

Dublet

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TWOPENCE

## THOMAS SAVES THE PRINCIPLE

PRINCIPLES, it may be presumed, are that which proceedeth out of the mouth of God—that, in short, besides bread, by which we live. That is why C. T. Cramp, Industrial General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, has lately been fighting so hard for principles. Never, he has repeatedly said, must the PRINCIPLE OF THE EIGHT HOUR DAY be given up. He declared that he was prepared to fight for it to the last copper in their (the railwaymen's) treasury.

Cheero, therefore, Scottish comrades! (And be thankful, English comrades, who may now see what is before you). The National Wages Board has given you a thrust downward on the slippery slope which leads to Cheaper Production. It has doubled the rate at which your pay may be reduced, on the sliding scale, until all the increases you gained in June, 1920, have been demolished. It has decreed that you may be called upon to work up to nine hours a day, that in country places your hours of duty may be spread over ten hours, and even that, in cases where "further economy may accrue," your spread-over may occupy twelve hours.

But the principle is saved! You may descend as low into poverty and servitude as you like, but keep your principles! Thus respectability is preserved—and Mr. Cramp and Mr. Thomas are always there to spend your last penny in defending your principles.

### What a Spreadover Means

Apart from its utility as a means of saving principles, what is the use of a "spreadover?" It is highly acceptable to the railway companies, for an obvious reason. If, instead of the reasonable "principle" of an eight hours' day, you had the pernicious *practice* of the same, the following events would happen: John Smith, being a porter at a country station, would arrive at his place of work to commence an eight hours' day, not of the "spreadover" variety. Supposing he took an hour off for dinner, then he would wend his way home to his wife, his garden, his books, his beer, or whatever he liked, just nine hours after he had arrived at the scene of his labours.

Now, maybe, the railway company would have to engage another one, or perhaps two men to fill in the time when John was not there. But that is what the railway companies call "waste."

So they propose a "spreadover," and then events are as follows: John Smith walks three miles to his job. He starts work, and continues for four hours. But now his eight hours' day is spread over ten hours. His dinner time is two hours long. The time is not sufficient for him to walk back home for a meal. He must waste it in the neighbourhood of the station. Finally, he leaves work ten hours after his arrival. He has one hour less for his wife, his garden, or what not.

And in those special cases where "further economy may accrue," he may find himself taking the homeward path twelve hours after he arrived to do, *nominally*, eight hours work.

John Smith must make his voice heard against the voices of those who issue the dictates of the National Wages Board. He must make it clear that what the railway companies call economy, he calls waste. Waste of life. Economy of the railway shareholders' profits it may be. But John Smith was not born to economise other peoples' profits. His wife, his books, his garden, are of more importance to John.

Very well, that is good enough as the theory of John Smith's eight hours' day. What about a little practice? This is where it is to be feared that John will meet with disappointment. He has left action to men of principle, not of practice. And see the result.

### Men of Principle

The National Wages Board was set. It consisted of a row of well-fed, well-dressed men, sitting before a table. They represented the railway companies. They were faced by another row of men, not remarkably different from them. These represented the railway workers. The discussion began, by the chairman calling upon Mr. Mathieson, a keen-witted Scotsman, to open the case for the employers. Then it went on for days. Most of the time the workers' representatives were silent. They sat and looked portentous, and twiddled their thumbs.

There was one exception. That was J. H. Thomas. His tongue was busy. His brain was alert. He plied representatives and witnesses with questions. Cramp made the "big speech" at the end, but Thomas shaped much of the discussion. And with what did the discussion, under Thomas' leadership, end?

Cramp had declared that, if the *principle* of the eight hour day or the 48 hour week was to be taken away from the railwaymen, he would not merely refuse to try to get them to accept it, but he would use all his influence to incite them to rebel against it.

A railway manager argued for "eight hours' actual work for a eight hours day," and a longer day if all the hours were not filled with work. Cramp demurred, but said he thought arrangements might be made for "eight hours' actual work."

### The Voice of Thomas

Then Thomas spoke and said, could not the 48-hour week be maintained by an agreed spreadover, "in some cases, say, of twelve hours."

Cramp said he thought it could.

The curtain fell.

Railway comrades will notice J. H. Thomas' signature among those attached to the Board's award.

O rash, bold words of Cramp, inciting to rebel! O wisdom of Jimmy!

What is the delegate conference going to do about it? Will it quietly accept a practice which will destroy all that has been gained, believing that the principle has been preserved? Or will it take example by the Scottish railway managers? Their two representatives have already expressed their intention, whatever the Board may award, of going ahead with their original intention. They are going to throw the eight hours' day overboard, with no humbug about principles.

The delegate meeting must meet this manifestation of class-consciousness with one equally strong. The railway companies will stand together. So must the railway workers, and AN EIGHT HOURS' DAY AND NO COMPROMISE must be their slogan.

# BLASPHEMY By T. A. Jackson

"And then came one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, and spake with me saying, Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters: with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication."—Revelation, xvi.

It is just as well that we should remember that there are other things than "sedition" which will secure one board and lodging in one of His Majesty's Temperance Hotels. There is "blasphemy"—for which a man is now serving a sentence of nine months hard labour: a sentence which the Appeal Court refused to alter, on the grounds that "blasphemy was a most serious crime."

If, however, you ask what, exactly, constitutes the crime of blasphemy, you are left sadly to seek. True, there is a "Blasphemy Law"—but although it was passed as long ago as the time of William III., it has never been used. Those who, since that time, have been indicted for this offence, have not been prosecuted under this statute. They have suffered under the "common unwritten law of the land," which has, at any rate, one great advantage over the other sort (from the Governmental point of view) that nobody quite knows just what is or is not penalised thereby.

The sort of things one says when one treads upon a tack (like the things which one would like to say to the foreman) may be blasphemous; but if action is taken against them it must be under the "Town Police Clauses Act" and the sections thereof referring to the use of "profane or obscene language" in a public place. In these cases of outbreaks of "langwidge," the worst that can happen to you is 40s. or fourteen days. The law gives every encouragement to enterprise in the ever popular art of cursing and imprecation; but in doing so abates not one jot or tittle of its righteous indignation at the "serious crime of blasphemy."

You may be in your speech so foul that the cabbages for miles around turn yellow; you may use terms so terse and in combinations so turgid that experienced police inspectors fall into swoons and sergeant-majors perish of the spleen, and still be innocent of blasphemy as the law defines it.

Contrariwise you may use words of Addisonian purity chosen with a taste that would secure the approval of Henry James and still find yourself "jugged" for this appalling offence. \* \* \*

Let me expound.

According to the statute of William III. above referred to "blasphemy" consisted in (a) asserting that there were more gods than one; (b) denying the existence of God; (c) denying the truth or the divine authority of the Books of the Old and New Testaments, and bringing the same into disbelief among the common people.

While this represented, no doubt with accuracy, the state of the prevailing opinion at the time of its passage, it at the same time would be quite unworkable nowadays, and has been so for the better part of a century. The Empire holds in high honour people who believe in a lot more gods than one. Works like the learned and voluminous *Encyclopaedia Biblica* exist to demonstrate that the Scriptures can only be understood, and rightly appreciated by those who recognise that their origin is human—much too human in some cases. Men who not only deny in long and learned volumes the existence of any such God as conceived by the legislators of the days of William of Orange, but who, notwithstanding, have held high place and position in the State, can be counted by the score.

In fact, it is safe to say that nineteenth-twentieths of the ordinary output of the printing presses in Britain in 1922 (particularly that of the theological publishers) would have been condemned by these our "Revolutionary fathers" to be burned by the common hangman and its authors to be whipped like bawds at the cart's tail.

None the less for that, people can still manage to get into gaol for blasphemy and judges can still show that in sentencing the delinquents they are executing "the law" which existed long before the parents of our Revolutionary Fathers entered upon their conjugal enterprises.

In the days of Cobbett it was accounted blasphemy to deny either of the points of doctrine held to be essential by the State Church. It was (as in the case of Hone and others) held by some lawyers to be blasphemous to indulge in parodies of the Church of England liturgy.

In these days, when nobody knows what the Church of England regards as essential to its faith—(the church which, as Marx long ago noted, would far sooner pardon an attack upon 38 of its 39 articles than one upon one-thirty-ninth of its income)—the legal formula is that anything in the Christian doctrine may be questioned, provided that it be done with "due gravity and propriety." Judges take the view that persons of Christian belief are protected by law from anything which is calculated to cause them pain or shock their feelings.

Observe! Only Christians (within the meaning of the law) have this privilege. You may mock and deride the Book of Mormon to your heart's content, you may cast any aspersion you will upon the memory of Joseph Smith, and do whatsoever disparagement you please to the repute of Brigham Young. You may, if it so please you, describe the whole church of the Latter Day Saints as a conspiracy for sanctifying lechery and venerity, and be free from any fears on the score of Blasphemy. You may ostentatiously fry pork sausages next door to a pious Jew on Black Fast Day, and if he breaks your windows he will be unable to plead that your performance was calculated to give pain to his religious feelings. You may call all the inhabitants of India "benighted heathen," and insult them by raising subscriptions to provide them with the second-hand exhortations of mis-educated missionaries. All this you may do and more—and the blasphemy law will touch you not.

