ONE PENNY

Workers' Dreadnought

FOR GOING TO THE ROOT.

Vol. X. No. 40. December 22, 1923. WEEKLY.

The Decay and Restoration of Civilisation.

THE DECAY AND RESTORATION OF CIVILISATION, *Part I. The Philosophy of Civilisation, by Albert Schweitzer, translated from the German by A. T. Campion (A. & C. Black, 5s. 6d.).*

The author explains that this work is the first part of a complete philosophy of civilisation, which he has developed in four parts.

He contends that the ultimate nature of civilisation is ethical; that the essence of civilisation "depends on the mental disposition of the individuals and nations who exist in the world; that that it is only in his struggle to become ethical that man comes to possess real value as a personality"; that if the ethical foundation is lacking, "then civilisation collapses, even when in other directions creative and intellectual forces of the strongest nature are at work."

He adds:

"Only as we succeed in attaining a strong and worthy theory of the universe, and find in it strong and worthy convictions, shall we again become capable of producing a new civilisation. . . .

"Civilisation, put simply, consists in our giving ourselves, as human beings, to the effort to attain the perfecting of the human race and the actualisation of progress of every sort in the circumstances of humanity and of the objective world. . . .

". . . . As long as we look on our existence as meaningless, there is no point whatever in desiring to effect anything in the world. We become workers for that universal, spiritual and material progress which we call civilisation, only in so far as we affirm that the world and life possess some meaning; or, which is the same thing, only in so far as we think optimistically."

All this contains much truth, but the author has not given us any, only a very guarded and slight definition of what he regards as an ethical basis of society. Opinion on ethics differs completely from age to age. Moreover, the various individual members of society in each period are at various stages of development regarding the ethical conceptions which are being gradually established or gradually passing away. The author would, of course, point out that a final standard of ethics cannot be set forth, because as we have observed, ethics, like all other features of human society, are evolving and are in a continual state of flux.

Nevertheless, since the author has promised "a complete philosophy of civilisation" with an ethical basis, it seems to us that he has laid upon himself the obligation to set forth a general working programme of ideals and conduct to be applied to the main human relationships and conditions of life in the present age.

So far as the present volume is concerned, Schweitzer has made no such attempt. The nearest he gets to it are in the following passages:

"Civilisation is, then, two-fold in its nature; it realises itself in the supremacy of reason, first, over the forces of nature; and, secondly, over the dispositions of men.

"Which of these kinds of progress is most truly progress in civilisation? The latter, though it is the least open to observation. Why? For two reasons. First, the supremacy which we secure by reason over external nature represents not unqualified progress, but a progress which brings with its advantages also disadvantages, which may work in the direction of barbarism. The reason why the economic circumstances of our time endanger civilisation is to be sought for partly in the fact that we have pressed into our service natural forces which can be embodied in machines. But with that there must be such a supremacy of reason over the dispositions of men that they, and the nations which they form, will not use against one another the power which the control of these forces gives them, and thus plunge one another into a struggle for existence which is far more terrible than that between men in a state of nature. . . ."

"And what is meant by the supremacy of the reason over human dispositions? It means that both individuals and the mass let their willing be determined by the material and spiritual good of the whole and the individuals that compose it. . . ."

Only under a free communism could the author's broadly indicated ideas for an ethical social basis be realised. Only under communism could the evils he castigates in the present system. This is our view. To us free communism is the essential ethical basis of society.

Schweitzer, however, glides over the economic basis of society in a few cursory phrases, refusing to commit himself to any view:

"We are, indeed, far from unanimity as to the plan needed for the reform of our anti-democratic plan; others believe that our arrangements: one section sketches out an mistake lies in the fact that democratic principles have not yet been applied consistently; others again see salvation only in a Socialist or Communist organisation of Society."

Schweitzer is apparently searching for the key to the social riddle which others have discovered. It is daily offered for his inspection, but he thrusts it aside, refusing to recognise it for what it is. He is like a man who wanders in a dark room praying for light, though all that is needful to obtain it is to draw the curtains.

Schweitzer's criticisms of present society are nevertheless, in many respects, remarkably true and scathing. They may lead others to a point at which they will see further than he has done.

He observes that philosophy, once "an active worker producing universal convictions about civilisation," has come to mean merely the history of philosophy, the creative spirit having disappeared. Philosophers may now reflect on the results achieved by historical and natural science, for the purpose of establishing a theory of the universe, but they give no attention to developing ideals of civilisation.

Scheweitzer says in one part of his book:

"The only conceivable way to bring about a reconstruction of our world on new lines is first of all to become new men ourselves under the old circumstances."

Yet, in spite of that saying, and in spite of his belittling of the importance of economic institutions, he goes not to show how fundamental economic circumstances affect the people in just this very matter of becoming new social beings.

He asserts that ability to be a pioneer of progress; in others words, to understand what civilisation is and to work for it, depends on being a thinker and on being free. The more completely the activities are absorbed in the struggle for existence,

"The more strongly will a man's impulse to improve his own conditions find expression in the ideals of his thought. Ideals of self-interest then get mixed up with and spoil his ideals of civilisation.

"Material and spiritual freedom are closely bound up with one another. Civilisation pre-supposes free men, for only by free men can it be thought out and brought to realisation. . . .

"If society had so developed that a continually widening circle of the population could enjoy a modest, well-assured condition of comfort, civilisation would have been much more helped than it has been by all the material conquests which are lauded in its name."

All this is an argument for Communism, whether Schweitzer is aware of that or not. He adds that even property-owners are more and more completely drawn into the struggle for existence, because of the insecurity of present-day economic conditions, a fact acutely felt in Germany.

He points to the growing lack of freedom resulting from the factory system, and from overwork. He observes truly, that "for two or three generations numbers of individuals have been living as workers merely, not as human beings."

The children are injured by the overwork of the parents, who cannot devote themselves to them. As they grow up the children, too, become the slaves of over-long hours. They feel more and more the need for external distractions. They lack the mental collectedness to employ their few hours of leisure in self-cultivation and serious thought. They require idleness, forgetfulness, entertainment. The entertainment itself must be superficial, trivial. The theatres and newspapers, the novels, have been adapted to this condition. The institutions which should sustain the spiritual life are penetrated by superficiality, and exercise a reflex action, imposing on all a state of mental vacuity. There is a lowered conception of what mankind should be.

