

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

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BETWEEN OURSELVES. By L. A. Motler.

PRINTING RUSSIAN TRAM TICKETS.

When you want to know something about a thing, Henry, it is just as well to see, so to speak, from which barrel the beer comes if you are at all doubtful about it. For instance, if you want to read up all about football, you do not begin by taking in the local parish magazine. Likewise, if you want to know the price of shabbages (controlled) you do not apply at the nearest chemist's. Now, you will probably write me to tell you something you don't know. Good! Let us take the price of tram tickets in Russia. Firstly, I will draw your attention to the one appended herewith:—



This is an actual tram-ticket for use in Archangel. It is being printed in large numbers in London at the present moment. The fact is obvious that the Allies are in control of the tram in Archangel and the question naturally arises. What are they doing there?

That will be answered presently, and meantime I will draw your attention, Henry, to another item. It is from *The Star* (December 30th, 1918):—

"The week-end casualty lists give the following figures: Officers, dead 7; men, dead 643, wounded missing, 1,475—total 2,125."

Now the war is as good as over; there is no fighting to speak of; but two days before the new year, and sixty days after the signing of the armistice, out comes a "week end casualty list." And on the day previous, the Admiralty issued a bulletin to the effect that a British warship reports having captured two Bolshevik destroyers. Is that the price of getting tram-ticket orders?

And what are the Allies doing in Russia? Apparently, getting orders for tram tickets at the point of the bayonet. This is not a mere supposition. The facts speak for themselves, Henry, as plain as the nose on your face. And you still have lingering doubts, well—

As I said at the beginning of this article, when you want to know about football, don't ask a greengrocer. When you want to know about Russia come to *THE DREADNOUGHT* offices and get facts.

I have here before me—and I am sorry the manifesto is just a trifle too long to reproduce fully—a sheet of paper headed, 'Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic,' and with the following question in big type:

WHY HAVE YOU COME TO MURMANSK?

It is signed by Lenin and Tchitcherine and comes red-hot from the Bolshevik Press in Moscow. It has been distributed to the English-speaking troops on the Murmansk coast, and several copies have reached England; and does the daily press print it? I should think so.

The daily press is not so green; in fact, it is usually yellow, except when it is in a blue funk; and it changes colour so often I might dub it the Chameleon Press. And this press would not let me read in its columns as follows:—

"The Murman railway is in no danger either from the Germans or Finns. If you look at a map you will see that the railways and roads from the west of Finland end hundreds of miles short of the Murman railway. If the Finns approach our border they must traverse hundreds of miles of marshy forest land... Neither can the Germans threaten our railway. If the Germans want to attack the Murman railway, they must first take Petrograd and march through our country hundreds of miles."

Lenin is also careful to explain that Russia is not at war with Germany and they cannot advance on Petrograd without declaring war on Russia. The Allies, apparently, can do without that trifling formality, and once having got into Murmansk, keep it a dark secret why they are there or else tell brazen lies about it.

Brazen lies? On December 19th recently past, Lord Milner declared that "our troops went to Russia not to meddle with Russia's internal affairs." In his manifesto Lenin says:—

"Your Government is interfering in our internal affairs. It has established its own control in the district you occupy. It has cut off our telegraphic communication with outside. It is attempting to seduce our citizens into fighting against us. At the same time your Government shot four members of our local Soviet. Your Government denies that it did so, but we have positive proof that it did."

So now you know how to get tram-ticket orders. Now you know what it means "not to impose any particular form of government on Russia." Now you know why, although the war is as good as over, we still have casualty lists.

If an American army came to South Wales and said it was there to defend the coal-mines from the Germans, you would smile. The miners would probably tell the Americans that the best place for them was Home and Mother. But when it comes to Allied troops occupying the Murman railway, the Baku oilfields, the Siberian wheat districts, ah, well!

It is none of our business, eh, Henry? Lenin says further:—

"For the first time in history the working people have got control of their country. The workers of all countries are striving to achieve this object. We in Russia have succeeded. We have thrown off the rule of the Tsar, of landlords, and of capitalists. But we still have tremendous difficulties to overcome. We cannot build a new society in a day. We desire to be left alone."

Good, Henry, distinctly good. He desires to be left alone, so come and let's have one before closing time.

"Comrades! Englishmen!"

Chin-chin, Henry.

"You who pride yourselves on your love of liberty!"

Same to you, old man.

"Comrades! Descendants of the great Chartist! You who have always expressed sympathy with the Russian Revolution—are you going to assist in crushing the first effort of working people to free themselves from their sweaters and exploiters?"

Henry, I should worry.

AGENTS WANTED FOR THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT.—Are you a regular reader of the paper? Do you sell it at the meetings of your organisation? Introduce it to your workshop.



VICTORY.

WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' COUNCIL IN FRANCE.

In May, as Longuet reported at a recent Inter-Allied Socialist and Labour Conference in London, great strikes occurred in France, the demands of the workers being that French war aims should be re-stated, and Wilson's fourteen points endorsed by the French Government. At St. Etienne the workers went further and proclaimed a Workers' and Soldiers' Council. The military were called out and hundreds of men and women were arrested. Between 30 and 40 of the prisoners are still in gaol. A fortnight ago a mass meeting addressed by Jean Longuet was held outside the gaol. Mr. Paul Hanna of America tells us that this was a most remarkable demonstration. Mr. Hanna throws further light on the demonstration to welcome Wilson which the Socialists desired to arrange, but afterwards abandoned when Clemenceau said they must first ask President Wilson's permission as reported in the Press. Mr. Hanna explains that the reason the Socialists refused Clemenceau's suggestion was that they thought it would put Wilson in the position of asking them to arrange a demonstration. When Wilson and his party arrived, however, and Longuet went to present an address to Wilson, Admiral Grayson asked him on the President's behalf when the Socialist demonstration would take place. Longuet explained that it would not take place; but the Socialists afterwards organised another demonstration in conjunction with the Society for Mutilated Soldiers. The mutilated soldiers, blind, legless, armless, went from door to door collecting their mutilated comrades. Then, some 3,000 of them assembled at the Arc de Triomphe, a similar company at the Place de la Concorde and Rue Royale and another at the Opera. After the President had passed down the Champs the cripples formed in procession and marched with red flags from the Arc de Triomphe, picking up the other companies on their way. They were joined by many American soldiers and civilians of all sorts. As they passed the offices of the Royalist newspaper, the *Action Francaise*, the Royalists assailed them with abuse, accosting the blind and the limbed soldiers as "spies," "German agents," and "tools of the enemy." The pitiful procession made no response, but the crowds assembled on the pavements cheered it as it passed by.

THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL WAR.

ALLIES JOIN WITH GERMANS AGAINST RUSSIAN SOCIALIST WORKERS.

Karl Liebknecht says an International Civil War between Socialism and Capitalism is developing.

In Germany Ebert and Scheidemann have allied themselves, not openly, but none the less definitely, with the forces of Capitalism.

The following letter which appeared in The Manchester Guardian clearly indicates how sharply the international war is already defined:—

Sir,—I find the following paragraph in Vorwärts of Dec. 6:—

"Neue Nachrichten" a paper published at Berdiansk, on the Sea of Azoff, publishes the following manifesto of the Allies, who are about to intervene in Russia:—

"We inform hereby the inhabitants of Odessa and neighbourhood that we have arrived on the territory of Russia with the object of restoring order and freeing the country from the Bolshevik usurpers, for which reason the reports spread by the Bolshevik provocateurs that the Allied troops have come to South Russia in order to drive out the Germans are absolutely false.

Both the Germans and ourselves have come here not as conquerors but as champions of right. Hence their objects and ours are identical. The reports of impending fights are not true, and are being circulated with the object of sowing a panic.

The manifesto is signed—Sir Neville (?), England; Hours, for France; Gajani, for Japan; S. (Z.) Holinsky, for Russia; Saniti, for Italy; O. Reimann, for Belgium; Sillich, for Serbia; Kargit, for Greece; Grinesku, for Rumania.

I cannot imagine that "Vorwärts" should have invented the manifesto, nor that the "Neue Nachrichten" should have dared to fabricate such a document under the eyes of the Allied Army of Occupation. The manifesto is a puzzle to me.

I know that we are no longer at war with the Germans, but I did not know that we had concluded an alliance with them against the Bolsheviks.—Yours, &c., C. CRUICKSHANK.

The class struggle is nowhere more clearly seen than in the Baltic provinces, where the people, the Letts, Estonians and others have long been revolutionary Socialists, entirely Bolshevik in spirit and where German Barons form the ruling class.

The Russian Soviet Government has now sent out through its wireless stations the following protest against the intervention:—"At the moment when the armies of the Entente are crossing the frontiers and its navies are approaching the coasts of the former Russian Empire the Government of the Soviet Republic once more raises a solemn protest, in face of the wide masses of the people of the Entente countries, the misled and misguided soldiers and sailors of their armies and navies, and the labouring brothers of the entire world.

The Russian Republic had offered peace to the countries of the Entente, but their Governments ignored this offer, and the present attack is their reply. The Socialist Soviet Republic is prepared to make peace. It relies on its faithful and gallant Red Army to repel these attacks, and throws the responsibility for renewed bloodshed upon those who are about to attack its frontiers and who continue the policy of oppression in the occupied territories."

PRINCE KROPOTKIN. In view of the report that Prince Kropotkin has been murdered, a Russian Government wireless message reproduced in the Zurich Volksrecht categorically denies the report in the capitalist papers of Peter Kropotkin's arrest. Kropotkin, the message asserts, is enjoying complete freedom and is in friendly relations with the Soviet Government.

JOHN MACLEAN. We now learn on good authority that since last July John Maclean has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding. Is this country to be the last in granting reprieves? Germany has shown the way by freeing Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When we are going to have our political prisoners released? All sections of the community should protest against

LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND RUSSIAN INTERVENTION.

The Russian Commonwealth, the anti-Bolshevik paper published in London which has backed the Allied intervention, now says: "In Russian democratic circles, where much uneasiness concerning the intervention prevails, the opinion is gaining ground that a League of Nations as the only legal instrument for an intervention grows stronger each day."

This puts into words our own suspicion of the use to which the League of Capitalist Nations will be put—to put down Bolshevism in all lands. Bolshevism has now become, of course, the name for Socialism of the immediate sort. A proclamation of the anti-Bolshevik Archangel Government, published in the same magazine, states that "Bolshevism is regrettably not only a Russian, but an international danger."

This Archangel Government declares that "no Bolshevik usurper can have a place" at the Peace Conference. The Russian Commonwealth claims that the anti-Bolsheviks must be represented there, but naively admits that it does not know by whom, for, it says: "We are not sure that the situation in Siberia will clear soon enough for the Allies to recognise the Kolchak Ministry as an anti-Russian Government."

Therefore the question: Who will represent Russia? still remains. The Russian Commonwealth persists in referring to the groups of counter-revolutionaries who are fighting the Bolsheviks as "Russia," and, though it does not say so, we have seen, know which group of them will be chosen at the Peace Conference. It says: "Although only possessing a moral force, the Russian delegation will still possess a force, since backed by the Allies' decisive support."

The position of these counter-revolutionaries seems to us to be clearly this. They have no force behind them, because the mass of the Russian people is opposed to them, but they desire the arms of the Allies to establish their power, and they persist in describing themselves as "Russia." Because for generations they and their like have dominated the nation, now that the masses have come into power, they describe them as usurpers.