More than that, if you are a Christian you may, on Christian grounds, do your best to drive your fellow Christians of another sect into paroxysms of fury. If you are with Protestants in a city with a large Catholic population, you may (if there are enough of you to make it safe) exercise at once your lungs and your piety by roaring (to the tune of "Kind Words Will Never Die"), "Hell rip and roast the Pope! roast the Pope!! roast the Pope!!! and you blaspheme not. Your privilege as a Christian it is to say just whatever you feel is most calculated to drive into a frenzy anybody vile enough to be addicted to anything else—especially Communism! \* \* \*

Blasphemy prosecutions have their history.

Where printed matter is called in question the offence is always urged against cheap and popular publications—never against expensive works. Some of these latter, as in the case of Swinburne's "Songs Before Sunrise," were not only likely but designed to insult whatever feeling a Christian might be supposed to possess, yet in no case were they ever prosecuted. The offence was not so much in attacking Christianity, but doing so in such a way that the "common people" were thereby influenced to hold it in disrespect.

It is there that we find the secret of "blasphemy" prosecutions. They are not instituted to prevent angry or ill-tempered theologians from starting a pogrom, nor to prevent conflict between rival sects (as is doubtless possible in a country like India). They are and always have been an adjunct to the police machinery for coercing all who exhibit a tendency to break away from the discipline and control of the ruling class and their state.

This fact is borne out by an analysis of the records of prosecutions. Prior to the French Revolution there were very few cases on record—not for want of unbelievers. The famous case of Thomas Aikenhead, an Edinburgh student aged 19, who was hanged for blasphemy in William III.'s time (a case which falls somewhat outside our purview as coming under Scottish Law) is a conspicuous exception.

With the fall of the Bastille and the rise of the Jacobins commenced a counter-revolutionary scare in Britain, and an outbreak of prosecutions for both sedition and blasphemy. With the ending of the Napoleonic Wars and the stirring of popular

unrest that thereupon ensued followed a fresh outbreak of attacks upon popular freedom of utterance. After a lull with the rise of Chartism came another outbreak, which died down as the Chartist movement faded away. From 1852 to 1883 there were no prosecutions, and many deemed that the "law" had become obsolete. Then, when popular attention had been attracted by Bradlaugh's Radicalism, the newly active Socialism, and the unemployed agitation, came a fresh batch of prosecutions—in this case specially aimed at the destruction of Bradlaugh, who, however, escaped unscathed. A lull followed until twenty years later they recommenced, being especially frequent between 1911 and 1913—years of popular unrest.

It is not to be argued that the "Blasphemers" were in all cases politically revolutionary. In many, if not the majority, of cases they were not. But they were all men and women of popular appeal who exercised an agitating influence (or were regarded as encouraging agitation) among the proletariat.

It is for this that they were prosecuted and subjected to savage sentences. It is always a crime to wean the workers from their adoration of the things the Boss class sees fit to set up for worship.

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MEXBORO. All members and sympathisers invited to a meeting on Feb. 5th, at 7 p.m., in the Labour Church. Speaker: Tom Mullins.

WANTED, copies of "The Call," No. 127, Sept. 12th, 1918.—Address, A. N. Watts, 16, King Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C.

The Editor welcomes contributions from any member of the Party, or from sympathisers, on any industrial or other subject of interest to the Party. The return of these cannot be guaranteed unless they are accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. They should be sent to 16, King Street, London, W.C.2.

## NOTES OF THE WEEK

The Manifesto on the United Front, of which we printed a summary last week, has provoked sharp criticism from some of our French comrades. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that the French Communist Party as a whole is opposed, since of 58 "federations" (divisions) that have voted, 46 have voted against. The reasons that have moved the French comrades to this action are special to France. In the first place it is argued that the "French Socialist Party," the Right wing rump that steers poor Jean Longuet, is not a force that is worth uniting with. So far from it strengthening the French C.P., they argue, it would make it ludicrous. On the industrial front, moreover, it is monstrous to speak of French unity. The left wing has made every possible sacrifice for unity within the C.G.T. (the French Federation of Trade Unions), and the right wing leaders, with whom an alliance is proposed, have only just completed their reply—which was to expel all left wing elements before the next Congress could meet, thus splitting the Union movement right through. What is the good of offering this group "unity" they ask? Finally, they protest that so important a question of tactics can only be settled by the Fourth Congress of the International which will meet this year.

All these arguments contain much truth, and it is, of course, true that the Fourth Congress will consider the "united front" question and come to a final decision. But in the meanwhile it must be repeated that the discipline of the International must remain intact. The Executive of the French Party has disclaimed any intention of infringing it, and it would be indeed disastrous if, say, at a West-European Conference, called with representatives of the 2½ International, to consider the unified front, there were present representatives of the German and Italian Communists, and no French Communist delegates at all.

The Meaning of the Thesis, whose full text we understand will be published soon, has one definite aim of which we can approve regardless of national differences. The workers are no longer upon the offensive but the defensive and the failure of the reformists has led to deep divisions in the workers' ranks. Unity against the common enemy is essential, and these very leaders are always chattering about unity. The least that we can do is to express our willingness to unite to fight a common programme of defence. If, as is only too likely, these same leaders flinch at the moment of action, their final exposure is all that we can desire.

Connected with this question of the united front is the suggested Conference, to be called by the 2½ International, to contain representatives from the component parties of the Second, Two and a-half, and Third Internationals in England, France, Germany, Belgium, and Italy. All those parties which stand "on the basis of the class war," are to be invited to this Congress in February, in Paris. The I.L.P. and the Labour Party have already accepted, we understand. (How is this, Mr Henderson? We thought you said the Labour Party was "not a class party at all.") No invitation has yet been received at 16 King Street. If it comes, however, delegates will be sent, although the shortness of time prevents them holding anything but a "watching brief."

Poplar Rates There is considerable doubt whether the new scale given by the Poplar Guardians to the unemployed will ever materialise. The Guardians will have to have recourse to borrowing almost at once, instead of, as they hoped, only after a lapse of time, and

Sir Alfred Mond is, of course, able to veto such a loan, and presumably will. But, even if the rate cannot be paid, the attempt to do it was good. Anything that assists the unemployed in their fight to keep a human standard of life is good.

The reformist members of the Poplar Council were very distressed about it, because they thought they would lose the votes of the small ratepaying class and may even go out at the next election. Cheer up, old things! the Poplar Guardians along with the rest of the Guardians all over the country, would have gone bankrupt quite soon anyway. They might as well do so in paying decent relief, as to do so after half-starving the unemployed. The latter policy would have helped to break down the spirit and morale of the unemployed, without assisting the Guardians in the least.

One after the other the Boards of Guardians will go bankrupt, and they will have to refer the vast masses of the unemployed to the centre, Sir Alfred Mond. And when the Government, with its cheeseparing ideas, is faced with an infuriated mass of two million more unemployed, then we shall have a first-class crisis upon us.

Overtime and Undertime The London Compositors, along with the rest of the workers in the printing industry recently accepted a reduction of wages. They were induced to take this step by the urgent representations of their officials. Now the sequel appears in a circular which has been issued by the Unemployed "Chapel" of the L.S.C. They ask their fellow members "where is the great increase of work that was to be the result of the reduction of wages and the lower rates for night ships? You agreed to these proposals in the belief that they would ameliorate the position of our unemployed and also relieve the heavy strain on the funds of the Society. Notwithstanding these concessions, the employers have given no assistance, but instead have greatly increased the short time policy. Has not the time arrived for members to act? The number signing is over 1,400. Something must be done! At the February delegate meeting a resolution will be moved that a special urgency committee be appointed, such committee to consist of six members of the trade executive (including the chairman and secretary), and six from the delegates assembled, to report to a special delegate meeting as quickly as possible. Last year (1921) over 700,000 hours overtime were worked. This state of affairs is too serious to brook delay, and you are urged to support the resolution."

Secretaries and Salaries It may be worth while noting that the Committee of the L.S.C. are strongly urging the retention of the new M.P., T. E. Naylor, in his present post as Secretary. They do not suggest that he retain the whole of his present salary, but even with the reductions they propose he will still be able to handle more than £18 a week. This, of course, is not more than we should like everybody to get, and certainly T. E. N. is more worth his keep than many he will rub shoulders with at Westminster. (Some of them would be dear at 18 pence!) But it is so many times more than the average income of the members of his union—to say nothing of the unemployed chapel—that it is calculated to paralyse his sense of the raw edge of biting circumstances and all feeling of class-antagonism to the exploiters.

If, that is to say, he ever had that latter! T. E. Naylor is a brainy man. What a pity it is that he ever saw the Cobden Club!

"Honoured Sir" Last week's *Worker* published a revolting letter from Havelock Wilson on Hugo Stinnes. Stinnes, the biggest German boss living, was more than any other responsible for the unrestricted submarine warfare. Yet this is the way the snivelling creature addresses this "super-hun" as he once would have called him:—

Honoured Sir, Reading in the newspapers that you are now in London on business matters, may I take this opportunity of asking whether you would be good enough

to give me an audience of fifteen or twenty minutes for the purpose of placing before you a question of most vital importance affecting the future relationship of Germany and England?

In the first place, I think I ought to let you know who I am. I am the President of the National Sailors' and Firemen's Union of Great Britain and Ireland, also the President of the International Seafarers' Federation. . . .

