabi. They believe it to have been written in the eighth century B.C. A new wave of Babylonian influence was then rapidly spreading westward, owing to the Assyrian conquests. If, on the other hand, Exodus dates from the time of Moses, and if Moses had an actual existence, it is computed that he must have lived about 500 years after Hammurabi, and that in the land of Canaan which the Hebrews were entering Babylonian legislation was well known.

Whether the laws of Moses were derived from the Babylonian or developed independently, we should not be surprised to find them alike in certain respects, because they were the product of peoples living under conditions which in certain respects were similar.

The code of Hammurabi sanctions and legislates for three classes of persons—the freemen, the Plebeians, and the slaves. The law of Moses does the same. The freeman and the slave is there, and also an intermediate class the "ger," called in the English version "stranger" or "sojourner." original "ger."

As we showed in an earlier lesson, the laws contained in Leviticus were issued at a time of popular unrest, and contained provisions for the relief of debtors ,and slaves and the poor made to placate the people. These laws were not, however, enforced.

On the whole, the laws of Moses are more barbarous than those of Hammurabi, notably in their treatment of slaves, women and offenders against the law. The code of Hammurabi does not treat of religious rites, and contains no punishments for failure to conform to religious belief. The laws of Moses are largely concerned with barbarous religious regulations which to a large extent are of a cruel and savage character, both in their rites and punishments.

Slavery.

Exodus (the Book of the Covenant) deals more hardly with the slave than the Hammurabi code. The code limited the slavery of a free native to three years; Exodus (chapter 21) makes the period six years. It further stipulates that if the man were married when he went into slavery, his wife leaves it with him; but if his master gave him a wife, she and her children remain behind in slavery when the husband goes out free. If the man who is entitled to his freedom prefers to remain behind with his family:

"Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or into the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.

Tragic indeed is this cruel ordinance, and a reminder to us of the atrocities that men have perpetrated upon each other throughout the ages. It is a witness, too, that the most unfortunate classes of humanity have the same affections and tender feelings that the noblest may lay claim to.

It is further provided that if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not regain her freedom as the menservants do.

As to sorcery, Exodus (ch. 20) says: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," and Leviticus declares that the soul that turns to wizards "shall be cut off from among his people."

The Hebrew priests permitted no unauthorised competitors; Leviticus directs that if one of the children of Israel, or a "ger" or stranger, should worship Molech, he shall be stoned to death. Numbers (chapter 15) says that whilst the children of Israel were in the wilderness they found a man gathering sticks on the sabbath day, and that the Lord Jahweh directed Moses that the man should be stoned by the congregation; and this was done, and the man died.

FROM THE PUBLISHERS.

The German Revolution and After.

By Heinrich Strobel. (Jarrolds, 12/6.)

(Continued from last week.)

Mr. Strobel declares that when the German Capitalist Government fell in November 1918, the essential task of the revolution was to complete the destruction of German militarism and to replace the old Government officials by democrats. He considers that Germany was not ripe for large measures of socialisation, and he argues that workers' council control was inadvisable, because: (1) the economic process, in his view, must be carried on by the leaders, and the led and the rank and file cannot organise; (2) because the peasants were hostile to socialism, and the middle class numerous, and therefore rule by workers' and soldiers' council would have meant permanent civil war; (3) because the German proletariat was numerous enough to assert its power through democratic parliamentarism.

The two last reasons conflict. Moreover, Mr. Strobel himself shows that the German proletariat has failed to assert itself through democratic parliamentarism. Moreover, if the working class could assert itself through democratic parliamentarism, why the revolution of which he expresses approval, and the workers' councils, which he declares were necessary to that revolution?

Mr. Strobel fails, indeed, to show clarity of reasoning in this book of his. He is at pains to praise and justify members of the Independent Socialist Party to which he belongs. Thus he approves Ledebour, who was active in the workers' and soldiers' councils, and demanded all power for them; Kautsky, who denounces workers' council rule; and Haase Ditmann and Barth, who entered the Coalition Government with the Social Democrats.

Mr. Strobel declares that the failure of the German revolution, which he frankly admits, is mainly due to the fact that the Coalition Government of Right and Independent Social Democrats, which took office at the height of the revolutionary crisis, gave power to the reactionary troops and disarmed the troops that made the revolution. The retreat from the front was entrusted to Hindenburg by the Cabinet of six. The Independents had three members of the Cabinet; but, says Mr. Strobel, they "were persuaded by the insistence of the over-anxious Social Democrats," who feared mass uprisings. The workers' councils were temperate and sensible, and secured order where the old officers utterly failed, Mr. Strobel declares; yet he thus excuses the members of his party who assisted in giving the command of the military machine back to the reaction. The Supreme Army Command took immediate advantage of the opportunity. Here is one of its instructions:

"Order and security in the homeland will again appear only with the return of the field army. It is, however, an indispensable pre-requisite that the field army should once more be placed under the firm control of the leaders, and that it should be convinced of the high importance and absolute necessity of protecting Germany from Bolshevism. When the field army crosses the western border, precautions must be taken to prevent contamination by the revolutionary influences in the locality. . . ."

