

# SOCIALIST APPEAL

ORGAN OF WORKERS INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE  
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOL. 5. No. 9.

MID-APRIL, 1943.

TWOPENCE.

# 4,000 WORKERS IN BELFAST ON STRIKE

## SOLIDARITY WITH WAGE DEMAND OF 800 CARTERS

By BOB ARMSTRONG

THE RISING TIDE OF MILITANCY AMONG THE BELFAST WORKERS INDICATED BY STRIKES OF BUSMEN, DOCKERS, PAINTERS, BLACKSMITHS, AND WELDERS DURING THE PAST SEVEN WEEKS, HAS REACHED A HIGH PITCH IN ONE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC STRUGGLES IN THE CITY'S HISTORY, INVOLVING MORE THAN 4,000 TRANSPORT WORKERS.

On March 18th the Carters mailed a letter to the Master Carriers' Association requesting a Conference to negotiate a 10/- wage increase in wages. Only four of the master carriers agreed even to meet the men, and these four claimed that they had no powers to negotiate. On the 22nd March, 800 Carters stopped work. On the 30th March 2,200 Dockers — 1,400 belonging to the Transport and General Workers Union and 800 to the Irish Transport Union, came out in sympathy. By April 1st, all freight men, checkers and employees of the Northern Ireland Road Transport Board and belonging to the A.T. & G.W.U., were on strike.

The carters are paid £3. 12. 6 a week with their cards clear. They are forced to do an average of 9 hours gratis labour weekly. The employers wangle this three-card trick by restricting payment to and from entry into the quay in the morning at 8 a.m. to the time of leaving the quay at 5.30 p.m. This means, for example, that carters leaving Donegal Quay at 5.30 p.m. may take an hour or an hour and a half to get their horses to the stables, but no matter how long this period of work it has to be performed free for the bosses. Similarly in the mornings the time spent in cleaning the horses and proceeding to the quay does not cost a brass farthing to the master carriers. The casual nature of their employment, involving frequent days without any work at all, is a further hardship. Another grievance is that all breakages and losses due to people pilfering from the carts are stopped out of the carters' wages.

The carters are transporting every possible type of commodity regardless of the utility or inutilty to the war effort. Indeed, this is plain for all to see. The go-carts and furniture can be observed being carried through the streets in military lorries. This is the third time within a few weeks that soldiers have been commanded to replace strikers. Military lorries were used for the transporting of war workers during the recent bus strike. Also during the dockers' strike, soldiers were used for unloading the mail. Many of the soldiers have expressed resentment at being thus used as strikebreakers. Many claim that they were conscripted to fight the arch enemy of trade unionism, Hitler and fascism, but are being used to support the practices of Hitlerism. No worker doubts that, were it technically possible, the boss-class Government would seek to utilise soldier labour to break the morale of strikers in every sphere of war industry.

### SOLDIERS USED AS STRIKE-BREAKERS

Soldiers have been forced to blackleg on the carters and dockers. Early on in the strike the Belfast Telegraph stated that "at the behest of the Northern Ireland Government the Military Authorities have agreed to provide labour for the transport of ingoing and outgoing essential war materials."

A statement issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Production stresses that the military have no intention of providing transport or labour for other purposes. However, in spite of pious assurances to the contrary, the Strike Committee has alleged that the sold-

### CIVILIAN BLACKLEGS GET POLICE PROTECTION

Lorries belonging to the Road Transport Board are being driven by blacklegs, chiefly office workers. Every lorry is protected by at least one, and usually two, policemen. All the Belfast police carry revolvers, even in peacetime.

### BOSS PRESS ATTACKS

Meanwhile the Belfast Telegraph, a yellow rag which has never in its history lost an opportunity to slander strikers and to attempt to stamper them with false rumours whose headlines wail "Belfast a City of Strikes", has printed a story that the master

# POLITICS BARRED TO TOMMY ATKINS

THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES AS EXPRESSED IN THE RECENT PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE WILL SHOCK MANY A DOUGHTY DEMOCRAT WHO WEARS THE UNIFORM OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

If democratic illusions were permissible before the debate, and if the King's Regulations had been somewhat relaxed, then the debate demonstrated clearly that Tommy Atkins must keep his mouth shut, and that the Government intends to tighten up on political discussion which seems to be so prevalent and growing in the forces.

In Parliament on April 7th, by 195 votes (mainly Tory) to 33 votes (mainly Labour), a vicious slap in the face was administered to the democratic aspirations of the masses of workers in uniform. The motion rejected was "that taking part in political controversy while off duty should not be deemed conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline."

The extent of the restrictions against political life must come as a shock to all those who were taken in by the baloney about "democratisation" which heralded conscription. It is a harsh irony that the soldier is considered good enough to die for 'democracy' but not good enough to exercise it.

Under the authority of this Annual Act, King's Regulation Para. 541 reads: "No officer or soldier . . . is permitted to take any active part in the affairs of any political organisation or party, either by acting as a member of a candidate's election committee, or by speaking in public or publishing or distributing literature in furtherance of the political purposes of any such organisation or party or in any other manner . . ."

As if this wasn't enough; but no, there are even further restrictions. Listen to Major Arthur Henderson, Financial Secretary to the War Office, reply to the debate. "If a soldier was on leave and in mufti and there was an election in his

part in that meeting and that would be forbidden."

So—a soldier may attend political meetings to ask questions?—Yes—once every five years! That is if no bye-election happens to fall in his constituency, and maybe much longer if, as happens at present, Parliament extends its own life. These regulations are obviously designed, not to give the soldier a chance to find out things for himself, but to prevent him from doing so.

And, let it be also noted, his leave must occur just exactly at the right time—he must also have civvy clothes into which to change (without coupons or enough money either)—or else he has missed his one-day-in-five-years chance to ask 'proper' questions.

Major Henderson finished by saying: "The regulation was purposely left vague and the War Office had applied it in a very sensible way."

It can readily be seen how under these circumstances almost any interpretation can be given it. As a method of victimisation many an industrial employer must be green with envy.

Just what exactly is meant in practice of it being applied? "It means that the War Office hardly ever punishes anyone under these clauses. They are just discharged without reasons or explanations despite service and excellent records. The list of those discharged from the Forces in this manner is already a long one."

Notice well that these victimisations only apply against the Left. Before the war Mosley was able to openly boast of his wide support among the officer-caste, yet there was no action taken against those pro-Nazis. Knowing the mentality, particularly of the tops of the military bureaucracy (remember Colonel—Public Schools only—Bingham and more recently Hi-de-hi Colonel) we can more readily understand their boss-class outlook.

### TO ISOLATE THE SOLDIER-WORKER

It is by means of restrictive clauses and vicious penalties that the ruling class in control of the Forces, hope to isolate the soldier-workers. They hope to prevent or, failing that, delay the men and women in uniform from partaking in the inevitable political revelation which will, and indeed has already begun to sweep their comrades in the factories.

This represents a severe danger to Labour, for as of old, the bosses undoubtedly plan to be in a position to set one off against the other. Every section of the working class movement must place a militant programme for soldiers' rights at the forefront of their programme.

At the periods of the most dramatic events of the war, the fall of 'demo-

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INTO BATTLE!  
"Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die . . ."

constituency, in my view he would have the right to ask the candidate perfectly proper questions. "But if he went to a party political meeting at other than election times and asked controversial questions he might be regarded as taking an active

# "TELEGRAPH" SLANDERS MINERS

The "Daily Telegraph" is fast establishing a reputation for itself as the most vicious anti-labour newspaper in the country.

At the beginning of 1942 during the dispute at Betteshanger, it demanded that the full weight of the state machine be used against the workers.

On each occasion that the employers have provoked their conditions and wages the "Daily Telegraph" has shown the yellow fangs of poisonous reaction.

The recent report of the Minister of Fuel gave another opportunity to the "Telegraph" to attack the miners and in its editorial columns of April 3rd it had the following comment to make:

"As it enters the spring season the country can afford to congratulate itself on having survived the winter without suffering a coal shortage as serious as was at one time feared. The credit is shared partly by the domestic consumer, who has saved 4,000,000 tons, partly by the exceptionally mild weather but not at all by the producer. Appeals to patriotism and the pocket have proved equally ineffective in preventing a steady decline in output." This foul attack against the miners comes ill from a well paid hack of Big Business.

The conditions of mining have greatly deteriorated in the course of the war. Normally many thousand times higher than the casualty rate in the editorial chairs of Fleet Street, accidents in the pits have reached a dangerously high level. Meanwhile, the average age of working miners is rising and not sufficient fresh labour can be found to fill the gap. Added to this is the direct sabotage of the coal owners, who find every excuse to work unproductive drifts and faults instead of coal.

But no complaint is made by the

Editor of the "Daily Telegraph" against these greedy coal barons who place profits before production as a matter of general principle.

A few months on a coal face would no doubt change the opinion of the editor who delights in baiting miners. And when the workers take control it might be a good thing to send him and his coawling friends down the pit to hack coal instead of hacking phrases.



HE GETS THE COAL — BUT NO CREDIT —

# Liverpool and Notts. say: End the Truce

As the Labour Party Annual Conference draws near one Labour organisation after another goes on record against the truce, against the coalition, and for an independent policy on the part of Labour.