Then the precious begging letter goes on to explain how well-disposed Wilson really was to the Germans all along, and how distressed he was at the cloud caused by the submarine warfare, for which he was (he says) frequently demanded reparations:

An apology has been tendered to me at the Labour Conferences under the League of Nations held at Genoa, but adequate reparation has not been made, and, therefore, the wound inflicted upon our dignity—and we seamen hold that most dear—has not healed, and who are the men to suffer?—the German seamen. They are excluded from our ships for a period of years by Act of Parliament, and when the time comes for repealing the Act it is probable that it will be renewed.

It is for the purpose of finding a road out of this difficulty that I ask that you would be good enough to grant me an interview if you think the matter is of sufficient importance to merit your attention.

I am available, although a cripple, to attend any meetings you may arrange at any time. My telephone number is Hop 4006. At least no harm can be done by a talk, and possibly much good. I leave it for you to decide, Honoured Sir, whether the interview would be beneficial or otherwise.

I am, Sir, yours very respectfully,  
J. HAVELOCK WILSON.

After the Beans A slimy letter! and a crafty one. If Wilson had really wanted to get in touch with German seamen he could have done so without writing to Stinnes. What he wanted was "adequate reparation"—MONEY, and the figure named was as high as five millions, according to creditable information reaching this office. It was, of course, to be ostensibly given to Havelock's Union, in return for the lifting of the ban, and Havelock himself would be there to see that it was all spent in the best possible manner.

Genoa The forthcoming "Russian Information and Review" (a valuable fortnightly publication, by the way, and well worth six-pence), contains the official correspondence inviting Lenin to Genoa. There is biting irony although unconscious in this sentence from the letter to Moscow: "The Italian Government, in accord with the Government of Great Britain, is of the opinion that the participation of M. Lenin would very much facilitate the solution of problems affecting the economic equilibrium of Europe."

No doubt it would, and what a pity it didn't occur to their High and Mightinesses a few years sooner!

In the meantime, Albert Inkpin, will rot in jail for publishing an authoritative statement of the political principles of "M." Lenin.

A Straight Question The "Russian Information and Review" asks, in connection with the Cannes resolutions a very straight question: "Is it not clear that if Russia is in debt to France and England, these countries have also contracted indisputable debts towards Russia, both in the pre-war time and during the period of war, intervention and blockade?"

It is clear to us that the difference is this:—the Allies have lost some millions of pounds; Russia has lost some millions of lives. Which is creditor depends upon which you value at the higher rate.

Benefits of White Rule A Hungarian business firm sends us a circular soliciting our custom, and extolling the benefits of transferring business to Horthy's land. It writes:—

"You can produce 5 to 8 times as many circulars through us as you could produce for the same expense in England."

"WAGES HERE ARE LOWER THAN ANYWHERE ELSE."

"Two times less than in Vienna. 20 times less than in London. 40 times less than in New York."

Which is good news for the unemployed over here.



# RELEASE INKPIN! THE VENDETTA

By sending comrade Albert Inkpin to prison, the British Government has made the circulation of the Theses and Statutes illegal. It has by that action ranged itself with the other governments that have suppressed them—the highly civilized and dignified states of Rumania, Yugo-Slavia, Poland, and Horthy's Hungary. It seems now to be its desire to liken itself in all other ways to Horthy's Government, for, contemporaneously with the arrest of Inkpin comes the news of savage assaults on the unemployed and Communists all over the country. We must deal this week especially with the outrages at West Bromwich.

## THE CLASS WAR IN WEST BROMWICH

Recent proceedings in the Black Country culminating in the arrest of five of the unemployed are of interest not only to the unemployed workers, but also to the whole Trade Union movement. West Bromwich lies on the border of the Black Country. This is roughly an area having Wolverhampton, Walsall, West Bromwich and Dudley as its limits.

In the beginning of its industrial career it was specially suited for the iron trade since side by side were to be found coal, ironstone and ore. As time has gone on, the home supplies have become depleted, so that these necessities for some time have been brought from outside to the furnaces turning out pig iron. The Hollow-ware trade has flourished all over the area, whilst Walsall is famous for its leather trade. The introduction of the motor car, however, has spelled ruin to this once flourishing industry, and the activities of the workers have been transferred to the motor trade. Employers have for years struggled along with obsolete machinery, the consequence being that to face the competition of other and better equipped capitalists, wages have been constantly cut.

The iron trade is an old one. Men have worked for generations for the same firm, son following father in the rolling mills, and it is significant that in the present crisis some of the oldest established of the iron mills have been compelled to close down. During the war, in consequence of the tremendous demand of the Government and also in order to escape the Excess Profits Tax, large sums were laid out in new buildings. The employers evidently lived in a fool's paradise; in that they considered the war time trade was an index to later conditions.

Prior to the war, moreover, the Black Country had been the despair of many men in the labour movement. With the advent of the peace, however, and the changed conditions of trade, the workers, even though slowly, were waking up under the stress of happenings without precedent in the area. A year ago the West Bromwich Trades Council and Labour Party began to give special attention to the question of the unemployed. Hitherto the trouble had been to get them to take any interest in their own affairs, but this time their numbers were so staggering, that within the unemployed themselves began the rudiments of organisation.

At first it was a struggle to get the Poor Law to take the responsibility for relief. Old officials of the Board, grown grey in the business of refusing or reducing the claims of the unemployed, were compelled by the demonstrations to accept their responsibility. The same thing has happened here as elsewhere—nothing was done until the workers were prepared to demonstrate. Naturally, all the forces of the Press and pulpit were focussed on the spokesmen. Naturally also, the police were called in and the meetings and demonstrations have been under their careful watch. The employers of the town, who in one week during the war subscribed nearly £25,000 for a special war fund, were appealed to by the Mayor on behalf of the Distress Fund, but so great was the call on it and so small the amount subscribed, that this, after a brief spell sank into obscurity. Some months ago, relief works were started by the Town Council. In the putting on of men every effort seems to

## The Cases of West Bromwich, Rochdale and South Shields—defenders of the Unemployed—The Inkpin case the

THE refusal of the Court of Appeal to alter either the verdict or the sentence in the case of Albert Inkpin took place at almost the same moment as the action of public prosecutors against prominent Communists in West Bromwich and in Rochdale.

All together, these cases, with an earlier one from South Shields, show the determination of the ruling class first to crush the Communist Party, and second to crush it in such a way as will provide both a precedent and a means for crushing all resistance of the working-class to the will of their ruthless exploiters.

During the war it was a crime to oppose or criticise the will of the ruling class.

During the miners' lock-out last spring it was made a crime to oppose or criticise the will of the ruling class.

During the peace that endures, in which the idleness enforced by a mine-owners' lock-out is changed for idleness enforced by a general throw-out, it is a crime to oppose or criticise the will of the master-class.

In the Black Friday period the Vendetta against the Communist Party began. More than seventy members of the Party were imprisoned in the course of it.

Now that the relations between the unemployed and the local authorities grow tenser every day, it begins again to be a crime to be a Communist concerned for the welfare of the working-class.

*Under cover of an attack upon Communism and its party, an attack is being developed upon every phase of working-class activity.*

have been made to separate those in the working class who were ex-servicemen and those who had stopped at home. That was one of the efforts to divide and conquer. Matters came to a climax when the Government circular with its 75 per cent. was put into operation. At that time the unemployed committee was supplemented by the relief workers, who joined the organisation. This was a tribute to the splendid efforts of the former in their fight with the Guardians. The present situation culminated in a strike of workers at the local sewage works, where men had been engaged for some months on cleaning the purification beds. During the autumn there were constant complaints of the terrible smell and of the filth associated with the job—to say nothing of the fact that some of the men had to walk three miles to and from work. With the advent of winter the conditions increased in severity. The sewage farm is the West Bromwich "Siberia," exposed to all the winds that blow, and one can faintly comprehend the conditions of these men on this job, with unsuitable clothing and boots, walking long distances, with insufficient food. The strike of these men naturally brought in the "blacklegs" under police protection, with feeing running high on both sides.

The "blacklegs" were induced to leave the job, and a week later five warrants were issued. Brought before the magistrates at a special court within two hours of their arrest, the prisoners were refused bail and removed to Winson Green Gaol.

On the morning of the day set down for the hearing, meetings of unemployed were held in all the surrounding towns, and from each of them a procession was formed to march to the West Bromwich Town Hall.

### A Baton Charge

Over 20,000 unemployed gathered in the neighbourhood of the court house before the case commenced, and the arrivals from outside the town were greeted with the news that there had been a baton charge.

During the time of waiting the commencement of the proceedings, the crowd held up a tramcar because its progress endangered the crowd that had gathered. As there happened to be an unpopular alderman on board, the police interfered. A blow was struck, and the police drew their staves and charged the crowd, several of whom were batoned.

The borough member (Mr. F. O. Roberts) was present, and with a view to quieting the crowd addressed them from the top of a motor, but he did not succeed in persuading them to disperse. They remained in High Street, as near to the court as they were permitted to get, and spent their time in booing and jeering the police. Of these at least 1,500 had been gathered from all parts, and during the whole of the day they were manœuvred in such a way as to give the impression that somebody in charge was anxious to provoke a collision which would give an excuse for a bludgeoning, which might strike terror into the unemployed mass.

