

The Fight of the English Miners in Danger.

By John Pepper.

The Central Council of the Trade Unions of the Soviet Unions has requested the General Council of the English Trade Unions to convene the **Anglo-Russian Committee** for the purpose of supporting the miners in their struggle.

This step which has been undertaken by the trade unions of the Soviet Union is of tremendous international importance.

The English miners who are fighting with heroic endurance, are confronted with all the combined forces of the enemy. In spite of the entreaties of the leaders of the Labour Party, the English government has brought in its bill for the extension of the working day in the mines to eight hours. The Right trade union leaders are now endeavouring to induce the government at least to lay before parliament for discussion the bill for the reorganisation of the coal industry. But the Conservative government pays not the least regard to the requests of these "leaders". It has already long forgotten the terms of the Coal Commission's Report, just as it never for one moment considered the Samuel Memorandum seriously.

Ever since a suspicious "contact" has begun to be established between the General Council, the leaders of the Labour Party and the leaders of the Miners' Federation, the entire English bourgeoisie has been full of hope and has been broadcasting the joyful tidings of an approaching "peace".

Even Cook is inclining more and more to the leaders of the General Council. First he gave his consent to the postponement of the Conference of Trade Union Executives which should have taken place on June 25th — in other words, he gave his consent to a postponement of the criticism of the treachery of the General Council. He has now taken a further step in this direction. He has issued a declaration which is directed only

against the lengthening of the working day of the miners. He threatens that, in the event of the introduction of the eight hour shift, there would be such an outburst of indignation that the Conservatives and English capitalism would be swept off the face of the earth. These high sounding phrases, however, only serve to mask his **capitulation** to the standpoint of Herbert Smith. Thanks to this declaration, Cook has, for the first time since the outbreak of the great struggle, allowed himself to be guided by the principles of the Report of the Coal Commission. At the same time the official leaders of the railway workers and transport workers have declared that their hands have been tied as a result of the capitulation which followed on the general strike, so that they **cannot support** the fighting miners by preventing the loading and transport of coal.

The fighting English miners are therefore threatened with great dangers. But even on an international scale there is not sufficiently energetic support to be seen for the struggle of the English miners. The opportunist leaders of the international labour movement have prevented the mobilising of the proletariat in the most important coal areas and ports. In the German mining industry overtime is being worked. Coal is being exported to England from Holland and Poland. At its recent sitting the Bureau of the Second International only dealt with "inner organisatory questions", and displayed not the least interest in the strike. The I. F. T. U. and the Miners International are conniving at the **manoeuvre** of the reformist leaders of the miners who are doing all they can to take advantage of the favourable situation created through the strike. At the recent Conference of the Miners International in London, no mention was made of an international miners' strike, in spite of all the high-sounding words and heroic gestures of the trade union bureaucrats. The question of **material support** for the miners' struggle was deleted from the agenda, as it was declared that, as in any event it would be impossible to raise the amount of money actually required, it would be better not to do anything at all. The gentlemen who call themselves "leaders" of the international mining proletariat have done nothing in order to prevent the export of coal to England.

Regarded both from the national and the international point of view, the struggle of the English miners is threatened with great dangers. In these circumstances it is quite natural that the Central Council of the trade unions of the Soviet Union has demanded the convocation of the Anglo-Russian Committee. This is all the more necessary as a number of representatives of the English miners have already declared themselves in favour of this convocation.

What, however, can the Anglo-Russian Committee do under the present circumstances? Do there exist any prospects of success? Will the English come to the Conference? Can one, after the treachery which was committed in connection with the General Strike, sit at the same table with those who are guilty of throttling the General Strike? It is, of course possible that the leaders of the General Council will simply sabotage the work of the Anglo-Russian Committee. It is, of course, also possible that, just as they previously refused the material help of the Soviet trade unions, they will also reject help for the English miners. Moreover, it is possible that the representatives of the General Council will turn up in full strength but will not adopt any serious decision. We must keep all these possibilities in view.

In spite of the shameful treachery of the leaders, the General Council is still the leader of the English labour movement. It is still possible for the General Council, by means of a **single appeal**, to mobilise the whole of the English working class in support of the fighting miners. It is still possible for the General Council to prevent overtime being worked in the Ruhr area, to hold up the export of coal from Rotterdam and Danzig, to prevent the English railway workers, transport workers and dock workers from touching blackleg coal. The Anglo-Russian Committee will be convened for the purpose of inducing the General Council to resort to all these measures. The Trade Unions of the Soviet Union will fulfil their international duty right up to the end. The matter now rests with the General Council of the English Trades Union Congress.