Specialisation increases production, but makes no call on the man, only on some of his faculties. The creative and artistic powers are atrophied.

Communism has its remedy for all that: useful labour at necessary productive work for all; leisure and opportunity to do creative work for all; abolition of the useless toil entailed by production for profit and buying and selling.

Schweitzer deplores the fact that modern life does not allow us to deal with each other as man to man, and that forgetting our relationship with our fellows, we are on the path towards inhumanity. The consciousness is lost that every man should be an object of concern, just because he is man. A social mentality is created which discourages humanity in individuals.

Quite so: humanity is considered improvident. Schweitzer adds that indifference, stand offishness and want of sympathy pass for the behaviour of the man of the world.

Society has ceased to allow men and women, as such, a human value and a human dignity. Many sections of the human race are regarded merely as raw material and property. War is talked of as mere operations on a chess-board. Individuals are looked on as figures or objects of the material world.

The lack of spiritual independence in the people of to-day, the stultifying effect of over-organisation which represses creative activity, is also enlarged upon.

Political, religious and economic associations aim at the greatest possible inner cohesion, with the highest external activity. People are so much imbued with the thought of discipline from childhood up that they lose the sense of individuality, and only desire to think in the spirit of some group or other. It is assumed that certain established views must be taken into account, which one cannot hope to alter, and which are determined by nationality, creed, party, or social position. People are lost in the mass. They lose concern for their own nature, and are acutely susceptible to the views which society and its organs of expression have put into circulation. They renounce the privilege of thinking as free personalities, and let themselves be guided by a clique. They cease to reflect lest they be brought into inner conflict with the body to which they belong. The opinion is current that the action of the community or the organisation, as the case may be, are not to be judged by standards of morality, but by expediency alone.

Schweitzer acutely observes that whilst nationalism has been invested with a halo, the closeness with which the nations are inter-related is shown by the fact that they have all suffered from the same decadence.

The author has made some acute observations, but in many respects he has not progressed so far as had William Godwin in his "Political Justice."

Let us see what his future efforts may bring forth.

The German Koltchak, by C. Zinviev.

It must be admitted that the probability of Seeckt becoming the dictator in the very near future is a serious one. Hitler and Co. are German Purishkeviaches.* They have a certain backing among the nationalist petty-bourgeoisie; but their programme will not bear examination, and they themselves are more like buffoons than serious, active counter-revolutionaries.

But General Seeckt is another proposition. His movements are secret and cautious. He has managed to secure the backing both of the prudent section of the German Social-democrats and of the big bourgeoisie headed by Stinnes. His policy is to consolidate the big bourgeoisie throughout the country and to creat a solid bourgeois constitutional *régime*. To this extent Seeckt constitutes a most serious menace to the German revolution.

What is the relation between German Koltchakism (Seeckt) and the "November Republic"?

The November Republic is personified by President Ebert, the social-democrats, and the more "freedom-loving" section of the bourgeois-democrats. Koltchakism is personified by General Seeckt, who for some time has been playing a prominent, and indeed a decisive, *rôle* in every German democratic Government.

We are again hearing the assertion made that Fascism has defeated the November Republic in Germany, and that the dictatorship of Seeckt marks a military reaction to it. These assertions are, to say the least, inaccurate.

For the sake of analogy, let us recall how Koltchakism developed in Russia.

Koltchakism in Russia was begotten by "revolutionary democracy" itself. The revolutionary democrats, forced to the wall by the revolutionary proletariat, themselves handed power first to General Kornilov and then to General Alexeiev? Did not the revolutionary democrats, in the person of the Siberian socialist revolutionaries and mencheviks, call Admiral Koltchak to power, who then, as was only to be expected, turned upon the revolutionary democrats and rent them?

Something similar is now taking place in Germany. What we are now observing amounts to this: the German November democrats are handing over power by instalments to the German Koltchak, General Seeckt.

With the first German revolution (November, 1918) power passed entirely into the hands of the social-democrats, who set up the first "revolutionary" Government of "national representatives," consisting of social-democrats and independent social-democrats. Five years have elapsed since that period. During these five years the German social-democrats and independents have been employed in handing power over by instalments, first to the bourgeoisie and then to the reactionary militarists. German social-democracy "begat" the November democracy. November democracy "begat" the German Koltchak, Seeckt.

German Koltchakism, like Russian Koltchakism in its time, is the logical development and consummation of the idea of revolutionary democracy, or, adapted to Germany, of the idea of the November Republic. One cannot therefore assert that any distinction or contradiction exists between the November Republic and the dictatorship of Seeckt. Seeckt is the child, the legal heir, of the November Republic, as Koltchak was the legal heir of the revolutionary democracy of Kerensky.

The revolutionary democrats are unable to bridle the communist proletariat, and therefore a Koltchak or a Seeckt inevitably comes to bridle revolutionary democracy. That is the logic of things. The German proletariat having shown that it is as yet unable to exercise its dictatorship immediately, the November Revolution must in its logical development lead inevitably to the dictatorship of General Seeckt. General Seeckt has not defeated Ebert. As a matter of fact, Ebert needs General Seeckt much more than Seeckt needs Ebert. It is very possible that when Seeckt finally establishes his dictatorship, he may think it advisable to make the social-democrat Ebert his President. Why not? In a big affair like that, a social-democratic President would be a very useful asset. But Ebert, on the other hand, could not remain President for a day without the support of General Seeckt. Seeckt and Ebert are the two sides of one coin. On the front are the words, "The November Republic," and on the back the words, "The Dictatorship of Seeckt."

Similarly, it would be just as incorrect to assume that a fundamental antagonism of interests exists between General Seeckt on the one hand and German Fascism on the other. It is true that Generel Seeckt and the official Fascist organisations are not one and the same. But even Admiral Koltchak, in the first period of his activity, was in favour of the Constitutional Assembly, and not of a "united and indivisible Russia," and certainly not in favour of "autocracy, orthodoxy, and nationalism." If we talk not of trifles, but of serious matters, *i.e.*, the victory of the bourgeoisie over the proletarian revolution in Germany, and the consolidation of the bourgeois dictatorship, then the Fascisti, Seeckt, and Ebert are engaged in one and the same business, in which a certain amount of division of labour has been arranged. Seeckt, Ebert, and Noske are merely different forms of Fascism.

