

A MESSAGE

By HARRY POLLITT

[All our readers will join us in regretting that Comrade Harry Pollitt was prevented from attending the Trades Union Congress, so that this year we are unable to present an account from him. On his release from prison he sent the following message to THE LABOUR MONTHLY.—ED.]

WITHIN twenty-four hours of shedding the distinguishing marks of the broad arrow I am asked to write a short message for THE LABOUR MONTHLY. I cannot do better than to ask its readers and critics at the present stage of the working-class movement to reflect upon what has been the central theme of THE LABOUR MONTHLY since its inception, and to examine it in the light of the tremendous happenings of this year, culminating in the General Strike, and finally, as a result of the colossal betrayal by the existing Trade Union leadership, in the isolation of the miners.

The central theme has been the rapid disintegration of capitalism and in particular the rapid and permanent decline of Britain, and the new political problems arising therefrom both for the capitalist and working class.

From this has been shown the inevitability of an increased capitalist attack upon the workers' standards of existence and the smashing of the reformist illusion of a steady peaceful progress of an all-in Labour Movement catering in its "broadmindedness" for all classes.

It has been repeatedly shown that the working class can no longer succeed against the capitalists by the old sectional methods of struggle and isolation into water-tight compartments of an "industrial" movement and a "parliamentary" movement; but that the struggle must be a united one on the part of the whole working class or defeats and setbacks are inevitable.

From time to time I have heard prominent Labour leaders declare that the writers of THE LABOUR MONTHLY "were only a set of intellectuals who knew nothing about working-class conditions or policy." It is a very apt comment on the aversion of the official element to carry out policy as a result of a close analysis of objective

conditions that these same leaders have been responsible for leading the workers to the terrible situation they find themselves in to-day.

In particular does one recall at this juncture the attempts of **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** to make the so-called "Left" leaders face up to the situation, warning them that if they were not prepared to fight the reformists and place their trust in the revolutionary class-consciousness of the masses that they too would have to share in any debacle that came along.

In this connection I think I cannot do better than to give the thoughts that ran in my mind immediately I heard in prison that the General Strike had been called. I thought then of a series of articles in **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** in 1924 in which Comrades Purcell, Hutchinson, Cook, Lawther, Williams, Bromley, and Hicks took part, and what a difference there would, and could have been in the whole official direction of the Movement if these comrades had then been prepared to organise their forces definitely, and fight for the realisation of the new policy upon which there was at least a common agreement.

That was, a common struggle, workshop organisation, extension of the scope of the Trades Councils, and the creation of a more powerful General Council. But the campaign of this "Left" bloc stopped at article writing. The result is known to all. When the call came the workers responded to a man, but the existing leadership failed, and in the moment of failure there was no difference between the Rights and the Lefts.

This was a complete justification of the whole attitude of **THE LABOUR MONTHLY** right from its inception. This, as I see the position, completes a kind of first phase in the task that the **MONTHLY** has in hand, and now it is more necessary than ever that it should receive a wide support from the active workers, particularly in the Trade Unions and Labour Parties in order that as a result of its work, not only will there be a continuance of its revolutionary working-class lead, but that out of these ranks the new leadership, the supreme need of the moment and Movement, can be developed.