The State and the Proletariat

By D. B. BATT

[From "The Proletarian"]

IN a discussion of the political state, whether from the platform or in the press, it is necessary to explain the terms to be used. Failure to do this lays one open to possible misunderstanding and criticism. With the world in revolt as it is today; with governments crumbling; with the workers in this country manifesting their discontent on every hand, we must all strive to attain a better understanding of the proletarian position. The revolution is spreading throughout Europe, and within a comparatively short time may involve the whole world. Different conditions will, of course, force the workers to adopt slightly different tactics and methods in the various countries but the general line of progress will be very much the same everywhere.

The tactics employed by labor organizations in this country in the past have thoroughly disgusted thinking workingmen, and we see in many sections of the country groups forming and striving to express their dissatisfaction with the tendencies of the American labor movement. A few words on the nature and function of the political state may prove of some assistance in clarifying the situation.

The general run of people do not know what the state is, and have a very narrow conception of political action. As these terms are being constantly used let us define them. The state is best defined, perhaps, as "the public power of oppression created and maintained in society by the division of classes." We may define political action as any action taken by or against the state.

The Socialist conception of the state does not, of course, harmonize with that of the ruling class, which deludes itself into believing that its institutions have existed from the beginning of time and will last forever. That has been a failing of all ruling classes. Each thought that its particular system was endowed with perpetuity. "As it was in the beginning, is now and evermore shall be, world without end" has ever been their prayer.

The beginning of the state is plainly discernable to those who will but seek for it. Previous to the introduction of private property rights in the means of wealth production there was no need for a coercive power in society. With the development of the division of labor one person could produce more than was necessary for his maintenance; thus slavery became possible, and society divided into classes. With slavery came also internal conflict, and the necessity for a means whereby that conflict could be controlled and regulated, making possible the development of the economic system despite the conflict of interest between exploiter and exploited. Thus the state came into being, and it will remain until such time as class conflicts cease. We must not regard the state as something imposed upon society from without, but as an institution which developed naturally within. There was need for an organized power in society that the economic system might function in an orderly manner. The chattel slave state was the first to develop. Frederick Engles found in the legends of Greece a clear record of the development of Greek society from communism to a slave society ruled over by the Attic state. In his book "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," he traces this development in detail. Space forbids a complete description of the transformation here. Four our purpose two important points which he develops are essential.

In primitive communistic society membership was based upon the blood that flowed in one's veins. One owed allegiance to a certain group because of blood relationship. Under the state, however, allegiance was demanded on the basis of the territory in which a person lived. The state was organized upon a territorial basis.

Another important point, and it is very important, was the creation of an armed force outside of the social organization. Previously, the armed force had been the population itself; all were armed for mutual protection. This special armed force formed the basis of the authority of the state. Armed force, in the last analysis, is the argument which the state uses to secure obedience to its mandates. The police and the standing army were the weapons that the state used to keep the economic system of slavery running; an armed force that was capable of preventing any independent armed action on the part of any section of society.

Due to economic contradictions within and military pressure from without, Greece fell after having reached a very high stage of civilization. Around the Mediterranean many slave states arose and developed to the zenith of their power and passed away. The last and mighties of these was the Roman Empire.

After the downfall of Rome the development of society took another turn. A period known as the Dark Ages set in. Out of the gentile organizations of the European tribes, influenced by the remains of the Roman Empire, there developed a new state. This was the Feudal State.

Under the Feudal regime the ownership of land was the important thing. The serf was bound to the soil; he was robbed by forced contributions of labor and kind. Within this economic system yet another was developing. Between the feudal lords on the one hand and the serfs on the other was a middle class—known in France as the Bourgeoisie. Eventually their system (capitalism) developed to the point where the conflict with the superstructure was no longer bearable. The bourgeoisie became revolutionary and organized for the conquest of the political state. In this they were finally successfully; they secured control of the state and used it to further their own ends.

The state was the strong arm that protected and mothered the capitalist class. In the state the capitalists have the guarantee of their ownership of the tools of wealth production; in it they have a weapon with which to effectively keep the workers in subjection. This weapon the proletariat will have to take from the capitalists if they ever hope to emancipate themselves. Every time the workers get the least bit unruly in their demands for better conditions, the state is there as the weapon that defeats them in their purpose. Anyone who has followed the activities of labor organizations has seen these things happen. The most recent example of the intimidation of the workers by the armed forces of the state was Seattle. There the workers had the city tied up in a general strike but the influence of the government was used to intimidate the workers and force them back to work. It is worth noting at this point that the workers of Seattle in the recent union elections returned the same officials, thus evidencing that their spirit is not broken. In the past the master class has not hesitated to use the most extreme means when mere intimidation has failed to accomplish the purpose, and it is quite certain that they will do the same in the future. The workers will do well to be guided by the experience of their comrades who have taken revolutionary action in the past.