The Liverpool Trades and Labour Council has followed the lead of numerous other Trades Councils and plumped to break the truce. One of the largest industrial cities in the country has thus gone on record against the policy of the leadership and for a new course.

So also has the Nottingham Labour Party gone on record against the truce.

Of the three questions which will be the subject of the keenest debate—Beveridge, C.P. Affiliation and the truce, the latter will undoubtedly occupy the minds and attention of the delegates the most, and is the key question facing the conference.

But whilst this threat of blackmail will have caused a fluttering among the careerists at the top it will not deter the rank and file who will continue to fight for the breaking of the truce and the organisation of an independent class policy aimed at placing the Labour Party in Power.

# I.L.P. CONFERENCE and Tasks of the Left

BY TED GRANT

THIS YEAR MARKS THE JUBILEE CONFERENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT LABOUR PARTY. IT IS A SUITABLE TIME TO DRAW A BALANCE SHEET FOR THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE OF THE I.L.P.

Fifty years ago the formation of the I.L.P. marked the first step on the road of independent class politics for the British working class. It marked the emergence of the working class from the position of slavish dependence on the traditional parties of British capitalism, onto the road of reliance upon their own class forces, organisations and class solidarity politically as well as industrially to achieve their aims. In this sense the workers' movement of the present day can look back with respect and pride to the pioneers of the workers' movement of the past. It is on the imperishable achievements of the formation of the independent class party of the working class that the workers' movement and rights are based on at the present time.

But while appreciating the achievements of the pioneers it is absolutely necessary for those who claim to stand on the basis of Marxism to understand the limitations and the defects of the old pioneers.

The I.L.P. was organised not on the basis of scientific Socialism, but on the basis of reformism. The I.L.P. founders never correctly understood the problems posed by capitalism nor the revolutionary socialist solution which alone could lead to its overthrow.

At the dawn of the development of the I.L.P. these immature ideas were reflected in their programme of gradual evolution of the capitalist system through a series of reforms into Socialism. The whole vacillating and equivocal character of the leadership of the I.L.P. can be seen in the fact that at the Jubilee Conference, they have not taken the opportunity to settle accounts with the reformist past of the I.L.P. and explain its development to what they call its revolutionary socialist position. To a genuine revolutionary leadership, this would have been an elementary duty, one moreover which far from implying disrespect to the past of the party, would on the contrary, have been the best tribute to those sincere but unclear and confused Socialists who founded the I.L.P. Not only that. It could have been a means of educating the mem-

bership and raising its consciousness to a higher level, preparing it in this way for the tasks which urgently face the workers at the present time. Instead of that, the history of the I.L.P. is presented as being one unbroken policy from the time of its foundation.

From their point of view the leadership is correct in letting the dead bury the dead, for in the last analysis, they remain true to the tradition of the I.L.P.—they are at best the left flank of reformism and nothing else. They remain organic centrists the majority of whom, tomorrow, under the pressure of events can find their way back to the reformist fold.

The I.L.P. formerly reflected and approximated to the immaturity of the Labour movement in a period when capitalism could still afford grudging reforms to the working class. Especially in Britain today we are living under the shadow of imperialist degeneration and decay. The very organisations which were built up in just a few decades, as the bulwarks of workers' democracy and workers rights are threatened with destruction and disintegration in the next period ahead if they do not transform themselves into fighting organisations of the working class, striving for and capable of achieving the conquest of power. For this purpose they need a guiding organisation and leadership—a revolutionary party—entirely different to the theoretical basis and organisation of the I.L.P. For the epoch of wars and revolutions we need a party and a leadership to correspond to the tasks. Not a party of reformism like that of the old I.L.P., but a party of revolution. The I.L.P., in the methods and ideas of the leadership remains far closer to the former than the latter.

### TAILISM — NOT FORESIGHT

The resolutions at this Conference formulated under the influence of the trends of development of mass consciousness and the pressure of Marxist criticism and of the Left wing of the I.L.P. show a marked turn to the Left — on the surface at any rate. An examination of the "New Leader" of the last few weeks indicates, that so

far as the leadership is concerned the change is only superficial.

However the change from the Conference last year to the present one, is striking. This Conference marks the burial of the "Socialist Britain Now" policy. Except in an occasional phrase, the policy is abandoned as it has been proved fruitless and barren. In the Basic Resolutions of the N.A.C. to the Conference not even a reference is made to it. Like the numerous Stalinist adventures of a similar character, it has been unable to win the masses and no explanation or discussion on the reasons for the failure has taken place. This is not the Marxian method of changing policy by an honest examination and criticism, thus arriving at an understanding of mistakes made, guaranteeing that the same mistakes will not be made in future and that the new policy will be put forward on a firm basis. The abandonment of this tactic and the turn towards the Labour Party is a vindication of Marxist criticism. But alas! As always with Centrists, the wheel has turned full circle, from a sectarian-opportunist position the I.L.P. has advanced to a full-blown opportunist one.

At the last Conference a resolution was proposed which advocated that the I.L.P. propose Labour should break the coalition and fight for power on a socialist programme. This resolution, which was fundamentally correct formulated a transitional policy aimed at educating the Labour Party workers to independent class consciousness, exposing the role of the Labour leaders and winning the organised workers to the banner of the I.L.P. The leadership painted a picture of the horrible consequences that would follow from putting forward the Labour to Power tactic. It would sow illusions in the minds of the workers that the Labour leaders were or could become Socialists; on the basis of their experience of the Labour leaders it would disillusion the masses in socialism altogether and prepare the way for fascism. It was sheer opportunism . . . ran their arguments . . . to put forward such a policy. Meanwhile of course, this did not prevent the I.L.P. leadership in actual practice from being nameless

# Break the Coalition

## LABOUR TO POWER on the following Programme:

1. Immediate despatch of arms and material to the Soviet Union under the control of the Trade Unions and factory committees.
2. Nationalisation of the land, mines, banks, transport and all big industry without compensation.
3. Nationalisation of all war profits—all company books to be open for trade union inspection.
4. Workers' control of production to end chaos and mismanagement in industry to be exercised through workers committees.
5. Equal distribution of food, clothes, and other consumers commodities under the control of committees of workers elected from the distributive trades, factories, housewives committees and small shop-keepers.
6. Sliding scale of wages to meet the increased cost of living with a guaranteed minimum.
7. Repeal of the Essential Works Order and all other anti-working class and strike-breaking laws.
8. Clear out the reactionary fascist officer caste in the Army and Home Guard. Election of officers by the soldiers. Trade union wages for all workers in the armed forces.
9. Establishment of military academies by the Trade Unions at the expense of the state for the training of worker officers.
10. Arming of the workers under control of committees of workers elected in factories, unions and in the streets against the danger of invasion or Petainism.
11. Freedom for Ireland, India and the Colonies.
12. A Socialist appeal to the workers of Germany and Europe on the basis of this programme in Britain to join the Socialist struggle against Hitler for the Socialist United States of Europe.

# BELFAST STRIKE

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carriers are hiring out their horses to farmers. This tale is designed to convince the carters that the strike is only causing them hardship while the bosses are sitting pretty with a good alternative source of profit. Actually, if the report has any foundation of truth at all, it only serves to reveal once more that, no matter how loud the lip-service to loyalty and the war effort, capitalism is motivated solely by the lust for profits. For so far the farmers have managed to get along without the city cart-horses, but, unless the motor vehicles of the army are to be used still more extensively with the continued large wastage of petrol involved, horse waggons are indispensable for the ordinary work at the docks.

### NATIONAL T.U. OFFICIAL TOLD TO GO HOME

T. E. Corrin, National Secretary of the Commercial Services Group of the A.T.G.W.U., flew over from London and, after interviewing the Minister of Labour Gordon, attended a mass rally of carters on April 2nd at the Grosvenor Hall where he attempted to persuade them to pack up the strike. It was strongly hinted to him that he would be well advised to pick his own case and go back to London. Not a single vote was cast for abandoning the strike.

### THE ROLE OF THE STALINISTS

The Stalinist Party is working to disrupt the workers not so much by its usual direct onslaught of "objectively helping Hitler" phrases, and not so much by egging its own members on to set examples in blacklegging, but by more subtle but none the less pernicious methods. The Stalinists admit that the strike was provoked by the master carriers' refusal to meet the men in conference. They are not directly and openly calling on the workers to return as they did during the big Aircraft strike last October. They write condescendingly about the strikers' grievances but deplore the outcome—the strike—with a host of tearful sighs. This new line serves a two-fold purpose. It undermines morale by damping the militancy without which every strike is doomed and at the same time provides an alibi against accusations of direct blacklegging and sabotage. That the Stalinists are forced to combat the strikers in this unaccounted roundabout fashion is a tribute to the magnificent determination and fighting spirit that is alive to-day in the whole Belfast working-class. It is also a sure indication that the bureaucrats are beginning to feel the heavy tremors directly beneath their feet amongst the Party members. Above all, this retreat from the open parading of their blackleg policy is a tribute to the growing influence of the Belfast Trotskyists.

