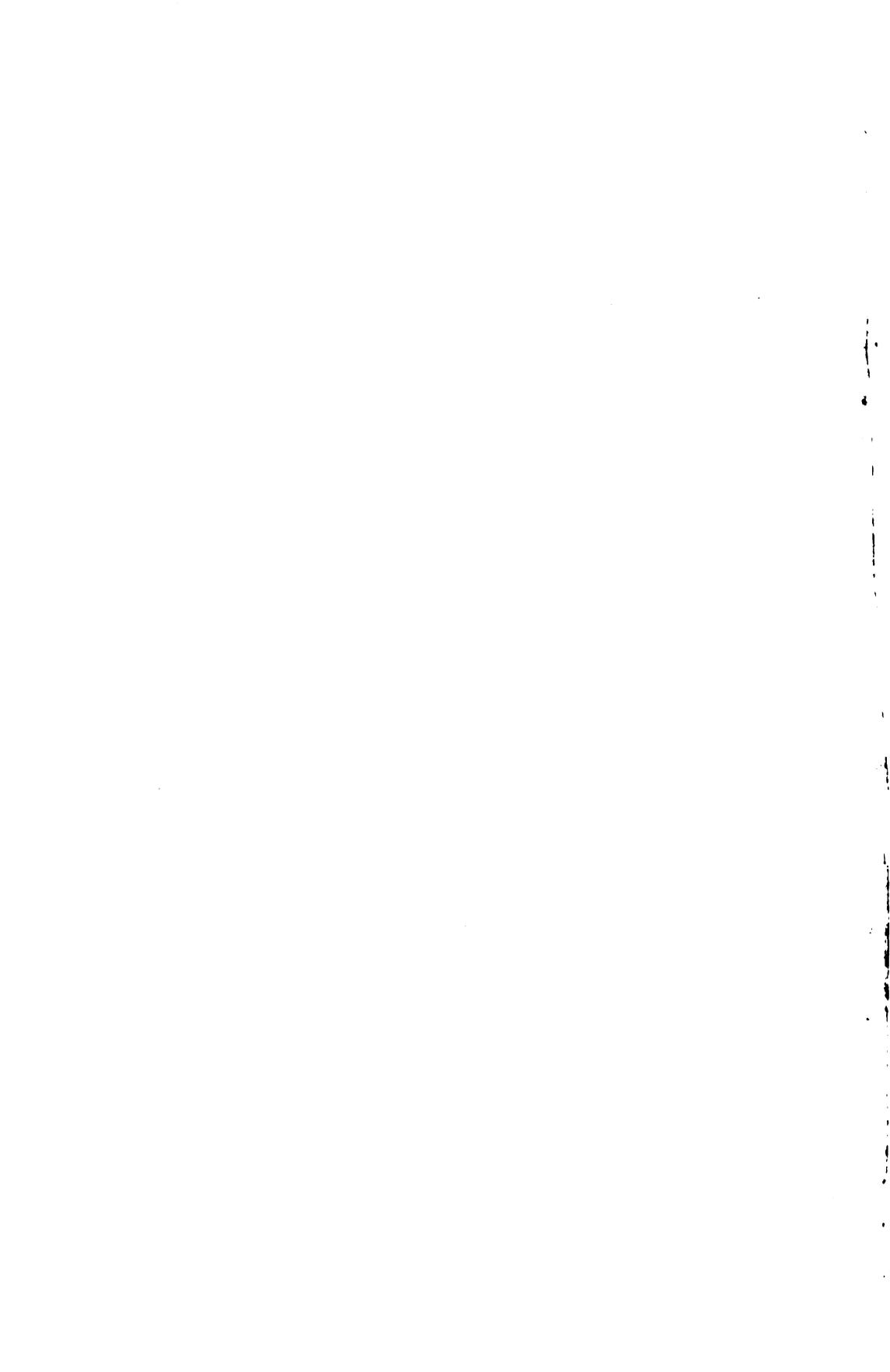


**THE
COMMUNIST REVIEW**



THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

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THE EDITORIAL VIEW

THE WORKERS AT BAY.

EVENTS are justifying to the full the analysis of the meaning and results of the General Strike given in the resolution of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, printed in this number. The new vigour and shamelessness with which the attack on the miners is being pushed by the capitalists and their Government, now that they think the other workers have deserted them: the new attack on the legal position of the trade unions, revealed in Lord Birkenhead's speech, which has developed out of the preliminary "raids" by the railway, transport and printing employers immediately following the General Strike: the new attack on the Soviet Union, encouraged and made possible by the public insult offered to the Russian workers by the General Council, in reply to their generous offer of aid—all these facts will show the workers that the Comintern was right in its declaration that the conduct and ending of the General Strike would have profound consequences, for the workers not only of Britain, but of the whole world. It is for those who habitually mock at "advice from Moscow" now to study the resolution fairly and tell us whether Moscow is not a hundred times a better friend to the British worker than the leaders who betrayed the General Strike.

* * * * *

But the betrayals are not ended. The decision to postpone the Conference of Executives, called for June 25th, and the press statements subsequently issued by the General Council, are new proofs that the one idea which is uppermost in the minds of the present leaders is to avoid a fight. True, the workers are told that the postponement was dictated in the interests of the miners: such a vigorous and united attack on A. J. Cook and Herbert Smith was expected that it would have rendered unlikely any further assist-

ance to the miners, and the latter would have been extremely disheartened at seeing "the whole trade union movement" ranged against them. It is generally understood that it was reasons such as these that drew from the miners' leaders consent to the postponement of the Conference. **But this was a shortsighted decision, and the Central Committee of our Party has made clear why in its resolution printed in the "Workers' Weekly."** On the one hand once the miners' leaders allow themselves to be browbeaten by threats of public attack, there is no stopping place. Exactly the same pressure can be used against them for a more openly treacherous purpose—say, to stop them appealing to their fellow workers on railways and transport for an embargo; or to force a new Samuel Memorandum upon them, with its careful provisions for wage reductions. The miners' leaders know the men they have to deal with: why should they think that treachery stopped on May 12? On the other hand, the miners know very well that the General Council have the public opinion of the trade union movement to reckon with. Why was it that avowed enemies of the General Strike, like Thomas, decided upon a General Strike, even in bluff? Because otherwise they dared not face the workers. Why was it that, after May 12, the General Council preserved the silence of the grave? Because they were afraid that self-justification, in the workers' present mood, meant self-exposure. Why is it that the "Left-wingers" in the General Council were particularly in favour of postponing the Conference? Because they were terrified of the alternatives which the Conference opened up before them: either of exhibiting themselves to the workers at last as unashamed supporters of Thomas, or of coming out as a minority in the General Council on the side of the miners and fighting Thomas—which they have not the courage or the belief in the workers to do. If the miners had insisted on the Conference, and had demanded that it discuss practical ways and means of resuming the fight on behalf of the whole working class, it would not have been the M.F.G.B. whom a refusal would have isolated, but a small clique of leaders.

* * * * *

Now, at any rate, the course is clear for those workers who love their class and are prepared to fight for it. The pressure for the embargo on blackleg coal, for the pledging of the entire resources of the Labour movement in support of the embargo, for the levying of all workers in work, for the election by a new Conference of an Emergency Committee to conduct the fight—in order to show a new and purified General Council, after September, how leaders should fight—this pressure must come from below, and it has come during the last two years on every occasion on which the leaders appeared to be making heroic decisions. And in this connection it is not only resolutions to National Executives that assist—although these are urgently required—it is the telling influence of prac-

tical example that would give an irresistible lead to the whole working class. This the dockers at Plymouth, like their gallant comrades at Boulogne and in the Soviet ports, have understood. By the time these lines reach our readers, we shall know whether the delegates to the A.S.L.E. and F. and N.U.R. Conferences have shown sufficient confidence in the rank and file to brave the pleadings, the bombast, and the threats of Bromley and Thomas, and proclaim an embargo, appealing simultaneously to the whole movement even as the miners have done. But, whether they decided or not, here is a task on which every active trade unionist and Socialist must concentrate his energies, if he is genuine in desiring to help the miners, and indeed in his loyalty to the entire working class. For nothing can be more certain that, unless the Labour movement bares its teeth in support of the miners, the capitalist wolves have no intention of desisting until the whole structure of working class organisation, built up since the repeal of the Combination Acts, 100 years ago, is torn to pieces.

* * * * *

It is for such reasons, and because we believe that there are many working class fighters in the I.L.P. who share our views, that the Communist Party deemed itself bound, in duty to the working class, to propose to the I.L.P. once again a united nation-wide campaign for the embargo. Not that our Party has waited itself, or contented itself with a resolution: the contents of our factory papers, of our speakers' notes, and of our press, the activity of our fractions in trade union branches, Trades Councils, and national conferences—all show that every energy and thought of the Party is bent upon exercising its maximum influence to show the workers why an embargo is essential. But we believe that, if an organisation like the I.L.P. were to join forces with us, the chances of rapid success would be very greatly increased: indeed, the experience of local co-operation between the two Parties has shown that. Not that we took the step without grave misgiving. The I.L.P., through its official organ, was very cutting, the week after the strike, about the failure of the General Council to prepare for the struggle. But what were the I.L.P. leaders doing, during those brief months that the workers had, to arm them for May? Did not the "New Leader" week after week, avoid mentioning the possibility of an attack by the capitalists, or dismiss it in a paragraph concentrating all attention upon quack nostrums for the coal industry like the "Selling Agency"? Was there a single word urging the workers to take concrete steps which Mr. Brailsford—after the event—said the General Council should have taken: or even calling on the General Council to do so? Was there not, on the contrary, a rejection, twice repeated and for entirely shadowy and pitiful reasons, of the Communist Party's proposals for a joint campaign

to prepare against May? Even as we write comes the news that the I.L.P. Secretary has replied to our offer by a formal note, intimating that the proposal will be laid before his N.A.C. on **July 24th**, but that the I.L.P. is not wasting its time meanwhile. To this amazing letter, written on a matter which the whole world knows is one of extreme urgency, we can only say two things. First, that we challenge the I.L.P. leaders to produce a scrap of evidence that, during the first six weeks after the General Strike, they stirred hand or foot to mobilise their Party machinery for the embargo. Second, that the postponement of a decision for another four weeks bears a dangerous resemblance to the General Council's postponement of the Conference of Executives, first from May 12 to June 25, and now indefinitely. It will be so much more convenient, said the General Council, if the miners' struggle is "out of the way" by that time. Is that what the I.L.P. leaders have said to themselves? We refuse, at any rate, to believe that their worker members will remain silent: and we ourselves shall "carry on."

* * * * *

There is one more sector of the working class front which has been menaced, and is still dangerous—that is the Russian front. No need here to go over the campaign of the Tories: they acted after their kind, with venom and lying and impudence, as they have always acted. What must be raised, however, is the question of responsibility—because it shows us the way out.

What has saved the Workers' Republic, again and again in its history? Not only the courage and devotion of its Socialist Army, but the solidarity of its "front line"—the workers of every country, and Britain particularly. It was this solidarity that carried the Scarborough Congress at which leaders and workers seemed united, save for a few despicable exceptions. But since that time there has been a change. Nine months have gone by, but the pledge given at the Congress and renewed three months later at Berlin, has not been honoured. The General Council has not summoned the Conference between Amsterdam and the Russian unions, as a preliminary to achieving world unity through "an all-inclusive International" (we quote the Scarborough resolution), which it had promised. And those who have claimed the title of "Left-wingers" by their silence have acquiesced.