In the Paris Commune (1871) we have the first experiment of the working class in power. Marx in his account of the Commune says that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." Because of this statement many form the idea that it is necessary to build up an entirely new state but if we seek a little further we find what Marx meant when he made that statement. He says, "The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the 'parson power,' by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies." "While the merely repressive organs of the old government were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority-usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society." We gather from this that Marx considered that the state was merely to change hands and be reorganized to suit the needs of the new ruling class. The anarchist, of course, wants the state abolishel out of hand, but this we know can not be done for we must use it as an instrument to destroy the resistance of the capitalist class. In the inauguration of the dictatorship of the proletariat the workers not only forge an instrument of emancipation but also a weapon to be used against the capitalists until their resistance has died out.

When the resistance of the capitalists has ceased, then, and not until then, will the state cease to exist. Once the workers gain control of the state they proceed to centralize the ownership of the social wealth in the hands of the state, that is, the working-class dictatorship. When this centralization of wealth has been completed and all class distinctions have disappeared then the state "dies out"—it is not abolished. It dies out because there is no longer any need for an instrument of repression in society. There is no longer any exploited class. Man at last is free! The first step the accomplishment of this great end is for the working class to raise itself to the position of ruling class in society. "To thoroughly comprehend the historic conditions and thus the very nature of this act, to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and the meaning of the momentous act it is called upon to accomplish, this is the task of the theoretical expression of the proletarian movement, scientific Socialism."

SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

SUNDAY, MAY 4

At 8 p.m. Sharp

EMPRESS THEATRE

Corner Gore and Hastings

Speaker.....T. Connors

SOCIALIST LITERATURE IS STILL BANNED FROM CANADA

A rumor has been going the rounds that the government ban on Socialist literature, in Canada, notably Chas. H. Kerr's publication and the Western Clarion, the official organ of the Socialist Party of Canada, had been lifted. A telegram of enquiry to Colonel Chambers, chief press censor, elicited from that war-worn veteran the following curt reply:

"Sir: Replying to yours, our reply is in the negative."

Comrades, carry on the propaganda; distribute the "Red Flag" for educational purposes.

An Afternoon at the Industrial Relations Commission

The writer had an hour or two to spare on Thursday afternoon and, being interested in labor questions, took in the concluding session in Vancouver, of the Industrial Relations Commission which was taking evidence on the problem of industrial unrest.

In passing I might say that one notable feature of the visit of the commission to the West is the ignoring of it, in any official way, by organized labor.

One interesting exhibit to listen to was Mr. Neill, the chairman of the B. C. Manufacturers' Asociation. He was the last but one to give evidence and cunningly tried to make all the previous testimony appear ineffective because, he said, there was nothing in it but general charges and what we wanted was facts, facts, facts. This, in spite of the fact that all the previous witnesses had dealt specifically with such matters as hours of labor, working conditions, wages, cost of living, number of unemployed, both in individual unions and in general, also the refusal to negotiate and the breaking of contracts by the employers under the Robertson agreement. Documentary proof of such actions was furnished by W. L. Macdonald, the official adjuster appointed by the government. Mr. Neill further asserted that the Labor Gazette's estimate of $21.50 per week for the upkeep of a family with five children, was too high. Scientific men, said this well-groomed, well-fed-looking gentleman, had shown that it was quite possible to live on considerably less than that. The audience, at this point got quite restless, but this did not fease the expounder of cheap living for the workers a bit. Facts was what he was giving. facts and figures. He gave me the impression that he would make a successful manager of a slave plantation providing there was an unlimited supply of slaves.

All the witnesses from the side of labor gave it as their view that there was no solution to the problem of unrest under the present order of society, but they easily fell into the trap of the chairman: "But in the transition stage into the new order, would not industrial councils act as a bridge?" Most of them accepted the suggestion, even if somewhat dubiously, as a possibility. It was not until the last five minutes of the sitting when Comrade Charlie Lestor took the stand that the proletarian attitude was correctly stated, and stated in no uncertain terms.