The Russian Commonwealth raises its voice in horror because the Soviet Government has ordered the bourgeois for street cleaning—merely as spare time workers, like the unpaid special constables here, we conclude, since they get no wages for this job. The Russian bourgeois are not contented for the Red Army, as the workers are; instead they are given some of the disagreeable necessary work that has to be done by someone. The Soviets do not force the capitalists to fight to maintain the workers' Government, though capitalist governments always force the workers to fight for capitalism. Surely it is better to sweep streets for the community than to fight for a Government to which one is opposed.

STARVATION IN RUSSIA. The Daily News of January 6th published a Reuters message from Stockholm giving an account of affairs in Petrograd said to have been given by 17 Bolsheviks who reported the "city in the immediate future will become one vast burial ground for the starving crowds, who are falling down in numbers in the streets. As for food, they have practically only oats left now; a herring costs 20 roubles, and a bundle of firewood 300 roubles."

We hope that this story is exaggerated, but we know that there is some truth in it. Famine in Petrograd is caused by the counter-revolutionaries who with Allied help are preventing supplies of food from the districts where food is produced from reaching the Russian capital. British workers, until we stop the intervention we cannot escape responsibility for this terrible state of affairs.

Again and again the Soviet Government has sought to make peace with the Allies. But protesting that their object is to put down Bolshevism, the Allies have continued their armed attack on Russia.

The Russian Soviet Government has now sent out through its wireless stations the following protest against the intervention:—"At the moment when the armies of the Entente are crossing the frontiers and its navies are approaching the coasts of the former Russian Empire the Government of the Soviet Republic once more raises a solemn protest, in face of the wide masses of the people of the Entente countries, the misled and misguided soldiers and sailors of their armies and navies, and the labouring brothers of the entire world. Against this wanton attack, this act of naked force and brutal outrage, this attempt to destroy the liberties and the political and social life of the people of another country, the Soviet Government protests."

HOW RUSSIA TREATS SMALL NATIONS. In reply to the note of the Finnish Government concerning the recognition of the independence of the Finnish Republic, the Council of the People's Commissaries, in full agreement with the principle of self-determination of nations, has decided in favour of making the following proposition to the Central Executive Committee: (a) to recognise the Finnish Republic as an independent State; and (b) to form, in agreement with the Finnish Government, a special Commission of representatives of both countries, with the purpose of working out of those practical measures which arise from the separation of Finland and Russia.

Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissaries: V. OULIANOFF (LENIN). Peoples' Commissaries: V. HENZINSKY, V. PROTUVSKY, G. PETROVSKY, V. BUCH-BRUEVITZ, Secretary of the Council: GORBUNOFF.

[This recommendation was accepted and given effect to.—EDITOR.]

WORKSHOP NOTES. By W. F. WATSON.

The Discharged Soldiers' and Sailors' Federation and the demand for increased unemployment pay.

INFORMATION WANTED. In West London the Discharged Soldiers are their comrades in Glasgow, very active, and many of them are working at Clement Talbot's, the big motor engineers. Some weeks ago the workers at Clement Talbot's were approached by the D. and D.S. and S.F. with a view to organising a joint demonstration to demand that the unemployed pay be increased to £3.

The matter was placed in the hands of the West London Engineering Workers' Committee which immediately got into touch with other committees, and arranged a conference to make final arrangements for the demonstration, the date of which was provisionally fixed for January 15th. I should here mention that the discharged soldiers at Clement Talbot's have dropped the name of the D. and D.S. and S.F. with a view to organising a joint demonstration to demand that the unemployed pay be increased to £3.

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CHALLENGE TO BOB SMILLIE. At the dinner recently held by the London Workers' Committee Jack Mooney stated that Bob Smillie had asked him to convey a message to the effect that should a Coalition Government be returned at the forthcoming Election, he would use his influence to make the position of the Government untenable. Smillie spoke to the effect at Albert Hall meeting organised by the N.U.R. At the L.W.C. monthly meeting on Sunday, January 6th, it was decided to write to Smillie urging him to put his threat into

operation, with the suggestion that the best way to do so, was to use his influence to bring about a complete stoppage of the mining industry as a protest against the violation of Russia.

Now, then, Bob, it is up to you to ACT. We have had enough of mere threats.

EAST LONDON ACTIVITIES. As a result of a meeting held at 400, Old Ford Road an East London Workers' Committee, on similar lines to the L.W.C., has been formed and propaganda meetings are held every Sunday morning in Victoria Park. Associate members are required.

The River Thames Shop Stewards' Movement is organising a mass meeting of dock workers to be held at the Poplar Hippodrome on Sunday, January 12th, at 11 A.M., for the purpose of enabling the Joint Standing Committee of Shipping Trades (London E. District) to state their views on the demand for fifteen shillings increase for all trades. The arrangements are that two representatives from the official body will state the case, and the meeting will be invited to discuss the position. All workers should attend.

SOLDIERS' COUNCILS? Quite a sensation was caused by the comedy of the Guards Colours. It appears from the press reports that the Colours were carried from Wellington Barracks with the usual ceremony. "The troops," we are told, "were in church parade order," for which only belts and side arms are necessary. Bayonets were fixed and swords drawn at 10 o'clock, and sixty non-comrades were detailed to receive the colours. The band played Elgar's "Land of Hope and Glory," and the usual crowd of people was present to see the performance.

The start from Birdcage Walk was in perfect order, and the said colours artfully reparted for Charing Cross en route for Cologne. Some "hitch" occurred, however, in consequence of which the colours got no further than Charing Cross. What was the "hitch"? That's the vital question. The papers are strangely reticent about it, but we learn that at Folkestone, some men had obtained an extension of leave to give them time to communicate with the local committees, their pro-war employers consenting to take them back. Other men, to whom no extension had been given, claimed to be entitled to get leave on the same grounds.

