

The Grief and Glory of Russia.

Workers' Dreadnought

FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM.

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BY RIGHT AND REASON—NOT BY FORCE. To GEORGE LANSBURY & L. T. SADLER

Right not might, by reason not by force: that is the ideal towards which humanity is working. Of course, we all look forward to that desirable end.

But the world is very savage still, and the capitalist system, the system that maintains the Haves as rulers of the Have Nots, is maintained entirely by force; the display of force, the threat of force, when necessary the use of force. We are environed by the rule of force, and all around us is the affirmation that the rule of force administered by the Capitalist State is just, necessary, and permanent in the sense that it is something that always must remain. There is even the tacit assumption that this rule of force is not force at all, but the passive compulsion of general consent, in spite of the Army and Navy used for compulsion of the home population, as well as abroad; the police force in all its branches, the constables with their truncheons, the racks of rifles that have lately crept into the police stations, the detectives with lead-weighted sticks and rifles in the hip pocket, the warlike Royal Irish Constabulary.

The overthrow of all this force arrayed in support of capitalism is a tremendous task, a task that only gigantic movements of the people can render possible. We need not wonder that when we quail before its immensity, as all who realise it must quail at times, some should fancy these fears to be the voice of conscience telling them to do all things only by consent, not to take his wealth from the rich unless he give it; not to bind the strength of the strong unless he surrender it.

Hailing the Revolution.

When the Russian Revolution broke out and swept all before it, apparently with so much ease, so little danger or conflict; apparently with the general consent and applause of all the governments and peoples of Europe, then a shout of approval rang out from the Socialists of all kinds and countries.

The Herald Group takes Action.

Here in England George Lansbury and the *Daily Herald* group bestirred themselves, and presently convened an informal meeting, at which foregathered all the *Herald* young men with their enthusiastic brotherly airs and intellectual voices, led by their big man Lansbury; big Robert Williams, the platform fire-eater of the *Herald*-cum-industrialists, the oratorical diplomatists of the I.L.P. with their most cautiously orthodox Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden (they were Members of Parliament then with their seats to consider), and the B.S.P.ers pale from the dusky, airless offices of Maiden Lane, E.C., Fairchild, Albert Inkpin and the rest, besides a bunch of pacifists like C. G. Ammon, and a few carefully selected women. Somehow we also were included in the invitation to the preliminary conference where strange new lights were seen flaming ruddy on the horizon and the air seethed with the steps of the oncoming masses who would arise with amazing speed to establish Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. The International Social Revolution was on the point of knocking



DEMOCRACY!
Now go away for six months and I promise you, when we meet again, a great surprise.

at Britain's door, and it was important to insure that the proper people should float on its shoulders into power.

The National Executives of the I.L.P. and the B.S.P. were the first, and apparently the most legal claimants to office. They had formed the United Socialist Council, and if the masses should make a revolution it would clearly be their duty to allow this body to control them. That was obviously the view of the United Socialist Council.

But the *Herald* also put in a claim, and the *Herald* young men urged that a revolution must not be monopolised by a clique: people of all shades of opinion must be given a chance to come in and control it. Obviously it would never do to leave out the *Herald* and George Lansbury and Robert Williams, and the other buoyant brotherly big men in whom the *Herald* young men place their faith.

So it was arranged that Workers' and Soldiers' Councils should be set up according to the latest Russian formula. There should be a provisional committee of thirteen members at that small meeting to make perfectly sure that the right people should be on it. A further thirteen could be elected more democratically later on.

So they were appointed, the leaders of the British Soviet Revolution—for they were out for Government by Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in those days, you know. Here is the list:

- George Lansbury.
- Ramsay MacDonald, M.P.
- Philip Snowden, M.P.
- F. W. Jowett, M.P.
- Robert Smillie.
- Robert Williams.
- Charles G. Ammon.
- W. C. Anderson, M.P.
- E. C. Fairchild.
- H. Alexander.
- J. Fineberg.
- Tom Quelch.
- C. Despard.

Mrs. Despard's name was selected last of all in the list. The woman was chosen as an afterthought. "We must have a woman!" The original number had been twelve. Eyes were turned anxiously in several directions, and they rested more than once on the not unwilling Mrs. Snowden; but someone mentioned Mrs. Despard, and the politeness of the gathering could not venture a contest around that venerable figure.

So events moved on to the Leeds Conference. We had always our doubts of these thirteen enthusiastic revolutionaries, but they had no doubts of themselves. Oh, gone whatever! The revolution was coming; the workers and soldiers would certainly make it, and these bold leaders would certainly not shrink from leading those who would undoubtedly do the work.

In the meantime the manifestoes were a bit mixed.

Leeds Conference was held; what an orgy of enthusiasm! Delegates flocked from all parts of the country, filled all the available lodgings, and even commandeered the railway trains to sleep in. It seemed a veritable breaking of the bonds. When the conference was over, we found that nothing definite had been done. We had not even elected the remaining half of the executive. Nevertheless, we were all out for the Revolution; there was no doubt about that.

The provisional committee issued a manifesto. Here is the greater part of it:—

WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' COUNCIL.

Manifesto to District Conferences.

The memorable Leeds convention will remain a landmark in our democratic history. Masses of our people have been stirred deeply by the glorious Revolution achieved by the men and women of Russia. Caring for democracy and the Labour cause, with the triumph of which is bound up the triumph of world-wide peace, they have preserved the instinct of freedom through years of repressive and coercive laws. The time has come for organised common action, and for a general advance.

The Work and the Spirit.

Workers and soldiers are achieving a common power. If justice is to be secured for all soldiers and their dependents, and if freedom is to be won for all workers, they must join forces. These reasons led to the creation of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. In accordance with the resolutions passed at Leeds, the Provisional Committee desires to indicate, in broad outline, to the local organisations something of the task ahead, and the spirit in which it should be undertaken.

The Russian Lead.

Not in any narrow or exclusive sense, we desire to cultivate close alliance and solidarity with the Russian democracy. They have kindled in every land a new hope. They have given fresh courage to all struggling against bureaucracy and despotism and toward liberation. Every people must work out their own salvation in their own way, with such industrial and political weapons as may be available. The Russian workers have pointed the way towards the healing of nations and a new Internationalism, and it is the manifest duty of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council and all its branches to proclaim

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