He said the causes of social unrest were fundamental in the structure of the present organization of society. Unrest was not peculiar to British Columbia or Canada, but was world wide. In Paris, today, the workers are marching with the red flag flying, in their hundreds of thousands. Nevertheless, though the revolutionary sentiment was very strong in Vancouver, it was probably the quietest town in the world and that was due to the character and the large extent of the educational work carried on by the Socialists for many years. This education had taught the workers in Vancouver to understand what was wrong in society and to build and prepare calmly and confidently for the day of the final struggle for power.

The capitalist class, he continued, had had all power in their hands and were to be held responsible for the mess the world was now in, and he denied that, at this day, it was the business of the working class to co-operate with them in cleaning it up. The business of the workers was to seize control of the powers of the State and to use those powers unscrupulously, against the capitalist class and rub their noses in the mess for which they were responsible. When the workers had power, it was then only that the transition period into the new order of society commenced.

Unfortunately, Lestor's time was very limited, but he spoke more truth, in that three minutes, and contributed more of real constructive thought to the consideration of the commission than all the rest of the afternoon had furnished. And, though the commission was not formed in the expectation of receiving such testimony and will hardly consider it within the scope of the bourgeois government in Ottawa to give Lestor's recommendations practical effect, nevertheless, Charlie had the distinction of having the final word in the hearings of the commission in Vancouver and seized upon the opportunity with gusto, in order to voice the aspiration of the revolutionary west.

MAY-DAY HAPPENINGS ABROAD

It is regrettable in the extreme that many paraders on international labor day should have been sacrificed in all parts of the world, to the brutality of constituted authority. But we may be assured that time will bring its reactions. According to the accounts received from Paris the fighting Poilu refused to fire on the workers. That dirty work was done by stool pigeons, gendarme and the hand-fed cavalry pets, most of which cattle dodged the fighting in the trenches.

In Cleveland, Ohio, we read of tanks and motor trucks being set charging through the ranks of the processionists. Verily that is one atrocity the kept press never thought of charging up against the uncultured Bolsheviki.

In Great Britain, May Day appears to have been celebrated without anything untoward happening. How was that, we wonder? Probably due to a more sauve and polished way they have of handling such matters.

Comrades! There are more May Days to come, and the future is ours. Let us see to it.

THE UNITED STATES

George P. West, formerly connected with the United States Commission on Industrial Relations and later special assistant to Joint Chairman Manly of the War Labor Board and one of the best informed students of American labor politics, has an article in the April 19 issue of the New York "Nation." In it he discusses the growing power of the insurgent movement in the United States amongst the working class against the political machine in the A. F. of L., controlled by Gompers and his crew. The A. F. of L. meets in convention in June at Atlantic city and he predicts a strong assault on the Gompers' machine. Nevertheless he says because of the machine running so perfectly, "the strongest and most promising men in the labor movement refuse to concern themselves with federation politics. They let Mr. Gompers go his way while they go theirs. In consequence, the failure of the insurgent movement to make headway at Atlantic city would not mean stagnation in the labor movement. It would more probably mean that vitality was definitely departing from the federation leadership and flowing instead into local, economic and political movements. These movements for the time being are sporadic and unrelatedly but they must eventually form in the national field on orientation that will be the end of Gomperism." He relates how local labor men stepped in and organized the meat packing and steel industries in the face of the opposition of Gompers and his lieutenants who were satisfied that only the skilled sections of the employees should be organized.

Propaganda meetings every Sunday evening, Empress Theatre, Hastings and Gore.

MAKOVSKI TELLS WHAT HE KNOWS ABOUT THE WORKING CLASS. HA! HA!