According to "Unity", the key to class-peace and greater production is held by the Government. The remedy to the strike sickness apparently lies in making Production Committees compulsory. "Unity" fails to explain why

# IRISH UNEMPLOYED WORKERS ORGANISATION APPEALS TO BRITISH WORKERS

35 Balkan Street, Belfast. 17.3.43. To The British Workers: Comrades,

For the past year it has been the unthankful task of the above committee to endeavour by all lawful means in their power to bring to the notice of our working class comrades in Britain and Ireland the rank injustices being perpetrated on a very large section of the working class both in Northern and Southern Ireland; to deal with these places separately and to try and give you the true facts and to inform you of your responsibilities in this matter.

I will try and truthfully set before you the situation as it stands. I shall begin with Northern Ireland which at least in theory but not in practice is part of the United Kingdom and a vital cog in your war effort. For the past 20 years in this part of Ireland legislation known as the Special Powers Acts has been operating. I do not propose to bore you with a dirge of conditions that prevail through the operations of this act, but I can assure you that the conditions that are being given to you daily by your press and propaganda machines of the occupied nations of Europe, are on a par with 99 per cent of the working class minority in this part of Ireland. As an example, daily raids by Police, arrests, interrogations and searches of young working men in the public streets; victimisation in employment brought to perfection by Police; supervision of all war work. Even the humblest government contract has made it almost impossible for any person to live in average decency any one who dares to be (not criminally remember) but who has the audacity to associate himself with a demand for real Democracy and Freedom. This act is at present being strengthened and to what extent it can further add to injustices we cannot see but this we do know, that any further acts of tyranny on the working class, will see us in a more terrible position than the peoples of occupied Europe. Regarding the administration or to be exact the maladministration of the unemployment and as horrible as any performed by the "Gestapo" are daily occurrences. To you people it may seem absurd, the usual award of 6 weeks disqualification of benefit, but in Northern Ireland it is a common occurrence. When you consider men with young families it is quite easy to understand why the persecuted minority in this part of the realm sneer at your politicians' speeches of freedom

as theirs and yours. Remember justification for the war, six weeks deprivation of unemployment benefit has no hard and fast rules, it can be used against any person and for any reason, no man or woman is safe from this form of Bureaucratic tyranny. Neither sickness, family reasons, morality, or the sanctity of motherhood are excuses for these Bureaucrats. It would be tedious to quote cases if it were only hundreds but unfortunately it is thousands of cases which our organisation have fought for with no hope of even getting the slightest degree of justice. It is most remarkable that this atrocious system is used exclusively against the minority who are almost 75 per cent of the labouring class in this community. It should also be stressed that the scale of wages in this area are the lowest in the Kingdom, notwithstanding the price of essential commodities are the same as in your towns and villages. With unemployment steadily rising and the penalising of the unemployed for in many cases frivolous reasons, for example "misconduct". This term can mean anything nevertheless it entails the penalty of 6 weeks disqualification of benefit. This and many other injustices of a like nature force the unemployed man and woman to seek outdoor relief which in simple words mean pauperism. This my friends is the meaning of Democracy and Freedom in Northern Ireland.

### SOUTHERN IRELAND

Regarding Southern Ireland or Eire much also is wanting there. Prisoners, unemployment, and all other evils are as rampant in that part of Ireland as in the North. I need add no more of this dirge, but we ask you if you believe in Freedom, grant it then to your fellow-workers. Northern and Southern Ireland's jails are full of prisoners, many without charge or trial and all of these prisoners in the interests of True Democracy and Freedom should be released immediately not in the mythical future when the so called benevolent will of a tyrant shall release them. To the Rulers of this land and to you, the British Workers I give you the words of Connolly to the employers of Dublin Act, 1913, which have as much bearing today as then. "The men whose manhood you have broken will loathe you and will always be brooding and scheming to strike a fresh blow. The children will be taught to curse you, the infant being moulded in the womb will have breathed into its starved body the vitality of hate. It is not they, it is you, who are Blind Samsons pulling down the pillars of social order."

On this day I shall conclude my fraternal greetings, and hope through this letter a better and happier time for our people.

Fraternally yours,  
P. J. McMurray,  
Hon. Secretary (I.U.W.O.)

# WHY THE STRATFORD RAILMEN RETURNED

The drivers and firemen employed by the L.N.E.R. at the Stratford depot commenced work on Sunday, 4th April. These railwaymen, who had banned Sunday work for three weeks as a protest against the victimisation of a fellow unionist, displayed a high level of class consciousness and a fine degree of solidarity.

The worker in question, who had anarchist sympathies, had been arrested and sentenced at the end of last year for speaking to a group of soldiers, distributing working class literature, and spreading "sedition".

After serving his sentence, the company refused to place him back in his job and his work-mates banned Sunday work as a medium of forcing his reinstatement.

The strike ended in consequence of a letter sent by Owen, the worker in question, who declared that he had no further wish to continue the struggle; that he was prepared to work on the land and did not wish to involve his work-mates in further hardship and victimisation.

This individualistic action, which was a poor reply to the militant stand of his comrades, could have easily resulted in a bad situation for the workers. Had it not been for the complete solidarity of purpose in their ranks they would have been split from top to bottom. As it was it placed them in an awkward position. The company took a "hard" stand at first and refused to guarantee "no reprisals" against the workers who had applied the Sunday ban. It appeared that a serious situation would develop. However, two members from the executive of the A.S.L.E.&F. met the management and men on Friday the 2nd, and arranged that the workers go back without reprisals.

It was a tonic to listen to the discussion of the workers at their well packed meeting on the Friday evening; to hear them discussing the question of industrial unionism and a trade union for all transport workers, etc.; and to see, that despite the capitulation of the workers for whom they were fighting, the action had bound them into a closer unity than hitherto.

It was quite clear that had Owen not capitulated, they were prepared to continue the ban until he had been reinstated.

The workers at this depot will not easily forget some of the lessons of their struggle. The vicious manner in which the capitalist press attacked the workers, the indignities in which the London District Committee of the renegade Communist Party organised a campaign of slander and vilification against them as Hitler's agents, and the steadfast manner in which their local officials stood the test under most trying circumstances.



Coalition—the Lid is Rising

# ENGINEERS WAGE AWARD

The Arbitration Board have handed down their decision regarding the claims of the Engineers. And the reply of the workers in the engineers and allied trades has been almost unanimous hostility and opposition to the award.

Already in Yorkshire, North-East England, North-West England and in other parts of the country engineers have struck work in protest against the acceptance of the award, and the feeling among the workers indicates that unless the Government and employers agree to a revision of the award a period of industrial strife of a sharper character than we have hitherto seen in the industrial field is likely to be ushered in.

The decision of the National Arbitration Tribunal on the engineers' wages award is a decisive victory for the employers. After nine months of long-winded negotiations, during which millions of pounds profit have gone into the engineering bosses' pockets, such prominent trade union leaders as Mr. Harrison, President of the Confederation of Engineering and Ship-building Unions, are forced to admit that the award "did less justice to the workers' claims and was no better than what the employers offered."

reasons for the inability of the A.E.U. and Confederation leaders to win our demands. They first of all reluctantly took them up and then conducted negotiations in the form of a conspiracy over the heads of the workers.

Things have come to a sorry state in the engineering trade when the most powerful group of unions in the world are unable to ensure a meagre all-round increase for every worker in the trade, and this at a time when the industry is booming. If they cannot get increases now, what is going to happen in a period of slump?

The demands which the Unions presented to the Employers' Federation were modest demands. Any worker on a machine or on the bench can in the space of a few minutes give practical justification as to why they should be granted: the rising cost of living, taxation burdens and the innumerable taxes on such commodities as beer, tobacco, entertainment etc., have reduced real wages far below their pre-war level. It has been estimated by the Oxford Institute that if all these things were taken into account, the real rise in the cost of living would be 55 per cent and not the 27 per cent recorded by the Government. Indeed, if the 11/- on the base rate, plus an addition of 33/- per cent on that rate to plain time workers and a return to the 1931 nightshift rate of time and a quarter were granted, it would only be a temporary stop-gap and not in the least an effective remedy to better the workers' conditions.

The Tribunal accepted the employers' offer and transferred 20/- from the National Bonus to the district base rate, as well as giving plain time workers an increase of 6/- per week; the only difference being that it increased the piece-workers premium from 25 to 27 1/2 per cent of the base rate. This means that as the new base rate is increased from 45/- to 66/- he will earn 27 1/2 per cent of 66/-. If he is already earning more than 27 1/2 per cent he will receive nothing. And here is the rub. Clause 3, section B, which covers the adjustment of the 25 to 27 1/2 per cent lays it down that "piece-work prices" and "bonus and basis times" shall be such as will enable an average workman to earn 27 1/2 per cent of the new basic rate. In other words under this clause employers have the legal covering to adjust the prices down to 27 1/2 per cent of the new base rate of 66/-, and it is this understanding which brands the agreement as a definite attack against the piece-workers' standards, for the average pieceworker is making well over the 27 1/2 per cent. In Napier's the bonus works out round about 95 per cent whilst on piecework assembly, and bonus in some other large aircraft factories is round about the 250 per cent mark. To cut it short, the vast majority of pieceworkers who are earning well over 27 1/2 per cent of 66/- get nothing, and the same is also true regarding time workers; here again, there are only a minority of workers receiving the bare district rate or plain time, and only a few will benefit. To sum up, the employers have on the one hand gained basis to attack the high pieceworker earners, whilst insofar as time workers are concerned only a few of the lower paid workers will get anything.