Again, during the General Strike, the General Council committed the shameful, inexcusable, unforgettable act of refusing the Russian workers' help—thereby in deed, if not in word, joining with the Amsterdam enemies of unity who treat the Russian workers as pariahs, outcasts, on a lower scale of the movement than the Western workers. Again, not a syllable, not a breath, from the self-styled "Left"—and even, it is now widely reported, a renegade

and disgraceful speech from George Hicks against taking the money!

Can it be wondered that the Tories think their time has come: that, as so frequently happens, they have mistaken a few leaders for the mass of the workers, and concluded that British Labour has now refused the hand of friendship extended from the first Workers' Republic?

Can it be wondered, too, that our Party from the first moment of the crisis has told the workers that the way to stop the Tory attacks on Soviet Russia is to take matters into their own hands—to insist on the immediate summoning of the Anglo-Russian Council and of the conference with Amsterdam, in order to show the capitalists their gross mistake?

* * * * *

It is scarcely worth wasting space on the notorious "Blue Book" produced by the Tories to support their campaign. It has been adequately dealt with elsewhere, and in any case was an utter fiasco. If anything, it has only strengthened our Party. In any case, the roughly 3,000 workers who, according to latest reports, have already joined our Party since May Day represent a new and unmistakable vote of confidence which laughs at stage-managed Blue Books.

Reflections on the General Strike

By J. R. CAMPBELL.

THE late General Strike was one of the greatest mass strikes arising out of a question of wages, in the history of any highly developed industrial country. Its importance for the working class movement of the world cannot possibly be exaggerated. It merits study in all its details, in order that we may draw valuable lessons for the future from the experience gained by the workers in it. It is, therefore, surprising that so little discussion has been entered upon as to the lessons it holds for the working class.

Not an Accident.

Surely the first thing we have to get clear is that the strike was not an accident, but the result of the whole previous development of the class struggle in Great Britain. It is necessary to emphasise this when we find Mr. MacDonald writing as if it were merely the bungling of Mr. Baldwin which had brought on the General Strike.

“Had the Government taken the matter in hand not later than when the lock-out notices were posted up, it was the simplest thing in the world to have avoided the General Strike.”—(“Socialist Review,” June, 1926.)

What a beautiful explanation! Mr. Baldwin is not so clever as Mr. MacDonald, hence the General Strike.

The General Strike originated on the question of miners' wages and hours. Is it the simplest thing in the world to get the miners to accept a reduction in wages or a lengthening of hours? Mr. MacDonald knows that it is not. Would it have been the simplest thing in the world to have induced the other workers not to support the miners? Mr. MacDonald answers himself when he says later in the same article:

“After the conduct of the Government it was perfectly evident that had no General Strike been declared industry would have been almost as much paralysed by unauthorised strikes.”

Perhaps it would have been the easiest thing in the world for Mr. Baldwin to have prevented the strike by making a concession. Mr. Baldwin is, however, the representative of the British capitalist class struggling desperately with a situation of economic decline. The growing competition of America, the industrialisation of its own colonies, the loss of financial predominance, the backwardness of its technique, the chronic unemployment, the collapse of the heavy industries, have confronted British capitalism with a crisis for which it sees only one solution—"the wages of all workers must come down."

It is impossible for British capitalism to avoid a struggle to secure this object. If it had made any concessions in April, 1926, it would merely have done so in order to attack the workers later on. But it had spent nine months in making preparations for a struggle in April, 1926. It knew that the Labour movement had made no counter-preparations. It knew that the leaders of the Labour movement were prepared to retreat. In these circumstances the capitalist attack, leading logically to the General Strike, was inevitable.

Choice of Weapons ?

"Granted that the crisis and the lock-out of the miners were there," cry a number of critics, "was it not a mistake to use the weapon of the General Strike? Should not Labour have used some other weapon?"

It is one of the peculiar delusions current in the British Labour movement that the working class in its struggle against capitalism has a variety of "weapons" at its disposal, that it is perfectly free to choose any one of a number of "paths" to its emancipation. Thus Mr. Clynes explains that he never really believed in the weapon of the General Strike and the workers ought to learn to use the Parliamentary weapon. (It's a pity that the Labour Party in Parliament cannot learn to use it.) Mr. Norman Angell asks, "Shall Britain tread the Moscow road?" The general ignorance of Marxism and the existence of an eclectic literary Socialism have both helped to spread this confusion widely throughout the British Labour movement. The fact that we are in a class struggle, in which we have to adapt our tactics to those of the enemy; in which we have no varied choice of weapons, but have to use those which history has placed in our hands, never seems to have occurred to our imaginative pathfinders.

No doubt if Mr. Clynes could have arranged a dissolution of Parliament for the 1st of April on the issue of present wages versus reduced wages, the workers might have endeavoured to use the Parliamentary weapon first, but in the absence of such an opportunity it is imbecile to put as an alternative to the General Strike, the use of the Parliamentary weapon, especially when we

cannot use that weapon unless the employing class puts it in our hands.

The other weapons which might have been used as an alternative to the General Strike such as financial assistance (Mr. MacDonald) or the embargo (Mr. Brailsford), were not adopted because both of them envisage a long struggle whereas the aim of the workers was to shorten the struggle by bringing the maximum of force to bear at once and so secure a speedy victory.

The Strike Inevitable.

A moment's reflection on the recent experiences of the British workers and one realises that, given the workers' will to fight, an attempt at bringing off a General Strike was inevitable.

The British workers of recent years have passed through the three following experiences.

Firstly, the experience of Black Friday, the isolation and defeat of the miners. That experience surely demonstrates that in a period of capitalist decline the isolated struggle of the workers in one industry usually leads to defeat and that the defeat of one section soon leads to the attack and defeat of all other sections in turn.

The second experience was that of the Labour Government and demonstrated that a merely reformist parliamentary policy could not lead to good results for the workers.

The third; the experience of Red Friday; the defence of the miners' standards as the result of a threat of an embargo leading to a General Strike.

After these experiences there was no alternative before the leaders on May Day except either openly to betray the movement and thereby speedily discredit themselves or to resort to the form of action that the whole previous experiences of the Labour movement had popularised amongst the masses. The development of the Labour movement had made the strike inevitable.

Is the General Strike Useless?

In view of these facts what can we say of Mr. MacDonald's assertions that the General Strike is a weapon which cannot be wielded for industrial purposes (June "Socialist Review"); that it cannot be wielded for political purposes except with arms in the hand ("Forward," May 22nd), and that, as it is directed against the "Community," the community (i.e., the capitalist State) is bound to defend itself ("Answers").

Here you have the same old "choice of weapons" fallacy.

Why has the British working class, which formerly was held up to the workers of Europe as the example of a working class which knew how to live at peace with its employers, begun to manifest signs of unrest and to engage in mass strikes? **Because, Mr. MacDonald, of the decline of British capitalism, leading to a fundamental change in the economic conditions under which the workers live, which in turn results in a new outlook and the adoption of new methods of class defence.** Is the working class entitled to defend its standards of life? If it cannot do so effectively by sectional strikes, is it not entitled to do so by mass strikes? If in using mass strikes it comes up against the State, that simply demonstrates that the working class in its struggle for self-preservation is bound to come into conflict more and more with the capitalist State. That does not prove, as Mr. MacDonald seems to think, that the workers should not use the weapon of the General Strike because it brings them up against the State. The workers have no other weapon. In defending their standards in a period of capitalist decline, the workers must come up against the State which is the bulwark of capitalism, its laws embodying the capitalists' rules of the game.

The alternatives before the workers at the moment clearly are :

1. To submit to wage reductions.
2. To avoid challenging the State by sticking to the sectional strike weapon. This means defeat and wage reductions.
3. To mobilise all forces in a mass strike. This is a challenge to the State. It is also the only way of self-preservation.

The only way in which the Labour movement can avoid challenging the State in modern capitalism is to submit to progressive reductions in wages all along the line.

An Alternative Government.

If the working class is entitled to defend itself, if it can only defend itself by the General Strike, if it cannot have a General Strike without coming up against the State, then it is equally true to say that it cannot successfully carry through a General Strike without laying the foundation of an alternative Government. The struggle for wages at a certain stage becomes a struggle for power.

The suppression of the press, the granting and withdrawing of food permits, the setting up of Workers' Defence Corps, the building of a transport service under union control as undertaken in the late General Strike were all necessary to the success of the

mass movement. They were equally an attempt to strip the capitalist State of some of its functions. There is no need to shiver at this. The path of working class defence leads to the confrontation of the Labour movement and the State and their struggle for mastery. It can only end by the victory of the working class over the State and the setting up of a Workers' State based on the organs of the working class movement. **That is the path indicated not by "Moscow" but by the whole development of the class struggle in Great Britain.**

Intermediate Possibilities.

Does this mean that because the General Strike brings the workers up against the State that it is a useless weapon unless the workers are prepared beforehand to develop it into an armed revolution? One of the excuses that we have heard since the calling off of the last strike was that the General Council was confronted with a revolutionary situation and having no mandate for a revolution they called the strike off.

"Much more serious was the failure to think out the question whether the General Strike is an appropriate weapon unless one intends in the event of success to attempt revolutionary action."—(Mr. Brailsford, "New Leader," May 21st, 1926).

"What then of the General Council? In view of their avowed attitude it is idle to reproach them for not having carried through a successful revolution."—"Lansbury's," May 22nd, 1926).

While realising the political character of every General Strike we consider it is a mistake to reason in this formal fashion: either an acceptance of a reduction in wages or the entrance into a General Strike which will only be successful if it is developed to a victorious revolution. The Right-wing will be pleased to see the question put in that fashion. They know that the workers in their present frame of mind are more prepared to take the first alternative than the second.

There is no need to put the question in this way. The workers can still gain results in a struggle for partial demands under capitalism, provided the struggle is well prepared not only in the extent of the technical preparation of the workers' forces, but also by a systematic campaign of publicity amongst the intermediate sections of the population plus a systematic campaign against the capitalist State. **The State is an instrument of capitalism but it is an instrument which can only be manipulated by the aid of the hundreds of thousands of workers in the forces which it has**

at its disposal. That is its essential weakness. Too little attention has been paid in the past to propaganda amongst the professional classes whom the State relies upon as its auxiliaries. Yet the standard of this section of the population is dependent upon that of the workers.

The possibilities of compromise will narrow as time goes on. It is impossible to extract the same concessions twice by exercise of the same force and bluff. This was the mistake of the Lefts in the General Council in 1926. They expected the bluff of Red Friday to succeed twice.

Better Next Time.

In every successive mass movement the workers must be prepared to go further than in the last, to endure longer, to put forward greater efforts. Not only must the efforts to build the workers' organisations go on unceasingly, but alongside those efforts must go on a ceaseless effort to disintegrate the forces of the enemy.

For while it is possible to conceive the late strike having ended in a victory if the General Council had been more steady, while it is foolish to rule out all possibility of compromise in the future, sooner or later the Labour Movement and the capitalist class will have to fight to a finish. A parliamentary victory for Labour might alter slightly the conditions in which this struggle takes place. It could not prevent it happening. It cannot do away with the necessity of mass action by the working class.

Theory and Practice.

The old pre-war reformist attitude to the General Strike must give way to an attitude which takes into account the new conditions.

In the "Forward" of May 22nd, there are extracts from an article by Jaurès on the General Strike. Jaurès considers:

1. That a General Strike for a limited economic end might succeed if "public opinion" had been convinced of the justice and practicability of the strikers' demands. (MacDonald does not agree with above.)
2. As a demonstration against the slowness of capitalist reforms.
3. As a demonstration against an act of capitalist injustice (restriction of universal suffrage).

He considers that it is useless as a means of revolution. It stops production but cannot re-organise society as the State machine is in the hands of the capitalists.