The committee on industrial relations opened up in the blue room in the Vancouver Hotel. An ex-missionary and ex-Methodist preacher, head of the "Khaki Union," which he said was 400 strong and which he characterized as "one big allied union" gave evidence. Asked if his union was a strike-breaking organization and according to the Vancouver Province, he said it was not, but if a strike would accur and bloodshed and suffering might be the outcome, then the Khaki Union might take a hand. He also said "that the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council had classed the Khaki Union as 'undesirables.' His union did not take in employers but believed it would if they weer willing to subscribe to the constitution of the union." . . . . Asked to what he attributed the present industrial unrest, he replied that it was due to lack of employment and the high cost of living. He did not know how many men were unemployed, but he could put them into three groups—out of work through their own choice, a class which was a menace to society: physically unfit, and those who could not find work." His remedies to cope with the situation were that first, industry be stabilized and also that capital and labor sit at a round table in a friendly spirit. After such sound and business-like and startlingly original advice we fail to see why the commission is lingering on its way. It ought to beat it hot-foot. to Ottawa and begin "stabilizing" industry, taking that prodigious economist, the ex-missioner, along with them as a guide and councillor. However, it stayed to listen to another "exhibit," also an expert on the problems of the laboring masses, L. W. Makovski, sometimes hack journalist, sometimes anti-Bolshevist lecturer to west end audiences and all the time secretary for the War Savings Stamp Committee, a good-enough-job. In the opinion of this "expert," with the English public school Johnny accent don't cher know and the Polish name, the unrest was due to four things and there were, war. propaganda, economic conditions and—prohibition. We believe if he had been given more time to think, he could have thought of other things. Indeed, later on in the profound observations which adorned his tremendously enlightening testimony, he said the New York "Nation" was also a cause, but at the head and front of all the offenders, he seemed to place the lack of beer. Instead of the work beast going and getting fuddled with beer now, on Sunday nights, he went and listened to Socialist lecturers, ergo, fuddle the working class with beer and the social problem is solved, or as good as solved, which is a good-enough-job for the exploiter and his parasites. He said he had attended a meeting of Bolshevik propagandists where there were about two thousand men. We remember that meeting. Makovski was on the platform. W. A. Pritchard was on the platform. Makovski remembers that meeting, the two thousand men remember that meeting. Ha! Ha!—but that is another story. Anyway he says it is certain that Germany sent in the Bolshevik propaganda and the New York "Nation." Bolshevism here, was I.W.W.ism built up on Socialism and the "one big union" was the name as I.W.W.ism and the I. W. W. had got control of the Vancouver Trades and Labor Council and Bolshevism was the cause of prohibition and prohibition was the cause of unrest, when it wasn't the war or unemployment, or the high cost of living or I.W.W.ism built up on Socialism or—Oh! what's the use. What is the use of even a public school education when all that a man has inside his ivory dome is the "brain-pan of a bird."

Next week we shall deal more fully with the proceedings of the Industrial Relations Committee.

Labor produces geological hammers, pestles and mortars, sink shafts, makes machinery, apparatus, performs all work, and risks its life. Nature produces the gold and the donkeys!

Economic and Menshevik Determinism

By MAURICE BLUMLEIN

(Continued from Last Issue)

ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

All that has been stated under the heading of historic inevitability is just as true of economic determinism, but with this addition: the latter not only accepts and regards the mental development and understanding as an essential cause contributing to social results and conditions but goes still further by explaining that the mental stage is itself the result of previous material conditions of which it was the outgrowth. Thus we conceive of each mental stage not only as the cause of what follows, but as the result of what preceded. For each one is born in an environment, not of his own choosing, to which he must react and in which he must reach a certain maturity: he may then as the product of one environment, influence another. In short, economic determinism treats not alone of causes, but of the causes for causes in a continuous chain, which then constitutes a connected interpretation covering the entire sphere of history.

In this sense, therefore, the class struggle is a necessary result and a necessary cause; not as an eternal condition, however, but **only so long as society saw no other path of progress than by class struggles,** in other words, only just so long as our mental development did not enable us to diagnose the presence and nature of classes and class-antagonisms, and by finding their causes, remove them.

This diagnosis was made possible not alone by the material of history, but also by the discovery of mental methods and processes in the field of philosophy and science. Class struggles have made up the entire period of known history, yet it was only in the nineteenth century that the class diagnosis was made. History presented the symptoms and indications, and continued to do so with ever greater emphasis and incisiveness, until the "pressure and more pressure penetrated to the consciousness" just as the continued presence and recurrence of disease in the human body led to medical science and its cures.

This development of the human understanding to the point where it could grasp the nature of social factors and entities, so as to be able ultimately to control them, is the accumulated result of many centuries and many minds. First it was necessary to make human reason a perfect instrument of observation; this made possible the accumulation of natural and historical material of perfect accuracy and universal reliability, i.e., scientific material. This took up to the time of the French Revolution and reached a practical result in the exact and natural sciences.