The so-called Socialist Cabinet had given the army back to Hindenburg: what wonder that others were arming? The Spartacists began to form a Red Guard; but when the soldiers' councils protested that this was a mark of distrust, the project was dropped, according to Mr. Strobel. Eichhorn, of the Independent Party, who had been appointed Chief of Police by the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Council, formed a new armed police force. Otto Wels, the Social Democrat, whom the Coalition Government had made Military Commander of Berlin (the Otto Wells who is still prominent to-day in the Second International) formed a Republican Militia, composed of reactionary elements, to hold the Left in check.

When, on November 21st, a procession of people marched to the Chief of Police to demand the release of Left political prisoners, and was dispersing satisfied, the soldiers of Social-Democratic Wels appeared and fired on the crowd, and several people were killed.

Before the end of the month the Coalition Government had formed an "Iron Division" against a possible "invasion of Russian Bolshevism." On December 6th a procession of unarmed men was fired on by Government troops, and again several persons were killed. On the same day a contingent of troops drawn from various regiments attempted the arrest of the Executive Committee of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, but was prevented by the appearance of revolutionary troops. The reactionary troops then went to the Palace of the Imperial Chancellor and called upon Ebert, the Right Social Democrat, to become President of the German Republic. If the arrest of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council Executive had been achieved, and had the tone of the people been favourable, Ebert would doubtless have accepted the invitation. As it was, he replied evasively that he must consult his colleagues.

Reaction was having its fling. Incitements to "kill Liebknecht," because of his outstanding Left position, were pasted on the public hoardings and distributed on thousands of handbills, the Government taking no step to suppress them. A new general commander, named Leguis, who tolerated no soldiers' councils, was appointed.

The Government was now endeavouring to remove the revolutionary National Sailors' Division from the Royal Castle and Mews, which they had occupied since the day of the revolution. The sailors agreed to go when they received the arrears of pay due to them, but Wells would not agree to this condition, and the sailors therefore made him prisoner. Ledebour, the Independent, intervened to procure a peaceful settlement; but Leguis bombarded the castle and occupied it whilst the sailors retired to the mews. The Independent members of the Government succeeded in negotiating a settlement, but as a result of this incident the Independent Socialists left the Government.

During the weeks that had intervened since the workers made the revolution on November 9th, the military power had gone back to the reaction behind the smoke screen of a Socialist Government.

As the military grip upon them strengthened, the revolutionary spirit of the workers had declined and the influence of time-serving politicians had increased.

The Spartacists had demanded all power for the workers' and soldiers' councils. The Independents had made the same claim, but only till the election of a Parliamentary Constituent Assembly, which they wished to postpone till the gains of the revolution had been consolidated. In the meantime, the Coalition Government, created by Ebert, with the assent of the old order, was to continue in

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The Hebrew priests, like other ecclesiastics who have followed them in later times, were great stirrers up of warfare. Deuteronomy (chapter 7) gives the following instruction:

"When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee. . . .

"And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt strike them; and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto tehm:

"Neither shall thou make marriage with them. . . .

"For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee utterly."

office. Therefore, the real power would not rest with the workers' and soldiers' council in any case.

The Right Social Democrats assented to the Independent plan, but insisted upon an early election. On the matter being put to the workers' and soldiers' council, it accepted the Social-Democratic view, refused to take power, and fixed the Parliamentary election for January 19th.

The facts given by Mr. Strobel are important, but his views are confused, and the facts he leaves out are often more important than those he gives. He suggests that the reaction was largely due to the extreme policies of the Spartacists which terrified the Right Social Democrats and so caused them to turn to the reaction for assistance.

He ignores the fact that the Right Social Democrats and Trade Unionists had made a pact with the employers, limiting the objects of the revolution to the recognition of Trade Unionism, the eight-hour day, and such minor conditions. The Right Social Democrats by that pact renewed the fealty to Capitalism they displayed during the war, and debarred themselves from movng towards Socialism.

OVERHEARD IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

Well-dressed Onlooker: Why don't they ever get Thomas, Henderson, and Clynes to speak at these meetings?

Docker: Gawd blime! Why, they're too busy dusting tables at Buckingham Palace!

OUTING.

Federation House, George Lane, South Woodford, Whit Sunday, 3 to 10 p.m.

Music, Recitations, Songs, Speeches.
Literature on sale.