When the demands were first voiced at the National Committee meeting of the A.E.U. in 1942, the leadership of that Union, especially Tanner, made it clear that they were reluctant to put up a struggle for them. And it is this reluctance to struggle which has characterised their whole attitude during the nine months of negotiations. That is why the employers have been so cocksure of themselves. Alexander and Company, know full well that Tanner, Kaylor and the rest of the Confederation leaders will accept in the long run whatever they have to give. After January 5th they set up a committee to go into the Federation's offer. A month later this committee admitted that the situation was unchanged and five weeks later the Arbitration Tribunal with one minor alteration left the employers' offer untouched. Commenting on this the "Economist", the journal of big business, cynically remarked in its issue of April 10th: "It would indeed make a mockery of arbitration if the Tribunal felt itself obliged, in order to try and please everybody, to award more than the employers had offered, and less than the workers had claimed". The A.E.U. and Confederation leaders went through all the rigmarole of protracted negotiation and ended up by accepting the employers' original offer. All the chatter about the Arbitration Tribunal being a neutral body has been exposed as a farce. Every shop steward knows that when he interviews the management he can only win concessions to the extent that the workers in the shop are behind him. The idea that managements can be convinced by slick talkers and armchair negotiators, is rubbish. If the employers are to be forced to give a decent minimum, it can only be done by the determination of the workers to struggle. If the leaders intended to conduct a struggle it presupposes a preparation of the workers for this. This is one of the main

Of course, everybody is in favour of the lower paid workers getting a square deal, but what we object to is that type of propaganda which pretends that the award benefits these workers greatly. On the contrary it is but a sop compared to the original demands (inadequate as they were) submitted for these workers. Under the guise of a so-called benefit for lower paid workers the employers are paying the way for an all-round attack. Alexander, from the Masters' Federation gave the key to this, when he based his opposition to increases on inflation grounds. In other words according to the Masters' Federation, high wages and not exorbitant profits are the cause of inflation, so let's cut the wages. Simple for the business men, but backs to the wall for the hard-pressed workers.

Tyne shipyard shop stewards have already started the ball rolling with a resolution demanding an all-round increase of £1 per week which has been overwhelmingly carried and submitted to every district committee throughout the country. This is a start but it must be backed up by the determination to struggle; this is the only language the employers understand.

The original demands submitted by the unions should be pressed home without delay. Here it must be stated that these demands and the demands of the Tyne shop stewards should be unified into one group of demands common to the whole of the trade.

The original wage demand must be granted!

The unions must withdraw from all Arbitration machinery, reassert the independence of the organisations of the working class and withdraw from collaboration with the bosses.

If the Executive Committee doesn't want to do the job they must be replaced by a leadership that will!

# RAIL PROFITS RISE

By SID BIDWELL

The first tangible result of the new agreement between the three railway trade unions, the N.U.R., R.C.A. and A.S.L.E.&F. is the demand presented for an increase in wages of 10s. weekly for all employees (male, female, adult and junior). The claim has been submitted to the Railway Executive Committee who have to give their reply.

The previous negotiations culminating in the award by the R.S.N.T. of 5s. for adult workers and a smaller amount for female and junior employees, took over six months to conclude. During that time the Head Offices of the unions were inundated with correspondence expressing the disgust of the workers over the time taken in giving a decision.

Even then it was only after a short strike by the Manchester and Salford railwaymen, threatening to spread on a national scale, that the Tribunal gave its decision. The warning given by W. P. Allen, Gen. Secretary of the A.S.L.E.&F. that the men will not stand for long delay on the part of the companies in making their reply, reflects the militant mood of the workers, and their realisation that there has been deliberate procrastination in dealing with their modest claims in the past.

At the Annual General Meetings of the railway companies held recently, the chairman had a good deal to say in praising the part played by their staffs under the trying conditions imposed by the war. Sir Thomas Royden, Bt., (C.H. Chairman of the L.M.S. reported "... a number of acts of gallantry in face of enemy action by members of the staff whilst on duty, and seven of our men were recommended for national awards". He also announced increased profits enabling the company to pay increased dividends made possible by "a number of acts of gallantry".

Most railwaymen have the feeling that the concern for the wellbeing of the staff contained in the speeches, will be given their worth when the reply of the companies is made known.

At the meeting of the G.W.R. held on the 10th March, Sir Charles Hambro K.B., M.C., announced that £2,206,915 was available for dividends on Consolidated Ordinary Stock making a payment of 4s per cent for the year on this stock. Thus what the companies were unable to accomplish before the war they can now do with the assistance of the Government and the war-time plight of the nation.

The Government guarantees to the companies including the L.P.T.B. £43,469,000 annually. The gross earn-

ing of the companies are still to be published. In the year 1941 there was a margin of £21,656,000 handed to the Government. As the financial editor of the "Daily Herald" pointed out these figures which will be increased for 1942, would enable the rail workers to be immediately put on a living wage standard as well as reducing freight rates to bring down the cost of living for all workers. However, he did not indicate how the workers could "bring pressure to bear" to achieve this worthy object.

As we have repeatedly emphasised, the rail workers will get no real wage increase out of the National Tribunal. They must force their leaders, irrespective of union, to present their claims with far greater vigour not only to the companies and the Government, but to the workers of other industries and the nation as a whole, who will feel a ready sympathy when they are fully aware of the shocking wage rates paid to the majority of rail workers.

The attitude of Mr. J. Benstead, new General Secretary of the N.U.R. to the problems of railwaymen and the factors holding them back from receiving their rightful share of the nation's resources, is exemplified by his statement in the "Railway Review" on March 12th where he is referring to the promotion of one of the company's "expert" advocates and negotiators. He said: "May I offer my congratulations to Mr. G. L. Darbyshire, Chairman of the Railway Staff Conference, on his elevation to the position of Vice-President of the L.M.S. Company. Although on the opposite side of the table—and he served his side efficiently as we endeavour to serve ours—he always adjudicated with kindness and fairness, and we wish him well in his new responsible post".

The rail workers are certainly in need of a little "kindness and fairness" on the part of those who own and control the industry, and having obtained this assurance from none other than the Gen. Secretary of the N.U.R. they will be looking to Mr. Darbyshire to persuade his "colleagues" to speedily grant the 10s. increase.

More seriously, the attitude of Mr. Benstead illustrated by these remarks, gives the answer to the oft repeated question why is it that the tremendous power which 400,000 workers organised in the N.U.R. could wield, still witnesses the lowest wage rates in all sections of industry developed on a large scale. His attitude is a part of the present disastrous policy of class-collaboration practised by the union leaders which must be ended if the rail workers are to advance.

Sid Bidwell.

**SOCIALIST APPEAL**  
ORGAN OF WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE  
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL  
EDITOR: E. Grant. BUSINESS MANAGER: M. Lee  
61, Northdown Street, London, N.1.  
12 issues 3/- . . . Post free.

## EDITORIAL

**EDDISBURY--A WARNING**

Common Wealth has succeeded in placing its first representative in Parliament. In a liberal, semi-residential and rural constituency, Common Wealth scraped in with a small majority.

The significance of this must be clearly understood by the organised workers. It should sound the alarm for the politically conscious workers of the mass organisations, for it marks a turning point in British political life. It emphasises once again the frustration of the masses which has resulted in a succession of parliamentary victories of so-called "independents" of all shades; "independents" who are in reality adventurers who masquerade under the cloak of a semi-socialist programme and demagogic denunciation of monopoly capitalism and its methods in the course of the war.

Three and a half years of war are teaching the people a number of lessons. They are beginning to see that the actions of the ruling class does not fall in line with their propaganda about "equality of sacrifice" and "freedom for all." They see that Big Business steadily continues to pile up ever increased profits while the workers' standards steadily deteriorate. They see that Big Business has entrenched itself in the State machine; that it has placed itself at the helm of all the "controls" by means of which it is steering the life of the nation, squeezing out its smaller competitors in one field after another.

As with home policy, so with foreign and colonial policy. In India they see only repression against the people. Imprisonment of tens of thousands of workers, students, professionals and intellectuals; shooting of hundreds—nay, thousands, of peaceful demonstrators, whose only crime is that they desire to rid their country of a foreign oppressor and that they be left to form their own Government and decide their own fate.

They see negotiations and agreements with Quislings, with anti-semites and fascists. Darlan, Giraud, Peyrouton, reactionaries all. All this is impressing itself on the minds of the working peoples, that the "democratic" programme for Europe and the world after the war is nothing but a fake and a sham. That it differs no whit in principle from the programme of Hitler.

The earlier apathy of the people has been replaced by a widespread political ferment and increasing radicalisation. The response of the masses to their experiences and observations, has been to seek a new political alignment of forces in parliament which can best express their needs and wishes. The capitalist class is not unmindful of this movement among the people and here too, a process of differentiation and regroupment of forces is taking shape.