Instead of encouraging the German workers with the talk of differences between General Seeckt and Fascism, instead of basing our calculations upon such differences, it would be far better to study the facts carefully. Let us recall recent happenings. The Bavarian Fascisti effected a *coup détat*. What did General Seeckt and the social-democratic President Ebert do? They took advantage of the fact in order to declare a state of siege throughout the whole of Germany. This was done so skilfully that considerable sections of the social-democratic workers were at first deceived by the manœuvres of Seeckt and Ebert, and seriously believed that the state of siege was declared, not as a measure directed against the revolutionary proletariat, but in order to deal with the *coup détat* of the Bavarian Fascisti.

Again, let us take Red Saxony. While General Seeckt, with the approval of the social-democratic President Ebert, was concentrating 60,000 troops of the White Reichswehr in Saxony, it was given out that the concentration was directed against White Bavaria. But when the concentration was complete, the mask was discarded and the White Reichswehr overthrew the workers' Government of Saxony.

Take, again, Thuringia. The Fascisti were concentrating their well-armed forces on the frontier of Thuringia, where also a workers' Government was in power. The whole social-democratic and democratic press raised the alarm that the Fascisti were about to occupy Thuringia, whereupon General Seeckt, in order to save the situation, and with the blessing of Ebert, sent his republican Reichswehr into Thuringia. Thanks to the efforts of the social-democratic press, many social-democratic workers regarded the occupation of Thuringia by the republican Reichswehr almost as a victory for the German proletariat. If the Reichswehr did not occupy Thuringia, they said, the Fascisti would. While the right social-democratic leaders are terrifying the workers with the spectre of Hitler Fascism, they are in fact setting Seeckt on the Fascist throne. In short, the heroes of the November Republic, the German social-democrats, are handing over power to Seeckt by instalments. The thistles of German Koltchakism are springing up thickly in the flower-beds of German social-democracy.

Will this go on for long? It is hardly possible. There can be now little doubt that Germany will have to pass through a period of White Terror. There is also little doubt that the path of the German proletariat will be a difficult one, and that many and heavy sacrifices will be demanded of it. It is now certain that the path of the German proletariat revolution will be much more painful than we at first believed. But the fundamental factors which are dragging Germany to the edge of the abyss, and which are leading to a revolutionary crisis—viz., international politics, the financial crisis, the food crisis, etc.—are still operating and are steadily becoming more acute.

The German proletariat will have to pay a heavy price for its victory, but nothing can cheat it of that victory. Koltchakism will be a no more permanent phenomenon on German soil than it was on Russian soil. The German proletariat is being tested in the fire of painful experience, and is acquiring the qualities it needs most for victory, namely, a fighting temper, distrust of the social-democrats, and military preparedness. Revolutionary determination will be hardened under the blows of Koltchakism.

[Our comment upon this article of Zinoviev is that, whatever its author may have intended, it exposes the futility of the Moscow policy (largely sponsored by Zinoviev himself) of forming a united front between the communists and the social-democrats. In practice this united front means that the communists back the social-democrats, and the social-democrats continue to pull the strings.]

WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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FROM THE PUBLISHERS

THREE SISTERS *and other plays by Anton Tchehov, translated from the Russian by Constance Garnett* (*Chatto and Windus*), *3s. 6d.*

These short plays, translated with consummate skill and great beauty of language, are full of the magic of Tchehov; that strange subtle melancholy interwoven with details that are sordid and coarse, crude, vivid, commonplace and strange, from which there rises a rare spiritual beauty, a poetry of the finest essence.

Mysterious and sad is the title play, the brief tale of three unfortunate women.

"Tell me, why is it I am so happy today?" asks Irina, "as though I were sailing, with the great blue sky above me, and big white birds flying over it. Why is it, why?"

Vershinin says to Masha, whom he loves, but may not wed:

"You are a splendid, wonderful woman. Splendid! Wonderful! It's dark, but I see the light in your eyes. . . .

"I love your eyes, your movements, I see them in my dreams . . . splendid, wonderful woman!"

Ah; these marriage tangles whose artificiality enlightened Russians, of all peoples, have been best able to understand!

Masha in the midst of her trouble speaks ever and anon a strange refrain:

"By the sea-strand an oak tree green . . . upon that oak a chain of gold."

At the tragic close of the play Olga, the schoolmistress, embraces her sisters, musing:

"Time will pass, and we shall be forgotten, our faces will be forgotten, our voices, and how many there were of us; but our sufferings will pass into joy for those who will live after us, happiness and peace will be established on earth, and they will remember kindly, and bless those who have lived before. Oh, dear sisters, our life is not ended yet. We shall live! The music is so gay, so joyful, and it seems as though a little more and we shall know what we are living for, why we are suffering . . . if we only knew—if we only knew!"

Thus beautifully is expressed the prevailing thought that has animated a generation of Russian literature; hope arises out of sorrow, the almond blossom breaks forth on the bare twigs of the tree growing from the rubbish heap. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

What a tremendous range of subjects has Tchehov! What a knowledge of life among all classes! What a sympathy and understanding for all frailties! The nobility, rich and pompous, or fallen and struggling with debt and poverty; the small, striving middle-class; the workers; the submerged waifs of poverty. All this society of shams he sees—and knows that it will pass.

A ghost sketch "On the High Road" is intensely dramatic and moving. Only a Russian could have produced such a drama. The immaterial and the ideal clearly transcend the material in their hold on the characters, immersed as many of them are in sordid cures and vices. In the roadside tavern are gathered a crowd of poor people, prepared to spend the night huddled up on the floor, or the few rude benches; pilgrims, beggars and travellers. The old pilgrim is tenderly waited on by strange women. The factory lad addresses him with reverence. The fallen, penniless landowner craves the innkeeper for more vodka, offering in return his overcoat, his sole garment, though he has nothing under it save his skin. The innkeeper refuses to commit the sin of accepting his only garment. The landowner in his agonised longing for drink, accusing and yet excusing himself for the deed, at last offers a gold locket containing the portrait of his wife, who left him on their wedding day for a lover, and for whose sake he has gone mad and fallen to this degraded plight.

The pilgrims and wayfarers crowd round to see the portrait. A traveller, once a serf of the landowner, enters and tells the story, The wayfarers in pity give their money for more drinks for the fallen landowner.

There is a carriage accident outside. A lady is brought in to rest: it is the landowner's wife. She spurns him. He weeps at her feet.