As the day grew on, the crowd marched and counter-marched in the neighbourhood of the court house (accompanied by squads of mounted police), the head of the march being taken by men bearing posters of the early edition of the local paper with the wording

POLICE  
BATON  
UNEMPLOYED.

At the end of the day the crowd dispersed in good order, satisfied that a most imposing demonstration of solidarity had been made and that the effects would be soon apparent.

### The Case

A highly important feature of the case was that proceedings were taken under the "Protection of Property" Act, and the Trades Disputes Act 1906.

The accused were Walter Rigby (30), James Baggott (40), John Swain (44), William Carpenter (39), and Isaiah Tanner (40). They were all charged with "baiting" the Friar Park Sewerage Farm, where Corporation relief work is in progress, "with a view to compelling other persons to abstain from doing an act which they had a legal right to do."

Mr. J. S. Sharpe prosecuted on behalf of the police, and Mr. Willison defended.

Mr. Sharpe explained that the prisoners were leaders of a section of the unemployed in the borough. The Town Council had opened relief works at several places, including Friar Park. Since these works had been opened a strike had been called by the leaders of the unemployed party. A number of men refused to avail themselves of the work offered, but on the other hand there were men who were desirous of accepting the rate of pay, which was the Government rate, and there were 22 of these men at work at Friar Park on Jan. 12th.

This did not appear to have suited the views of the men accused, who called a meeting at the park gates. After this meeting a crowd of about 500,

# VENDETTA AGAINST THE COMMUNIST PARTY BREAKS OUT AGAIN

## Rochdale and South Shields—Determined attack on only Inkpin case the declaration of war—Stand all together!

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Once the public mind has been prepared for the belief that any unrest, either among the employed or the unemployed, is "fomented" by Communists, and would not exist without their striving, anyone active in organising the unemployed or in stirring up resistance to a wage-cut can be marked down and victimised as a "Communist."

If the trade unions, trades councils, and Labour Parties allow this sort of thing to go on, they will find first, that their most militant spirits will be cut off along with the "Communists," and then (when they are at last driven to make a stand), they too will be suppressed as illegal and seditious conspiracies of a Communist character.

Let the Trades-unionist and the worker generally take note of the fact that in the West Bromwich case (and incidentally the Rochdale one) the trouble arose primarily from Mond's 75 per cent. of the Trade Union rate for relief work.

The unemployed have rightly resisted this insulting injury. And in doing so they have struck in defence of the employed even more than themselves.

*If this thing were allowed to pass it would be, virtually, impossible to prevent all wages from falling 25 per cent.*

We call, therefore, every member of the Communist Party to stand firm to meet this new attack. We call every honest and convinced Labour worker to stand with us. The bosses' first attack began this summer with Black Friday. War has been declared by them again. Who is on our side? Let us hear the answer not uncertainly.

headed by the prisoners, marched to Friar Park. When there, Carpenter used expressions which he (Mr. Sharpe) suggested were calculated to incite the crowd to violence. The crowd was held back by the police, who did everything to conciliate them. The officers suggested that a deputation should be appointed to find out whether the men who were at work would come out or not. This course was adopted, but the men at work shouted that they did not mean to come out.

Then began the trouble which was the subject of the charge of besetting. The crowd, led by the prisoners, made a rush past the police, the men at work were surrounded, threats were used, and stones were thrown. There was a general act of intimidation by the crowd, in consequence of which the men who were at work came out because they were afraid.

Henry James Corbett, the foreman at the Sewage Works, said after the deputation spoke to his men they (the men) decided to go on with their work. Rigby, Swain and Carpenter went back and told the crowd of this decision, and the crowd swarmed over the beds. The result was that the men had to cease work.

Other relief workers gave evidence that they had to cease work because of the attitude of the crowd.

All the prisoners were called. Rigby said there was no intention to have any disturbance; there was no bad language or abuse. He thought the unemployed were in the right not to work under trade union rates.

In reply to Mr. Sharpe, he said he claimed the right as an individual to try to maintain a living standard inside society. He was not being paid for his work.

Asked if he was a member of the Communist party, he replied warmly, "Yes, and proud of it," but he protested that that had nothing to do with the case. The Stipendiary told him to answer the questions and behave himself.

Swain, who described himself as the local organiser to the District Committee of West Bromwich unemployed, also denied that there were any threats or violence, and they never intended anything but peaceful picketing. He wanted, he said, a living wage for the unemployed.

In reply to Mr. Sharpe, witness admitted that he lived at Smethwick.

Mr. Sharp: Why do you come from Smethwick to spread disaffection here? I am not out to spread disaffection. I realise the position of the unemployed, and am out to organise them to get something for their wives and children. He admitted that he was a Communist.

The other prisoners also gave evidence denying that there were any threats of violence towards the men who were at work. Tanner admitted, in reply

to Mr. Sharpe, that he was getting 26s. a week from the Labour Exchange and 18s. from the Guardians, but pointed out that he had a wife and six children to keep.

Several other unemployed workers were also called, who stated there was no violence.

One of them, asked by Mr. Willison if he were a member of the Communist party, replied, "No, Well, I'm unemployed, that's all I know." (Laughter)

Mr. Willison urged that the intention of the prisoners was perfectly honest. They felt they were justified in trying to get these men out, because the pay was very much less than the trade union rate of pay. Commenting upon the crowd of people and the police outside the court, Mr. Willison said he was amazed when he came to West Bromwich to see so many people about, but he understood it when he saw the cavalry (referring to the mounted police). They created this panoply, and then wondered at people standing by. Commenting on the fact that the warrants against the prisoners were not issued until five days after the occurrence—and during the interval nothing took place—he said it was no wonder there was discontent and trouble. They had been kept in prison since their arrest, and he suggested this was only done to punish them.

The Stipendiary said what prisoners had done was not peaceful picketing, and such violence must be stopped. He appreciated the fact that during the five days before the issue of the warrant there was no more violence; if there had been the sentences would be much heavier. He pointed out that each prisoner was liable to a fine of £20 and imprisonment for six months.

Inspector Mollart said Swain had been concerned in trouble before.

He was a red-hot Communist.

Rigby had been very active in inciting people to set up trade disputes. The other men were well known in the borough.

Swain was sentenced to a month's imprisonment with hard labour, Rigby and Baggott to 21 days with hard labour, and Tanner and Carpenter were each fined 26s., or 14 days, and were allowed time to pay.

### WHEELBARROWS, WINDOWS AND WIND-UP AT ROCHDALE

THE Rochdale case cannot so far as the result is concerned, be classed among those in which the sentence is vindictive.

The features in the case were:—  
A march by the unemployed to stop a relief work job at blackleg rates.

Direct action in the form of confiscating the wheelbarrows and tools of the offenders.

A march to a newspaper office to remonstrate with an editor who had misconducted himself.

A window smashed during this demonstration.

A number of visits to the house and business premises of the mayor.

A "funeral" parade before the house of the leading offender among the relief blacklegs.

For all this the unemployed leader, Comrade Dawson, was "bound over," notwithstanding the endeavour of the prosecution to obscure the issue by drawing attention to the Communism of several witnesses.

### The Case

During the last few weeks the unemployed in Rochdale have been endeavouring to obtain from the local authorities the use of a hall suitable for holding meetings in, but without success. After sending deputations to the Mayor and General Purposes Committee the plan of campaign was altered and demonstrations were held both to the house and business premises of the Mayor and to the houses of other influential townsmen.

The unemployed need the meeting place because of their activity with regard to men working on unemployed relief schemes at less than Trade Union rates of wages.

For their activities in this latter direction the Rochdale Observer styled them "Work-Shys." Resenting this, the unemployed demonstrated in a body at the premises of this paper.

Whilst an interview was being held with one of the proprietors, some person, unknown, threw a stone which broke a plate-glass window in the office valued at £30.

As a result of this a summons was served on Comrade Dawson, the organiser of the Local Unemployed Workers' Committee.

In opening the case for the prosecution the Deputy Town Clerk said that Dawson had held meetings and that breaches of the peace had occurred as a result.

On January 3rd defendant led a procession to Brimrod, where a number of men were working on relief work, for which the Corporation were only allowed to pay 75 per cent of the standard rate of wages. He addressed the men working there, asking them to leave the job. They refused, whereon Dawson called on the unemployed to take away the barrows and tools.

This instruction was carried out, Dawson helping in the taking away of the tools.

Addressing a meeting on the Town Hall Square on the following day, Dawson said they had stopped the job at Brimrod. He had heard of similar instances, and if the men did not come out peaceably they would throw them out by the scruff of the neck.

At a meeting on the Town Hall Square on January 5th, defendant said they had quietened the God-dam Times and would shut up the Observer in a fortnight. He then called on the crowd to form up in procession and led them to the Observer office in Drake Street. He was assisted by a man named Lund. They entered the side entrance and in threatening tones demanded to see the manager. About this time a window was broken. Defendant said they took objection to a paragraph in the last issue of the Observer referring to the Brimrod incident, calling the unemployed "Work-Shys."

At a meeting on January 6th defendant said "Follow your leader," and led a crowd to the Mayor's business premises. Dawson and one of his followers went into the shop, but they were turned out by the police.