The right wing Tory bloc is fast turning towards reaction and towards Fascism. Churchill threatens a centre bloc which will split the Labour movement at the top and is designed to split it at the bottom and "stand above the classes" as the expression of the "nation."

At this stage sections of the middle class are more radical than the workers. Hostility to conservatism and the bureaucratic restrictions imposed upon them, is however, balanced by suspicion of Labour, which is hardened by the continued coalition.

From out of the ranks of the middle class all shades and varieties of political adventurers are thrusting themselves forward to give expression to and exploit the middle class frustration. New groups spring up overnight, the most stable of which is found in Common Wealth.

Meanwhile, from the ranks of thousands of Labour and Trade Union members, there arises a mighty roar which swells and grows in volume every day. Let Labour Break the Coalition and Re-assess its Independence! Let Labour take Power to end the ramp of the Tories! From Labour Parties and Trades Councils in every part of the country this cry is being heard.

But the leadership of the Labour and Trade Union movement tries to stifle this demand on the part of the organised movement. Breaches of discipline on the question of the coalition have resulted in the expulsion of leading groups of local labour members from the Party. Meanwhile a section of the leadership openly blackmails the membership by threats to leave the movement, to do a MacDonald and go over to Churchill's proposed Centre bloc. Instead of giving a bold lead to the workers and the middle class and mobilising their support to overthrow the Tories and introduce large scale socialist measures, they attempt to stifle all progressive sentiments and frustrate the socialist desires of the working and middle class.

This situation can have, and already is having, serious consequences for the Labour movement. Failure to satisfy the demands of the masses for a decisive move to the Left, has resulted in increasing support for Common Wealth as a party. At this stage the supporters of Common Wealth, an unstable middle class group, could be won to the Labour movement. But only to the extent that the Labour movement gives a bold and decisive lead.

Like similar middle class groups who sprang up on the Continent of Europe following the last war, they can easily turn away towards reaction and become the cadres of fascism on the morrow. It is not a question of the "sincerity" of the Common Wealth which is doubted. It is which programme; which form of political organisation; which class can the supporters of the Common Wealth be won to. The longer the truce lasts, the more deeply entrenched and independent of the Labour movement, will Common Wealth and its supporters become. In this sense, the more they will tend to counterpose themselves as an alternative to the working class parties and programme for the solution of the social problems of Britain.

This would be a dangerous situation for the Labour movement and serve to sow confusion and illusions in the minds of whole groups of workers. The answer must be to sweep Common Wealth aside as a possible political rival. This would be one of the bye-products of breaking the coalition and conducting a struggle for power.

From the inception of the coalition, Workers' International League, consistently emphasised the damage to the Labour movement which would result from the abandonment of its independence. To-day the mass of the workers, and tailing behind them, all the middle class and centrist groups, are beginning to perceive the correctness of this. The Eddisbury by-election must serve as a warning signal to the Labour movement: Break the coalition and demand that Labour take power on a Socialist programme.

# ROOSEVELT'S PLANS FOR GERMANY

By ANDREW SCOTT

America's plans for the treatment of Germany after the war are being openly discussed in Washington. They represent the most reactionary and catastrophic programme it could be possible to conceive. The American imperialists are planning in cold blood to smash up Germany's whole industrial machine and restrict the country's economic life to the "minimum required for self-subsistence". They are further planning to hack Germany up into a series of small units politically, and to establish the rule of a military government under the command of "United Nations Forces."

Hundreds of political and military occupation authorities are already being trained to put the plans into operation.

Here are the broad outlines of this blue-print for a shattered Germany, for a poverty-stricken Europe, and for a third World War. They are taken from an article published in the April number of the "American Mercury" written by an agency correspondent, Kingsbury Smith, who according to the "Times" "spends much time at the State Department, and some of his recent articles have been taken to reflect official views." He states that: "America's official planners" while they are prepared to give the German people one more chance to prove that they could be peaceful, recognised that the Germans "are going to have to learn to be good the hard way."

"The plans involve the total disarmament of the German nation; the swift and merciless punishment of its war criminals; the drastic decentralisation of the country as a single powerful industrial and political unit; and the temporary restriction of its economic life to the minimum required for self-subsistence. . . . The first step planned for Germany, following the occupation of that country by allied forces under the terms of unconditional surrender, is the establishment of a military government under the command of United Nations forces. American planners consider it absolutely essential that an understanding should be reached in advance between the United States, Great Britain and Soviet Russia concerning the joint policy to be followed in connection with the establishment of such a military government. It is felt that, as soon as Germany has been completely occupied, a supreme allied military and civil government should take over. This Government would control the administration of Germany; supervise the total disarmament of its air, land and sea forces; and direct the decentralisation of its industries and the general readjustment of its economic life."

The author of this also refers to "training that is being given to several hundred men to fit them to be civil administrators at the Army School of Military Government at Charlottesville, Virginia", and adds:

"Special occupational military police are being trained by the War Department at Fort Custer, Michigan. Our Navy, too, is training contingents for service in Germany."

He then discusses what he calls "American plans for the decentralisation of Germany even to the point of breaking up the country into separate states or regions. . . . This idea is not dictated by revenge. It is inspired by a genuine desire to find a solution for militarism in Germany."

This is not the outline of a "democratic New Order", nor the final out-

come of a war of liberation. This is a general plan for the deliberate smashing up of a trade, industrial and military rival, and can only come about as part of a reactionary and ruthless war of oppression for imperialist aims. If this plan is put into operation, it will mean not only Germany but the entire continent of Europe being flung back into medieval poverty, misery and oppression; for the whole continent is now clustered around the gigantic productive power of Germany. With Germany's industrial machine destroyed, the standard of living of pre-war Europe, low as it was, would be completely unattainable. Hitler has twisted that industrial power into the channel of war; American imperialism would grind it into dust. The result in both cases will be the same; the achievements of the productive forces of mankind will be wiped off the European continent.

Nor will there be any difference politically between the Hitler "New Order" and the Wall Street "New Order." The change over from the gauleiters and the S.S. to the military and political bosses now being trained in America's military academies, will not be liberation. It will bring a change in the nationality of the oppressors. Neither in Germany nor in the rest of Europe will the mass of the workers and peasants be allowed to

organise themselves, to form parties, or even to express their grievances. For if they were, they would follow a path that would be far more dangerous to American imperialism than Nazism has been. The American plan is directed against the European revolution with even more resolution than against German capitalism. It is a detailed programme of counter revolution.

Its effects right now can only be to keep the German workers and soldiers behind Hitler. With such a threat hanging over their heads, and with no alternative forthcoming from any quarter, they will continue to tolerate the Nazi regime, to produce in the factories and to fight at the front.

One of the main tasks of the British workers and soldiers is to aid their German and European comrades to smash Hitler's power. But this plan reveals the utter hopelessness of ever accomplishing this task under capitalist leadership. A programme of liberation would go further towards smashing Hitler's power than scores of armoured divisions fighting for such a programme as this.

American imperialism cannot, by its very nature put forward a policy of liberation that could win the German masses to the side of a genuine struggle against their own oppressors. Nor,

in spite of any differences, can British imperialism.

The greatest need of Europe is not that German industry be shattered, but that it be used to the full for the production of the necessities of life. A representative of British imperialism Professor Carr, has admitted that:

"Europe cannot maintain—much less increase—her present standard of living without German productive power. Though powerful sectional interests might derive a passing advantage from the elimination of Germany economically without producing a serious setback to the prosperity of Europe as a whole."

The two problems go together: the winning of the German workers by a genuine programme of liberation, and the freeing of German productive power from the present alternatives of Nazi war economy or American destruction. And the only force capable of carrying them out is the British working class joining hands with the workers and soldiers of Germany.

The American programme will not only prolong the war and make a world prison-house of the "peace", but with the greatest of certainty, prepare the way for a third and more catastrophic world war. The only solution is that the workers take their destiny into their own hands and lay the foundations of that genuine peace and industrial collaboration that the capitalists cannot offer.

The way may lead through war, but it will be a genuine war of liberation; it will be fought not against the German masses, but with them; not for imperialist aims, but for revolutionary aims; not for a Germany torn asunder and thrown back into barbarism, but a Soviet Germany as part of a Socialist United States of Europe.

## WHERE WE STAND ON THE BEVERIDGE REPORT

In view of the widespread discussion going on within the ranks of the working class movement and the confusion which the Beveridge Report has created in the minds of the workers, especially of the most advanced section, we reproduce here a directive which was issued by the Political Bureau of Workers' International League to its members, outlining the revolutionary socialist attitude towards this question.

In dealing with the Beveridge Report our comrades must be crystal clear on how to approach the problem. It would be criminal on our part to create the slightest illusion in the minds of the workers regarding Beveridge, and in particular regarding our attitude towards it.

Because of the Broad popular support which has been created in the ranks of the workers for the Beveridge Plan as the result of the skilful newspaper propaganda, aided by the workers' press, and by the illusions created in the minds of the workers as the result of the right wing opposition in Parliament and their refusal to legislate it, our comrades can easily slip into a position of critical support for the Beveridge Plan, and not make our principled position clear. The grave danger is, that as the result of the opposition of Big Business, the main weight of the discussions in the Labour movement will centre around this question, and it is our task to continually strive to bring the discussions back to a principled plane. Even the more advanced workers have some illusions on the "Plan", and despite their scepticism, are easily confused unless the clear alternative is posed. They regard the Plan as a "lesser evil".