"But this method has left us as a legacy the habit of observing objects and processes . . . in repose not in motion, as constants not as essentially variables, in their death not in their life." The addition of the dialetic method of reasoning discovered by Hegel, and perfected and applied by Marx made possible not only the perfect observation of things in repose, but of things in motion, of forces and their underlying principles, and consequently of social evolution. This mental development was accomplished simultaneously with the rise in human society of a permanent industrial proletariat, and resulted in a diagnosis of permanent causes and permanent remedies of social and class struggles.

Ever since the time of the Communist Manifesto the mental impediments to the abolition of the class system has tended to disappear, in proportion as the working mass learnt the message of final social liberation. When to the power of the worker is added the knowledge or consciousness of his class relation, this combination of knowledge and power in the hands of the mass means the vanishing point of progress by class control and class interests.

Had this knowledge been possible a thousand years ago there is no reason why the class system could not have been permanently dispensed with at the time of such realization. In other words whenever the producing class is able to analyze its class condition and social evolution, when society can thereby really master the forces of production so as to fully control them and no longer to be driven by them, it means that production will be operated and society's affairs conducted by one class, i.e., there will be no classes. This realization might have been possible (so far as the objective factors are concerned) at any period of history from the time of the first class system.

However, the abolition of classes is not absolutely necessary at any and all stages of the class system. Under ancient slavery, under feudalism, and under early bourgeois capitalism, there were periods of general well-being, and not until each stage led to a condition of oppression did the material conditions indicate the inevitable necessity of a change. The producing mass then rebels against the conditions of ownership **as it sees them,** and the new system then corresponds to this understanding of cause and remedy. But each time such a change is made, it is accomplished under the impression that the oppression of ownership has been disposed of, not in favor of a new oppression, but permanently. In other words, the world has all along been seeking the freedom of a one-class society, only to find that it is deceiving itself each time that it thinks that it has found it. The aspiration has remained unfulfilled because the mentally indispensable factors were not yet present.

The final acute indication of the need of removing class production is the presence of a permanent proletariat. Just as fever in the human body means that there is something radically wrong, so the existence of a proletariat is a specific indication that there is a dangerously unhealthy condition of society which cannot last. Where the proletariat is transient, that is to say, where it disappears by a change of class relations, the class system is again made tolerable for a time instead of being abolished. The first two proletarian situations, that of the Roman proletariat and the agricultural proletariat, were solved in this manner. But no class system can be made healthy by merely trying to maintain and perpetuate proletarian conditions. It is doomed the moment that the necessary mental equipment is placed in the hands of society.

Next Issue: The Social Revolution

Motion Picture Play Exposed

In last week's issue of the Red Flag we published an advertisement to motion picture theatre managers and advertising agents, under the caption, "Anti-Bolshevik Propaganda on the Cinema, a Peep Behind the Scenes." This was taken from the Moving Picture World, of April 19, a trade journal, and the title of the play in question was "Bolshevism on Trial." We had no wish to advertise either the journal or the play and so withheld both their names. However, we have learned since that the inflamatory advertisement has also been exposed by the New York Call, and so there is no necessity to withhold the names any longer, more especially as the U. S. government is expected to take action against the Chalmers Publshing Company, 56 Fifth Avenue, New York City, and against the Mayflower Photoplay corporation, Isaac Volper, president, which is producing the play.

We quote from a press despatch in the Butte Daily Bulletin:

"WASHINGTON, April 26.—Denial of the mails and federal prosecution for inciting to riot probably will be meted out to the editors of the Moving Picture World, a New York magazine, for editorial recommendations in its current issue on the production of a coming photoplay entitled "Bolshevism on Trial."

"Secretary of Labor Wilson today wrote to Postmaster General Burleson and Attorney-general Palmer, requesting that immediate action be taken against the Moving Picture World and against the producers of the play, as a prize commercial venture. In his letter to Mr. Burleson, the Secretary of Labor said that 'never in all my life have I seen more dangerous editorial advice. It is calculated,' he says, 'to produce violent disorder wherever the play may be advertised in the manner proposed.'"

In addition to the editorial advice the magazine had four pages of cartoons in flaming colors picturing what was supposed to be Bolsheviks running around with torches, burning factories, ravishing women and all the other atrocities that the fertile imaginations of the bourgeois press agents are capable of. It will be remembered that this story of "Bolshevism on Trial," was taken from a book by a reverend apostle of the Prince of peace, namely Thomas Dixon, author of another book from which "The Birth of a Nation" was filmed, another play which has served the purpose of stirring up racial hatreds and misunderstanding in a world already so torn asunder by such means as to endanger civilization itself.

