

Imperialist War Manoeuvres and Opportunist Peace Manoeuvres.

By John Pepper (Moscow).

The Independent Labour Party has addressed a memorandum on war danger and disarmament to the Executive of the II. International.

The memorandum demands complete and immediate disarmament in every country, criticises the "partial disarmament conferences" of the League of Nations, and unveils the militarist policy of British Imperialism. The I. L. P. declares that there is a danger that every agreement made by the governments on the subject of restricted armaments is likely to serve the sole purpose of generating a false feeling of safety among the workers, for it distracts their attention from the dangerous policy pursued by the government. The memorandum states it to be the duty of the socialist movement to prevent this by constantly exposing the Imperialist policy which is the cause of wars. As counteractive the I. L. P. then proposes the organisation of a world campaign of all socialists for a general disarmament and for the organisation of the resistance of the working class against the danger of war, this resistance to include the laying down of tools in the key industries, and the refusal to give war service or to make ammunition.

These are the fundamental outlines of the I. L. P. memorandum. This memorandum is a remarkable mixture of correct criticism of the Imperialist policy of Great Britain and of the League of Nations, mingled with pompous radical phraseology and tearful pacifism. One sentence of the memorandum kills another. It declares that as long as the governments pursue an Imperialist policy no disarmament is possible, and in the next sentence it proposes a lengthy and detailed programme for a partial disarmament within the limits prescribed by the disarmament conferences of the League of Nations. It admits that war and war danger are indivisibly bound up with the essential character of Imperialism. But it does not simultaneously propose that Imperialism be overcome by social revolution. It admits that no real disarmament is possible without the co-operation of the Soviet Republics, but it does not utter a single word of criticism or condemnation against the Imperialist powers who are making this co-operation impossible. It proposes that the workers in the key industries should go on strike, and that all workers should refuse military service, in the case of war, but it does not waste a word on the organisatory preparations to be made for the proletarian struggle against Imperialist war, nor a word on the united front of the working class as prerequisite for preventing war, nor a word on the transformation of Imperialist war into civil war.

The memorandum to the II. International is the I. L. P. to the life.

The I. L. P. recently issued the slogan of: "Realisation of Socialism in our time". But at the same time it declared itself against armed insurrection, against the dictatorship of the proletariat, that first fundamental prerequisite for the realisation of socialism. The I. L. P. recently issued the slogan of a "living wage". But in practice it has not raised a finger to aid the miners in their struggle against the reduction of wages, though this is a question involving the subsistence minimum. The I. L. P. announces the Utopian slogan of: "No more war", Utopian because the I. L. P. supplements this slogan by another on "no revolution on any account". A few months ago the I. L. P. proposed to the Executive of the II. International that it should take steps towards the amalgamation of the II. and III. Internationals. But at the same time it rejected the most moderate united front proposals made by the Communist Party of Great Britain in the defence of the imprisoned communists, and for the prevention of scab coal transport.

The I. L. P. applies to the Executive of the II. International in this pompous memorandum for aid against the war danger, but forgets that the whole II. International joins hands unreservedly in the fraudulent policy of the League of Nations. The I. L. P. finds the right words of censure for the disarmament swindles practised by the imperialist governments, serving no other end than to awaken false feelings of security among the workers. It will not see that the II. International and all its parties have never done anything else; on any occasion, except awaken and intensify this false feeling of security among the workers. The I. L. P. memorandum characterises very rightly the militarist policy of the British government in Singapore, in India, in Egypt, in Iraq, in China, in the Sudan, in the Suez canal, and in all the oceans; but it shuts its eyes to the fact that the MacDonald government, which was almost identical with the I. L. P., pursued precisely the same policy, and that the parliamentary Labour Party, two thirds of which are members of the I. L. P., entirely approved of this imperialist policy.

The new memorandum of the I. L. P. is just the same as the whole policy of the I. L. P. It is a combination of a brilliant Utopia, intended to dazzle the workers, and of an opportunist and frequently dirty practical policy.

We know the I. L. P., it is an old acquaintance of ours. It has taken a "radical" fit for the second time.

As early as 1920 it wanted to "approach" the Communist International. At that time it was impelled forward by the pressure of the revolutionary committees of action which had formed in many places among the British proletariat, of the mighty protest movement of the English working class against the Polish war and for the Soviet Republic. At that time it even broke from the II. International, and began to "study" the programme and statutes of the III. International.

And now the I. L. P. begins once more to drivel about the amalgamation with the Communist International. It has discovered that there is a danger of war, it is anxious for the "rapid" realisation of Socialism, it promises to carry on a systematic "left" opposition within the II. International. This "radical" mood of the I. L. P. has once more its cause in the radicalisation of the British working masses.

The mighty economic crisis in England, the decay of the British Empire, the growing unemployment, the example given by the building up of Socialism in the Soviet Union, the disappointment with the Labour government, the increasing danger of war, the class struggle becoming more acute from day to day, all tend to turn the British working class more to the Left. All the appeals, memoranda, proposals, and Utopian advances of the I. L. P. are merely the weak reflection of this turn to the Left among the working masses. The more the offensive of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat makes itself felt, the greater will be the radicalisation offensive in the I. L. P. The offensive of British capital against the working class is anything but a manoeuvre, but the radicalisation offensives of the leaders of the I. L. P. are nothing but a manoeuvre.

But despite all this, it would be false were we not to discern, beneath all these petty tricks and windings and radicalisation offensives and small manoeuvres, the growing discontent, the real revolutionary bitterness arising in the masses of the I. L. P. What is merely a manoeuvre to the leaders of the I. L. P., is deadly earnest to the masses. The working classes of England are radicalising sincerely. They are truly anxious for an agreement with the trade unions of the Soviet

Union, they really want to co-operate with the Communist International, they are really prepared to join in the fight against Imperialist war danger. It would be wrong to see merely a petty manoeuvre in this memorandum of the I. L. P., we must see at the same time the significant symptoms of the beginning revolutionising of the British working class which it contains.

Our reply to the leaders of the I. L. P. must be to tear the veil from their opportunist intentions. The working masses in the I. L. P. must however receive a positive reply from us. We must state clearly: We Communists are ready at any time to lead the way in a common struggle for the realisation of Socialism in our time, or in a common struggle against war danger. The Communist International differs from the II. International in having **realised** Socialism by the dictatorship of the proletariat. The reason why the Communist International split away from the II. International was that the II. International identified itself with Imperialist war, and that the Social Democratic parties sank in the bog of "national defence". **The Communist International was born of the struggle and in the struggle against Social Chauvinism.** And even now the Communist Parties are the sole leaders in the struggle against Imperialist war. In France it was only the Communist Party which fought against the Morocco war. The socialists and adherents of the II. International supported the disgraceful Morocco adventure. The Soviet Union is the sole power pursuing a peace policy. But the II. International accuses it, the sole and proletarian peace power, of warlike intentions. The central organ of the I. L. P. itself stated, after the World Congress of the II. International in Marseilles, that what this Congress combatted was not French **Militarism**, nor British **Imperialism**, nor German **Monarchism**, but solely Russian **Communism**. We must say to the masses of the Independent Labour Party that they can only carry on the fight against French Militarism, against German Monarchism, and against British Imperialism, if they join forces with "Russian" Communism, or, rightly expressed, with the Communist International.

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