A tramp who is a bully and a thief had previously terrorised all the company, forced the factory worker to vacate his bench for him, and the innkeeper to remove his boots. He springs forward, seizes the landowner's wife, and urges:

"Come, you might give him just one look! Comfort him with one kind word! For God's sake!"

The landowner's wife only resists the tramp, exclaiming: "Take this . . . crazy man away from me."

The tramp cries: "Then go to the devil, you damned woman!" He swings the axe. The crowd drag him back. The coachman carries the lady out of the inn.

The landowner clutches at the air with his hands: "Marie . . . where are you, Marie?"

The tramp asks: "Have I killed her?" The innkeeper answers: "Thank God: your life's safe this time."

Then, strangely, the tramp weeps:

"I didn't kill her then. . . ." He staggers to his bench. "It was not my luck to die from a stolen axe." He sinks down on his coat, and sobs:

"Oh, misery! Cruel misery! Have pity on me, good Christians!"

FROM LUTHER TO STEINER, by Ernst *Boldt, translated from the German by Agnes Blake* (*Methuen, 7s. 6d.*).

This is far from being a clear and lucid volume. To establish a logical connection between the ideas of Luther and Steiner and to give a rational historic survey of religious thought lying between is not attempted. The author confusedly indicates that Rudolf Steiner is a sort of theosophist called an anthroposophist, and that he is the founder of the sect which, beside a variety of religious beliefs, advocates what is called the "Three-fold Commonwealth." This apparently includes three Parliaments, one for spiritual matters, one for personal rights (which is to be backed by the police and military), and one for industry.

The book and the sect are typical post-war products of a defeated nation.

The perilous economic situation of Germany has produced, on the one hand, a desire for State assistance to industry; and on the other, a rebellion against the tyranny of the profiteer. Therefore, in harmony with the times, the author and the sect advocate that men should be overseers, not owners, of property and industries. The aggressive nationalism is also significant of the time. Boldt declares: "The German Spirit is to-day fulfilling its appointed task through the agency of Rudolf Steiner." He protests that Germans must turn away from "strange gods, be their names Vivekananda or Newton, Bergson or Lenin, Darwin or Wilson." He asks: from foreign vampires?" "Germany is sick from foreign campires?" "Germany is sick because of the un-German taint now poisoning her blood." He adds:

". . . . Only when we Germans, through a true apprehension of the Living Essence of Christ, shall come to apprehend the I—CH dwelling within *us*. Then, too, shall Germany be made whole; then, too, shall we bring health to all the other peoples of the earth—that true health, for which, albeit unconsciously, all are yearning, but to which they can never attain of their own unassisted efforts. What Lucifer and Ahriman have to bestow, that each one of them possesses; but that which verily is CHRIST's, they must consent to receive from us:

"O German spirit 'tis thy goal
Once more a sick world to make whole."

Thus, with patter called from a hocuspocus of bygone superstitions, are some ignorant people gulled in these days of trial in Germany. Not alone in Germany, for there are many here also who prefer rather to dabble in fraudulent magic and vulgar superstitution than to face hard facts.

Unemployed Workers Organisation.

There has been trouble at Ockendon Farm Colony, run by the West Ham Distress Committee. On December 5th the meat served up for dinner was rotten. The men declined to touch the dinner (with the exception of two weak-kneed, spineless individuals); they also decided not to return to work. Eventually, the superintendent substituted bread and cheese and pudding for the dinner, added bacon for tea, and promised there would be no such meat in future. This satisfied the men, and they returned to work after a delay of about two hours.

The washing arrangements on this Colony are far from being what they should be. No hot water is provided for the men to wash their shirts and underclothing, neither is any light provided for them to wash themselves night and morning.

The men also wear out what relics of clothing they possess for the princely sum of 2s. 6d. per week, in addition to board and lodging served out in well-known institution fashion: this in and in return for working during the duration of daylight.

Thus does the West Ham Distress Committee make these men more distressful and despondent than ever—and in a borough "represented" by three "Socialists" and a "Labour" Council, if not a "Labour" Board of Guardians. It is time the men kicked over the traces in this and similar Slave Colonies—such as Laindon Farm, Hollesley Bay, and Belmont.

G. RICHARDSON,
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184, St. Leonard's Road,
Poplar, E.14.

UNEMPLOYED WORKERS' ORGANISATION.

All communications for the Unemployed Workers' Organisation should be addressed either to A. J. Mummery, Secretary of the Area Council, at 19, Leonard's Buildings, Old Ford; or to C. Soderberg, Secretary of the Central Committee, at the Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road.

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Our View.

One "Forward" Policy.

MR. W. STEWART, M.P., in the Glasgow *Forward*, asks: "What kind of Government shall we get?" and answers: "We shall get a "Capitalist Government," because "there is a Capitalist majority in Parliament." The statement is absolutely correct (though there are also additional reasons why there will be a Capitalist Government at the present time).

It is interesting to observe that there is a strong cleavage of opinion between the Scottish Labour M.P.'s who write in the Glasgow *Forward*, and the other Labour politicians whose utterances are published in the New Leader. Mr. Stewart, in the *Forward*, urges that the Labour Party must wait to take Office until another General Election has given it a victory at the polls.

Mr. Thomas Johnston, M.P., the Editor of the *Forward*, says:

"If Mr. Baldwin resigns, as he is almost certain to do, and the King sends for Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, a Labour Government will be formed. *Before Mr. MacDonald could do anything he would require to come to the country for a mandate. He would require to get a majority before he could carry his Budget, or take over the mines and railways.*"

Mr. John Wheatley, M.P., also in the *Forward*, says:

"Insidious attempts are being made in the Press to influence Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to adopt one of two courses: (1) To enter into a coalition with the Liberals on condition that certain Socialist proposals, such as the nationalisation of mines and railways, were to be passed; (2) to form a Labour Government and pursue a watered Parliamentary policy to which Liberals and many Tories would have no deep-rooted hostility. This policy might include the pacification of Europe, the provision of relief work for the unemployed, reform in the old-age pension law, and more generous treatment to ex-Service men and the dependents of the dead. The Capital Levy would be relegated to a Committee of Inquiry.

"Our Leader is too wise and too faithful to adopt either of these suicidal courses. Liberalism stands for the defence of competitive Capitalism. The measure of social progress in the future will be the extent to which competitive Capitalism is destroyed. Labour's policy is diametrically opposed to that of Liberalism. . . .