It would be an invidious distinction, however, to single out the Reverend Mr. Dixon as though he was a solitary offender in this respect. The whole organized weight of the bourgeois press in all countries is also thrown into the struggle to keep the working class divided so that their ruling classes may continue to rule and rob.

THE NEMESIS OF THE "KEPT PRESS"

John Galsworthy, the well-known English writer, in an interview, was asked what he thought about a remark of Lord Haldane's quoted in the London "Times," which was to the effect "that the worst features of the present is that the working classes refused to believe anything we tell them."

"I should say that is probably true," replied Galsworthy. "It may not apply to the trades union leaders, but the rank and file—yes. It is a curious Nemesis that a press which has led the people for centuries or at least decades should come to this."

That's so; you can't fool all the people all the time. There comes a time when the institutions become so rotten that the lies of the propagandists who are bolstering it up become too obvious for even the most credulous.

JAPANESE METHODS OF "PENETRATION" IN SIBERIA

Following in the wake of the armed forces were swarms of Japanese land buyers, concessionaires and surveyors. The natives were induced to part with their land and other rights for a song. They feared that they would lose the land anyway, so soon as Japanese rule was established, and if the Bolsheviki gained power again they expected to get it back. The capital invested by these speculative buyers of land and concessionaires will now furnish Japan's excuse for staying in the country.

Views on Berne Conference by International Socialists

"The Working Class Is Revolutionary or It Is Nothing"

"It is all very well for the Berne Conference to deceive itself by discussing questions of responsibility and territory. There is only one question: the Revolution. Whether one wants it or not, one has to be either for it, with the Bolsheviki or the Spartacists, or against it, with the capitalist bourgeoisie. The intermediate position taken up by the Berne Conference only aims at evading the responsibility of making a plain answer. The proletariat must force the sycophants of Socialism, the masqued opponents of the Revolution, the weak and hestiating, to proclaim themselves. By their class action, the workers must recall to those who pretended to speak in their name at Berne the fact that "The working class is revolutionary or nothing."—F. Loriot, of the Left wing of the French Socialist Party.

Our Goal a Socialist League of Peoples

"The revolutionary Socialist youth of Europe must band itself together in a decisive, resolute fight. Bourgeois reforms will not serve us. Our goal is the creation of a European Socialist League of Peoples. We wish to be no longer simply material in the hands of generals and capitalists; we wish to live, to live for Socialism, which for us means as much a new society, a new, clear intercourse between man and man, people and people, as it does an economic transformation. We wish to live in order to fight for the spirit of love and humanity."—Ernest Toller, Member of the Executive of the Bavarian Workers' and Soldiers Council.

We Wish to Replace Capitalism by Communism

"'The working class is revolutionary or it is nothing.' This Conference was called by the governments of the capitalistic world, in order to put the Revolution to flight. The revolutionary proletariat did not attend the Conference; Branting, Thomas and Ebert celebrated their triumphs there. The revolutionary proletariat of the whole world must advance along revolutionary lines. Conquest of political power! Dictatorship of the proletariat! The arming of the working class! The disarming and removal of the bourgeoisie! Mass action! There are, and remain, our watchwords. We do not put our trust in Wilson, but in the class struggle. We do not ask that beast capitalism to be just, that would be Utopian. We wish to replace Capitalism by Communism. Workers of all lands unite!"—Valerin Marcu, Delegate of the Roumanian Socialist Party.

A Meaningless Conference

"International Conferences have significance only when they express the fighting spirit of the proletariat in individual countries, and when they induce results from this spirit. The Berne Conference was satisfied with resolutions and programmes, it was afraid to sound a call to arms. Therefore, in this epoch-making hour it was meaningless and without influence."—Grimm, Swiss Socialist Deputy and formed editor of the Berner Tagwacht, the Berne Socialist daily.

A Ruthless Class Struggle Is Needed

"This Conference at Berne has something international, but not an atom of Socialism about it. It is the servant of the bourgeois governments and belongs to them completely. Whilst excusing and absorbing the renegades, it is destined to sanction the ulterior revolutionary work."—A Bulgarian Socialist.