Our whole perspective of crisis for British imperialism and coming tremendous class struggles, teaches us to place the Beveridge Plan in its correct relationship in the economic and political life of the nation.

In the first place, only the petty capitalists and their reformist allies, believe that it can be implemented. The genuinely conscious representatives of Big Business know better and are scientifically correct, as capitalist economists, in their arguments against the Plan. The Beveridge Scheme is utopian and if it were introduced into the Statute Books as the result of a radical upsurge, and even partially operated, it could only be of short duration when the position of British capitalism would engender crisis and collapse.

Seen in perspective, the Plan is in the nature of a vent for the energy and revolutionary ideas of the workers, and thus acts as a red herring to distract the minds of the workers away from revolutionary socialist measures as the basis of social security.

### HOW WE CAST OUR VOTE

The following directive is issued in the attempt to establish for our comrades the correct and concrete method of tackling the problem when it comes up for discussion, and to clearly establish our position as against that of the reformists.

1. The Beveridge Plan is a miserable reform with a number of reactionary features.
2. Our general attitude towards the Plan is determined by this characterisation.
3. The weight of our argument is thrown into exposing the Beveridge Plan rather than opposing it.

Our task is to explain the limitations of the Plan; its reactionary characteristics; the difficulties and indeed the impossibility of putting it into operation with the best will in the world on the part of the ruling class; to explain that in the event of a political crisis that puts Labour into power, or a left coalition pledged to operate the Plan, that the financial guarantee would be undermined by inflation which the Big Business executives would inevitably introduce.

The primary reason for its introduction at this stage is to sidetrack the inevitable revolutionary upsurge of the masses, who will demand radical changes in the social and economic structure of the nation, into the blind alley of reformism.

From this flows the necessity to oppose the Labour and Trade Union leadership who present Beveridge as a panacea for social security after the war, and to counterpose our own demands that Labour break the coalition and fight for power on the basis of our Socialist programme. We demonstrate that, by limiting the demands of the workers to Beveridge, the policy of the leadership of the Labour movement is a policy of betrayal. That this policy must inevitably lead to the disillusionment of the mass of the workers and lower middle class and that it must therefore strengthen reaction and lead to fascism in Britain.

In the Trade Union and Labour movement, our attitude towards Beveridge will be determined by the character of the resolution.

If it proposes to endorse the attitude of the National Council of Labour, the T.U.C., or the Co-op leadership towards the Beveridge Scheme, we oppose the resolution and present an amendment demanding that Labour break the coalition and fight for power on a socialist programme as the only basis for social security. We vote against the original resolution in the event of our amendment not being carried, and thus demonstrate our principled opposition to the policy of betrayal.

If the resolution demands the immediate implementing of Beveridge and calls upon the Labour leaders to fight for its immediate and unconditional legislation, we put an amendment as before, and in the event of this failing, we put a second amendment demanding that Labour break the coalition to implement Beveridge; again explaining and emphasising our attitude towards the plan, and pointing out to the workers that if they seriously believe that it will partially solve their problem, then they have no alternative but to take this step. We would explain that without a directive as to how the Beveridge Scheme could be implemented, i.e. by breaking with Big Business and conducting a struggle against it, the resolution was a farce. We would explain that if this was carried out we would give full support to the Labour Party against the reactionaries. But all the time we counterpose our own programme and thus demonstrate to the workers in their own experience that the Beveridge Scheme is incapable of solving the problem of Social Security, and teach

them that the only alternative is the Socialist Revolution.

### OUR ATTITUDE IN PARLIAMENT

The question of our attitude in Parliament is not a practical one for us at this stage but it has a certain theoretical value. We would expose the meagreness of the proposed reform and its reactionary features, and explain why it is being introduced at this stage. We would demonstrate the soundness and the correctness of the reactionary opposition's argument from the capitalist point of view as the result of Britain's position in the world market. We would demonstrate from this that Socialism was the only basis for social security. We would expose the reactionary attitude of the parliamentary reformists in accepting this Plan as the basis for Social Security, and clearly state that this attitude was a betrayal and that they were preparing to conduct a shadow fight with the ruling class around the question of Beveridge, instead of demanding large scale socialist measures as the basis for social security. We would then call upon the Labour leaders in Parliament to break the coalition and fight for power on our programme as the only basis for social security.

Having made our political attitude crystal clear, we would vote for the immediate implementing of the Beveridge Scheme with the reformists and against the reactionaries.

The difference between our attitude in the working class organisations and in parliament arises from the class character of the two institutions. In the labour movement there is no question of voting with the reactionaries when we vote against the Beveridge Scheme, or the fakers who wish to limit the struggles of the working class to Beveridge. The full weight of our argument would be levelled against the Labour leaders for their policy of betrayal and our principled attitude demonstrated clearly and decisively in what we say; it must be emphasised by our vote which is against all false resolutions on the question. In parliament our political case is identical, but the emphasis is thrown on the attack against capitalism, because of its hostility towards even this miserable reform and its inability to grant the workers even a minimum measure of social security. From this flows our criticism of the Parliamentary Labour Party for not decisively breaking with the capitalists and calling upon the workers to introduce a labour government with large scale socialist measures as the only basis for social security and thereby, as the result of their sparring with the capitalists over the question of utopian and miserable reforms, misleading the workers and crippling their class basis of activity. Our vote would go with the reformists against the reactionaries so that our class position and hostility to capitalism would be harmonised with throwing the maximum weight for legislated reforms.

Political Bureau,  
Workers' International League.

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# THE I.L.P. POLICY REVIEWED

Continued from Page 1.

opportunists who failed to conduct any real struggle against the Trade Union and Labour bureaucracy. To this day the I.L.P. has not anywhere put up a candidate at a bye-election against the Labour Party. The leadership has shed its sectarian mask of last year and openly comes forward . . . with an opportunist position! In true centrist fashion they have stumbled blindly into the very morass into which they warned the policy of the Left-wing would lead. The distorted caricature of the policy which they tried to foist onto the revolutionary socialist on this question they have now adopted as their own. Except perhaps that they give it a more vulgar expression.

Our task is now to try, and educate the best members of the working class as to the real basis of this policy. Lenin's formulation, and our formulation of the problem leave not a single unclear phrase behind which not only sectarianism but opportunism could find shelter. Look through all our articles for the past two years in which we criticise the position of the I.L.P. or our positive formulation in the "Socialist Appeal" and there is not the slightest ambiguity or doubt in our attitude towards the Labour and Trade Union bureaucracy. It will suffice here if we quote Marc Loris, since his article aroused such an indignant protest on the part of Padley, one of the leaders of the I.L.P.

"The Labourite leaders cynically collaborate with the Tories in order to bring the imperialist war to a successful conclusion. The English workers feel more and more ill at ease, but are still organised in the Labour Party. How get out of this impasse? How take a step forward?"

To this fundamental question, point of departure of all the problems of the English revolution, the leaders of the I.L.P. bring no answer. By this they betray the purely abstract character of their propaganda. How would a Leninist leadership approach this task? It would address itself to the members of the Labour Party saying: "End the political truce! Break with the representatives of Capitalism! Labour to Power! Here is the programme we propose for a Labour government. And the revolutionary leadership would present a series of fundamental demands."

July 1942 "Socialist Appeal"

But the new orientation is even more dangerous to the socialist revolution than the previous sectarian position of the I.L.P. Not content with the position adopted by the membership despite their opposition last year, the I.L.P. leadership wish to "improve" on it. The Basic Resolution presented by the N.A.C. says in connection with the truce:

"Similarly, in colonial and foreign affairs an aggressive imperialist policy has been pursued, gravely compromising the Labour Party. The Labour leadership has become subservient to the ruling class and socialist principles have been betrayed."

The imperialist policy of the Labour leadership would come as no surprise to a Marxist. The first and second Labour governments pursued as ruthlessly, if not an even more ruthless imperialist policy than their Tory predecessors. But it is clear that the moment the reformist leaders under the pressure of the masses, take a step to the left and beckon with their little finger, than the I.L.P. leadership makes haste to abandon all pretence of revolutionary intransigence and rush to the side of the union bureaucracy. Evil tongues would have it that behind the scenes the Centrist leadership of the I.L.P., without consulting or acquainting the membership with the fact, has been negotiating with the Labour bureaucracy on what terms they could secure re-affiliation to the Labour Party. This would be in accordance with the usual back stage manoeuvres and horse dealings of Centristism with reformism. However, whatever may or may not be the truth behind this rumour, there certainly seems to be some fire behind the smoke in this case. The resolution of the N.A.C. says:

"In the event of the Labour Party breaking the political truce, the N.A.C. will immediately call a special conference of the I.L.P. to discuss our relations with the Labour Party."