"Such a coalition or compromise is impossible. Were it possible, and adopted, it would break the hearts of those gallant men and women whose sacrifices and enthusiasm have carried our movement to the gates of the promised land. . . .

"The second course would be but a coalition of ideas, and be equally treacherous and disastrous. I could understand a Labour Government being formed to promote a bold Socialist policy with a view to soliciting for it the support of the public, but for which, because of its very Socialist nature, they would expect no support outside of Labour in the House of Commons. . . . A bold policy might even now be triumphant at the polls. A colourless, diluted policy would be rejected with contempt, and the people might again turn in desperation to the plausible proposals of a Liberal mountebank.

"It must also be borne in mind that the Labour Party has to face not merely a hostile House of Commons, but an even more hostile and united House of Lords. We are now entering into close grips with the forces of Capitalism. We require greater courage and more formidable weapons. Nothing is to be gained by attracting the support of a few weak-kneed people. In the desperate struggles of the immediate future they would be only in the way. It would be political madness to leave the impression on the public mind that the Labour Movement is not a menace to vested interests. These interests are keeping our people in the depths of poverty, and are now actually threatening to throttle our national existence. We must destroy them rapidly in self-preservation. The people of Glasgow will support us in this task, and so will every other section of the populace, if we nail our colours to the mast and leave timidity in the rear.

"Our people are prepared for annual Elections. It is obvious that we stand to gain by the frequent collapse of Capitalist Governments and the frequent presentation of our case to the public. Let us look on in calmness and confidence while the shattered forces of the enemy are being reformed for the final battle."

So much for the policy of the *Forward* group; it is a refusal to remain in office without power—an affirmation that, should the Labour Party be called to office, it must either decline or accept only on condition of calling an immediate General Election.

* * *

The "New Leader" Policy.

Mr. H. N. BRAILSFORD, editor of the *New Leader*, adopts the diametrically opposite view. He urges that the Labour Party should accept office for a short term, in order to deal with unemployment, by "big constructive works," and by "humanising the working of relief," to initiate a housing scheme, to recognise Soviet Russia, and to set up inquiries into the Capital Levy, the relations of finance and currency to unemployment, on agriculture, also to reform the electoral machinery and Parliamentary procedure.

This is, of course, the "watered" programme denounced by Mr. Wheatly. Mr. Brailsford adds: "The danger before us leaps out from some of the extensive programmes which have already appeared in Labour speeches and in print." Evidently he is referring to such programmes as those put forward by Mr. Wheatly and Mr. Johnston, who both advocate, as first measures for a Labour Government, nationalisation and democratic control of the land, mines and railways.

Mr. Wheatly adds "measures for the better distribution of the national wealth."

Mr. Johnston adds measures to relieve unemployment, widows' pensions, improved old age pensions, and the cutting down of Cabinet Ministers' salaries to the £400 a year of an ordinary Member of Parliament.

Mr. Clifford Allen, Treasurer of the I.L.P., also writing in the *New Leader*, adopts an attitude similar to that of Mr. Brailsford, urging that the Labour Party should accept office as an emergency government to deal with unemployment and the European chaos.

Mr. Sidney Webb, M.P., also wants to take office, though he admits "the plain impossibility of passing into law in this Parliament any large and contentious measures."

Mr. Macdonald merely asks the rank and file to trust the leaders.

The Labour Party Executive has answered all speculation by declaring its willingness to take office. A full Party meeting is called for January 8th to decide what (if any) terms it will lay down. We may take it that the Labour Party will take office if it can, in spite of the Scottish objectors.

It remains clear that the Capitalist parties have a Parliamentary majority, and that the Labour Party can only retain office by pursuing a policy which is acceptable to the Capitalist parties. By doing that it will soon wreck the hopes of those who look to it for substantial improvement.

The programme of both factions of the Labour Party are superficial and unscientific.

We observe with interest that the C.P.G.B. advocates Labour Party acceptance of office. Is this Moscow policy? Alas, alas, how are the mighty fallen!

* * *

Unemployment.

TO ASSUME that unemployment and foreign policy can be dealt with by agreement, as though they were minor isolated matters, is utterly absurd. There are no more bigger, more fundamental and more difficult questions than these, save the abolition of the capitalist system itself. Indeed, since their roots are in the capitalist system, these questions cannot be dealt with without attacking large capitalist interests.

The Labour Party's Unemployment Bill, with its proposed colonies for the unemployed and doles to the wives and children left at home, would still fail to solve the pressing problem of financing the unemployed relief, and would be immensely unpopular with the unemployed themselves. The I.L.P. programme of large subsidies to municipalities would have to be paid for somehow. Moreover, it would be rejected by the Tories, unless it were coupled with the Tory industrialist demand that great subsidies shall also be granted to private capitalist employers.

The result of the great subsidies would be inflated currency, increased prices, and increased taxes, and inevitably the unpopularity of those who promoted the schemes. The subsidy plan has been tried in Germany: its results are manifest.

* * *

Foreign Policy.

AS TO FOREIGN POLICY, the Labour Party would have a difficult task, even had it a majority behind it. The Labour Party has adopted the position that it will force all the Governments of Europe to mind their p's and q's, and that France especially shall be brought into line with British policy. Such things are easier said than done, even when they are worth doing. The *Daily Express* says that Woolwich is working overtime making gas masks. If the Labour Party were to attempt to coerce France the masks might be needed. We do not anticipate that the Labour Party will find the business of coercing France so easy as it fancies. It may well discover discretion to be the better part of valour when it essays the task. Mr. MacDonald would nevertheless take care that the protagonists of the next war do not draw him into their toils. We regret to observe that the Labour Party is still confirmedly national in its views, and has no conception of internationalism.

Democratic Whitewash.

MR. MUSSOLINI has dissolved the Italian Parliament. He wishes to be a democrat Prime Minister like those of other countries. Since his electoral law enables him to nominate a majority of members, should he win only 25 per cent. of the seats during the Election, his Fascist forces can be trusted to do the rest. They are already on the war path, smashing the printing presses of their opponents.