The official statement reads as follows:—"The trouble which has arisen during the last two days among the troops returning to France from England has been satisfactorily settled this

evening, after a long conference between the General Officer Commanding the Eastern Command and representatives of the men. The War Office authorities and officials of the Labouration Department of the Ministry of Labour are engaged in investigating each case individually at Folkestone" (National News).

The National News further informs us that: "Ten thousand soldiers paraded the streets of Folkestone to-day, and, after the procession was over, several meetings were held. At one of these several delegates were selected to confer with the authorities. The trouble is said to have arisen over questions connected with demobilisation."

From these few facts it would seem that the soldiers are forming councils and are disregarding the time-honoured regulations that no man in uniform shall speak in public.

This manifestation of revolt on the part of the troops and of the sailors is most welcome, and, on behalf of the Workers' Committee movement, I extend to them the hand of comradeship, and I assure them of the wholehearted support of the thinking workers in any action they may take, however drastic. Get on with the Soldiers' and Sailors' Councils and link up with the Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement!

RUSSIA. "What are we going to do about it?" The Herald asks referring to the Allied war against Socialist Russia.

The only thing that can be done is to back up the conference convened by the S.L.P. and the L.W.C. that is being held at the Memorial Hall on Saturday, January 18th. The arrangements are now completed. The Conference opens at 10 A.M. and will continue, with an interval for lunch, until 5 o'clock. W. F. Watson will preside. It is anticipated that 500 delegates will be present. The capitalist press is barred, but the Socialist papers are invited to send representatives as fraternal delegates and foreign comrades and all others interested are invited to apply for a fraternal delegate's card.

The Mass Meeting will commence at 7.30 (doors open at 6.30) with Arthur MacManus in the chair. The speakers are Comrades Luhani, W. Paul, Sylvia Pankhurst, David Ramsay, Ellen Wilkinson and W. F. Watson. There will be music, under the direction of Cedar Paul, between 6.30 and 7.30, the artists being, Muriel Davenport, pianist; Edward Soermus, violinist; Cedar Paul, vocalist. Admission is free and no tickets are required. Adequate arrangements have been made for an overflow meeting should it be necessary.

ORPHANAGES have been replaced by a boarding-out system and by adoption, the children being sent to country homes. The care and vocational training of the vast numbers of wounded and crippled soldiers is under her direct control. Beginning in Petrograd, whilst making similar plans for other cities, she has taken over a large government building, turning it into a Palace of Motherhood, a sort of glorified lying-in hospital, where rest before and after confinement is combined with mothercraft instruction. This institution, too, is self-governing. John Reed, to whom we are indebted for this first-hand information, tells us that large schemes of motherhood pensioning were being worked out when he left Russia.

SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' WIVES PROTEST AGAINST INTERVENTION IN RUSSIA. The Merton Committee of Soldiers' and Sailors' Wives and Dependents has written to Lloyd George demanding the immediate withdrawal of Allied troops from Russia, and that the Russian people be left to manage their own affairs as they think best. They further say that "during the past four years the wives and dependents of men who have preserved the life and wealth of this country have been allowed to exist on a starvation allowance which has practically been nullified by the almost famine prices arranged and controlled by the Government. That the Civil Liabilities and Pensions Committees have proved inefficient and expensive, and have helped people who before the war were in a position to put by for a rainy day, and improvident people who purchased on the hire instalment plan, while the hard working people who struggled to keep clear of debt have been left to get on as best they can.

German Working Women in Wartime.

On September 27th the Prussian factory inspectors reported that whilst there had been a decline of 25.5 per cent in the number of male industrial workers, the number of women in the eighteen in industry has increased by 18.4 per cent, whilst the number of younger women workers had increased by 17 per cent. Of children under fourteen, the increase had been 68 per cent, the figure is less serious than it might seem at first sight, seeing that before the war the number of children at work during 1917 in Prussia was 6,012. On the other hand it must be remembered that these figures relate only to factories, and take no account of the enormous increase in child labour in petty workshops, in home industry, and on the land. The total number of wage earning women in Germany last summer was stated to be nearly 5 million. The whole from which I am quoting refers to the general failure during the war to enforce the laws of the protection of women in industry, above all regards overtime and night shifts.

We note with interest that there are a few women towns in which our socialist comrades have been endeavouring to carry on pre-war activities for the benefit of working-class children. There is a report from Offenbach of the organisation of three country excursions every week during August and September, at a total cost of £500, the money being raised by collections.

REORGANISATION IN BOLSHEVIK RUSSIA. German institutions are in the melting pot. Despite the effective labours of the censorship, we have ground for the encouraging belief that socialist reorganisation is proceeding apace in Bolshevick Russia. Take for example, Alexandra Kollontay's work as Commissar for Public Welfare. She did not feel able to make a clean sweep of the poor relief which had been carried on by the imperial and provisional governments, for there was a legacy of poor to be taken over. Her first step was to give self-government to all the state institutions under the care of her department, all the hospitals, almshouses, and so on—exception naturally being made of the insane asylums.

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REVOLUTION AND THE HOUSING QUESTION.

Poverty and decay, grim comrades, are rife in Poplar. Children grow warped and stunted there; adults die off before their time.

The East India Dock Road is dismal. The long, blank wall of the dock over which, between and above the bulky warehouses, the masts of ships peep here and there.

But this, as it were, is the front door into Poplar. Away from this main road are meaner, dingier streets, where the wronged people live herded together in the hideous dilapidation of old, neglected buildings, darkened by soot, bug-ridden, structurally only fit to be inhabited by sewer rats, and yet high rents are charged for them.

The side streets running from the High Street are as densely populated as a rabbit warren. The little, two-storied houses in — Street, owned by a worthy Borough Councillor, vie with each other in their decay.

The light of poverty is everywhere. Here and there cheap little cotton flags, the Union Jack and the colours of the Allies, are hung from a window or on a clothes line across the street, to welcome some returning soldier.