"What has the International Socialist Conference at Berne done for women? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Not a single question was dealt with to advance our position. No advance was possible at this gathering, because the Conference consisted of people who no longer take their stand on the international class struggle. These people are against us and must be against us because of their standpoint. Therefore it must now be our task to call an International Women's Conference, a conference of comrades who adhere to the revolutionary class struggle and who are determined that the proletariat shall not be led to the slaughter a second time. Not only the women of the belligerent countries, but also those of the neutral states, have suffered so greatly under this mass murder, that they must use every effort to prevent its repeitition. This can be accomplished only by the most ruthless class-war against the bourgeoisie of each individual so-called fatherland.—Louise Munch, Berne wife of the secretary of the Berne Socialist Party, well-known as a Socialist and feminist.

Can the Second International Be Resuscitated?

"The Berne Conference could not be and was no more than a mutual exchange of ideas. Therein lay its interest. The fact that the representatives of so-called enemy countries met together —even befor peace was signed—is of great importance. This meeting, beyond its symbolical value, contributes to the re-grouping of all the working-class forces of the world. i

The Second International, despite its failings, may live again. The Berne Conference has proved it. Nevertheless two conditions are necessary. On the one hand, it must conform to the principles adopted unanimously at the Amsterdam Congress; on the other hand, it must get rid, in all countries of its false elements. If these two conditions were not fulfilled a third International is absolutely necessary."—Raoul Verfeint, delegate from the French Socialist Party, Berne, February 9, 1919.

Not an International Socialist Congress, But a Congress of Nationalities

"1. This was not an international Socialist Congress but, by the force of circumstances, and by the faults and failings of the Second International, it was only a rump congress. The revolutionary international sections were lacking there—Switzerland, Italy, and above all Bolshevik Russia, which is at the head of a formidable Socialist revolution without precedent in history.

"2. It was an ice-breaker, the object of which was to unite in the same hall enemy brothers—the jingo Socialist majority groups—of the different countries. It was a step forward in comparison with the state of war; it united, for instance, French patriotic Socialists and German patriotic Socialists; it was the first time they had met each other with resolutions, instead of with hand grenades and cannon.

"3. The majority Socialists of all countries have agreed to put nationalism above the International. And the Congress did not alter this state of mind.

"4. It was not an international Socialist congress, but a congress of nationalities, a great non-Jewish Bund. (The Bund is an organization of Jewish workers, half nationalist, half internationalist.)

"5 There were some fine internationalists at the Congress, but they allowed themselves to be effaced by the others.

"6. A genuine International Socialist Congress should place in the dock the capitalist regime, which called up the war-world and should lead to the Socialist or Communist revolution.

"7. A genuine International Socialist Congress should place in the dock the capitalist regime, which called up the war-world and should lead to the Socialist or Communist revolution.

"8. With certain reserves such a conference should unite itself with the Russian and German Revolution.

"9. It ought to prepare the programme of the coming Socialist revolution.

"10. The Berne Congress was the first at which Marx was absent with his watchword: "Workers of the world unite.' None dared say: 'Wilsonians of the world unite'!!! But that may yet happen, for Marx is henceforward replaced by Wilson!

"In short the Second International is dead. We must have a third International of a Socialist revolutionary communistic character."—Charles Rappoport.

THE TEMPER OF BRITISH LABOR

(Continued from Page One)

statement must be taken very seriously. Today labor is likely to look upon any compromise as temporary. Despite the fact that discussion of the joint industrial council was going ahead briskly. the workers continued to demand recognition of the new shop-committee organization. At a critical moment in 1918 the production of aircraft and munitions in Coventry was held up by a strike of fifty thousand workers, the sole issue being the recognition of the new industrial organization. The Birmingham workers threatened to strike on the same issue. This led the government to hold a series of conferences—which aimed, however, merely to settle the status of shop stewards as a part of the regular trade-union organization. A glance at the twelve proposals made as a result of this conference should leave no doubt of the fact that the object was really to restrict the activities of the shop stewards to trade-union matters, preventing them from perfecting any general industrial organization.