On January 9th defendant led a demonstration to the house of a man named Newcombe in Peil Street, who was working on the Brimrod job. The crowd walked to and fro in front of the house. This was clearly a breach of the labour laws.

Comrade Dawson, dealing with the Brimrod incident, said that on several occasions P. Newcombe, on behalf of the men working there, had appealed to him, and had also attended a mass meeting of the unemployed for the purpose of getting them to demonstrate to the job as those there were fed up with the conditions they were working under, the wages being 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>d. an hour. If the unemployed came up Newcombe stated all the men working would leave the job.

Referring to the incident at the Observer office, he said the unemployed had decided to go there for the purpose of interviewing the management as they

(Continued from preceding page)

had taken objection to a paragraph in the last issue of the paper which referred to the unemployed demonstrators at Brimrod as "Work-Shys." This paragraph, in his opinion, most certainly was inciting to a breach of the peace. He did not know of the window having been broken until they left the premises.

Com. Davenport gave evidence on the Brimrod affair. He stated the unemployed visited the job twice. Before they went the first time he had heard P. Newcombe appeal to Dawson to bring the unemployed up to the job. He attended a recent meeting of the Trades and Labour Council, at which a resolution was passed supporting the payment of full trade union rates of wages and not 75 per cent or less as was being paid at Brimrod.

**Cross-examined by Mr. Robinson as to whether he was Secretary of the local Communist Party he stated he did not think this a fair question. Com. Kealey also rose in court protesting but was told he had nothing to do with the case. The Chairman of the Bench ruled that the question be answered. Com. Davenport then admitted that he was Secretary of the local Communist Party.**

In reply to Mr. Robinson he said when the unemployed visited Brimrod on the second occasion they passed a resolution to the effect that the barrows be removed from the job, which was carried out.

Com. Lund gave evidence on the visit to the Observer office. He did not know the window was broken until they came away from the premises.

**Cross-examined by Mr. Robinson he denied being an official of the local Communist Party.**

The Bench ordered defendant to enter into recognisances in a sum of £10 to keep the peace for 12 months.

## ALIENS AND THE DEVIL

The South Shields case occurred on the 30th December last. Its importance has been enhanced as a result of the above cases. We therefore note the following essentials:—

Two Swedes were charged with being aliens who had (1) landed without the permission of the Emigration Officer. (2) failed to notify their presence to the police.

Henry Birkett was charged with (1) failing to notify the Registrar of the presence of aliens in his house. (2) with not keeping a register of persons staying there.

James Beadham (described as a joiner and an official of the local Communist Party), was charged with aiding and abetting Birkett.

The prisoners all admitted the offence, the two Englishmen contending that they had merely given the men (whom they had met casually) hospitality for a few days until they could find a ship.

For this the Bench decided to commit the two aliens to prison for *three months* and Birkett for one month; Comrade Beadham having to pay a fine of £5.

The amazing feature of the case was the attempt of the prosecution to connect the Swedish prisoners and their visit with Communism. To this end Comrade Beadham's house was ransacked and all the papers therein subjected to a close scrutiny.

Nothing was found to connect in any way the Swedes with Communism beyond a clay bust made by one of them representing Lloyd George as the Devil—with horns.

It appeared from the evidence of Beadham that the aliens had tried to earn a little money by making clay busts, but the prosecution preferred the view that some sinister plot was involved in this irreverence to the Prime Minister. They introduced a letter from G. Harvey, of the Miner's Section of the National Workers' Committee movement, in which reference is made, in connection with the outcome of the miners' lock-out, to the phrase of a miners' leader: "Let us meet the devil (i.e., bad conditions and local reductions) when he arrives." This letter seemed to the prosecution either to have inspired the bust, or the bust the letter, and both to evidence a dark conspiracy to do all sorts of unspecified devilment.

By itself the case would be ridiculous. Taken in conjunction with those that have happened since, it would seem to give a clear indication that the various Town Clerks and prosecuting attorneys throughout the country have arrived at a family agreement that at all costs and by all possible means, a Communist must be made to feel that it is an unpleasant and an unprofitable thing to be a Communist.

## RUSSIAN FAMINE FUND

Past the £4,000 Now

**T**HE Famine Fund has now passed the £4,000 mark and reached £4,050. Plans are in hand which it is hoped will bring us over the £5,000 in a few weeks. Meanwhile our regular contributors continue to work very hard on behalf of the fund. The announcement we print this week of a further contribution from the N.A.F.T.A. (East London United Branch No. 15) brings their total up to £43. This branch has arranged for a weekly levy to be taken and in spite of all the difficulties connected with unemployment the levy has been maintained excellently.

Goods made for the Bazaar should be forwarded as soon as possible to E. W. Cant, 35, Grays Inn Road, London, W.C., so that we may know how to make our arrangements. Cedar Paul and John Goss have very kindly consented to sing during the days the Bazaar is open, and other artistes will give their services.

Lantern Lectures on the Famine, with slides illustrating the actual conditions in the Volga Region, are being arranged in Scotland and England. For particulars of the arrangements for Scotland apply to the Scottish Organiser, and for other arrangements apply to the Central Office. A very successful lantern lecture was held at Bow last Sunday—some six hundred people paid sixpence each for their tickets, and afterwards gave to a retiring collection no less than £6. These lectures can be made very successful, and will result in materially increasing our Fund.

W. Mc.L.

## Acknowledgments

*Cheques, Money Orders and Postal Orders, should be crossed thus &/Co. and made payable to J. F. Hodgson, Russian Famine Fund. Treasury Notes should be registered. Address all letters: Russian Famine Fund, 16, King Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C. 2. Unless otherwise desired, a receipt is sent by post, in addition to the acknowledgment in "The Communist."*

Alice Steele, 10s.; Bradford Central C.P., 7s. 11d.; H. Owen, 10s.; Olga, Bradford, 2s.; Brentford E.T.U., per Ealing C.P., 7s. 6d.; A. T. Dickson, £1; Shipley C.P., Xmas Effort, £1 5s.; F. Barry, £1; H. Webb, Hanwell, £1; Portsmouth C.P., 11s.; Teddington and District Co-operative Sick Share Club, £1; N.A.F.T.A. East London United Branch 15, £6 17s. 6d.; Misses Griffiths, £1; "Chock," Edinburgh, 10s.; A. Green and Friend, 7s.; Dumfries C.P., half proceeds Will Gray's Lecture on Burns, £17 2s. 9d.; H. Potter, Altogether Union, £1; Y.C.L., N.W. London Joint Committee, 15s.; Chesterfield Spiritualist Lyceum, 10s.; Assurance Agents Chronicle, £5 12s. 6d.; J.H.W., 2s. 6d.; Collected by E. C. Couttenden, £1; W. Parker, Nottingham, £1; Few Matelots, 9th and 10th weekly, 14s. 6d.; Openshaw C.P., £1; Openshaw C.P., Sale of Book, Comrade Grierson, £1 2s.; Openshaw C.P., Manchester and Salford H.O.R. Committee, per W. Greenhatch, £2 16s.

Marylebone C.P., £1 10s.; A. Thorpe, 2s. 6d.; A.H.K., Brixton, 16s.; G. L. Hoyles, 10s.; E. C. Shell, 10s.; R. W. G. Waters, £1; Altringham C.P., 5s.; Mrs. Spicer, 10s.; Croydon C.P., Comrades Hall, Dickinson and J.F.B., 7s. 4d.; Brighton C.P., £2; Pendleton C.P., 5s. 6d.; Francine and Friends, £2 9s. 7d.; P. J. Wright, 6s. 6d.; A. Muller, 2s. 6d.; H.J.T., 4s.; A. Levin, 15s.; W. E. King, 5s.; K. Maher, 3s.; Social Credit Reformer, 3s. 6d.; Fulham C.P., 9s. 6½d.; A.I. Pioneer Co-op. Div., 1s.; D. Stephenson, Norwich, £5; T. Colquhoun, 10s.; Four Women Workers, £1 10s.; John Crow, 7s.; Workers on Building Guild Scheme, Hatcham Hill, 12s.; E. W. Morgan, Ton-retail, £5 0s. 6d. Total, £4,015.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Realism

DEAR COMRADE.—F. Silvester says that the usefulness or uselessness of the Labour Party is not the point at issue. But it arises immediately if you are asking workers to vote labour.

He wants alliance "on grounds of our hostility to Imperialism and particularly to the present Coalition Government." He also says that the Labour Party policy is not in advance of the capitalist Coalition. Why bother to change them, then? Does he allow nothing at all for the growing pressure of the masses behind the Labour leaders?

He constructs an entirely automatic process of government to prove that the Labour Party can do nothing. For all its learnedness this is far too rigid. Why not frankly admit that the Labour Party may make concessions not only in regard to Imperialistic policy (which Silvester seems inclined to concede) but in regard to domestic policy as well.

His statement as to the inadequacy of reform every Communist accepts, so really that was unnecessary. The strength of the Communist case remains even when they have done all they can do. It is not "Menshevism" to face facts. The Bolsheviks do it continually.

If the Communists always insist that nothing but Communism can remedy the existing position they can never be tarred with the same brush as the reformers.

By the danger of rant I mean that tendency to find refuge in phrases rather than to face a situation. We know that the Left Wing movement has suffered and does suffer from this.