In the High Street shop after shop stands empty, literally falling to pieces for lack of small repairs and hastened to their end by small repairs and hastened to their end by small repairs and hastened to their end by small repairs.

One woman rises from her knees, putting aside her pail and scrubbing brush. She has two children and is expecting a third. She works all day at Morton's biscuit and preserving factory, because her husband's wage is too small to

maintain her household, and coming home at night, she cooks, and cleans, and washes, and mends. Her elder child goes to school; she pays 8s. a week for a woman who takes care of the younger. "That is a great deal for you to pay?" "Yes, but I must have her properly looked after—I couldn't go out to work if I wasn't sure she was all right!"

There are no parks or playgrounds near. The crowded, tiny homes do not provide the necessities of healthy childhood. Those who look back towards infancy at a past in which comfortable clothes and shoes, a garden, and yearly country or seaside holidays were things simply taken for granted, and father, or mother, or someone else, was always providing books and tools and games, can with difficulty comprehend the lives of children who are saved from dull apathy by mere destruction.

These shops are empty because the rents are too high for any trade that can be done here, or for working-class families to occupy as houses. Sometimes, to save his property from utter destruction, the owner, when the place is in an advanced stage of decay, is willing to allow a family to occupy a part of it at a reduced rent on condition of taking care of the premises.

He offered to let my sister take care of that miserable old place and pay him 7s. a week. A man tells us, pointing to a terribly dilapidated shop, "The landlords have not thought it worth while to repair their property; they have not wanted to spend on it any of the money they have drawn from their tenants and so the property itself is disappearing. Here and there some dignified old house, with an imposing door, speaks to us from the past; the knocker of one of them is the beautiful head of a woman with finely-wrought vine leaves in her hair.

In a small, closed-in court you may discover Hanbury Buildings. One mounts to the dwellings by a narrow stone staircase, and at the top of the first steep flight one is confronted by the open doors of three W.C.s, all of which are out of order. To the left of these is a small wash-house, with a water-tap and copper for boiling clothes; to the left is a narrow, dark passage where, by feeling with one's hands, one discovers the doors of the two-roomed apartments in which the tenants are living.

Seven families share the copper and the W.C.s and the women of the seven families take turns to clean them. The two small rooms occupied by each family open from each other without a door between. There is no water in the apartments; it has to be carried from the wash-house. The light in most of the rooms is dim, owing to the surrounding buildings. The rain beating on the stairway, the many people who pass up and down to the various floors—there are seven families on each story—the dripping from the tap in the wash-house used by so many people, make the stone floor of the dark passage wet and muddy. Smoke pours from the wash-house. The socket holding the basin in which the clothes are boiled is broken away and through the holes the fierce flames rise up. One must take care not to burn oneself in using this boiler!

"Nothing's been done to it for a long time and the gambling boys come here at night to play; they helped to break it."

"Who are they? Do they live here?" "Some of them live here; others not. They're just lads with nowhere else to go."

"Come here and see how these places need doing up! Look at the wet coming in there and there." "Aren't the rooms small?" "Aren't they dark?" "I wouldn't stay there, if I could find another house anywhere"—so the tenants greet us.

One woman rises from her knees, putting aside her pail and scrubbing brush. She has two children and is expecting a third. She works all day at Morton's biscuit and preserving factory, because her husband's wage is too small to

maintain her household, and coming home at night, she cooks, and cleans, and washes, and mends. Her elder child goes to school; she pays 8s. a week for a woman who takes care of the younger. "That is a great deal for you to pay?" "Yes, but I must have her properly looked after—I couldn't go out to work if I wasn't sure she was all right!"

There are no parks or playgrounds near. The crowded, tiny homes do not provide the necessities of healthy childhood. Those who look back towards infancy at a past in which comfortable clothes and shoes, a garden, and yearly country or seaside holidays were things simply taken for granted, and father, or mother, or someone else, was always providing books and tools and games, can with difficulty comprehend the lives of children who are saved from dull apathy by mere destruction.

These shops are empty because the rents are too high for any trade that can be done here, or for working-class families to occupy as houses. Sometimes, to save his property from utter destruction, the owner, when the place is in an advanced stage of decay, is willing to allow a family to occupy a part of it at a reduced rent on condition of taking care of the premises.

He offered to let my sister take care of that miserable old place and pay him 7s. a week. A man tells us, pointing to a terribly dilapidated shop, "The landlords have not thought it worth while to repair their property; they have not wanted to spend on it any of the money they have drawn from their tenants and so the property itself is disappearing. Here and there some dignified old house, with an imposing door, speaks to us from the past; the knocker of one of them is the beautiful head of a woman with finely-wrought vine leaves in her hair.

In a small, closed-in court you may discover Hanbury Buildings. One mounts to the dwellings by a narrow stone staircase, and at the top of the first steep flight one is confronted by the open doors of three W.C.s, all of which are out of order. To the left of these is a small wash-house, with a water-tap and copper for boiling clothes; to the left is a narrow, dark passage where, by feeling with one's hands, one discovers the doors of the two-roomed apartments in which the tenants are living.

Seven families share the copper and the W.C.s and the women of the seven families take turns to clean them. The two small rooms occupied by each family open from each other without a door between. There is no water in the apartments; it has to be carried from the wash-house. The light in most of the rooms is dim, owing to the surrounding buildings. The rain beating on the stairway, the many people who pass up and down to the various floors—there are seven families on each story—the dripping from the tap in the wash-house used by so many people, make the stone floor of the dark passage wet and muddy. Smoke pours from the wash-house. The socket holding the basin in which the clothes are boiled is broken away and through the holes the fierce flames rise up. One must take care not to burn oneself in using this boiler!

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REVOLUTION AND THE HOUSING QUESTION continued.