The whole outlook of Jaurès is that of a Socialist thinker liv-

ing in the pre-war era of European capitalist expansion when the workers' conditions were steadily improving. It was easy for him in those circumstances to deal with the General Strike as the panacea of people who were getting impatient with the slow process of building a parliamentary majority and to gently hint to the capitalist class that perhaps these people would get their way in the Labour movement if the capitalists did not throw a few crumbs at the workers.

What analogy, however, is there between a state of affairs when the standard of the working class is rising and when the General Strike is advocated as an alternative to the slowness of building up a legal majority plus the prevailing parliamentary corruption, to the state of affairs when capitalism is attacking the workers and the workers have only the alternatives of surrender or the use of the General Strike? What relation is there between Jaurès' picture of the State waiting passively until the workers at the end of their resources go back to work baffled and the picture of the workers' Strike Committees assuming powers which reveal them as the germs of an alternative government, preparing to defend themselves against a State going all out to win?

Surely this reveals that while a passive General Strike as a means of revolution is doomed to defeat, a General Strike leading up to the struggle for power is quite a different thing.

Our Party's Task.

Those things will have to be explained to the workers in the most detailed way. Not only is there a glaring weakness in the leadership of our Labour movement but the understanding of the rank and file lags behind the events themselves. The courage and solidarity of the workers in the strike were beyond all praise, but courage and solidarity are no substitute for revolutionary understanding. Without revolutionary understanding courage and solidarity are in vain. Revolutionary understanding does not drop from the heavens. It is not the product of one's isolated experiences in the class struggle. It can only come from a revolutionary party acting as the carrier of the revolutionary philosophy of Marxism based upon a scientific analysis of capitalist development and upon the experience of generations of working class struggle.

To raise the understanding of the workers to the level of their courage, to re-fashion the Labour movement in accordance with its new tasks, to give it a clear-sighted leadership, such tasks require the creation of a mass Communist Party. Without such a party the Right-wing, blinding the workers to the realities of the struggle, will go on preparing fresh defeats for the workers. Mass struggles in the future are inevitable. The only question is—will the workers be prepared?

Theses on the Lessons of the British General Strike

(Adopted unanimously by the Executive Committee of the Communist International, June 8th, 1926.)

1. The Crisis of British Capitalism.

(a)

THE general position of British national economy in the world economic system, and at the same time the general position of Great Britain as an imperialist State, may be characterised as that of a steady process of decline.

Even before the war the competition of a number of countries, above all Germany and U.S.A., threatened the monopolist position of Great Britain and was gradually relegating her to a secondary position. The war and the post-war development greatly intensified this basic tendency, complicating and partly changing its forms. The growth of the U.S.A.; the economic and political strengthening of France and of Japan to a certain extent; the industrialisation of the British Colonies and Dominions, with an increase in their centrifugal tendencies; the National Debt with all the consequences arising therefrom; the limitation of the purchasing capacity of the markets still within the purview of Great Britain; the partial withdrawal of Russia from the former trading system; the growth of the revolutionary movement in the colonial and dependent countries (such as China); finally, the relative technical and organisational backwardness, as compared with the U.S.A. and Germany, due to the parasitic symptoms ensuing from Great Britain's monopolist position in the world market—all these factors are summed up in the chronic crisis of British capitalism. Great Britain can no longer be spoken of as the "workshop of the world." Her rôle as "monopoly ruler of the waves" is steadily disappearing.

(b) A most important component part of the general decline of British capitalism is the chronic and increasing acute crisis in the British mining industry. This branch of industry, which is directly connected with about $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the British population, with a yearly output of £250,000,000, and exports equalling 10 per cent. of the entire British exports, was the

economic basis of British economic power. Thus, the decline of the coal industry is a decisive factor of the general decay of British capitalism. The *output* of coal shows a steady fall (270 million tons in 1909-13, 267 million tons in 1924, and 244 million tons in 1925). *Home* consumption, from 1909 to 1925 inclusive, decreased from 182 million tons to 175 million tons, particularly due to the decreased demands on the part of the metal industry. *Exports* of British coal have been and are being reduced most of all; in 1903-13 they comprised 88 million tons; in 1924 82, and in 1925 only 69 million tons (see Report of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry, p. 4). British coal is being systematically ousted from a number of markets: in Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Belgium, in the South African and South American countries, in the East, in the British dominions, etc. This descending curve of the coal industry has both general and specific causes: the competition of other forms of fuel in connection with technical progress (electricity and "White Coal," oil, progress in fuel-technique); the technical backwardness of the British mining industry and the relative exhaustion of the coal mines; backward organisational forms of mining management; decreased purchasing power of the coal consumers; the competition of other countries including the Dominions, due to the development of their own industry and re-grouping of markets.

(c) *From the point of view of the main prospects of development, the profound crisis in the British coal industry, connected with the general crisis of British economy and tremendous chronic unemployment, will lead to a radical change in the method of production, i.e., to the basic task of the proletarian revolution. For the radical way out of the blind alley is to destroy the relics of feudalism (absolute rent burdening industry), to abolish private property which is the only way of obtaining the necessary planned production and definite technical reorganisation; to secure real guarantees of peace and collaboration in the field of international relations, including the "colonies," which is inconceivable on a capitalist basis; and finally to get the proletariat itself profoundly interested in the process of production, which is only possible under the victorious dictatorship of the working class. The schemes for emerging from the cul-de-sac put forward by the bourgeois and social-reformist ideologists in present conditions are partly utopian (for instance, the plans for an International Agency proposed by Messrs. Mond, Keynes, Brailsford, Hodges and Co.), and partly propose pressure on the working class which will inevitably lead sooner or later to the revolt of the proletariat, raising the fundamental question of power in the country. The coal crisis is thus the barometer of the social revolution.*

2. Great Britain's Decline and the British Labour Movement.

(a) *In line with the previously long-sustained power of Great Britain and her ruling position on the world market, a historically evolved type of labour movement developed.* British capitalism of its classic period also begot the classic type of British trade unionism. Its social-economic bases were the surplus profits received by the British capitalists from all corners of the globe and partially transformed into a component element of the British workers' wages. On this basis the working class raised its standard of living and productive qualifications. The British working class therefore became a specially privileged section of the International army of labour, a labour aristocracy, to a certain extent economically bound up with the general interests of their masters. This "bourgeoisified proletariat" (Engels) had the most skilled section of the workers in its midst, a 100 per cent. aristocracy which proved to be a purveyor of trained servants of capital, "the labour-lieutenants of the capitalist class." The social condition of the British proletariat also created its opportunist social-consciousness: craft outlook, indifference to politics together with the fetish of legality, Parliament, King and Church; "Fabian Socialism," with admiration for gradualness and its disgust at revolutionary violence; finally, "Guild" Socialism and the "constructive" Socialism of Mr. MacDonald, which in substance denies the class struggle of the workers all along the front. It is on this basis that the open corruption in the upper sections of the labour bureaucracy arose.

(b) *The commencement of the decline of British capitalism, and the accompanying process of decrease in the imperialist surplus profits of the British capitalists, produced a radical change in relations between classes, and within the working class itself.* The increase of class antagonisms led to a sharp decrease in the political importance of traditional British Liberalism, which had been the prevailing ideology of the bourgeoisie and had systematically extended capitalist influence over the workers. The strengthening of the Conservatives on the one hand, and the growth of the Labour movement on the other; the general Leftward trend of the working class; the increased strike struggle (railwaymen's strike in 1911, general strike of miners in 1912, strike wave in 1913, railwaymen's strike in 1919, strike of miners in 1921); the appearance of factory committees, councils of action, the formation of the Communist Party and the birth of the "Minority Movement," the campaign for closer relationship with the U.S.S.R., the constitution of the Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council under pressure of the masses, the General Strike

and the present miners' lock-out—all these are links in the same chain of development.

(c) *The process of liberating the British working class from the influence of opportunism does not proceed uniformly.* The process of revolutionary development among the workers is not uniform because of the difference between the tremendous army of unemployed, which is becoming a chronic phenomenon in Great Britain, and the employed workers; the distinction between skilled and unskilled labour; the distinction between the workers of various trades, in connection with the non-uniform development of the crisis; and finally the distinction between the organised mass and the bureaucratic official staffs.

The greatest hindrance to revolutionary ripening is the hierarchy of trade union and Labour Party officials with their leaders, who have grown up on the basis of previous relations. The great majority of these are either conscious allies of the bourgeoisie and conscious enemies of a class movement, or else "Left Wingers" ("Centrists") who, thanks to their ambiguous attitude, political cowardice and policy of capitulation inevitably arising therefrom, go over to the side of the enemy at critical moments. The so-called "leaders of the working class" manoeuvre against the growth of the revolutionary activity of the masses, both in their tactics and their ideology. The ideology of "constructive Socialism," as a means of preventive war against Communism, has widespread popularity amongst the higher political and trade union officials, while the development of the mass movement, despite vacillations and zig-zags, brings the masses more and more under the banner of fighting revolutionary Marxism, *i.e.*, Leninism.

3. The Coal Crisis and Preparation for the Strike.

(a) *The postponement of the conflict between the miners and the mineowners in July of last year is explained by the fact that the Government did not feel sufficiently prepared.* The mineowners had not the necessary reserves of coal, the State authorities had not yet mustered all the forces necessary for a final fight. *The main strategic policy of the capitalists was determined by the desire to gain time, to reform the ranks, and to enter the fight with the aim of smashing the main position of the working class and of subsequently carrying out the "reorganisation of the industry," by bringing further pressure to bear on the working class and by increased exploitation.* Hence the subsidies to the coal-owners and postponement of a decision until May of the present year. The preparations of the capitalists proceeded in various directions; these include: (1) measures of a military and police

nature (special district civil commissioners, organisation of a special constabulary force, organisation of blacklegs throughout the whole country, getting the army and navy into fighting order); (2) measures for organising a central government in the event of a struggle (formation of a strong governmental "fist," division of labour between the "Die-hards" and Baldwin, who was to play the rôle of a mediator and conciliator "above classes"); (3) measures for organising so-called "public opinion" (the Samuel Commission, reasons for the necessity of lowering wages, the frightening of the petty-bourgeois elements with the "terrible" consequences of "violence" on the part of the miners, the appeal to parliamentary and constitutional modes of thought on the part of the general public, etc.); (4) measures for organising spying and treachery among the labour leaders.

(b) *Whereas the capitalist class did everything possible to mobilise its forces and disintegrate the forces of its opponent, the official labour "leaders" did everything possible to facilitate the work of the capitalists and demobilise the forces of the workers.* The Home Secretary, Joynson Hicks, stated on April 5th, that "the Cabinet was now more anxious than during the war." Meanwhile the official trade union leaders, as far back as August were "convinced" that it was impossible to make preparations in time. (See article by Brailsford in "New Leader" of May 21st, 1926.)* *The main strategic policy of the Right Wing leaders of the General Council (Thomas) and of the Labour Party (MacDonald) who were giving the tone of the movement consisted in holding on to the leadership in order to avert an acute development of the class struggle and in order to wreck the strike. Hence: permanent "contact" with the Government and the mineowners, i.e., an open plot against the workers; a whole gamut of acts, disorganising the proletariat as a whole, commencing with demonstrative "threats" to the Government and ending with simultaneous opposition both to the miners' strike and to the contemplated General Strike. (Compare, for instance, the estimate of the Report of the Coal Commission given by the Communist Party, which stated that the Report is "a declaration of war against the whole working class," with the opinion of MacDonald that this Report is our "triumph," and Hodges who proposed "accepting" this Report; also compare the speech of the Labour Party member, Wedgwood, in reply to Joynson Hicks' injunction about "keeping the Labour Party pure and chaste";* also the continual pressure exercised on the miners with simultaneous promises of "fraternal aid," etc.). The Right Wing Leaders thus had their*

N.B.—Quotations marked thus * have not been verified with English original which is not available here.

strategy, while the "Left Wingers" were in continual fear and trembling, had absolutely no independent position and were thereby doomed to be dragged along in the leading strings of the Right Wingers.