Fraternally,

R. M. Fox.

## Ireland

DEAR COMRADE.—Re Comrade Glickman's letter in your last issue, I did not and do not favour an inert Irish policy for the C.P.G.B.; of course, "the Irish people have to be supported in their revolutionary struggle against the Crown forces of this country." I still maintain, however, that the Irish worker must take into consideration factors which do not affect the English worker in this issue and that his line of action therefore is not so obvious.

The conduct during the next few months of those responsible for the *Voice of Labour* will show whether their policy was dictated by cowardice and reformism or the necessities of revolutionary strategy.

Yours fraternally,

A. B. F. WHITE.

DEAR COMRADE.—If, as Comrade White declares, the aim of the Irish Transport Workers' Union is to set up a Workers' Republic in Ireland and smash the British Empire, how on earth can she account for the tacit acceptance of the Peace Treaty by the officials of that organisation?

James Connolly risked a "split in the ranks" in 1916; James Larkin is prepared to risk the same today, but apparently the present leaders of the Irish Labour Movement would risk the safety of Ireland, Egypt and India than run the risk of standing by their oratorical efforts of the past few years.

It wasn't "foreign opinion" but economic necessity that compelled Ireland's fairy godmother to recall her Black and Tans in June last.

And that economic necessity exists today and will continue to exist for a long time to come despite the threats of Lloyd George or the feeble whinings of R. C. Barton.

Whether accepted or rejected by the Irish people this Treaty settles nothing. It will not benefit the English or the Irish middle-class despite the hopes of them both.

But that is another story.

Yours fraternally,

EDMUND F. CULLEN.

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# A LADY LOVED A SWINE

Once a Lady loved a Swine,  
"Piggy," said she,  
"Pig-a-hog, wilt thou be mine?"  
"Oomph!" said he.

**B**UT what if the Pig should start the wooing, and grunt his love to a lady? Scandalous thoughts of this nature passed through the mind of some of the members of the Gorton Trades Council recently when they were addressed by a large person, a vast extent of matter, given to grunting and blowing—their Sitting Member, the Right Honourable John Hodge. Certainly sitting. He had come before them as sole nominated candidate for Parliament.

He hove to with apparent ease and said "Oomph. My record is behind me" (interjection: "In front!") One of the greatest problems confronting us today, he said, was that of Unemployment. Whilst on this subject he referred to the Labour Party having had occasion to rise in the House of Commons no less than nine times during their three years of office (3 times per year, Henry, spring, summer and autumn, and they'd rise in winter too, but the intense cold makes rising difficult!) He said that the State should grapple with the question in enterprise," which refused to make munitions, when the same way they did during the war, with "private the lads in Flanders, sick of bully beef and apple, cried out for munitions. . . .

Here we will cut out a little, our brother the pink pig not being very bright as a speaker. Going on he said: "If only the Labour Party had had a majority in the House of Commons they would have been able to move a Money Bill, which only a Crown Minister could do. They were in the same position with widows' pensions; with a majority we could have pushed that to the second reading, if no further." In fact "we" could have "moved" any amount of Bills (Kaiser Bills included) and—and—listen carefully

"What is required at the present time is more unanimity between Capital and Labour. Oomph!"

And the Honourable gentleman grunted suddenly and sat down. Then the Chairman threw the meeting open for questions, as under:

**Question:**

"Is it your opinion that you can act as a Privy Councillor and at the same time truly act in the interests and as the accredited representative of the working class?"

**Answer:** (note the evasion):

"The reason for taking the Privy Councillorship was that it was compulsory on becoming a Crown Minister."

**Question:**

"Have you got the Privy Councillor's oath?"

**Answer:**

"No. But I will send it along to the Council if desired, though in my opinion it is no more drastic than the oath taken upon enlistment in the army."

**Question:**

"Would you betray the working class by informing the King or the Privy Council of any action the workers were contemplating?"

**Answer:**

"Certainly not!" (Do not trust him, gentle maiden, read the Privy Councillor's oath).

**Question:**

"Do you still believe the More Production stunt, to which you appended your name, will solve the Unemployment Problem within the Capitalist System?"

**Answer:**

"Yes. When the worker in his own Union produced more, in return they received more wages. It is not over-production we are suffering from but under-distribution."

**Question:**

"Seeing that Mr. Hodge still believes in the Labour Party policy, how is it that the Labour Party had such a big job to get him to resign membership of the National Democratic Party?"

**Answer:**

"Oomph! I notice that there is a great amount of sarcasm going on within this Council. Let bygones be bygones."

**Question:**

"Is it possible for a private to have his pension commuted?"

**Answer:**

"No. I am not responsible for the Pensions' Scheme, but I assisted the private soldiers on every occasion. For instance, a soldier with one leg wanted a grant to set himself up in business, and the Government would not give him one. I was determined by fair means or foul ("foul"—Tut, tut. Oh must emphatically TUT!) to see that this man set up in business. I had the pleasure of being a guest at a huge dinner (at Lockhart's?) and I appealed to those present on this man's behalf, with the result that £350 was raised. This incident was responsible for the Government agreeing to my amendment on the scheme of grants."

**Question:**

"Is it not a fact that just after the war when the unemployed sent a resolution to you to try and get the out of work pay increased to 40s. you replied that in your opinion the existing 29s. was sufficient to keep a man, his wife and their family on?"

**Answer:**

"I have no recollection on this point."

**Question:**

**Are you, if elected to Parliament, prepared to support the Government in bringing out the White Guards against strikers, as you did during the Boilermaker's Strike at Liverpool?**

**Answer:**

**"YES"**

**Question:**

"If the Labour Party is elected in a majority to Parliament, have they any policy by which they hope to solve the unemployment problem?"

**Answer:**

"No! We will have to play Ca-Canny until we find our feet (Gather round lads, the Mystery Play commences, "Watch the Labour Leaders find their Feet.")

From our LANCASHIRE CORRESPONDENT.  
C.B.J.W.

## BOOK REVIEW

### MARXIAN ECONOMICS

*The People's Marx.* By Julian Borchardt. International Bookshops, Ltd. Price 2s. 6d.

**S**INCE the Russian Revolution everybody has been talking about Marx. Here is a chance to begin to understand him. It is not, I think, an ideal beginners' book; nor is the translation entirely without flaw, but none the less for that it is the only accessible work at a proletarian price from which one may give a good working conception of the whole three volumes of Marx's "Capital."

The method of the author is interesting. Instead of a simple abridgement or summary which follows the author's course he adopts the method of giving verbatim extracts arranged in such a way as to present the essence of Marx's analysis in a form more suited to the needs of the student in a hurry to come to a conclusion. Thus the book begins with extracts from the third volume, on "Commodities, Prices, and Profits," continues in its second chapter with the topic of Profit and Value in circulation (extracted partly from the third volume and partly from the first) and only in Chapter III does it reach the analysis of Value with which the first volume opens.

There is much to be said for this method—it gives a concrete opening rather than an abstract one, and fastens at the outset upon the problems and circumstances which give the subject its practical importance. It may be that what it gains in this way it loses by reason of the sacrifice of much of the historical matter whereby Marx supports his case. These passages, forming as they do a mine of fascinating material, are naturally missed. So too, are the polemic sections in which Marx makes good his case against his rivals—but in this case the loss is probably an advantage to the beginner.

It cannot be too often insisted that although Marxian economics constitute an indispensable weapon in the hands of the proletariat that "Capital" was no more written for proletarian consumption than was Darwin's "Origin" or Frazer's "Golden Bough." It was (as its title page should have warned everyone) a "critique of Political Economy," a work which pre-supposed in its readers a good general knowledge of the progress made and the conclusions reached in that science up to the point at which the work appeared. It was therefore, in a work of such pretensions, necessary to do more than present discursively a new point of view in matters economic. Its author was compelled to lay a foundation by expounding a set of general principles

(supported, where possible, by the conclusions of previous workers) and to defend those principles so far as they departed from currently accepted views against the counter-authority of rival economists.

In consequence of this Marx's "Capital" had to proceed in strict logical sequence, while at each stage every conceivable objection and qualification had to be examined, disposed of, or allowed for. The result in any case was bound to be a *difficult* book. Not difficult from obscurity either of conception or of language, nor from any defect of presentation. *Difficult* as Darwin's "Origin" was difficult to the generation that first saw it, because the acceptance of its fundamental proposition entailed a mental revolution. Marx's "Capital" is never verbose, it is at times "dark from excess of light." At times and to some it is as unreadable as Gibbon's "Roman Empire" and for a similar reason—few possess the capacity to comprehend the immensity of the survey or the vastness of the prospect opened up.

To those who have learned to love their Marx no sort of substitute will serve. The mere suggestion of a "simplification" or an "abridgement" sounds as blasphemy in the ears of those who have learned to take the word of the Master pure and undefiled. They will, these "hard-shell" Marxists, those of the true faith (Allah be merciful! I, all unworthy, am one!) concede you that the Master Work should not be approached without due preparation but they will stand it even to the death that the best preparation for Marx is Marx. "Wage-Labour and Capital," and "Value, Price, and Profit," these two pamphlets to be purchased for a shilling will when duly assimilated give the best possible introduction to the study of "Capital."