* * *

THE LIBERAL *Manchester Guardian* has strongly protested against the rumoured proposal to make Mr. J. H. Thomas Foreign Secretary, and Mr. Tom Shaw Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, if and when a Labour Government comes in. The Liberal organ urges that Mr. Thomas has neither the experience nor the qualities necessary for the post: it observes that it would be necessary for Mr. Thomas to negotiate with the Ministers of other countries. Doubtless, the blood of those persons is considered bluer than that of Mr. Thomas. It is remarkable, however, that the *Guardian* should prefer, as it says, to confide the Foreign Office to Mr. Ponsonby, Mr. Roden Buxton, or Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, than to Mr. Thomas and Mr. Shaw. Messrs. Ponsonby and Buxton are, of course, newly come from the Liberal fold. Nevertheless, this is a poor recompense to Messrs. Thomas and Shaw for joining the *Guardian* in its support of the various Governments that ran the late War. It is also a poor complement to Messrs. Ponsonby, Buxton and MacDonald to suggest that their pacifism is so weakly and their foreign policy is such that a *Liberal* organ should prefer them.

* * *

Liberal Hopes and Fears.

THE NON-CO-OPERATORS having secured a majority in Bengal, Lord Lytton has called Mr. Das to form a Government. Mr. Das is the Leader of the Non-Co-operators who approve of taking part in the Elections to the British-made legislative bodies. Mr. Das (like Mr. MacDonald, if he takes Office), would have been able to do very little. He has declined the offer. It is true Mr. Das had a Parliamentary majority, but the British Government has the right to refuse legislation passed by the elected representatives of India, and also to impose decrees of its own. Mr. Das would either have had to admit his efforts abortive, or fall in with the views of the British administration, in which case he would at once have lost the confidence of the Indian people.

Eventually, it will be proved that the Non-Co-operative Movement can only advance the independence of India by working independently of the British legislative bodies.

The Irish Sinn Feiners learnt the lesson of independence when their representatives refused to take their seats at Westminster. The workers will eventually learn it in their struggle with Capitalism.

* * *

The Miners.

THE decision of the miners to terminate the agreement under which they are working means that they intend to use the Labour victories at the polls and the expected Labour Government to secure a higher subsistence level for themselves.

The miners' effort touches the root question whether a Labour Government can prove of economic value to the working class. The success or failure of the miners' effort will do much to determine the degree of popularity which Parliamentary Labourism can maintain amongst the workers.

If the men who work in the pits are baulked in their effort to secure increased wages by their leaders' fear of jeopardising the success of the Labour Party at the next election; if a settlement like that of the agricultural labourers to keep wages at the existing level is arranged by the leaders of the Labour Party; then the spell of the Labour Party will be largely broken.

The Labour Party is essentially a Trade Union party; a party not to abolish capitalism and the wage system, but to secure high wages and short hours. If it fails, as we believe it must, to secure high wages and short hours, not merely for a small section, but for the mass of workers, the ideals of the workers will speedily advance beyond the Labour Party.

The Labour Party would gain, for a time, great popularity were it able, through a combination of circumstances, which must include a great trade revival in this country, to assist the Trade Unions to secure a substantially higher standard of life for the British working class.

Even in that event, the ideals of the people could not stop short at the wagedom of prosperous Capitalism.

The miners' wage struggle, which is only one of the industrial upheavals which will develop in the early future, is one of the rocks on which the fortunes of the Parliamentary Labour Party will be riven.

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Lessons for Young Proletarians

GEORGE STEPHENSON.—VI.

The Killingworth colliery and the Stockton and Darlington railways were the first big landmarks in the progress of the locomotive. The next was the Manchester-Liverpool railway over Chat Moss, a tremendous undertaking.

In 1821 Joseph Sanders formed a committee of Liverpool men to consider this project. William James, a surveyor of West Bromwich, who had already laid down some colliery railways, offered to survey the land at his own expense, but his means did not suffice, and Sanders and others gave him £300 towards the cost.

The opposition which the landowners had shown to the Stockton-Darlington railway was as nothing to that encountered by the surveyors of the Manchester-Liverpool line. Organised mobs met them with personal violence. They were stoned, colliers threatened to hurl them down the coal pits, farm workers attacked them with pitchforks, the theodolite (measuring instrument) was smashed to pieces. Lords Derby and Wilton, through whose lands the railway would pass, regarded it as a nuisance. They sent their tenants and employees to the attack. The canal owners, especially the Duke of Bridgewater, also helped to organise the opposition. As a result, the survey was practically worthless, and though James got some further financial help from Sanders and his friends, he was overcome by pecuniary troubles and incarcerated in the Queen's Bench Prison as a debtor.

The Liverpool committee had by this time raised £300,000 for constructing the railway, but they had lost confidence in Mr. James, and leaving him to languish in prison, they appointed George Stephenson to undertake the building of the railway. It was thought that this would be done for £400,000, a sum which proved wholly inadequate.

Stephenson met with the same troubles as had beset James. Lords Derby, Wilton, and Sefton, and the Duke of Bridgewater organised their tenants and employees to drive off the surveyors, as before. Mr. Bradshaw, the manager of the Duke's canal property, even went so far as to fire guns across the land to prevent Stephenson's party from advancing. Stephenson and his men met their assailants both in hand to hand encounters and by strategy. Part of the land was surveyed by moonlight, the keepers having been drawn off in pursuit of pretended poachers who were firing guns some distance away. Lord Sefton's farmers were deceived by the production of a printed resolution, purporting to come from the Old Quay Canal Company, in which his Lordship was interested, and calling on landowners to oppose the projected railway, and to afford every facility for a survey of the intended line, in order that errors in the scheme of the railway company might be detected, and its defeat ensured. The farmers, seeing this document, believed the surveyors had permission of the landowners, and permitted them to proceed.

Meanwhile the press was active against the line, declaring that the poisoned air of the locomotives would kill the birds in the air and render the preservation of game impossible; that houses would be burned; that horses would become extinct, and oats and hay would therefore be unsaleable; that the railway would be dangerous to travel upon, and that the boilers of the engines would burst; and locomotives would be too heavy to move. Moreover, cows would cease to give milk, and women would miscarry at sight of the trains.

The Liverpool-Manchester Railway Bill went into Committee of the House of Commons in March, 1825. George Stephenson was called to give evidence. His Northumbrian dialect occasioned surprise, and one member of the Committee asked whether he was a foreigner.