Not that the question of affiliation to the Labour Party under all conditions would be a bad thing. The question of affiliation or non-affiliation is not a principled question for revolutionaries but a question of tactics. Indeed Trotsky some time before the war even gave the advice to the I.L.P. to attempt to re-affiliate to the Labour Party. But what is at issue is method. A revolutionary organisation could affiliate and would affiliate to the Labour Party as the mass expression of the workers in Britain, even if the Labour leadership in Britain refused to break the political truce. On condition that they possessed the full democratic right of criticism of the leadership and of the policy and had the opportunity of convincing the workers of the correctness of their point of view. Whether the truce is broken or whether the leadership openly instead of in a disguised way, support the capitalist class, the character of the Labour leadership does not change thereby; they remain agents and tools of the capitalists, in the classical phrase, labour lieutenants of the capitalist class. In fact that most difficult part of the task of revolutionary leadership comes precisely—not in a period when the leadership is blatantly

collaborating with the capitalists, but precisely in the period when they are in "opposition". The task of exposing the leadership under these conditions is both delicate and beset with difficulties. Relentless criticism and exposure of the leadership is a vital necessity if the masses are not to be misled into the swamp of reformism. This, the I.L.P. leadership cannot and will not do! The ending of the truce between the Tories and Labour, would mark the end of the truce between Labour and the I.L.P. in military terminology on terms of "unconditional surrender" to reformism. The I.L.P. leadership, with a sigh of relief would enter the Labour Party, there from the point of view of the Labour bureaucracy, to act as a useful left shield against the inroads of Stalinist or revolutionary Socialism and against any attempt of the masses to break away and turn to revolutionary politics.

In the last year or two even the Labour leadership has become aware of the widespread disillusionment among millions of workers in Labour politics and of the inevitable drift towards "Communism" not necessarily in the shape of the Stalinist caricature—towards which large sections of the workers are already tending. There is a danger for the Labour leaders that under the impact of events, the masses would rapidly break away organisationally and politically from the Labour leadership and the Labour Party. The I.L.P., they calculate cynically enough by its stand on the war and all other questions in the present period has not tarnished or spoiled its reputation among the masses. On the background of Labour and Stalinist betrayal it cannot but appear honest and sincere to the rank and file supporter of the Labour Party. What a fine conductor for the inevitable anger and indignation of the masses at the policy of the Labour leadership! And what is more as tame and harmless as a pet squirrel without teeth, whose bite cannot really hurt. The revolutionary elements within the I.L.P. must realise that so far as the basic leadership of the party is concerned this characterisation remains fundamentally correct. Very little separates the centrism of the parliamentary coterie of the I.L.P. from at best left-reformism. George Buchanan, with the blessing and goodwill of the I.L.P. leadership, made the transition from "revolutionary" I.L.P. to reformism without bursting any blood vessels and without any more trouble or qualms than it takes to transfer from train travel to motor coach. This desertion could happen in any party, but what is striking, was the good wishes and congratulations with which he departed.

On dozens and dozens of occasions —one can say without exaggeration at almost every session in Parliament, the I.L.P. M.P.s and following them, the N.A.C. has underlined the reformism of the leadership.

One recent example of this provides an annihilating indictment. In the February 13th issue of the "New Leader" on the front page in the most prominent position under the bold heading: "Maxton Flays the Tories" appeared the following extract from Maxton's speech:

"I should be happier if I saw more Conservative members showing signs of getting rid of their mean-spirited attitude towards the working class. I have pointed this out before, but no Conservative believes it. I know Conservatives in this House. In their personal relations they are kindly, generous and decent . . . throughout my life I have hated to see people poorer than myself, and every decent Conservative would hate it, too . . . Why not start now, in the middle of the war, and say: 'We will wipe out now all the obvious unfairness and injustices that there are.'"

Here in these few sentences is comprised the whole essence of the I.L.P.! Just as a scientist can construct and understand the whole structure of a pre-historic animal by a few bones, so a Marxist, from a few sentences such as these can see revealed the whole structure and policy of the party. It is positively embarrassing to have to deal with such a speech. Maxton claims to stand for revolutionary socialism. Yet instead of calling on the workers to rouse their revolutionary indignation and systematically develop and deepen the progressive hatred of the exploited for the exploiters, he appeals to good sense and kindness to ameliorate the hatred of the oppressors for the oppressed! No person could have made a worse speech dripping with nauseating and reactionary sentimentality. Just think of it! This speech was made on the background of the bloodiest war in history to a ruling class soaked in centuries of violence and deceit of the enslaved. It would be as sensible to lecture the keeper of a brothel to be more kind and humane to his victims because in his personal relations to his wife and family he preserved the moral code.

But Brockway, the real theoretician and leader of the I.L.P. printed this rubbish which would disgrace the pages even of a reformist newspaper, not only without protest, but with full publicity and approval. Such is the I.L.P.! If this is the attitude to the capitalist enemy it would of course, be absurd to expect a better attitude in regard to reformism. The I.L.P. in the past may have used a few radical phrases but they neither analysed nor understood reformism.

John McNair, General Secretary of the I.L.P. puts the "new" policy in the March 13th issue of the "New Leader." Just as Maxton is con-

vinced of the "good intentions" of the capitalists, so John McNair is convinced of the good intentions of their agents within the ranks of the working class.

"I am firmly convinced that when Labour entered the Government it was with the best intentions."

There is an old saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Certainly the leadership of the I.L.P. is well established on that road. For Marxists, the problem does not consist in measuring the "sincerity" of people or parties, but the objective results of their policies. As Lenin explained many times, no-one has yet invented a sincerimeter.

For the next period the attitude towards the Labour Party and reformism will be one of the key questions for the I.L.P. and the revolutionary elements within it. That is why we have dealt with this question so extensively. But on all the other fundamental questions facing the working class, the position of the I.L.P. is no different.

## INDIA

On the question of India, to which in a large extent is bound the fate of the British working class, the N.A.C. resolution presented at this Conference, has taken the most radical departure in its history. This too, reflects the pressure of the revolutionary elements in the I.L.P. But even now they are far from approaching the Marxist solution to the problem.

For the first time the I.L.P. abandons its uncritical support for the leadership of the National Congress in India and discovers that "An influential section of the Congress Party is anti-Socialist in outlook and may be expected to enter into agreements with British or any other imperialism . . ." Compared to other parties and organ-

# POLITICS BARRED TO SERVICEMEN

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isation, particularly when one considers the flagrant provocation contained in these regulations. For this and a great many other problems it will be necessary to have something in the nature of a Forces Trade Union to prevent such victimisation and for Committees set up by the Trade Union Movement to expose and give full publicity to any cases of injustice.

Without the background of political literature or organisations round which these often remarkably correct and class-conscious criticisms could centre, everything became too soon submerged under the general apathy of service life.

## GROWING POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Political ideas have however each time been left off at a slightly higher level than before and there is a very wide feeling of the need for Socialism. When Mr. Quintin Hogg, Conservative M.P. for Oxford said that he had found no trace of resentment against the existing ban, he was obviously thinking more about the Officers Mess than of the rank and file.

## FOR FULL POLITICAL RIGHTS

It must be demanded that the soldier-worker be allowed to think out freely his own ideas, that he be allowed to function as a citizen with full democratic rights.

The right when off duty to full legal and constitutional rights to the following concrete methods of exercising them.

1. Appear on political platforms in uniform;
2. Write for working class papers on political subjects;
3. Distribute Socialist literature to his comrades;
4. Partake in all activities of political parties.

Of course no one need pretend that this will automatically solve all the problems of the rank and file. There will be ever present the fear of victim-

isations within the working class, the I.L.P. takes a courageous stand in demanding unconditional freedom and independence of India from British Imperialism. But the success of the Social Revolution cannot be obtained merely from a position which is better than that of social patriotism or Stalinism. The position of the I.L.P. after all, remains that of platonic sympathy with the Indian and colonial peoples. A revolutionary internationalist position, demands the methods and policies of Bolshevism. From this the I.L.P. is as far as it is in its policy at home. Having timidly taken the step of criticising Congress for the first time, the I.L.P. leaders miss the whole essence of the problem of colonial liberation. "The passion for national independence has tended to obscure fundamental class divisions and the need for Socialist Revolution and reconstruction." On the contrary, the "passion for national independence", that is, the intense hatred for the foreign imperialist oppressor is the best cement that the socialist revolution could have. It is not in their "Passion for national independence" that consists the treachery of Congress, but precisely the fact that because of their own connections with the foreign capitalists, the banks and landlords and moneylenders in India, the Congress leaders are incapable of waging a real struggle against British imperialism.

The overthrow of British imperialism would require the mobilisation and organisation, the moving into

action of millions of peasants and workers. But the entry into the arena of action of the masses would spell a mortal danger to the Indian landlords and capitalists and that is the reason why Congress has betrayed the mass struggle in the past on each occasion —when it reached a crisis; that is why in the future they must attempt to arrive at a compromise with imperialism.

Only the Indian working class can lead a consistent and unwavering struggle against British imperialism to the end. For the achievement of the democratic revolution and national independence the Indian masses need the leadership of the proletariat. But the proletariat, in its turn, cannot lead the struggle without a far-sighted vanguard at its head. Such a vanguard could only be organised in a revolutionary socialist party armed with the knowledge and understanding of the experience of the Russian and Chinese revolutions. The primary task of British revolutionary socialists consists in aiding and helping in the organisation of such a party in India.