Tickets, including tea, 1/-, may be obtained from the "Workers' Dreadnought,"
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WORKERS' FRIEND CLUB,
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Music.
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Tickets, 3d. each, may be obtained from the "Workers' Dreadnought," or at the door.

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Flag Waving and War.

There is Union Jack wagging and there is Red Flag wagging when war is talked of, fellow-worker.

The Red Flag wagging is the most popular before the war, but afterwards the Red Flags mostly go down and the mobs follow the Union Jacks.

"Why is that?"

Why? It is quite simple, fellow-worker: the Union Jacks sweep on in action, and the Red Flags stand still, or are furled, and some of them even follow the Union Jacks.

That is what happened in the last war. The Labour Party had a great meeting in Trafalgar Square against the war with all the Red-flagging imaginable; but in one day the Labour leaders had thrown down the Red Flags and hoisted the Red, White and Blue.

"Ah, but this time it will be different. The workers have learnt their lesson in the last war, and this time it is not a case of fighting Imperial Germany, but Soviet Russia far away. The Labour Party could never officially support such a war."

Well, well, fellow-optimist; suppose you are right about that; what do you hope from the Labour Party and the Red Flags in the Square?

"Councils of Action," you say.

Indeed, fellow-worker, you should call them Councils of Resolutions.

Will the mob follow councils that merely make speeches and resolutions?

Or will the mob obey the Government that creates economic crises to force men to enlist; that has forces to bring up and punish, unwilling reservists and conscripts, that controls the Press, the schools and the pulpits, and through them thunders forth stories of atrocities, of massacres, of "our boys" abroad, of insults and dangers to "our country.

The Government will not mark time when it is making war: it will act—and swiftly.

As for the masses, unless some clear alternative action is presented to them, they will presently fall into line under the pressure of circumstances created by vigorous Government action.

What is the most you can expect from Labour leader led Councils of Action, fellow-worker?

Can you expect more than verbal expressions of disapproval of the war?

Messrs. Henderson, Clynes, Thomas, Macdonald, and the other Labour Party leaders, do not approve of action to interfere with Governments. They consider that the people should obey the men who were returned in the Parliamentary elections, whatever those men do.

The Government will not call an election on the eve of war. Therefore, if the Government should make a war, we are all bound to tolerate it—we may protest, but we must not resist. That is approved Labour Party doctrine.

"In case of war, can nothing be done, then?"

Oh yes, fellow-worker, something can be done if the workers want to do something. Something can be done that would place the Councils of Resolution in just the position their leaders enjoy. Something could be done that would transform the Labour Trade Union General Staff, and any Councils of Action it might create, into mediating bodies. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's lesser colleagues might then be running between the Government and another power making conciliatory proposals, and Mr. Macdonald himself might be calling representatives of the Government and "the other side" to meet him in his room in the House of Commons.

"What would that 'other power' be: what would be the 'other side'?"

Indeed, fellow-worker, do you not know?

The other side should be the workers' shop councils: the Soviets in field and factory, railway and dockyard, and also the services run by the State and the local authorities. Those Councils of the people, without whom the war could not be carried on, could oppose the war with crushing effect.

"Would the mediations of the Labour leaders be successful? Would they be able to get the war re-started as they got the Norfolk labourers back to work on the farms for 25/- a week?

Ah; now you are asking something very interesting, fellow-worker! The question you are asking is whether the rank and file of the working class of this country has got its eyes open yet.

Is there a Workers' Council in your workshop; and if not, why not?

THE SEARCHLIGHT.

THE "ONE BIG UNION BULLETIN"
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The One Big Union seeks to organise the workers on class lines. Read about it.
Eugene Sue's marvellous story: "The Mysteries of the People," or "History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages," now running in serial form.
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Weekly, one penny, from 21 Frith Street, Soho, W.

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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.
OUTDOOR MEETINGS.

Every Thursday and **Monday**, 7.30 p.m., Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebery Avenue. J. Welsh and others.

Every Friday, 7.30 p.m., Broad Street and Berwick Street, W. W. Pratt, J. Humphrey, N. Smyth, J. Grove, and others.

Sunday, May 27th.—Finsbury Park, 7 p.m.

COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT.
Central London Group meets Thursdays, 152 Fleet Street, 8 p.m. For Group business, 9 to 10 p.m.

"DREADNOUGHT" £1,000 FUND.

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A. J., 5½d.; Irene Smith, 1/- (weekly); J. E. Matthews, 4/- (1/- weekly); J. Figgins, 2/- (monthly); Per E. Wright, 10/6; Collection, per J. Welsh, Myddleton Street, 6d.; M. Watkins, 3/6. Total for week, £1 1s. 11½d. Total, £10 2s. 7½d.

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