

Creswell Sounds the Retreat.

"LABOUR PARTY" BUT NOT A "PARTY OF LABOUR."

During the week, Mr. F. H. P. Creswell has addressed himself to the Labour Party's National Council in a letter occupying four columns of the "Rand Daily Mail" (to say nothing of the editorial pats on the back). There is no doubt that the letter is intended to force the pace of the party in the direction towards which Creswell thinks it ought to travel. By the welcome given to it in the Daily Press that direction may be very easily guessed at. It is a direction away from a "party of Labour" towards a "broad-based" amorphous party of the lower middle class, promising all things to all men, this year, next year, sometime, never!

The great war was fought in vain for Colonel Creswell. So far from bringing enlightenment to him it has fossilised him in his grandmotherly notions of middle-class democracy. This is no great concern of ours or of the working class. But it is our business to acquaint the rank and file of the Labour Party whither they are being led by their "Daily-Mail"-blessed leader.

Briefly, the letter may be summarised thus: First, a description of the evils of the present economic system, in language reminiscent of Creswell's more eloquent and more militant days. He sounds the tocsins of reform—tocsins undistinguishable from those which led ten million men to slaughter—all-embracing words like Wilson's—leading to love, or wrath consuming quite, according as "platform and other support" may decide.

Then follows a criticism of the orthodox political parties—the Labour Party included—in which he says that the Labour Party "has failed to fill the bill." Why has it failed to fill the bill? Because it is almost as bad as the S.A. Party, the Unionist Party and the Nationalist Party; while these parties are out to safeguard the "pecuniary interest of the landowners," etc., the Labour Party is out to back up the "pecuniary interest of the manual workers." (Note words quoted.)

In so far as Creswell objects to narrowing a party of Labour to certain sections of manual workers he is right. But that is not his complaint. Indeed he mentions the non-voting black worker. But he does not want to spread out in that voteless direction, otherwise we should have seen little of this Creswellian screed in the capitalist press. The thing to go for is a vote-getting political party, with the best vote-getting name and the best vote-getting platform. That is the sum and substance of this clarion call.

That is bad enough! But fancy a "leader of Labour" talking about the "pecuniary interests of the manual workers" in opposition to the pecuniary interest of the propertied classes. He seems to have forgotten what little he once knew; that the opposition is not a merely "pecuniary" one; but the opposition of vested interests of property to the demand of the toilers for life and for liberty. "Pecuniary interest of the manual workers"! There is the escutcheon of the Tory on the hindquarters of a Labour Leader. Let the workers pursue the spectacle "with loud and irreverent laughter."

So scared is Creswell of the "manual workers" that he warns his party that sole reliance on them will lead to "continual intriguing and more coarse corruption in the

ranks of the party of which we have had recent painful experience."

Therefore he urges his party to scrap its cumbrous platform and decide on six or ten main planks such as "Land values taxation," "Municipal enterprise," "abolition of indentured labour," and so on, all very desirable if combined with the sine qua non of the political dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the means to the end is the acid test, no less than the end itself. We have had enough of "objectives," and the high-sounding slogans of reform. How you propose proceeding to attain them is the test of your sincerity. Creswell discards the proletariat as the power of emancipation. He gives the lie to that central assertion of the Labour movement—that the emancipation of the working class must be the task of the workers themselves. The only place in the world where Creswell's Ten Points are pursued today is in Russia, under the regime of the manual worker whom Creswell, in his incorrigible blindness, so much despises as a political and moral force. It is only the intellectual stodginess and political stupidity of that lower middle class whose political ideas he represents that could produce the incongruity of a self-appointed Labour leader denying the political existence of those he is leading—or misleading. But for that stupidity, the obvious inference would be that to mislead is his direct aim.

But this is nothing to what follows. Having said in effect: "Don't base your party on the appeal to the manual workers, it will lead to intriguing and corruption," this political virgin proceeds to say:

"The party should require all its candidates to place these (ten points) in the forefront of their addresses as policies they are pledged to, and outside of these they should be free to settle with their constituents, and with those on whom they rely for platform and other support, as to any particular views of their own."

If Auckland Park Sporting Club (or "other support") wants you to vote their way, you are free to bargain any "particular views" of your own so long as it isn't in the ten points. Chuck overboard the driving power of the "manual workers" with no bribes to give, and base your party on the "other support"—that immaculate middle class whose interests vary in every constituency, watering its milk here and sugaring its sand there to the tune of high Creswellian moralisings.

As for Creswell's complaint about the exclusion of "brain workers," this is too thin altogether. None knows better than he that this distinction is never made in the Labour movement. It looks as if he were seeking excuses to quit. If there are any class-conscious workers left in the Labour Party they should take this insulting document at its true value, not that of the "Rand Daily Mail," and encourage its writer to go and form that middle-class "Democratic" party of his heart's desire outside the ranks of Labour.

D.I.J.

"Elections for the Petrograd Soviet, according to a wireless message from Moscow, have resulted as follows: 847 Bolsheviks; 49 in sympathy with Bolsheviks; 147 from the United Labour parties; 227 Dezhpartyny or Independents."—"The Times."

The tyranny of a minority!

The export of tea and coffee from Holland, except to Bolshevik Russia (and Hungary) has been sanctioned by the Dutch Minister of Holland.—"The Times."

No blockade!