At the end of Poplar High Street one passes the Penny Fields in the Chinese quarter. The street—look pinched and cold. But coming into China Town, one has passed from the direct of day to something brighter. The Chinese have cleaned up the old, tumble-down property they occupy. Their shops are arranged with quiet elegance. Little furniture, and a, perhaps unaccountable, facility for the picturesque. In the fish shops hangs a wonderful dried flying-fish that seems to have flown straight out of a fairy tale. The grocer has put two lovely vases in his window. The "Chinese English" restaurant, though thick, clumsy, white cups one might find in any fifth-rate eating-house are provided for British customers, handleless bowls of fine china, charmingly painted, are supplied to the Chinese.

It is said that East End landlords exact higher rents from Chinese than from British tenants, and flagrantly violate the Rent Act one, but that's all. "I wouldn't stay here but for the children, but wherever you go it is 'Sorry, we don't take children.' Every woman tells a similar tale.

One woman shows us that her husband has stripped the torn, dirty paper from the lower part of the walls, painted them a dark, bright green, and finished off the edge of the wallpaper with a border pattern. Widows and women whose husbands are away (even soldiers' wives) are not much favoured as tenants. A family is preferred in which there is a handy man who will keep the property in repair without cost to the landlord, titting new locks, mending broken woodwork, and doorsteps with cement sinks, heartlistones, and even patching up broken A business-like, middle-aged woman twines her fingers. "I had the good fortune to secure two rooms at the front of the building where there is more light and air. She looks the healthier for it, though she has to go down a flight of steps to the lower floor to fetch water. "Look at my ceiling," she says, "look at the walls! It is three years since he half-papered the walls, and he's done nothing since! Look at it! They brick they dislodge as a potential treasure. Doesn't it take the heart out of you?" The bed, pushed close against the window, half-blocks the entrance doorway, but the bed cannot be squeezed into no other place. Withdrawing her eyes from the dirty ceiling she fixes them on a quilt and white valances. She says that she is expecting her two sons home from the front and we wonder where she will find room for them. "They won't bring their young women to a place like this!" she says bitterly. "I've been wanting to move from here ever since I came, but rooms are so scarce and I'm afraid to take a whole house and let off part of it, because I couldn't afford to pay the rent if the other people should keep me waiting."

Marvellous that women who have lived for years in these wretched tenements should still retain a genuine enthusiasm for home-making still grasp at any chance to beautify their rooms, still toil, even when excessively tired by outside labour, to keep their High Street, is a narrow doorway leading to a little alley in which is a row of cottages. "I thought these houses were condemned," someone says to an old woman standing on the first doorstep. "Oh, no," she says eagerly, "they're all right. Oh, mine is beautiful!" She is afraid that if her cottages were condemned she would never get another. She knows that again and again where slum property has been demolished, no provision has been made for the evicted tenants.

In busy Chrip Street, where anxious women hurry to and fro from shop to shop, comes

to the needy. Once when the father of the family was out of work and one of the youngest children lay seriously ill with pneumonia, the mother applied for a grant of milk for that child. She was asked: "Is any member of the household working?" She replied that one daughter was at work. "You know," she says, "the few shillings girls earned before the war." She was told that as her daughter was in employment they would be able to manage; the milk was refused. She gave birth to her youngest child at a maternity hospital, and when she left, the nurse advised her to take half a pint of stout each day in two portions. She followed this advice, and also took her baby weekly to the Infant Welfare Centre, where milk for the child was supplied to her. But one day, a "lady" from the centre saw her coming home with her stout and as the result the baby's milk was immediately stopped. The "ladies" told her they were sorry to see that she had "come down so," as she had been "well brought up." She explained that the nurse had advised her to take stout; but her excuses were brushed aside. "If I had been a loose woman, always in and out of public houses, they would have done all sorts of things for me to reclaim me." She smiled a little grimly. Her daughter added: "Yes, that is true; I have seen it happen."

We told them that in Russia "ladies" can no more soild and patronise poor women, for there, class distinctions are done away with and both riches and poverty are being abolished. We told them that the Russian Workers' Councils are taking over the empty houses and putting into them whoever needs a house, without charging tenants any rent at all if they are too poor to pay. Their poverty itself can only be temporary, since there is an equal wage for all, and people who are ill or out of work are paid at the same rate. Until as many houses as the people of free Russia desire can be built, an equal plan of rationing has been established, by which every family is entitled to one room for each adult member of the household and one room for two children. We told these women, too, that the land and the industries of Russia are now owned by the whole people and are managed by those who work them; that all education is free; that in two years' time no one under the age of 20 will be working for a living, and that everyone's child will go to the University or take up some other course of training. "Really? And will it all come here too?" they asked with radiant faces. "Yes, here too, in England, even in Poplar, Socialism is swiftly coming. It alone brings us the hope, the certainty, of transforming the East End."

One of the election cries of the Lloyd George Coalition was Housing Reform, but with what insurmountable obstacles are those tinkering reformers faced who are unprepared to abolish the Capitalist system. The London County Council has built some hideous, barrack dwellings, many, many stories high, without lifts, and with long, steep flights of steps, up which tired mothers must climb, carrying both babies and parcels. No gardens are attached to these dwellings; only paved yards, enclosed by high, ugly buildings. Uncomfortable as they are, the rents of the L.C.C. dwellings are so high that the manual labourer with a large family cannot afford to live in them. In giving evidence before the National Arbitration Commission in 1916, Mr. Berry, Assistant Housing Manager to the L.C.C., explained that the L.C.C. only allows two adults per room to occupy its tenements; children under 5 years not being counted, and children under 10 years counted as half an adult. That standard permits what ought to be considered gross overcrowding; it means that two adults and three or four children will often be found living in a single room. Nevertheless, rents are such, and wages are such, that Mr. Berry had to report that families were constantly having to leave the L.C.C. dwellings, because they could not afford to hire enough rooms, even to comply with this low standard of accommodation. In 1916 the L.C.C. rents were:—