(c) *THE WORKING MASSES* in general understood that the owners and the State were preparing a decisive attack on the working class. The lowering of the miners' standard of living was connected in the consciousness of the masses with the inevitable reduction in the standard of living for the workers of other trades. The masses—some consciously and others spontaneously—were all for extending the struggle. The "Minority Movement" and the Communist Party consciously expressed this process. Immediately after the appearance of the Coal Commission's Report, the Communist Party interpreted it as a "declaration of war" (see above); on April 9th, at the Miners' Conference, it issued the slogan for "mobilising the whole working class"; on April 23rd, it issued the slogan for a General Strike in support of the miners, and slogans for supporting them internationally, for the organisation of "Councils of Action," etc., developing these slogans still further (Workers' Defence Corps, leaflets to be issued to soldiers, agreement with the co-operatives, closing down of capitalist press, etc.) and warning the workers as to possible treachery on the part of the heroes of "Black Friday" (Thomas and Co.). In the same manner, the National Conference of the Minority Movement, and the Conference of Miners belonging to that movement put forward a number of slogans in the direction of preparing a General Strike and developing the struggle.

4. The Course of the General Strike and its Finish.

(a) *The course of the General Strike and its liquidation are a tremendous lesson for the entire international proletariat.* On April 30th, the mineowners presented the miners with an ultimatum (reduction of wages, extension of hours, agreements according to district, and not on a national scale). With the refusal of the miners the lock-out commenced. Under pressure of the masses, the General Council decided for a strike, postponing its commencement until May 3rd. On the 1st of May the workers demonstrated their mood in tremendous processions. In the interval the *Government* was taking energetic steps for suppressing the workers. On May 1st, martial law was declared throughout the entire country, troops were sent to Lancashire, Scotland and Wales, and all the forces of counter-revolution were mobilised. *At the same time* Messrs. Thomas, MacDonald and Co. took command in the General Council and the "Left

Wingers" pitifully retreated to the background. Thomas and Co. pleaded on their knees ("grovelled") with the Government but in reality were already at one with the Government in its struggle *against* the approaching revolutionary crisis. In the words of Lansbury (article of May 22nd) "a fever of anxiety and even of fear" (fear of the masses above all) prevailed in the General Council. Whereas the *strategy* of the Thomases was to head the strike in order to *smash* it (see Thomas's statement in Court after the 1921 strike, where as a King's Privy Councillor he spoke of readiness to smash the strike when it might serve the ends of a "revolutionary party") they had their corresponding *tactics*, which all the time were the tactics of smashing the strike that had commenced against the will of the Thomases. The fear of events, and the preparation for liquidating the Strike, *were above all to be seen in the announcement of the "purely industrial" nature of the struggle.* On this pretext the "mobilisation" proceeded in such a way that the General Council did not decide to publish its own paper, not issuing it until the Governmental strike-breakers' paper appeared; on this pretext the "politicians" were instructed not to take any action (which did not prevent them acting in the opposite direction); on this pretext the masses were not summoned to persistent systematic organisational work, or, what is more to conquest of the streets, but were called upon to engage in peaceful games of football; on this pretext a struggle was conducted against those revolutionarily inclined workers who entered the struggle without waiting for the orders of the General Council—for instance, the General Council even feared bringing into the strike the workers of the vitally necessary branches of industry (electricity, gas, etc.) The leaders of the Labour Party and its parliamentary fraction behaved no less shamefully. As a matter of fact, the Strike developed not *thanks to* the leaders but *against* their will .

(b) *Whereas the Labour Leaders pretended they did not understand the political nature of the strike, the Government and bourgeoisie saw this clearly and acted accordingly.* The "Manchester Guardian" defined the Government policy as "a struggle for a victorious conclusion."* To smash the trade union movement, the basic form of the British Labour Movement, was at the same time put forward as the main task of the day. The "Times" wrote of the necessity of "breaking the dictatorship of the trade unions." The "Daily Telegraph" (May 3rd) characterised the struggle as "a fight between the General Council and the constitutional government of the country." "The memorandum issued on Saturday night" the paper wrote "announcing the decision of the Executive Committees to call a general strike, is

in fact the proclamation of a usurping body, and there is no room for usurpers in our constitutional system” In accordance with this, the capitalists acted with all the necessary energy. The more the “labour leaders” entreated and raved, the more energetically did the Government conduct its policy of a “firm hand” (note, for instance, the contemptuous kicks that Baldwin gave Thomas and Co.).

(c) *The “Left” Leaders of the General Council, who have the majority† on it, not only offered absolutely no resistance whatsoever to the conscious betrayal of the Thomas element, but all the time marched under the orders of the Right Wing. As a matter of fact, Thomas and Co. led the General Council throughout the whole length of the strike. At the commencement certain “Left” leaders were openly against it. In the middle of the strike they almost entirely departed from the scene, putting themselves at the disposal of Thomas’s clique; at turning points in the Strike they sometimes acted no less shamefully than Thomas (for instance Hicks and the “damned Russian money.”)* They attempted to disintegrate the main force of the movement (the miners), persuading them to surrender. Only the tremendous pressure of the mass movement forced them to line up at its tail. Thus the “Left Wingers” in effect played a still more criminal rôle, for they had the majority and bore the direct responsibility for leadership of the strike.*

(d) *The mass movement developed with unprecedented force. All information decisively refutes the talk about any considerable or supposed growing number of strike-breakers. This legend was set going by the trade union “leaders,” and afterwards “worked up” by Otto Bauer in the Vienna “Arbeiter Zeitung.” In reality it is a shameful slander against the British working class, a slander all the more revolting as it served as a screen for real traitors. The evidence of such witnesses as Lansbury, Brailsford and others shows the growing enthusiasm of the masses everywhere, criticism of the leaders *from the left*, workers coming out in support of the miners even independently of the General Council, the creation of a number of mass organisations, etc. In some places the masses even spontaneously came out on to the streets and resorted to methods of revolutionary violence, so hateful to the reformists, (destruction of blackleg motor-buses, closing down of bourgeois papers, calling upon soldiers not to obey orders, etc.). The organisation of the Councils of Action from below, the commencement of an apparently spontaneous seizure of certain*

† This reference is to the I.L.P. elements who are always chanting their militancy.—Editor.

socially-important functions in various places (distribution of electric power, food, etc.), urged the development of the strike more and more towards higher forms of the movement.

(e) *THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL AND AMSTERDAM* actually supported the policy of the Right Wing leaders of the General Council, i.e., sabotaged the strike. The Social Democratic press systematically kept silent as to the dimensions of the strike, supported in advance a "compromise" issue, raised scares about the difficulties of the struggle, emphasised the "merely economic" nature of the strike, talked about the tremendous number of strike-breakers (Oudegeest in "Het Volk" wrote of 50 per cent. of the unorganised providing strike-breakers), hurled invective not at the British bourgeoisie, but at the Communists (against their "superfluous efforts"; like the accusations of "speculating in strikes" of the Russian liquidators); "Vorwaerts" conducted a campaign against "Moscow" and demanded a general strike in the U.S.S.R. The Amsterdam International turned down the united front with the R.I.L.U. and sabotaged its own meetings devoted to the British strike. The Transport Workers' International rejected the proposal of Fimmen "not to export coal through Rotterdam"; the German trade unions helped so long as it was not disadvantageous to the German bourgeoisie, etc. Only under pressure of the masses did the Second and Amsterdam Internationals decide on certain minimum steps by way of aiding the strikers. From the viewpoint of the development of the movement the policy of these organisations was a policy of sabotage.

(f) *THE STRIKE WAS LIQUIDATED BECAUSE IT WAS GROWING*, for its leaders feared this very growth more than anything else. Brailsford wrote that "the pressure (of the masses) was so strong, that it was not a question of the difficulty of mobilisation but of the difficulty of holding them back from the strike."* The strike could only survive and win by developing further, i.e., with a further sharpening of the class struggle. The decisive turning point was already clear when the "leaders" refused to accept monetary aid from the Soviet Unions with whom they had jointly formed the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council, giving as a motive of their refusal the fact that they would be misunderstood and the acceptance wrongly interpreted. Subsequently covering up this refusal by a refusal of foreign aid in general, they thereby isolated the British workers from the International proletariat. And as soon as rumours circulated as to new attacks from the Government being prepared (arrest of General Council, calling up of reserves, law against the trade unions, confiscation of trade union funds), the "leaders,"

utilising the second appearance of Sir Herbert Samuel, betrayed the strike. With the exception of the miners and certain sections of the labour movement, the working masses, who had *already* entered on the revolutionary path, did not expect such treachery, and returned to work at the call of the General Council, which they *still* trusted. This trust turned into a wave of indignation. The most shameful, insulting agreements of the railwaymen and others were concluded under the direct "guidance" of Thomas and Co. The treacherous rôle of Messrs. Thomas and others is officially documented in the British capitalist press. For instance, the most serious capitalist journal, the "Economist," (May 15th, 1926) writes: "The strike failed *because most of its organisers did not want it and did not believe that it could succeed. The Chairman of the General Council is a man of peace . . .*" The former Stinnes organ, "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung," described the railwaymen's agreement as the "most astonishing capitulation of the trade unions conceivable after such a strike." The tactics of the *Government and capitalist class* were tactics of a determined and calculated *offensive*. The tactics of the *trade union "leaders"* were tactics of *treachery and capitulation*. The refusal to turn the strike into political channels really amounted to a blow at the *internal mobilisation* of forces. The refusal of international aid was a blow against the mobilisation of the external forces of the proletariat. The order for liquidation of the strike put the finishing touch to the business. The working class, demobilised by its leaders, lost the first great fight in its history.

5. The Miners' Lock-out and Subsequent Prospects.

(a) *The present situation (end of May, 1926) is characterised by a relative strengthening of the position of the capitalists, a temporary disintegration within a considerable section of the working class, and the rallying of the revolutionary forces of the working class around the miners' lock-out with a simultaneous move of the capitalists to a further offensive.* The capitalist press is conducting an unprecedented campaign against the U.S.S.R. Together with some of the trade union leaders, it is conducting the same hue and cry against the miners. The mineowners are making attempts to conclude agreements with the miners in separate districts. A Bill is to be introduced into the House of Commons to amend the Trades Disputes Act (1906), and the limitation of trade union rights is in preparation. The employers are endeavouring to utilise the defeat to tighten the screw still more. Under such conditions the miners' lock-out, its progress and its outcome, have decisive significance for the entire coming period in the development of the British (and not only of the British).

Labour movement. Firstly, the possibility of a victory of the miners, of a subsequent development of the movement on a new basis, of new sections of the working class joining in on strike, is by no means excluded. On the other hand, the possibility of a defeat or compromise must also be taken into consideration, which would be followed by a frontal attack of the united forces of the Government, the capitalists and the Right "Labour" leaders against the workers, with all the consequences arising therefrom: policy of isolation, pushing out and exclusion of Communists and supporters of the "Minority Movement" from the trade unions, a decisive swing round of certain groups of trade union leaders towards the American Federation of Labour and Amsterdam, a rupture with the trade unions of the U.S.S.R., etc., etc.