## BEVERIDGE

On the Beveridge Report the cloven hoof of reformism is revealed again. John McGovern in parliament, succeeded in disgracing himself and his party, as usual. "If this House departs at the end of the debate without giving some definite instruction to the Government, we shall have failed in our mission, we shall have done the very worst day's work we ever did for democracy in this country, and we shall fall to an even lower stage in the contempt of the people . . . I am afraid that at the end of this war there is the danger that the military struggle will be followed by civil war, because men will be roused to such a pitch that they will take matters into their own hands . . . Let the Government make a great human gesture and an-

swer to its socialist basis, within and without."

"New Leader", April 10th, 1943.

This may have been true of the regime under Lenin, but it is definitely false under the regime of the Stalinist bureaucracy. Or does Brockway believe that the murder of the Old Bolsheviks, of the commanders of the Red Army, of Trotsky, or of these Polish-Jewish Socialists was necessary because they threatened the Socialist basis of the Soviet Union? Merely to pose the question, is to answer it. Lenin and Trotsky defended the socialist basis of the U.S.S.R. Stalin defends the privileges of the bureaucracy. This in its turn, poses inevitably squarely in front of the working class and of the international socialist movement, the problem of a political revolution in Russia and the forcible overthrow of the bureaucracy.

## C.P.-L.P. AFFILIATION

The kicks, insults and slanders of the Stalinists have reluctantly compelled the I.L.P. leadership to launch a retaliatory campaign of exposure of the C.P. since the last Conference. Not without the assistance of the pressure of the indignant membership, of course. However, we would seek in vain for a principled position on the C.P. The leadership prefers, as on their attitude to the international, passive waiting and adaptation to events. At the present time and for the past months the Communist Party has been running a tremendous campaign for affiliation to the Labour Party. The C.P. has secured a large volume of support within the trade union and labour movement for the proposal. The subject has been commented on extensively in the national capitalist and labour press. The Labour Party Executive and the "Daily Herald" have been compelled to wage a counter-campaign in order to frustrate the Stalinist attempt. What is the position of the I.L.P.? Are they for or against affiliation? What is their attitude?

We would search in vain in the columns of the "New Leader" or anywhere else for a statement by the N.A.C., or even an authoritative individual opinion. The leadership prefers to maintain a diplomatic silence which commits them to nothing. The reason is not far to seek. To oppose the C.P. would be for them, to come out against "unity", and they do not wish to take up what might be an unpopular position. To support, would certainly be to offend the Labour bureaucracy with whom they wish to remain on the best terms. The only thing left, is to ignore the issue altogether! Either way, the arrogant cowardice and refusal to take a theoretically correct stand, is demonstrated beyond possibility of refutation.

On all the fundamental problems and tasks facing the British workers, the I.L.P. has no thought-out answers. It proceeds not from the theoretical basis of Marxism, but blindly and convulsively in empirical jerks from day to day. Our analysis on I.L.P. policy in relation to Stalinism and reformism, finding Beveridge, Parliament—all questions, shows this. Whether the I.L.P. deals with the past, the present or the future of the workers movement, it is just the same.

Meanwhile political developments within Britain have resulted in a substantial increase in the membership and support of the party. The old membership are being revived and renewed by the development of events. Among the new members a process of differentiation and criticism of the limitations of the centrist leadership has been developing. Even the old members, as they have been compelled to put the policy of the party to the test in the unions and factories, have begun to realise its gaps and inadequacies. The pressure of the workers on these members and the reactions of the members to the workers has had its effect. They look with a new eye towards the policy of the I.L.P.

Unlike the first Conference, the present one meets at a time when all prospects of a gradual development of the class struggle in Britain have receded into the dim and distant past. In the last decades the utopian character of the programme of the founders of the I.L.P. has been drowned in the waves of the class struggle. In Britain today, we have a pre-revolutionary situation. It is on this basis and the striving of the masses that the I.L.P. has secured its rise from political obscurity, and decline to an important factor in the situation. A few decades were necessary to demonstrate the inadequacy of the old I.L.P. policy in practice. It will require not 50 years to show the hopelessness of the present leadership and policy. Events will drive the centrists from one position to another in rapid succession. We have seen this already between this Conference and the last. The process will now be speeded up. The I.L.P. is doomed. The years of vegetation and comfortable phrases are at an end. All parties will be tested in action.

The kaleidoscope of the I.L.P. with Maxton, Smith, Padley, Brockway, all pulling in different directions, now this way, now that, will meet a sharp test. The differing elements within the party at the first real crisis, will pull in different directions. The I.L.P. will splinter into pieces. In his Jubilee in the "New Leader" of January 9th, John McNair writes: "But the past is only useful if it teaches us to avoid our errors and to profit by our experience. WHERE ARE WE NOW?" We would seek in vain for an examination of the policy to match these good words. They remain empty of all content; a mockery of the position of the I.L.P. which never examines the past policy to prepare for the future one. However, this could be a useful basis for the best and sincere revolutionary elements to seek to end all equivocation and ambiguity in its policy. In doing so, they will find that only the policy and method of Bolshevism—the programme and banner of the Fourth International, can provide a solution to the problems of our times.

conspicuously absent from the agenda. No doubt the leadership has good reasons of its own to avoid a discussion on this question, for inevitably it would raise the question of the International. This is a fundamental issue which directly affects not only the British working class, but the revolution in Europe and the fate of the world working class. The problem should really be a simple one of elementary Marxism. The Second International has betrayed the workers, the Third has long degenerated into an agency of Stalinist foreign policy without even a trace of the revolutionary purpose for which it was founded by Lenin. Both Internationals, even in the eyes of the I.L.P. leadership are bankrupt and responsible for the debacle of the workers movement and the advance of fascism on the Continent of Europe. What then to do? Revolutionary internationalism would immediately indicate the way, and prepare to lay down the foundations of a new international, irreconcilably opposed to the reformist and Stalinist distortions of Marxism. Such an international would be based on the achievements of the previous internationals, and founded on the tested principles of Marx and Lenin.

That is the conception which led to the foundation of the Fourth International. Brockway has been writing a series of articles on this question in the "New Leader". In the issue of March 13th, 1943, Brockway says:

"That international will rise from the Socialist revolution in Europe to which we can look confidently in this period of history. It will throw up its own organisation and leaders . . .

There is little value in formulating the programme of this resurgence. It will create its own . . .

It would be difficult in a few lines to make more blunders than this. There is a whole world philosophy comprised here and its name is Centristism. True enough that the Socialist Revolution and new leaders and organisations in Europe will arise like a phoenix from the ashes of the old outlived organisations destroyed by fascism. But has history then no lessons for us? Especially Brockway condemns reformism and Stalinism but has not understood the real basis of these organisations. How else could he write so lightly-mindedly of the revolution automatically solving its own problems? The last world war saw a chain of revolutions unleashed by the working class. All were defeated except one—the Russian Revolution. Since then further revolutions and upsurges on the part of the workers have taken place in numerous countries. All have ended in disaster. Alas, the revolution by and of itself solves nothing. Brockway should have learned something from Spain. The P.O.U.M. brother party of the I.L.P., by their policy in being unable to face up to the Stalinists, were partly responsible for the defeat of the Spanish revolution—and not without the assistance of the I.L.P. which approved and supported their false policies.

If Brockway had learned from the defeats, he could not have made the statement that the movement will automatically create its own programme. What need then for a party or an international at all? No, Comrade Brockway. Revolutions may make programmes, but only the programme of Bolshevism can make a successful Socialist revolution. That is the lesson of the past decades. What would we think of a general staff which prepared for war by announcing that it was not interested in problems of strategy and tactics? and that the war would automatically create the organisation of the army and its own strategy and tactics? We could only conclude that they did not understand the A.B.C. of military science and were not fit to command a regiment, let alone an army. True enough, all the details of war cannot be laid down in advance but the broad principles apply in every war. So it is in politics. Of what use is the science of Socialism—Marxism—if we cannot lay down the broad principles and programme in advance of great events? The whole history of the past century and the writings of the great teachers, would have been in vain.

The revolutions will be successful on the tested theories of Bolshevism or they will fail. In that is summed up the meaning of the Fourth International. It is not a question of setting up a new international because of a dislike for the Second and Third, but of building on the granite foundations of Marx and Lenin which led to the successful revolution. It is that precious historical heritage which is preserved by the Fourth International for the benefit of coming revolutions and the new generation.

## SOVIET UNION

On the question of the Soviet Union the I.L.P. persists in its ambiguous position. They have neither explained theoretically nor practically how the Stalin regime is to be dealt with. They take the correct position that the Soviet Union is a workers state and must be defended. But alternately they hysterically denounce the crimes of Stalin or, picture the achievements of planned economy and the military victories as emanating from the Stalinist leadership. Says Brockway, dealing with Stalin's murder of the Polish Jewish Socialists, Alter and Ehrlich:

"The explanation of the ugly features of the Russian regime, tragically spoiling its great achievements in human welfare and happiness, has largely been fear of econom-

## INTERNATIONALISM

This Conference is noteworthy not only for what is to be discussed, but for what is not to be discussed. The question of international relations is