Table with 4 columns: Room count, s., d., s., d. 1 room .. 2 3 to 6 0, 2 rooms .. 4 6 to 8 6, 3 rooms .. 6 0 to 11 6, 4 rooms .. 7 0 to 13 0, 5 rooms .. 10 6 to 14 0, 6 rooms .. 12 6 to 13 0

Why are dwellings built by the L.C.C. and the municipal authorities so highly rented and why must they be great barracks, the most lately built of which is always the highest? As every one knows, it is because those who have somehow acquired the land will only sell it or let it at an enormous price. Mr. Winch, the Secretary of the Guinness Trust, informed the same Birth-rate Commission that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners had charged the Trust £11,000 per acre for land to be used for workers' dwellings, stating they had let it go cheaply on that account. Moreover, when the Local Authorities build dwellings for the workers they borrow money for the purpose and pay interest on the loan, and establish a fund for paying back the loan. They usually employ a contractor to build the houses who makes a profit on the undertaking, or even if they avoid employing a contractor they buy materials for the building from people who are making big profits. The landlords and profiteers insist on making gain for themselves out of the worker's house, and as the workers receiving the lowest wages cannot afford to pay the rents of the new dwellings, they are obliged to live in old houses, built at a time when landlords and profiteers were content with smaller gains.

When the London County Council finds that, on the one hand, it has several applicants who can only afford to pay for a two-roomed flat, and, on the other hand, it has a three-roomed flat for which no applicant can afford to pay, it takes the anti-social course of sealing up one of the rooms in order that it cannot be used, and then it lets the flat for the price of two rooms. It may be that the husband and wife who rent that flat with its sealed-up room, have four children, one of whom is nearly 5 years' old. In a short time the child has a birthday, and the parents, who are unable to pay for the extra room, are obliged to leave, as they have now passed the L.C.C. overcrowding limit. In Petrograd those two people, whether they were able to pay rent or not, would be entitled with their children to four rooms, and if they were short of these things, furniture, fuel, and light would be freely provided for them. In Petrograd those people would be treated as members of the human family; in London they are mere units out of whom money is to be made. This is why some people want British working men sent to fight against the Russian workers—lest they should learn by example to demand what the Russian workers have.

"But," a voice protests, "if you put some people into a decent house they would not take care of it." Probably not, if you put them into it with their present income which does not suffice adequately to feed and clothe the family and to keep it clean, to say nothing of providing it with education and recreation. But if you set up an equal wage for all, miners and railwaymen, teachers and scavengers, bank managers and Prime Ministers; if you added an equal wage and equal hours of labour for all, and the certainty of being supplied with a good house and a good education, you would find that the "some people" who would not know how to live decently in a decent house would certainly be very few; we do not really believe they would exist. But in a generation, at most, they would become extinct.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

Workers' Socialist Federation. H. DEVINE

WILL LECTURE on "Ireland and the Present Political Crisis."

On FRIDAY, 24th JANUARY, 1919, at 8 p.m., AT CAXTON HALL, Caxton Street, Westminster. (1 min. St. James' Park and Victoria St)

Discussion Invited. Come and bring your friends. Admission free.

said that if the Pensions Ministry use of the machinery already sk ourselves. We might be reason in the Bill, the meantime outle right it had to claim more innoxations. admitties. right of the peoples MS. us that Mr. Bonar going to have our political prisoners released? All sections of the community should press for

JOHN MACLEAN. We now learn on good authority that since last July John Maclean has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding. Is this country to be the last in granting reprieves. Germany has shown the way by freeing Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When we are going to have our political prisoners released? All sections of the community should press for

LEANEY'S LTD. WHOLESALE NEWSAGENTS City Agent for the Workers' Dreadnought 9 and 10, ST. E. AVENUE (Late City Future)

WORKERS' SOCIALIST FEDERATION.

For Revolutionary International Socialism, the ending of Capitalism and Parliaments, and the substitution of a World Federation of Workers' Industrial Republics.

LONDON MEETINGS.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 10th. Tower Hill.—12 (noon), Miss Price. SATURDAY, JANUARY 11th. Great Push in S.E. District for a People's Peace and Socialism.—Meet at the Clock Tower, Lewisham, at 3 P.M., and at Camberwell Lane at 6.30 P.M. Speakers: Mrs. Cole, Miss Price, and Mrs. Walker. SUNDAY, JANUARY 12th.—Osborn Street.—11.45 A.M., Ex-Inspector John Syme. Pinnerbury Park.—3 P.M., Miss Price. TUESDAY, JANUARY 14th. White Cross Street.—12 (noon), Miss Price. FRIDAY, JANUARY 17th. Queen's Crescent, Kentish Town.—5.30 P.M., Miss Price. SATURDAY, JANUARY 18th. Great Push in Tottenham. INDOOR. SUNDAY, JANUARY 19th. 20, Railway Street (Poplar W.S.F.)—7 P.M., Mr. Edmunds, "Possibilities of our Age." Chair: Mrs. Cressall. Discussion. MONDAY, JANUARY 13th. 44, Malden Road, Kentish Town (St. Pancras W.S.F.)—2.30 P.M., Business Meeting. FRIDAY, JANUARY 17th. 400, Old Ford Road.—8 P.M., General Meeting, London Section.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12th. Kingsley Hall, Botolph Road, Bow, 8.15 P.M.—Muriel Lester, "Unity." TUESDAY, JANUARY 14th. Walthamstow League of Rights for S.S., William Morris Hall, Somers Road.—2.30 P.M. Miss Horsfall.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 19th. The Communist Club, 8 P.M.—Mrs. Bridges Adams, "Education." West End Women's International Finance Committee, 3 P.M., 26, Soho Square. Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, "Hands off Russia Meeting," 7.30 p.m.

Before evacuating Pskoff the Germans handed over the administration to a committee of capitalists and bourgeois intellectuals, who immediately formed a White Guard to "preserve order."