(b) *Therefore at the present time all efforts of the real friends of the British workers should be directed towards energetic support of the miners.* The tactics of the Communist Party, the Minority Movement, the R.I.L.U., etc., should be based upon the most courageous and determined support of the miners both in Great Britain itself and on an International scale. Double attention should be paid to the work of jointly collecting funds in aid of the miners, boycotting coal cargoes, the extension of sympathetic strikes, etc. The widest possible mobilisation of the working masses must be organised around the miners' lock-out. The Communists (with the exception of the unemployed) of all countries are in duty bound to make regular contributions in aid of the miners. Without this most energetic intervention, and without this aid, the miners' fight may be lost; this will mean a great blow for the entire revolutionary working class movement. All sections of the Comintern are instructed to take a number of special measures in order to ensure the carrying out of this lead.

(c) *In the present condition of the struggle, the most determined resistance must be offered in all cases and in all circumstances to all attempts of the Right Wingers to push supporters of the Minority Movement and Communists out of positions they occupy in the trade union movement.* On the other hand, the tendency which has already made itself felt amongst the British working class—the tendency to leave trade unions—should be recognised as one of extreme danger. (See "Workers' Weekly," May 21st, article by A. McManus against leaving the unions.) While the rage of the most advanced workers can be very well understood, and while we can quite understand their just indignation at the treachery and scabbing of the official trade union leaders, on the other hand, from the point of view of political expediency, there should be the most determined condemnation of

the tactics of leaving the unions, no matter in what alluring and quasi-revolutionary phrases about "new organisations," etc., they be arrayed. (See Lenin: "Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder.") The experience of the world Labour movement, in particular the experience of the German movement during the last few years, has shown with surprising clearness that the tactics of "self-exclusion" objectively support the plans drawn up by the Right Wing leaders with the full approval of the bourgeoisie. These tactics lead to the loss of connection with the masses and isolation of the revolutionary elements of the movement, and render a solution of the fundamental problem—the problem of winning the masses—impossible. In the event of the victorious development of the Strike, the tactics of leaving the unions would greatly retard the process of *conquering* the trade unions; in the event of victorious reaction, they would lead to the isolation of the best sections of the working class.

(d) *The main result of the General Strike and the complex of phenomena connected therewith will be a process of accelerating the differentiation within the working class.* Whereas it is extremely probable, even inevitable, that there will be a definite Rightward process on the part of the upper groups of leaders (both in the trade unions and in the Labour Party), on the other hand equally inevitable is the process of further revolutionising of the masses. The economic basis of reformism in Great Britain has disappeared for ever. The shedding of parliamentary and constitutional illusions, the disclosure of the State as a class force, inevitable disappointment in the old reformist leaders and reformist methods, the ever clearer presentation of the question of power—these factors are bound to lead to a growth of class-consciousness of the workers. On the background of the fatal decline of the capitalist system in Great Britain, this in turn will lead to subsequent inevitable revolutionary struggles. Therefore the immediate task of the Communist Party of Great Britain is the energetic continuation of the policy of rallying forces, and the policy of the united front, preparing the working class for resistance to the inevitable capitalist offensive, and transforming this resistance into a wide revolutionary offensive movement of the workers.

6. The Lessons of the Strike.

(a) *The great British Strike completely confirmed the Comintern estimation of the general world situation as a period of RELATIVE and temporary stabilisation of capitalism, as opposed to the Social Democratic appreciation.* The latter affirms that

capitalism has already rid itself of the consequences of the war period, has secured new organisational forms for its international relations (League of Nations, etc.), while within various countries it has entered a phase of stable civil peace. Just as the colonial wars, the national revolution in China, the collapse of the Locarno Agreement, etc., display the whole unprecedented baseness of Socialist "pacifism," the civil war in Poland and the strike of millions of British workers, reveal the pitiful reformist Utopianism of Social Democracy on questions of the class struggle. These events very sharply emphasise the completely relative nature of stabilisation. The contradictions of capitalism have become unmasked (and therein lies the special peculiarity of the present moment), but the sharpening of the crisis has not yet led to a European revolutionary situation, and even in Great Britain there is not yet a revolutionary situation in the narrow sense of the word. However, with a favourable trend of events, such a situation might arise. This would ensue, in the event of the defeat of the British workers, through the development of the miners' lock-out, or any other cause, being followed by a phase of new powerful revolutionary impetus.

(b) *The strike of British workers has once more raised with tremendous force the question of the General Strike as a method of struggle.* The history of the labour movement has not yet known a strike of the proletariat conducted in an industrial country in such dimensions and with such volume (the "Economist" of May 15th considers that about five million workers were drawn into the strike movement). The experience of the British strike has shown, despite all assertions of the capitalists and renegades of the labour movement, that a strike is possible, that it can win, if it be developed. The main contradiction of this strike, arising from its reformist leadership, is the fact that the General Strike, which brought out millions of workers and brought them in collision with the entire concerted apparatus of State power, *i.e.*, which was, in essentials, a political strike was conducted as a "purely industrial" strike. This led it into a blind alley, the issue of which should have been to turn the strike into political channels, *i.e.*, to transfer the struggle on to the highest phase of its development. The reformist leaders not only did not steer a course for revolution, but, terrified by the prospect of revolution, they did not even utilise the strength of the masses to bring pressure to bear on the Government and capitalists in order to gain concessions of an economic order. They capitulated absolutely and unconditionally, completely delivering up, not only the miners, not only the workers of the remaining branches of industry which took part in the strike, but the entire working class. The reformist leaders capitulated because they could not

emerge from the confines of their reformism, because they dared not and could not consciously continue the main tendency of the strike: the change of economics into politics. The liquidation of the strike is not the bankruptcy of the General Strike as a method of struggle, it is the bankruptcy of its reformist leadership.

(c) *In this bankruptcy is revealed the bankruptcy of both wings of opportunism; of Right Wing opportunism, brazen, openly-treacherous, consciously serving the demands of the bourgeoisie; and of the hidden, capitulating opportunism (Purcell) which, thanks to its petty bourgeois political lack of character and cowardice was with the Right flank of opportunism at the critical moment.* Therefore the position of the Communist Party of Great Britain, adopted in its manifesto, is absolutely correct. This manifesto states that "most of the so-called Left Wing have been no better than the Right. By a policy of timid silence, by using the false pretext of loyalty to colleagues to cover up breaches of loyalty to workers, they have left a free hand to the Right Wing and thus helped to play the employers' game." (Manifesto of C.C. of C.P.G.B.). A necessary pre-requisite for further successes of the labour movement is a ruthless criticism and ruthless denunciation, not only of the Right traitors, but also of the "Left" capitulators of the General Council. *Without smashing opportunism in the Labour movement it is impossible to smash the capitalist regime.*

(d) *One of the most important lessons of the General Strike in Great Britain consists in the conclusions on the question of the rôle of the trade unions in this country.* The original feature of the situation does not merely consist in the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population is comprised of industrial workers, but also in the fact that the Labour Party is entirely based on the trade unions, the process of the masses towards the Left has its direct reflection above all in the trade unions, and also the fact that the Communist Party is still young and numerically weak. The experience of the strike has clearly shown that the rôle of the trade unions in it was tremendous; the Councils of Action organised by the trade unions actually developed into district Soviets. The departments organised by the General Council already resembled, in their structure and functions, the departments of the Petersburg Soviet in the period of the so-called "dual power" (February—November, 1917). The slogan first issued by the Communist Party—"All Power to the General Council"—in the given situation, together with the slogan of "Down with the Baldwin Government, the defender of the owners' interests," was quite correct and acquired most important

political significance. With the victorious development of the strike, it would indeed have been the General Council that would find itself in the rôle of a commander-in-chief and leading force. Comrade Lenin more than once said that the revolution in Britain might take different forms just because the trade unions are the main organisational basis of the British labour movement. Therefore a tendency to leave the trade unions and their organs, instead of conquering them, is especially harmful. Such a policy, in effect, would only profit the opportunists of the Amsterdam International and American Federation of Labour, giving the reformists a monopoly and thus isolating the Communist Party from the masses.

(e) *The General Strike in Great Britain has emphasised with particular force the correctness of the course steered by the Comintern and R.I.L.U. for unity of the world trade union movement and the formation of a united fighting International of trade unions.* It is only the split nature of the world trade union movement and the hopeless opportunism of the Amsterdam leaders that can explain the inadequate aid rendered to the British working class during the strike. The struggle against narrowness and opportunism is brought to the forefront. The attitude of the Second and Amsterdam "Internationals" to the strike should serve as a starting point for a long and energetic campaign for the formation of such a trade union international as could organise real joint co-ordinated activity of the workers in all countries for rendering real aid to a struggling section.

(f) *In this connection the withdrawal of the Soviet trade unions from the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council should be considered absolutely undesirable.* The workers of the U.S.S.R. sent their representative to the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council, not by any means because they hoped to substitute negotiations with the higher opportunist leaders for the task of revolutionary transformation of capitalist countries. Whoever has nourished such illusions has had to suffer cruel disappointment. But the trade unions of the U.S.S.R., which have not had such illusions for a single moment, entered the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council for the sake of connections with the masses, under whose pressure the trade union leaders turned to the Left. They entered the Anglo-Russian Council in order to strengthen the fraternal connection between the working class of Great Britain and the working class of the U.S.S.R., in order to map out a path towards the restoration of the unity of the international trade union movement, just as in the most critical and counter-revolutionary periods of the Russian Revolution (for instance, July, 1917) the Bolsheviks

by no means left the Soviets and their organs, and did not leave them when the Soviets were disarming the workers. The Bolsheviks ruthlessly exposed the Soviet leaders, but had the courage and patience to work systematically for the conquest of the Soviets, not by leaving them, for this would have cut the Bolsheviks off from the section of the masses which "erred in good faith," which still followed the S.R. and Menshevik leaders of the Soviets. The trade union leaders of Great Britain agreed to enter the Anglo-Russian Council under the pressure of the masses. If now—and this is not only possible but very probable—they turn round to the Right and, once more bringing about a rapprochement with Amsterdam, *they themselves* endeavour to break up the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council, or to starve it to death, this will be a new self-exposure, and will bring them up against that section of the masses which still follows them. Particularly now, when the British Government, entering the attack against the workers, is inspiring a campaign of abuse against the proletarian republic for the aid rendered by the trade unions of the U.S.S.R. to the British miners, abuse which in its dimensions recalls the time of the Curzon ultimatum; when, on the other hand, the British Government is striving with all its strength to isolate the workers of Great Britain with the workers of the U.S.S.R.—the break-up of the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council on the part of the leaders of the British trade unions would be a demonstration against the workers which would considerably push forward the process of revolutionising the British working masses. Under such conditions the initiative for withdrawal on the part of the trade unions of the U.S.S.R., despite the fact that the General Council refused to accept the money of the Soviet workers, would mean a blow to the cause of International unity and to the Anglo-Russian Council, and would be a very "heroic" but politically childish and ill-advised gesture.

(g) *The experience of the international struggle for trade union unity which was the basis and direct object of organising the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council shows that this step was absolutely correct.* The accusations that the trade unions of the U.S.S.R. took the initiative in this act out of national-State considerations have been smashed to atoms by actual facts and frequently condemned by the Comintern. The return once more to these accusations relished by the petty bourgeois "revolutionaries," particularly in Germany, reflects the general attack upon the U.S.S.R. and the C.P. of the Soviet Union waged by the bourgeoisie. The trade unions of the U.S.S.R. entered the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council not in any way tying themselves in the field of criticism, just in the same way the Communists of Great Britain, working in the trade unions or putting forward

the slogans for entering the Labour Party, do not bind themselves in the field of criticism and denunciation of the reformists. A consistent pursuance of the tactics of leaving the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council would lead to the withdrawal of the slogan for the entry of Communists in the Labour Party, and to the tactics of leaving the trade unions. The task of the Leninists is not withdrawal from the Anglo-Russian Advisory Council but a struggle to change its composition, as well as a struggle to change the composition of all the leading organs from the General Council to the local trade union bodies.