The promoters of the Bill were afraid that if Stephenson expressed his opinion that the locomotive could go at a speed of 20 miles an hour the Bill would be defeated. They besought him to keep his estimate down to 10 miles an hour, and even argued that the usual speed would be only four or five.

The opponents of the Bill denounced the use of locomotives and contended that it was impossible to lay a railway over Chat Moss unless a solid bank of earth were built up from the bottom at an impossible cost. They declared Stephenson to be an ignoramus. All the civil engineers were opposed to his views. The Bill, which was for power to build a railway, and said nothing of locomotives, was rejected.

The promoters re-introduced it in the ensuing Session, employing a firm of engineers and surveyors of the highest repute. They also succeeded in conciliating the Marquis of Stafford, the largest shareholder in the Duke of Bridgewater's canal, by offering him a thousand shares in the railway company.

The Hon. Edward Stanley (afterwards Earl of Derby and Prime Minister) and Sir Isaac Coffin opposed the Bill with all the old arguments, adding that it would result in increasing the price of iron by 100 per cent. and perhaps exhaust the supply altogether.

Lords Wilton and Derby continued the opposition in the House of Lords, but the Bill passed, nevertheless, having cost the promoters £27,000. So vested interests retarded industrial development in the nineteenth century.

The railway company desired to secure the services both of Stephenson and of George Rennie, whose firm had been engaged to get the Bill through Parliament on the second occasion. Rennie did not fall in with the arrangement: he proposed to make six visits a year to the railway, and to appoint a resident engineer of his own choosing. The company declined this offer, and gave the whole undertaking into the hands of Stephenson.

The first task was to find means to lay a railway over Chat Moss, an immense peat bog about twelve square miles in extent. It is a mass of spongy vegetable pulp of bog mosses, one year's growth of which rises over the other, the older growths remaining in partial preservation through the antiseptic properties peculiar to peat. James, when surveying the Moss, had been nearly submerged, like many other people; but a farmer, named Roscoe, had learnt to cultivate the Moss by wearing large wooden pattens and fitting such patterns also to the feet of his plough horses.

Stephenson adopted the same principle in building his railway. Drains were cut in the Moss, and on the land between them were spread branches of trees and hedge cuttings, and in the softest places hurdles interwoven with heather. Over these gravel was sprinkled. On this floating bed the sleepers, chairs, and rails were laid in the ordinary manner. The sleepers were packed with cakes of dry turf or bundles of heath. An underground sewer of wooden tar barrels covered with clay was formed to assist in draining.

Great difficulty was experienced in forming an embankment on the edge of the bog at the Manchester end. Six hundred and seventy thousand cubic yards of moss, as dry as it could be obtained, were taken from the edges of the Moss and emptied into the bog where the embankment was to be formed. The stuff continued to sink to the bottom for weeks, and no visible progress was made. The directors were disappointed and alarmed by the cost and delay, and discussed abandoning the project; but Stephenson persevered, and finally the embankment began to rise above the surface, and success was assured.

The line over the Moss cost £28,000. It proved the cheapest part of the railway and the easiest to run upon.

On other parts of the railway no fewer than 63 bridges had to be constructed. At Mount Olive red sandstone rock had to be cut through for a space of two miles, and in some places more than a hundred feet deep. Labourers worked on the line both day and night, working in the dark by torch and fire light. This was the greatest undertaking of the kind ever attempted up to that time.

Stephenson worked with the men at the points of danger, designed the bridges and working plant, superintended the manufacture and planned every section of the line. He had only a few pupils, learning their business from him, to assist him with the draughtsmanship. His son, Robert, who had helped him in the Stockton-Darlington railway, was abroad, at Bogota, the capital of New Granada, whither he had gone to take charge of the operations of the Columbia Mining Association. He had accepted this position largely with a view to improving his health, but as a matter of fact the climate there seems to have injured his constitution. The engineering factory at Newcastle had suffered whilst George was occupied with the railway and Robert was abroad. Edward Pease was dissatisfied, and wished to retire from it, but Stephenson had not the money to buy him out. Robert, on returning, succeeded in putting the factory on to a better footing.

It was now required for building the locomotives for the Liverpool-Manchester railway; but this was not yet realised by the directors, who had not made up their minds what mode of traction should be employed. After much discussion they permitted Stephenson to construct an engine for experimental purposes, which was used for transporting material and removing refuse during the making of the railway. Still the question of permanent traction on the line was undecided, and the most noted engineers of the day still reported against the locomotive. Finally the directors agreed to offer a prize of £500 for the best locomotive which would fulfil certain tests on a given day. For this competition George and Robert Stephenson built an engine which contained several inventions, its most important features being the steam blast and the multi-tubular boiler. It was called "The Rocket."* It easily outstripped its competitors in every way, and attained a speed of 29 miles an hour, which was regarded as a great miracle in those days.

On September 15th, 1830, the railway was opened, eight locomotives, constructed at the Stephenson works, being placed on the line.

The Duke of Wellington, then Prime Minister, rode in the "Northumbrian" train driven by George Stephenson from Liverpool. When the Duke reached Manchester he was met by placards about the franchise massacre of Peterloo, and brickbats were thrown at him. The Duke did not alight from the train, but returned to the safer atmosphere of Liverpool.

The railway soon carried an average of 1,200 passengers daily, and five years after the opening it carried nearly half a million passengers a year.

In the next years Stephenson was busy devising improvements in the railway and the trains, signals, safety appliances, and so on.

In the meantime, both the Stephensons were active in the construction of new lines which began to spring up rapidly. Between 1839 and 1840, 321 miles of railway (exclusive of the London-Birmingham railway) were constructed by them.

The landowners continued their opposition for some years. In the case of the London-Birmingham railway the Bill passed the Commons, but was thrown out by the Lords after costing £32,000. Committees of the House of Lords were at that time open to all peers. The measure was re-introduced, and cost £72,868 to get through Parliament in the following session—a striking evidence of the evils of the Parliamentary system. Jobbery and railway Bills went hand in hand. The Bill was carried only because the landowners were "conciliated" by paying them three times what had been estimated as the cost of the land.

Lord Wharncliffe, of Killingworth Colliery, was interested in the Manchester-Sheffield line, which passed through his colliery; but he rose in Parliament to oppose the Manchester-Leeds line because he thought it might be prejudicial to his interests. In the course of his speech he accused George Stephenson of dishonesty. Stephenson warmly defended himself, and pointed out that he had greatly improved Lord Wharncliffe's collieries during his period of service there. Lord Wharncliffe ended by asking that his attack on Stephenson should be erased from the records.