Be that as it may, the ordinary proletarian cannot possibly, as things go, afford either the money or the time to possess and assimilate the three volumes of that indispensable work. For him Borchardt's work is (with reservations) to be recommended. If he has a fair general idea of the subject—stimulated by the pamphlets named above—he may go ahead and with profit. If he is a student at a "Plebs" or other study class he will find it a very cheap and useful supplement. If he knows nothing at all about the subject and has no inclination for study he had best stick to our old friend Mary Marcy's "Shop Talks on Economics."

A word here about other "abridgements" may be useful. Aveling's "Students' Marx" is very frequently bought under a misapprehension. It is not a simplification for beginners—it is, as it describes

itself, for "students," people who are able and willing to study. It is a condensed summary of the main argument, paragraph by paragraph, of Vol. I of "Capital." It is admirable for the student who wishes to refresh his memory of some part of that volume. It is not good at all for the beginner.

Gabriel Deville's "People's Marx" is a simple abridgement of Vol. I. It is only occasionally to be met with second-hand. Untermann's "Marxian Economics" is a readable presentation of an outline of the three volumes of "Capital." It is good in the main and so far as it goes, and being elementary, fairly good for beginners. It is none too reliable, however, and its price is, owing to the state of the American exchanges, prohibitive.

Louis Boudin's "Theoretical System of Karl Marx" covers the whole of Marxism (Economics, Politics, Historical Philosophy) in a careful and critical fashion. It is quite good but too general for elementary students. Also it is not wholly devoted to economics and so far as it goes too much into polemics to be readable for the beginner. Like Untermann's work its price too is prohibitive.

Borchardt's book on the whole is the best thing of its kind yet. Anyway it will serve until the *Plebs* text book on Economics is available.

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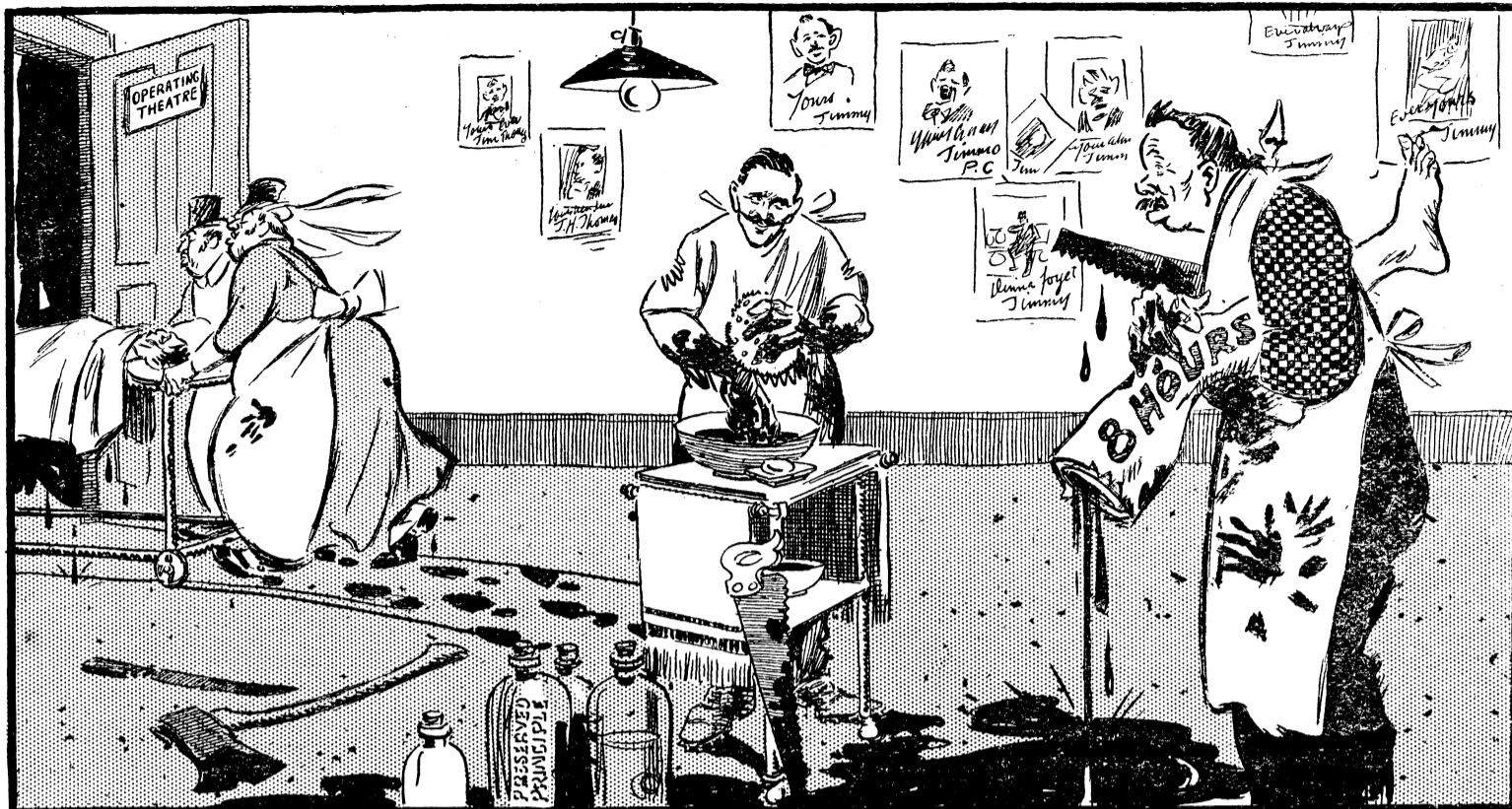
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## INDUSTRIAL NOTES

By John Ball

THE warriors had better be looking to their weapons. The result of the engineering ballot on overtime brings us a big stride nearer to a very big struggle.

By 50,240 votes to 35,525 the members of the Amalgamated Engineering Union have rejected the agreement signed last November by their executive. That agreement would hand back to the bosses the control of overtime. The men stand by the practice that overtime shall only be worked when it has first been sanctioned by the shop stewards or works committees.

Presumably the bosses will proceed to act on the rejected agreement. Men will be dismissed when they refuse to work over. Local struggles will be precipitated. It is a short step then to a lock-out. All the engineering trades will be involved in the struggle.

In connection with this, recall the situation in the shipbuilding trade, the suffering and unrest of the miners, the attack on the building workers, the position on the railways, the disputes of the dockers, chemical workers and transport workers, the struggle on the farms, the unemployment and the early exhaustion of unemployment funds—and then tell me if you cannot scent battle of gigantic proportions.

### Get Ready!

Brownlie and his executive would resign if they had any spunk left. Instead they may try to get breathing space for another ballot, though, as I have indicated, I do not think the bosses will agree to delay. And anyway the activity of the live wires in the workshops, and of the unemployed, would probably bring the crisis.

The vote is small—85,000 out of a claimed membership of 425,000. But the abstentions were largely members disgusted with the conduct of the executive. In addition we have to remember that the membership is rapidly falling, and that 100,000 members are wholly unemployed.

Whatever may be the immediate moves on the part of the A.E.U. executive and the employers, I strongly counsel the unemployed to look to their local organisation, and the rank and file of the engineers to overhaul their machinery ready for action. We must not expect union executives to give a strong lead. We should be prepared for guerilla warfare, remembering, however, that at any moment the operations may be forced on to a national scale by the employers.

### Chemical Lords' Humbug

In the chemical trade it is possible that a stoppage will occur next week, though the probability at the moment is that the Ministry of Labour may intervene and delay the crisis.

The history of this dispute shows how useless are the Whitley Councils in preventing attacks when the employers are determined. At the meeting of the Chemical Trade J.I.C. on December 2nd, the bosses demanded a reduction of 2d. an hour on January 1st and a further possible cut on February 1st. Fleming Eccles (a workers' representative) was in the chair, and he ruled the demand out of order on the ground that the bosses had said they would not ask for any further reduction in 1921.

The bosses accepted the ruling under protest. There was chortling in the workers' camp. But wait a minute! The Council met again on January 8th, with Roscoe Brunner (the employers' representative) in the chair, and the bosses demanded a cut of 2d. on February 1st and 1d. on March 1st. The workers' representatives refused to agree, but offered arbitration.

Note the sequel. Mr. Brunner replied rejecting arbitration and adding that there was no alternative but for the employers to *proceed to put the reduction into force*.

So much for Whitleyism! The bosses use it so long as it dopes the workers and gives the bosses what they want: whenever it fails to do that they snap their fingers at it.

### Havelock "Asking for it"

Havelock Wilson and his associates have made a pretty boiling of fish. They have agreed at the National Maritime Board to a reduction of £2 per month for seamen on foreign-going vessels and 10s. 6d. per week for men on coastal boats. These cuts will begin to operate on March 1st.

It will be interesting to see what the Marine Workers' Union has to say to this. It will be bound to make some show of resistance, and as it is linked up with the International Transport Workers' Federation and the British ditto (and Havelock's union is not) there is the possibility of an effective stranglehold on Havelock's settlement. No doubt attempts would be made on the owners' side to use the unemployed British and coloured seamen, but the organised workers in the land transport unions have the power (and the duty) to frustrate any attempt in that direction.