(h) *The General Strike, as a method of struggle, will play a proportionately greater rôle in England than in any other country.* This is explained not only by the fact that, for the entire economy with its sharply expressed industrial nature, the stoppage of work in industry and transport has a decisive significance, but also by the fact that Great Britain has a much smaller army. The main fighting force of Great Britain is the navy. The main composition of the population is proletarian; the peasantry is of quite insignificant dimensions as compared with the working class. All these circumstances make the method of the General Strike of decisive importance. The General Strike is not here a final condition for victory (it must be combined with still higher methods of the class struggle), but it is an *essential* pre-requisite of victory, a pre-requisite of extremely great importance, especially in Great Britain.

(i) *The experience of the British Strike has also given great prominence to the question of INTERNATIONAL AID on the part of the workers of other countries.* Real aid on the part of the trade unions of the Workers' Republics has played and is playing an important rôle in the development of international solidarity. The workers of all countries can clearly see that the U.S.S.R. is in the foremost ranks of those who are giving active help to the struggling working class of Great Britain. Just as the attitude of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Russian trade unions in 1923, on the eve of the German events, so the present attitude of the revolutionary proletarian organisations of the U.S.S.R. and its proletarian masses exposes the utter futility of the ridiculous talk about the "degeneration," the "kulakisation,"* etc., of the C.P.S.U., talk indulged in by the open enemies of proletarian dictatorship and also by such "ultra-Left" elements as Korsch and others. The enormous importance of international aid must be specially emphasised. It is essential

* Kulak—a rich peasant.

to point out that the Communist Parties of other countries have not exhausted by a long way the possibilities of giving aid. The lesson taught by the actions in connection with the British strike is that mobilisation on a much larger scale than before of all forces and resources is essential.

(j) *The experience of the General Strike reveals to the British working class and also to the working class of other countries the meaning, the rôle and the class character of reformism as well as of the State.* The traditional attitude to the democratic State, as a power above classes, will inevitably undergo a radical revision on the part of the masses, in spite of all the clever manoeuvres of Mr. Baldwin, the Prince of Wales, etc. The British bourgeoisie, more than the bourgeoisie of any other country, maintained its power by bribing the masses (excess profits) and deceiving them ("glorious traditions of the British Constitution"!). The possibility to bribe no longer exists. The power of deception, however, is still great. The masses have no longer a blind belief in the reformist leaders, as was formerly the case, but they have not quite lost faith in them. Once all the lessons of the strike have been digested, reformist illusions will collapse. Exposure of these specifically British "constitutional illusions" must be one of our foremost tasks of the present day.

(k) *To win the masses remains the main task of the Communists.* The mood of the masses in connection with the treachery of the General Council points to differences within the working class. *In spite* of the decisions of the General Council, the strikers represent the most developed section of the British proletariat. They have already partly emancipated themselves, and are, through the experience of the struggle, emancipating themselves more and more from the influence of the reformist leaders. The number of voluntary strike-breakers and of those bought by the bourgeoisie is miserably small. Very considerable numbers of workers returned to work at the bidding of the General Council, but their composition is certainly far from uniform. All the information received goes to show that many of those who resumed work did it against their will and judgment, and are painfully digesting the experience of the strike from the point of view of its general outcome as well as from the point of view of its leadership. As all the actions were under the leadership of the trade unions, the *Minority Movement* was bound to assume considerable importance. But it should be borne in mind that a considerable number of proletarians are "genuinely misled" which particularly applies to the *workers* behind the so-called "Left Wing" (Purcell and Co.). Relentless criticism of the *leaders* should by no means be

accompanied by a closing of the ranks of the Minority Movement. On the contrary, those who form part of the Minority Movement, and also all Communists, must now more than ever penetrate right into the thick of the masses, in order to reap a rich harvest of followers through a careful examination of the strike and its lessons.

(1) *The Minority Movement, which during the preparations for the General Strike, during the strike itself, and after its liquidation worked hand in hand with the Communist Party of Great Britain, has proved itself to be a truly revolutionary force.* A long time before the strike the Minority Movement demanded the mobilisation of all the forces for the impending May Day conflicts. It issued the slogan: "Summoning of a special Trade Union Congress of Action to ensure full national support for the miners in order to achieve a victory over the mineowners" and proceeded to secure the formation of Councils of Action in all localities. It brought pressure to bear on the General Council in respect to the miners' question, carrying on the struggle under the slogan: "Every man behind the miners." Right at the beginning of the strike, the Minority Movement issued a warning against the danger of limiting the strike to purely defensive slogans. "In order to be victorious"—wrote the Executive of the Minority Movement—"It is essential to take up the offensive and to deal the capitalists a severe blow." When the strike was at its height, the Minority Movement endeavoured to give the movement a political course; it organised Councils of Action, anti-strike-breaking corps and workers' defence corps; it warned the masses against the negotiations by the leaders behind the scenes, declaring them to be fraught with the danger of betrayal; it issued the slogan of mass control over the negotiations; it vigorously opposed the capitulation of the General Council, and called upon the workers not to forsake the miners, to refuse to have anything to do with the shameful bargain, to refuse to resume work. The Minority Movement issued at that moment a slogan which gained great popularity among the masses: "Summoning of an emergency conference of strike committees and Councils of Action," in order to compel the leaders to continue the struggle. By its determined tactics the Minority Movement brought over to its side that section of workers who formerly followed the so-called "Left" leaders.

(m) *The Communist Party of Great Britain has, on the whole, stood the test of political maturity.* The attempts to include the Communist Party of Great Britain into the arsenal of "brakes on the revolution" do not bear criticism. The Executive Committee of the C.I. was quite right when it unanimously approved

the position taken up by the Communist Party of Great Britain. The latter foretold the struggle and prepared for it. From the very beginning it drove the masses towards the General Strike, it issued the demand of "All Power for the General Council," pointing out the danger of isolating the miners. It demanded that the defensive should give place to the offensive; at the very beginning it issued the slogan of the overthrow of "the Baldwin Government which is defending the capitalists," the slogan of the "formation of a Labour Government," and the slogan of power in the various localities being transferred to the Councils of Action (see, for instance, the Liverpool "Workers' Gazette"). The Communist Party was quite right in its estimation of the liquidation of the strike as a "terrible crime"; it led a vigorous attack on the "Left," urged the continuation of the strike in spite of the orders of the General Council, etc. Perfectly correct also were such slogans as "nationalisation of the mines without compensation," "wages for time lost," "suppression of the capitalist press," "organisation of workers' defence corps," etc. Under the existing circumstances, the C.P.G.B. must continue to support the miners, must expose the treachery of the leaders, must help the Minority Movement in every possible way, and must do its utmost to transform the Party into a *mass party of the Communist workers of Great Britain*, consolidating its position in the *trade unions*, in all their branches, and recruiting more and more followers. The Communist Party was the only consistently revolutionary force following a correct course. The treachery of the leaders, and the wholesale re-valuation of old values on the part of the mass of the workers create a basis for the development of a mass Communist Party in Great Britain.

(n) *The General Strike brought the British workers face to face with the problem of power.* It placed before the workers the necessity of setting revolutionary methods against the capitalist methods, providing a way out of the capitalist chaos. Capitalism is endeavouring to save its life by condemning millions of people to war and unemployment, and is systematically lowering the standard of life of the working class. The British Communist Party must give prominence to its revolutionary programme. It must show to the British workers that the victory of the working class is the only way out of the present blind alley. It must show that, at the time of their struggle for power and after their seizure of power, the British workers will have a reliable hinterland in the Continental workers; that the Soviet Union would throw open its enormous markets to British Socialist industry; and that the British workers would find allies and collaborators for the economic regeneration of Great Britain on a Socialist basis,

such allies being the countries at present struggling desperately against British Imperialism.

7. Our Immediate Tasks.

(a) *The immediate Tasks of the Communist Party of Great Britain.*

1. The most energetic support for the miners on strike.
2. Organisation of anti-strikebreaking corps and workers' defence corps.
3. Support for the slogan of "nationalisation of mines without compensation and with workers' control."
4. Campaign for the new election of trade union bodies, including the General Council. *Workers' control over the leaders.*
5. Exposure of Right Wing trade union and Labour Party leaders as avowed traitors.
6. Exposure of the Left Wing as people who capitulated in spite of their majority, and who carried on a Right policy, being thereby mainly responsible for the defeat.
7. Struggle against any attempt to condone and obscure the rôle of the so-called Left Wing in this strike, and severe criticism of their attempts at self-justification.
8. Exposures of the treacherous rôle of the Parliamentary Labour Party in this strike.
9. Promotion of new trade union leaders from the ranks. Struggle under the slogan "*Make way for the new leaders.*"
10. Propagation of the idea of the General Strike as a method of struggle.
11. Struggle against separation of economics and politics.
12. Struggle for the industrial type of unions, abolition of the craft spirit in the trade unions.
13. Increased attention to Councils of Action and factory and workshop committees.
14. Drawing unorganised workers into the trade unions, and carrying on ideological propaganda among them.
15. Work among unemployed, drawing the unemployed into active struggle, organising them, etc.

16. Struggle against dismissals because of participation in the May Strike.

17. Struggle that the expulsion of Communists from the Labour Party be rescinded.

18. Consolidation and extension of the Minority Movement, and concentration of all the forces on the capture of the most important branches of industry (mining, railway and sea transport, electricity, etc.).

19. It is essential to pay special attention to the preparations for the next Trades Union Congress. This campaign should be conducted under the slogan: "Down with traitors and capitulators, elect to the Congress those who favoured the continuation of the struggle."

20. Establishment of a Communist daily, and also of wall-newspapers, publication of leaflets, etc. Struggle against the bourgeois press, and campaign in support of the revolutionary press.

21. In view of the growing sympathy for the revolutionary tactics of the Communist Party, organisation of recruitment of new members, especially in the industrial districts and in the most important branches of industry.

22. Struggle for amnesty for all those sentenced for participation in or support of the strike.

23. Propagation of the slogan *re* power—"Down with Baldwin, defender of the capitalists, long live a real Workers' Government!"

(b) *The Tasks of the Comintern and its Sections.*

1. Determined and unconditional support of the British miners' fight under the slogan: "*The Miners' Cause is Our Cause.*"

2. Study and explanation to the masses of the course, issue, and causes of the defeat of the General Strike in Great Britain.

3. Explanation to the masses of the rôle of the Amsterdam International, the Miners' International and the International Social Democrats who practically undermined and sabotaged the strike.

4. Exposure of the treacherous rôle of the Right and so-called "Left" leaders of the General Council and the Labour Party.

5. More intensive struggle for the unity of the national and international trade union movement and for the workers' united front.

6. Struggle against the disruption and desertion of the trade unions. Struggle for the organisation of the unorganised.

7. Special attention to the preparation of the masses for the impending social conflicts, and to the establishment of autonomous new organisations (councils of action, strike committees, factory and workshop committees, etc.) in the course of the strike.

8. Intensification of Communist activity in the trade unions. Formation of revolutionary minorities and consolidation of the R.I.L.U. and all organisations affiliated to it.

9. Special attention should be paid to support for the British Minority Movement on the part of the Comintern, the R.I.L.U. and all Communist Parties.

* * * * *

The characteristic feature of the present world situation is the situation in the three main component parts of the world economy; the situation in the U.S.A.—still a progressive stronghold of the capitalist order: the situation in the U.S.S.R.—for the time being the main foundation of the growing forces of the international working class: and the situation in the countries of the old capitalism, the classic representative of which is the Imperialist and colonial British Empire, with the whole complex of its dominions and dependencies, from London to Peking and Calcutta.