Opposition to the railways vanished when it became clear that they brought prosperity to the landlords, and new markets to farmers, and increased business to coaches in conveying passengers to and from the trains; whilst even the canals did more carrying business because of the general development which took place.

The landlords who had driven the railways from their lines perceived that higher rents could be had for farms near stations, and began to petition for branch lines and sidings.

The Stock Exchange had at first looked askance at railway projects, and respectable brokers had been reluctant to do business in railway shares; but about 1844 began a period of gambling in railway stocks, the aristocracy and all sorts of people not usually concerned in shares joining in the game.

Members of Parliament who had obstructed the growth of railways also caught the mania, and railway Bills went through unopposed. In 1845, powers were granted to construct 2,883 miles of new railways at a cost of £44,000,000. In 1846, powers were asked to raise £389,000,000 to construct further lines; 272 railways Acts were passed in 1846. The Rev. F. Litchfield, at a meeting in Banbury, said that the only limit he set to his approval of railways was that they should not come any nearer to him than to run through his bedroom with the bed-posts for a station. The Marquis of Bristol said that rather than be defeated in its undertaking, the Norwich-London line might make a tunnel beneath his drawing-room.

Railway prospectuses were now headed by strings of peers, landed proprietors, and Members of Parliament.

George Hudson, known as the Railway King, was one of those who exploited the railway mania, buying up numbers of railways, paying bogus dividends, and bringing about a crash which ushered in a slump in railway stock.

The railway engineers were forced to depend on the operations of the money-makers and on the self-seeking manœuvres of Members of Parliament. They spent weeks at a time in the crowded, low-roofed Committee rooms of the old Houses of Parliament, contending for opportunity to develop their work, with men who possessed no technical knowledge and were only animated by the desire of gain.

As to the railway contractors, many of them went bankrupt because the work proved much greater and more costly than anyone could foresee.

The railway navvies, who sprang up to do the actual work of making railroads, travelled about the country from work to work. They joined together in what was called a "butty gang" of ten or twelve members, making contracts to cut out so much "dirt," according to the character of the land. They often worked from 12 to 16 hours at a stretch. They wore white felt hats, velveteen coats with square tails, scarlet plush waistcoats with small black spots, corduroy knee breeches, high laced boots, and leather belts.

Unlike most inventors, the Stephensons became wealthy men. George Stephenson had the reputation of being kind-hearted, but some of his ideas on the rights of Labour and the prerogatives of capital would be looked on with horror by the mildest Labourists in these days.

He formulated a proposal to the Spanish Government that Sir Joshua Walmsley's company should be given land and be allowed to cut timber free to construct a railway, and should bring in their goods duty free. In return for these concessions the company should feed and clothe several thousand men from the Spanish convict prisons—the convicts, who were not regarded as having any rights at all, being forced to work for no other recompense than bare food and clothes. The Spanish Government made no answer to the proposal.

Leopold, King of the Belgians, was much impressed by the importance of railways, and decided that the railways of Belgium should be run by the State. He procured the assistance of George Stephenson.

The history of the locomotive clearly shows that Capitalism does not develop, but, on the contrary, exploits, industrial progress.

THE END.

A REVIEW OF THE STRUGGLES OF THE CATERING TRADE WORKER.

VIII.—UNIONS OF THE PAST—ORGANISATIONS OF THE FUTURE.

We have described the life in general of several grades of Catering Workers. We now come to their attempts at organisation.

Some twenty years ago the conditions of the workers of the Catering Trade were as bad as they are to-day. Paul Vogel spent his life in endeavouring to make up these workers.

About 1911, a few Revolutionaries, French, German, Italian, etc., met and formed the French Cooks' Syndicate in two sections—(1) for Cooks, etc., (2) for Waiters, etc.

1914 saw the "Great War," and the break-up of this Union. German comrades were interned, French and others were conscripted to fight each other, where previously they had been united to fight the Boss.

Even the excitement of this Capitalist war could not altogether subdue the discontent in the Catering Trade, so, about 1917, there was formed in the City (the patriotic stunt still holding sway) the British and Allied Catering Union. About this time the Workers' Union had formed a Catering Union Section in the West End.

Trade Unions, old style, are *no use* to the worker.

Strikes, old style, are of no use to workers.

Talking with employers is of no use to workers.

The Trade Union Congress proposed that five existing Unions should enrol the Catering Workers, each to have a given area, with paternal guidance by the Congress.

As Trade Unions can only function in so-called "prosperous" times, they can be of no use to workers in "bad" times.

In all these five Unions the officials boss the members, the officials talk and sign agreements with bosses, the officials call a strike—that is to say, the worker leaves the job at the order of the officials; the officials give the employer notice of strike; the members of the Catering Sections of these five Unions have to accept the existing rules, benefits, and constitution, which may differ in each of the five Unions.

One can imagine the confusion, jealousy, etc., if, say, the Catering Workers in one Union want to make it their *own* Union, and another of the five Unions, by the small membership of Catering Workers, will not support No. 1 Union. Appeal is made to Congress, and they are to decide the action of the Catering Worker.

All these five Unions have highly paid officials which the Catering Worker will have to help to pay.

As these five Unions have failed to maintain the standard of living of their already existing members, how is it possible for them to better the position of the Catering Worker? Even H. Morrison and other Trade Union officials have admitted that wages have been taken from the workers to the amount of six hundred million pounds.

I claim these five Unions are of no use to the Catering Worker.

In every hotel, restaurant, club, etc., the workers should themselves form a Shop Committee.

The members themselves should send a delegate to a local Workers' Council, with their instructions. If one delegate fails to fulfil those instructions, the Shop Committee should recall the delegate.

The local Workers' Council should elect a delegate to County or Borough Council, and so on, until we get a National Council of Workers' Committees, built up from the bottom—the workers—owning and controlling their own organisation, deciding their own actions, with no highly paid officials, no reliance on Parliament, no Labour M.P.'s, no one thousand and one Unions with thousands of officers to keep up, thousands of officials to maintain in huge salaries—but one industrial Union for the whole of the Working Class.

One goal should be in view: the complete destruction of the Capitalist System and the substitution of the Workers' Soviet Republic.

THAT IS OUR ONLY HOPE.

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