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THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA.

This is not a subject one can write about with enthusiasm. There is no movement to speak of; certainly no sign of activity among Socialist or Labour women. In fact we have gone back. Prior to the war we had the Women's Labour Leagues apparently firmly established on the Rand, but they have gone the way of every Labour organisation that is not founded on the principles of Socialism and have become mere "Gift and Comfort Committees." The real reason for the backwardness of the Women's Movement out here is, of course, the presence of an enormous supply of cheap native labour. Women have not, to any great extent, entered into the Labour market and any slight restlessness that has been shown by a few is but the reflex of the movement elsewhere. Such activity as there is, is confined almost entirely to middle class dilettantes, who, like your aristocrat munition makers, are ever looking for new sensations to amuse and vary their empty existences. So they make a great to-do (spasmodically) about the Franchise, demanding that it be granted to women on the same terms "as it is or may be granted to men." Different franchise laws prevail in the separate Provinces, so their demands are elastic and accommodating, ranging from Adult Suffrage in the Transvaal and barring colour, to a property qualification in the Cape, including coloured persons. The Backvelder, however, will have none of it, and quotes the Bible to prove that "women's sphere is the home." We have, however, the municipal vote, and of course it has made not the slightest difference to women generally—the women councillors voting class every time. For the School Board we are not permitted to vote, but, curiously enough, we may become members. Here again, Labour men and women are neglected or indifferent, and the only women returned to those Boards are those whose aim it is to perpetuate the Capitalist system of education combined with a due and humble reverence for the Flag, the King and the Church.

Such is briefly the situation here—we are somewhat in advance of the Patagonians, but a long way behind the Eskimos. There are signs, however, that we must travel the long trail before emancipation is achieved. Prohibition of many imports has created the need for factories and already women are engaged in cardboard box-making, and in shirt and hat and cap-making. The leather and tanning factories are making arrangements to start girls, aged 16, as learners, and there is a demand for similar labour in the newly started starch factories. The women and girls who are entering such trades are mostly

poor Dutch, who have migrated from the land to the big towns. They are woefully ignorant, and easy of exploitation, and there is no women's organisation to help or guide them. You will, perhaps, enquire what I have written that there is little to interest your readers in the movement here—in time there may be, but at present we are merely entering on the stages that you have long past. This, however, is a country of surprises and we may suddenly emerge. One does not get a clear perspective in war time. CHRIS. BARNETT.

CLYNES AND THE HERALD.

Mr. Clynnes is annoyed with The Herald because it has advocated a general strike to secure a new election. When a general strike comes we hope it will be for something much more important than an election—for instance, to bring the Allied armies out of Russia and Germany and to establish the Soviets in Britain.

HENDERSON AND A CAPITAL TAX.

Mr. Arthur Henderson has been debating with Mr. Henry Bell the question of a levy on capital. Mr. Bell instances the cases of A, unmarried, who has had a good time and spent the whole of his £1,000 a year income, and B, who has saved half his £1,000 a year income to provide for his old age and start his children in life. Mr. Bell protests that it is unjust to impose a tax on B from which A, because of his extravagance, is exempt. Mr. Henderson replies: "What the Labour Party proposes to do is to reduce this penalty on thrift. The capital levy will enable the income-tax to be reduced probably to its pre-war rate, so that B, whilst paying his tiny quota to the capital levy, will be spared the considerable annual payment that he now has to make as income-tax on his £10,000 of investments. The thrifty B will, under the Labour Party's proposals, be left in enjoyment of a larger net income than he now has."

Mr. Henderson's explanation seems very much like a conjuring trick! How can it be that a levy on capital will both pay for the war and at the same time present those who pay the tax with larger incomes? But surely it is not the duty of the Labour Party to worry about such minor matters. Surely its business is to level up the conditions of the people whose incomes are not one-tenth or one-twentieth of £1,000 a year to the £1,000 a year standard of comfort! A "tiny" tax on capital as a panacea of social ills is the sort of silly mirage that the Labour Party ought not to be running after. Why does it not go for Socialism?

JOHN MACLEAN.

We now learn on good authority that since last July John Maclean has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding. Is this country to be the last in granting reprieves. Germany has shown the way by freeing Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When are we going to have our political prisoners reprieved? All sections of the community should protest against

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FOREIGN COMMERCIAL POLICY IN NEW RUSSIA.

(continued from page 1186).

capital, which does not regulate its activities according to public needs, but according to the speculative possibilities of profit. The systematisation of foreign commerce ought to be effected from the outlook of the entire organisation of the economic life of the country.

7. The "nationalisation" of foreign commerce signifies that the import of commodities from abroad ought to correspond with real popular needs, as determined by the Department of Economy. This signifies that payment for imports must be made by this Department, and that opportunity for profit-making on the part of private capital shall be reduced to a minimum.

8. As regards the occupied territories or the independent states which formerly constituted part of the Russian economic system, commercial policy is based upon the common interests of all. A customs' union is a vital necessity for the interested parties. A desirable solution of this question will facilitate the transition to production under peace conditions alike in Russia, Poland, the Ukraine, and the Baltic provinces. As a sequel to similar treaties there should ensue direct exchange of commodities, with both independent and occupied territories, on condition that the imported commodities really go to the population.

9. To bring about the nationalisation of foreign commerce we must have recourse to available methods (State, public, and private). A fundamental principle must be a State monopoly of purchase. To prevent smuggling there must be created a controlling office which will perform its functions in association with the Central Purchasing Office. Private capitalist undertakings must be nationalised in degrees.

10. Foreign concerns, including those hitherto in the hands of the War Office, are transferred to the Council for Foreign Commerce. The following problems will require special treatment: (a) prices; (b) tonnage; (c) marine insurance; (d) warehousing; (e) commercial credit; (f) customs.

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