The most characteristic feature of the present moment is that the classic State of old capitalism *par excellence* is disrupted from two directions: from the East (China) and from the direction of the proletariat of the mother country (the General Strike). The national-revolutionary action in China and the action of the British working class have emphasised still more the very relative nature of capitalist stabilisation. And this is the *something new* which is of paramount importance for the correct appraisal of the internal situation. But to appreciate this situation as part of a definite historical period, one must take into consideration that in China, and also in Great Britain, we have to reckon with the fact of a temporary defeat of the revolutionary forces. A definite revolutionary situation does not yet exist. Therefore, the declaration of the C.I. with respect to two possible prospects for the near future remains in the main correct. British events have lent emphasis to the possibility of a revolutionary *élan*. The Communist Parties must do their utmost in the struggle for the realisation of *this* actual prospect, and it is from this *point of view* that the C.I. has to perform its duty towards the struggling British

workers. United front tactics, the capture of the masses—as the main task—remain as before the foundation of the tactics of the Communist International. Vacillations within it are inevitable. Inevitable and essential is also the struggle for a correct Leninist policy. But the formula about the struggle against the Right and the Left (this Leninist formula was, for good historical reasons and in connection with specific conditions in Germany, replaced by the formula of struggle against the Right and *ultra-Left*) must not be applied eclectically, and not from the viewpoint of an all-round standard. It must be concretely interpreted and the main blow must be directed towards the place where this or that peril is particularly great. Only such a method—Lenin's method—guarantees unity of the revolutionary will. It has stood the test of practical experience, and is continually tested by the consolidation of proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet country, where the working class has given one more proof of its Internationalism, a country which, in spite of all the attacks of the international bourgeoisie, the reformists and the infuriated petty-bourgeois "revolutionaries," remains the stronghold of the international proletarian revolution and of the vanguard of the Communist International.



Building the Party

By E. H. BROWN.

[The great influx of new members into the ranks of the Party as a result of the General Strike and the mining lock-out is creating many serious organisational problems. It is hoped that the following article by comrade E. H. Brown will provoke much discussion and that Party members will not hesitate to make their views known on this and kindred subjects to the Editor of the "Review." Perhaps there are also many new members who have much of value to say. In any case for the next few months a regular space for discussion will be left open in the "Review".—Editor.]

TO the members of the Communist Party the General Strike aftermath is not entirely without consolation. At the moment of writing this article over two thousand workers are reported as having joined the Party since the strike—a tribute alike to the correctness of the Party policy and the self-sacrifice which our members displayed, on behalf of the working class, during the recent critical period.

All the signs are in the direction of even still larger numbers enrolling within our ranks and this future probability, combined with the recruiting progress already reported, is welcome news indeed to the major portion of our overworked Party members.

We have within our ranks, however, a number of comrades who show very little enthusiasm at the recruiting figures. The news of hundreds of workers enrolling in Fife, Lanarkshire, the North East, South Wales, etc., fails to inspire them to anything greater than the oft-repeated phrases: "It's another flash in the pan," or "Our hardest job is not to make new members but to keep those we have already."

This pessimism is bred of past experience. Roughly speaking, the three main recruiting periods of the past were confined to:

1. The "Unity" membership.
2. The I.L.P. Left-wing.
3. The unemployed.

From these three sources we obtained the biggest numerical results in numbers—results which in the event of new members having been retained would have made the Party roll at least three times larger than it is at the present moment.

Many reasons are put forward to explain why all these members were not retained by the Party. In some cases, economic pressure or domestic difficulties, in others the fear of government repression and possible imprisonment, etc., etc., but all these reasons are part of the same one, i.e., "that they were not prepared to undertake the responsibilities of work in a real revolutionary Party." In most cases, these comrades did not clearly realise what they were actually up against until they were inside the organisation. When it finally became clear to them that the Party demanded far greater energy from its members than the old-style political parties, that being a Communist involved far greater personal sacrifice than heretofore; and that at all times "actions" rather than "words" was the test applied, then they took the line of least resistance and quietly slipped out of the Party.

But, says our pessimistic comrades, all this will apply again; the new members will follow the same lines.

Personally, I emphatically disagree with this viewpoint. A close perusal of the application forms now coming in, plus a personal knowledge of some of our new comrades leads me to the conviction that we are recruiting, in the main, from men who are not afraid of being implicated on the side of the workers in the class struggle. They are the best types which the organised working class movement can supply, the percentage of men with a militant trade union record being exceptionally high. Above all they are mostly the militants in the minefields and have demonstrated their readiness in the past to accept all the responsibilities of active local leadership during critical times.

The greatest possible mistake we could make at the present time is to treat these recruits as potential deserters. Our main task is the retention of these men and women as Party members and this cannot be done unless we place the maximum trust in them right from the date of joining.

Having got our members to see the value of the above argument it is not enough to warrant us in finishing there. We must realise also that **not** all backsliding from Party membership is due to the individual. Other causes are at work and attention must be paid to these also.

Why I.L.P. Loses Members.

The I.L.P. is a "respectable" political party, one which does not involve its members in fear of economic intimidation or police repression and yet the I.L.P. must have a far bigger percentage of resigned and lapsed members than even our own Party. Why is this? Surely it is because its politics are abstract and unreal and its activities very far removed from the day to day needs of the working class. Its local organisations are sluggish—mere debating societies except at election times. On the other hand the trade unions, whatever other faults we might find, do to a certain extent concern themselves with problems arising out of the workers' day-to-day contact with industry. The trade unions not only make members but retain them. It is significant also that those Locals of our Party which specialise in steady trade union and other day-to-day activity on behalf of and in concert with the working class are the Locals which have grown and which have retained new members. Indeed it is significant of the whole Party that during the last two years, when policy and activity has been more concerned than ever with the day-to-day demands of the workers—just during that period has it been found easier to obtain and **retain** new members. During that period we have more than doubled our membership.

The lesson is obvious. Constant and sustained activity by the Locals on behalf of the immediate requirements of the workers provides the correct atmosphere for drawing the new members closer to the Party.

Suggestions to Aid Retention of Members.

There are many faults inside the Party, which militate against growth of membership. In some instances complete indifference is displayed by the Local Party to the important task of carrying through the enrolment in a business-like manner. Here is an example of a criminal character and one which should not be tolerated inside the Party. In a letter a **new member** states:

"Six of us, all new members attended at — when the Local organiser was supposed to meet us and give us instructions as to the groups we were to be attached to. It was our first meeting after we had been accepted. No one turned up to receive us and after waiting nearly an hour, one by one we drifted out."

Instead of this kind of treatment the new comrades should have been honoured with attention driven to the other point of extremity.

The introduction of new members to the Party is of the utmost importance—first impressions are always the most potent. Contrast the above instance with the one employed by some locals which have given special place on the agenda of a well-organised aggregate meeting to the reception of new members. The chairman rises and introduces the new comrades and pays them the compliment of having had the necessary intelligence and determination to overcome all the prejudices which are manufactured against the Party; outlines to them what the Party expects from them and gives them a hearty welcome to our ranks. Then before the meeting concludes the local organiser or secretary takes special care to see that all questions in regard to group work, dues, etc., are explained. Such a procedure, without deteriorating into a “formal” practice, is necessary in all Locals.

The next fault which must be fought against is the tendency of some comrades to “show off” at the expense of new members. This intellectual snobbishness has no place in the work of the Communist Party. Likewise must we stop all the moves which are made to test out the “real intentions” of the new members.

The Testing Time.

The following instance is typical of many. A new comrade joined the S— Local Party. He was not a manual worker and this caused some misgivings to arise amongst the members of the L.P.C. To prove his sincerity they made him undergo a testing time. Without consultation as to his prior engagements, he was apportioned all manner of tasks, i.e., chalking, house to house sales of papers, sweeping up local headquarters, etc. Only the intervention of the District Organiser ended this testing period and made it possible for what proved afterwards to be a valuable recruit being retained for the Party. The question of testing possible unreliable elements is a question for the D.P.C. All other efforts should be sternly repressed.

In apportioning tasks to new comrades full consideration should be given to the viewpoint of the comrade involved. Consultations should be held with the comrade and arbitrary instructions without explanations must be avoided. On no account must work be given to a new member after old members have refused same.

The question of the part played by a careful training course in the retention of new members needs also to be emphasised. Special consideration should be given to this question as a whole. Sufficient to say in passing that the Party Centre would be pleased to hear of the difficulties met with in the organising and conducting

of Party training classes with a view to increasing its assistance and advice in this direction.

Group Work.

Finally, more careful attention to the basic group work of our Party is essential. There exists, in some quarters, a belief that it is easier to retain new members in the old territorial groups than in Factory Groups. Our experience does not warrant this belief. Rather we are inclined to the opinion that the other way round is the truth. Certainly we are sure that if the Factory Groups are properly organised and given their real status in the Party machine; if the members are given an opportunity of bringing the questions which have arisen out of their work in the factories right into the Party, then the Factory Groups are without doubt the best groups for retaining members. If, on the other hand, however, the groups are set up and allowed to detach themselves from the Party; if the Party turns a deaf ear to their problems because of their "relative unimportance," then disintegration and death of the groups follows as a matter of course.

In every Local the groups, both factory and area, should be given their proper status at the earliest moment. The members of all the groups must be brought together more frequently, as bigger numbers always inspire confidence and a right sense of the wider significance of the Party's influence. Nor should these gatherings be confined to the monthly aggregate members' meeting, important as this is. Every opportunity, including occasions of a social and cultural character, should be taken of bringing the membership together.

Thus in our inner Party life will grow that comradeship and trust which is also a very great asset in retaining new members in the Party.

Labour Imperialism

By A. McMANUS.

ONE of the most important factors retarding the progress of the revolution in Britain and the revolutionary emancipation of the four hundred million slaves of the British Empire, is the imperialist outlook and policy of the Labour movement. No thorough attempt has ever been made on a proper scale in this country to expose to the workers the real nature of modern capitalism, with an analysis of the elements of its final stage, Imperialism. The result of this has led to a conception of imperialism within the Labour movement which is disastrous. The general impression has been created in the minds of the workers, that the wages struggle in Britain is purely a trade union affair between the British trade unions and the British employers, and that the general conflict against capitalism is purely a parliamentary struggle confined within the walls of Great Britain. Reports of uprisings, rebellions, mutinies, etc., in Egypt, India, Africa or in some other remote part of the Empire are viewed with an attitude of superb aloofness. Such things are viewed as being no direct concern of ours. When we do betray an interest it is generally based upon a sort of sentimental concern in "the welfare of suffering peoples." The propaganda of the Labour movement, in Colonial matters, where any such exists, is always on such sentimental lines as being "opposed to oppression" and striving for "international brotherhood," etc. But the Labour movement has never attempted either to understand or to explain to the workers that talk of "international brotherhood" is sheer empty nonsense unless steps are taken to destroy the forces which are setting race against race, and class against class throughout the domains of the British Empire.

It is because of this, therefore, that the publication of Lenin's "Imperialism" by the Party is of the greatest importance. No other piece of literature in our language so clearly analyses the growth and development of imperialism as this little book does. The elements of capitalism are thoroughly examined from practically where Marx left off up to 1916, when the book was written.