But Havelock will have trouble with his own members, too. Recently he stumped the ports asking the men to agree to cuts of £1 a month. At meeting after meeting the proposal was rejected with contempt. Yet the men find themselves saddled with a cut of £2 a month! This friend of Stinnes—oh "honoured sir"—is in for a rough time.

### Hitch Over Amalgamation

It seems that the Workers' Union has raised obstacles which may end the scheme for the amalgamation of four unions of general workers. A few years ago amalgamation was arranged between the Workers' Union, the Municipal Employees' Asso-

ciation and the National Amalgamated Union of Labour. This has not yet reached the stage of final fusion of the three unions. Meantime a new amalgamation proposal arose, as between those three unions on the one hand and the National Union of General Workers on the other. This would have meant a union with over 1½ million members.

Just when the ballot was about to be taken, the Workers' Union executive butted in with new proposals which the others regard as intended to wreck the scheme. It may be that there will be an attempt to fuse the General Workers with the M.E.A. and the N.A.U.L.

### Trouble for Bevin's Men

What is the meaning of the attitude of the Transport and General Workers' Union to the latest demand for wage cuts for road commercial workers? Reports reach me that at several places at the week end the men got the impression that the officials want authority to accept reductions.

Negotiations are proceeding this week, and the men will watch the business with suspicion. One thing is certain: if any reduction is tolerated by the union officials there will be a row and a big drop in union membership.

Conditions in the road transport business are becoming worse and worse owing to the scramble to beat the railways without sacrificing any of the profits which the bosses are now amassing. There is a strong feeling among the men that wages should be increased and hours reduced to meet the added strain imposed on them.

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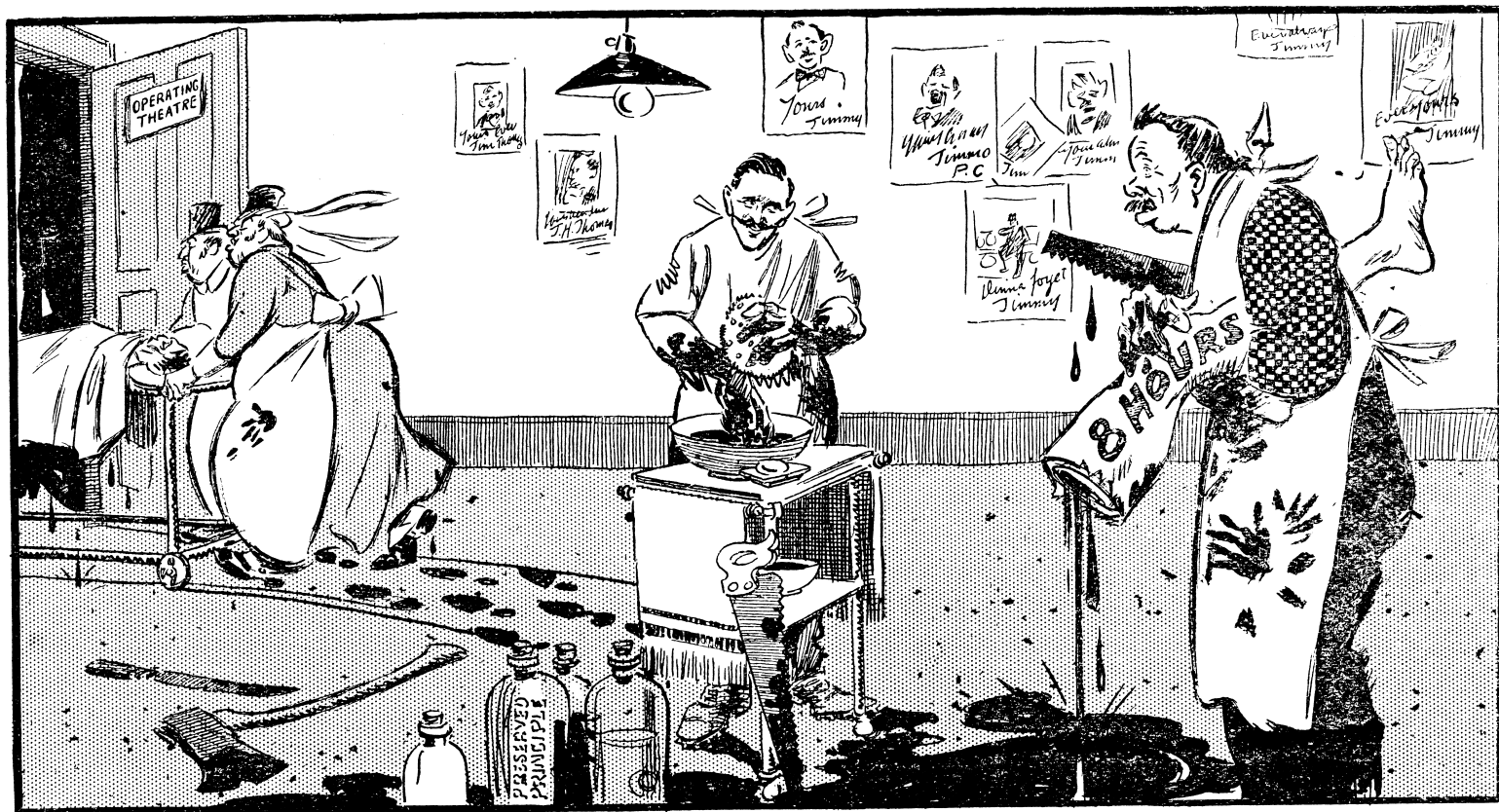
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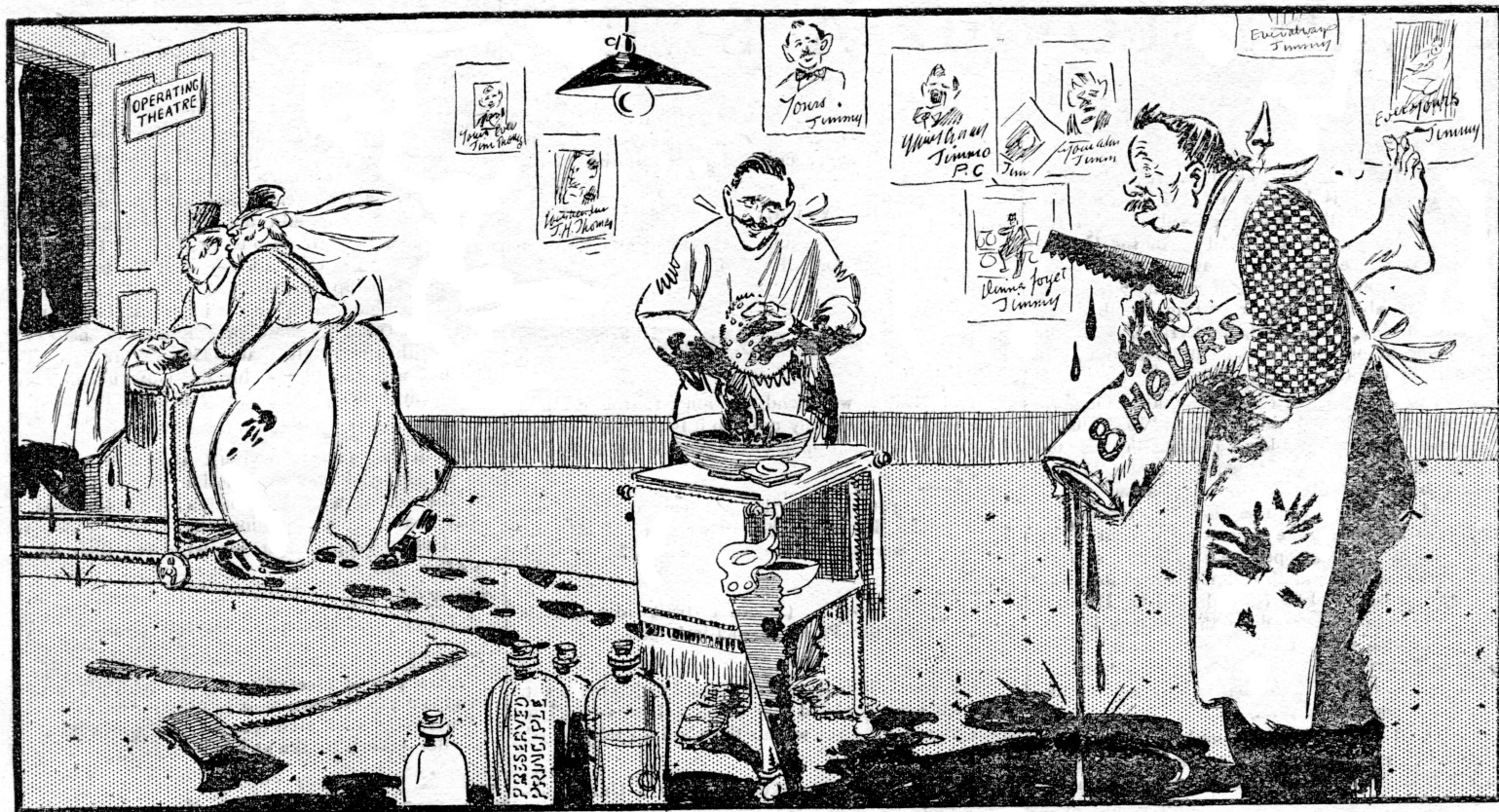
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