The concentration of production and the development of monopolies and trusts marks the transition towards Imperialism—the final stage of capitalism. A world survey of the development of trusts and monopolies is made, marking the principal stages in the

history of monopolies and the methods adopted by monopolists to oust competitors, etc. Lenin makes clear that this development is a process towards socialisation, but that the "immense progress thus attained by humanity only profits a small minority of speculators," because of the clever manipulation of financial tricksters. In summing up the growth of monopolies he puts it thus :

"This means that the development of capitalism has arrived at such a stage that, although the production of goods continues to be regarded as the basis of economic life, it has, in reality, fallen away, and the big profits go to the 'genius' of financial manœuvres. Behind these combinations and clever manipulators we see the socialisation of production, but the immense progress thus attained by humanity only profits a small minority of speculators."

Monopolies move on, all-powerful and unscrupulous as to the methods used in order to clear their way. To understand their real power and role, a study of the banks is necessary.

Here follows a clever analysis of the evolution of banking, exposing the transition of the banks from being intermediaries or "go-betweens" in industry until they reach the stage when their operations control various big industrial groupings and trusts.

"In proportion as banking operations develop and as they become concentrated in a small number of establishments, the banks become transformed and instead of being modest go-betweens, they become powerful monopolies dealing with almost all capital, and with almost all capitalists."

Convincing illustrations are used, which reveal the inseparable alliance of banking and monopolies.

The international ramifications of the various groups, and their further and further concentration, are directly connected with the re-mapping and partitioning of the world. The wars, struggles and conflicts, all have, at their very foundation, the efforts of these various groups to secure bigger and greater portions for their exploitation.

The tendency towards concentration of these groups into smaller and smaller compass, has given rise to the false belief that a stage would be reached when these groups would ally themselves into an "ultra" or "super"-imperialist alliance. This theory, advanced by Kautsky originally, finds almost general and unanimous acceptance in the Labour movement in this country in circles where the trouble is taken to understand the problem at all. "From

a purely economic point of view," writes Kautsky, "it is not impossible that capitalism will yet go through a new phase—that of the extension of the policy of cartels (monopolies) to foreign policy or of ultra-imperialism.

This theory of "super-imperialism"—of "a union of world imperialisms and not of their struggle," a phase when wars shall cease under capitalist rule—Lenin riddles by an analysis of the growth of the five great imperialisms before the war, and concludes by asking "was there, under capitalism, any means of remedying the disproportion between the development of production and the accumulation of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and spheres of influence by finance-capital on the other—other than by the resort to arms?"

The very belief that there could be any basis, under capitalism, for the sharing out of spheres of influence, of interests, of colonies, etc., other than a calculation of the general economic, financial and military strength, etc., of the participants, is absurd on the very face of it.

"The capitalists divide up the world, not because of original sin, but because the degree of concentration which has been reached, forces them to take this road in order to get profits. And they divide it in proportion to capital, to 'strength' because there cannot be any other system of division in a system of commodity production."

It is clear that just because this "strength" amongst the participants varies constantly, there cannot be under capitalism, any **equal** development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industries or countries, etc. Lenin, therefore, rightly concludes that any alliances, whatever form they may assume "whether of one capitalist coalition against another or of a general alliance embracing all the capitalist powers"—are inevitably nothing but truces in periods between wars. The fatuity of sentimental "No More War" movements which ignore the revolutionary struggle against Imperialism becomes patent.

The real benefit, however, of the publication of the book in the English language will not simply end with the destruction of such false theories as Kautsky's. Its effect will go much further than that. It will make patent and obvious to every worker, the real role being played by our Labour imperialist politicians and statesmen. It will make evident the extent to which the development of the revolutionary working class struggle within the British Empire is retarded and prevented by this Empire policy and outlook.

After reading the book one gets a clear picture of the material basis of the great war. One also realises what this meant to the millions of enslaved peoples within the British Empire. One re-reads again, the incidents of risings, struggles, rebellions, mutinies, etc., during the war, from one end of the Empire to the other, and realises that here are the enslaved, gradually awakening to the realities of their slavery. One sees British Imperialism finding greater and greater difficulty in repressing these outbursts and maintaining its Empire in subjection. So also, with the end of the war. These liberation movements in Egypt, India, Ireland, Africa, etc., had developed to a stage almost beyond control. Sheer force of arms was no longer sufficient to hold them in check. Schemes, agreements, promises, were no longer accepted—no longer trusted. Imperialists stood before these enslaved peoples in their true character—as imperialist oppressors. Compromises had to be resorted to, and the first element of compromise within the scope of an Empire of Colonial Imperialism is with the native bourgeoisie. Thus the compromise with Ireland was effected with the bourgeoisie and large farming class. Similar compromises had been effected in Canada, Australia and Africa at different times in the growth of the Empire. Also similar understandings were arrived at of a much less extensive character with the native bourgeoisie in India and Egypt. Yet these are insufficient. Where the native bourgeoisie secure dominion status, the struggle then is for complete separation and independence. Canada and Australia with their eyes turning towards America and the Pacific respectively, drive further and further away from the controlling influence of the mother country. South Africa not only insists upon a separate Union Flag, but is torn in twain in a conflict to abolish the Union Jack altogether from its domain. Imperial Conferences are held at which promises of imperial preference with protective tariffs are held out as inducements, to bring the dominions with the mother country, into one great commonwealth. But these imperialist conferences end in smoke. With the recalcitrants of the dominions, there is, side by side, the sheer insurgence and insurrection of the colonies.

Imperialism knows no other step of compromise, as the next class is the working class and between imperialism and the working class there can be no compromise. Two alternative methods alone, therefore, present themselves—the reliance upon sheer military repression by “garrisoning” the Empire, or the calling in of the Labour Imperialists to soothe the rebellious element with honeyed phrases and decoy them from their militancy and struggle on their own behalf within the folds of Empire and Imperialism. The first of these failed with an abruptness that was electric in the Canada-Chanak incident. Therefore, imperialism was forced to rely upon the second alternative. The Labour Government was

allowed to come into being, and was used in this policy of placation. The MacDonald-Olivier attitude to India was no departure from the Chelmsford-Montague Imperialist attitude. The MacDonald attitude towards China was no departure from the policy of Curzon. The MacDonald policy in Egypt culminated in the Sirdar incident. The colonial policy of J. H. Thomas as Labour Minister was even more imperialist than his predecessor's! A conscientious objector at the Admiralty builds dreadnoughts! The second alternative was succeeding. The four hundred million enslaved peoples striving for liberation had been turning their trust towards the Labour movement only to be betrayed. The advent of the Labour Government created false hopes and thereby toned down militancy. This Empire policy and outlook of Labour was the most effective retarding influence acting as a brake on the growing revolution. Official Labour chants "international brotherhood" while giving support to systems and policies which foment racial hatreds, bitter class struggles and open massacres. It is a policy which divides the international working class movement, creates war and struggle within the working class ranks, encourages tyranny and bloody persecution, and prevents the workers from attaining that unity within the Empire which is absolutely essential if British Imperialism has to be smashed. In developing the revolutionary movement, therefore, one of our most important, if not **the** most important task, is the shattering of this Empire outlook and policy within the Labour movement. The fact that Lenin's book reveals the inherent nature of Imperialism and the true character of Empire, constitutes it one of the most valuable pieces of revolutionary literature in the English language.





BOOK REVIEWS

The Soviet Union Year Book, 1926.

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This is the second annual issue of a most compact but comprehensive volume of information about the U.S.S.R., information which cannot be too carefully studied by all who realise the magnitude of the great Socialist pioneering venture being developed in the Workers' and Peasants' State. Here is authentic economic and social material to refute the silly and malicious slanders still hopefully propagated in the vicious millionaire press. Here is a whole packet of nails for the coffin of the correspondence "from Riga" which is still solemnly published in "reputable" bourgeois papers. To the friends of Soviet Russia the book is most encouraging as a plain, unvarnished record of amazing Socialist achievement. To the enemies of the workers' rule this volume is bound to be disconcerting, even depressing, in the extreme.

The facts given are remarkably well arranged for reference. All the multifarious economic activities of the Soviets are neatly and simply described, and there is much valuable information on foreign relations, the Co-operative movement, finance, education and labour conditions. This, with new material relating to the Concessions policy, the Legal system, and the political organisation of the U.S.S.R. makes a unique seven-and-sixpence worth of the very best kind of propaganda—facts.

Party members should make an effort to secure a wide distribution of this year book, as a counter to the frenzied propaganda of the mad-dog section of the press and Cabinet.

ELECTRICAL DEVELOPMENT.

"Electricity."—L.R.D. Studies in Labour and Capital, No. 10. Price 1s. (Trade Union Edition, 6d.; price for quantities, post free, 5s. for 12, £1 for 50).

This book, as its title suggests, is a study of the relative positions of Labour and Capital in the electrical industry. The story of capitalist exploitation, aided and abetted by Tory legislation, is clearly described. Mr. J. Rowan, Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, who writes a foreword says that "The method of its distribution is such that it lends itself to monopoly." "Electricity" demonstrates the truth of this statement, but it shows that the monopoly should be controlled by the municipal authorities and not by profit-making companies.

This subject is particularly interesting in view of its relation to the coal industry, and an able study of the financial groups behind both the electrical and the coal industry shows that in many cases coal companies control electrical power companies and use the latter as dumping grounds for their profits from coal.

Altogether this work is extremely valuable, both to students and propagandists, demonstrating as it does how completely capitalist exploitation is in opposition to the welfare, both of the industry and the consumer.

The Awakening of China, by Jas. H. Dolsen. One dollar. The "Daily Worker" Publishing Company, Chicago, U.S.A.

The struggle of revolutionary China against the yoke of imperialism is one that should excite the warm sympathy and active support of every class-conscious worker. By enslaving the millions of Chinese peasants to toil for their profit the Imperialists hoped not only to pile

up huge profits in the unexploited markets of the Far East, but to be able to bring down wages and lengthen hours at home by the competition of coolie labour.

The story of the penetration of China is the blackest record of imperialist brigandage and atrocity in the whole of history. It began by England using her navy to force China at the cannon's mouth to import deadly opium from India. It continued with the suppression of the Tai Ping rebellion against the decadent Manchu dynasty by armies of marauders led by unscrupulous adventurers of the type of Bruce and Gordon. When the peasantry rose up against the foreigners in the Boxer movement of 1900 the allied European powers burnt villages, looted, massacred and destroyed on a scale unparalleled even in the cruellest wars of the middle ages. And on top of all they finally enslaved the Chinese people by the imposition of the huge Boxer indemnity.

Slowly the independence of this ancient people was destroyed. The customs were seized, the railways patrolled, the seaports occupied, and the process of industrialisation commenced by brute force. The Chinese people as a whole were put on the same level as dogs (e.g., the notice on the gates of the Shanghai Park "Dogs and Chinese not allowed"), while the factory workers, men, women and children, were treated

as no humane Englishman would dream of treating his animals.

In 1911, the effete Manchus were overthrown, a republic proclaimed and the way opened for the development of a pure democratic and anti-imperialist movement. The Great Powers took good care that this movement, of which Sun Yat Sen was the acknowledged leader and inspirer, should not triumph, and subsidised the reactionary forces who finally got control and have since been responsible for plunging China into civil strife and disorder. Not till 1924 did Sun Yat Sen and his Kuomintang Party succeed in establishing a free anti-imperialist republic in Canton. From that day the fate of Imperialism was sealed, though it may be many years yet before the banners of the Kuomintang float over a free China.

All this and much more besides is excellently set out in comrade Dolsen's book. All who want to understand what is going on in China to-day, and the revolution there is second only in importance in world history to the Russian Workers' Revolution, should read it. Only here can a full account be found, written for the workers, of how China was enslaved, of the rise of Sun Yat Sen and the Kuomintang, of the struggles of the Chinese workers, and of their heroic Communist Party. It would be a great thing if the book could be republished in England.