Today this new industrial unity persists in large districts, even nationally. It is still opposed by the national trade-union executives, but it is still able to call large strikes in spite of this opposition. Under the impetus of events in Russia it is quite frankly revolutionary. Apparently nothing short of a workers' commonwealth along Soviet lines will satisfy a growing proportion of British labor. The recent election served to discredit political action. [In the sense in which the writer uses the term "political action" he means parliamentary action. The Marxian correctly defines the term "political action" as any action taken by the slave class against the master class to obtain control of the powers of State, or by the master class to retain control, using these powers to secure them in the means of life.—Edit. note.] It emphasized the contention that modern representative government is merely middle-class government masquerading as democracy. Direct industrial action is gaining converts as the only means by which the workers can achieve their ends. On the Clyde, in Belfast, London, Wales, everywhere the British government is face to face with strikes and threats of strikes which aim to make it impossible to continue industry on a capitalistic basis. The miners are demanding nationalization with management in the hands of the workers. The latest strikes in Great Britain show that demarcation lines have been forgotten. In the light of such developments the Whitley Industrial Councils are estimated by many radical leaders as little more than an effort to give permanence to the existing order. According to Mr. Robert Williams, general secretary of the transport workers' organization, labor is already suggesting that the trade-union leaders connected with this scheme are agreeing to the existing capitalistic order and standardizing for all time what many workers conceive to be a slave state—a slave state wherein, however, the slaves shall be better fed, better housed, and better clothed, in order to make them more efficient units in a servile order of society. This is a view that cannot be overlooked in any attempt to estimate the forces at work in Great Britain today.

THE RED FLAG

A Journal of News and Views Devoted to the Working Class.

Published When Circumstances and Finances Permit By The Socialist Party of Canada,

401 Pender Street East, Vancouver, B. C.

Editor ..... C. Stephenson

SATURDAY ..... MAY 3, 1919

Whose Death?

WHEN Italy decided to scrap a scrap of paper, and entered the war with the Allies, it was, of course, in the interest of freedom and democracy.

The events of the past week, however, seem to suggest that freedom and democracy had less to do with that decision than control of the Adriatic.

President Wilson said Italy must not have Fiume. Premier Orlando said Italy must have "Fiume or death."

Italy got Fiume notwithstanding the American veto. So all is lovely until we hear from the "young nation" our press is shedding tears over —the Jugo Slavs. (The "Sun" editor in his abysmal ignorance says Czecho-Slavs.)

The difficulty was overcome without our assistance, it being none of our business. We are indifferent alike to the claims of young nations or ancient ones. What we are interested in, however, is whose blood is to be shed.

Had the Big Three decided in their wisdom to make Fiume a free port or to hand it to the young nation, what then? Death, of course.

The members of the working class of Italy would have been called upon to do the dying. Their death would have been the dread alternative.

The peculiar feature is that no matter how many towns, on the Adriatic or elsewhere, Italy controls the miserable existence of her working class will not be alleviated one iota.

If it suited the purpose of the real owners of Italy, Rome itself would be surrendered as was Savoy and Nice in 1860, and when Garibaldi, the hero of the then aborning Italian nation came as deputy from Nice to the Italian chamber to find himself as an alien. They city of his birth had been ceded to France.

Reading some of the editorials in our local press we get the idea that Italy as a nation dates from antiquity. As a matter of historical fact it goes back no further than 1860. And the manner of its rise is as disgraceful as that of Poland's decline. Cavour said, "If we did for ourselves what we are doing for Italy we should be sad blackguards"; and Azeglio, in advising Persano, the admiral of the Italian navy, not to publish his diary, said that since Poland's partition no such "colossal blackguardism" had ever been published by any public man."

Bribery, corruption, intimidation, battle, murder, double-crossing, mobs, out-and-out lies between friends and patriots—all for Italy. And when the Bourbons had been driven from Sardinia and Naples, the Austrians from Venetia, and the temporal power of the Pope wrested from him, were the workers of Italy any better off as subjects of Victor Emmanuel than they were as subjects of Francis II., Franc Joseph, or Pope Pius IX.?

Here history steps in with one of her characteristic touches of irony. For notwithstanding the Canadian and Irish volunteers who shed their blood for their church at Rome (see Daily Province editorial, April 30), or the tremendous increase in the British volunteer forces following the annexation of Nice by France, it was the Batle of Sedan, 1870, which gave Italy dominion over the city of Rome. Germany's victory over France was the direct cause of Italy's consolidation.

The workers of Italy, however, had to leave its sunny skies, its cities of fame, its far-famed masterpieces of art, and slave for a dollar per day in the United States of America after Italy became a nation.

Death or Fiume! What a piece of intolerable insolence.

J.H.

Russia Under the Soviets

Being a series of articles based upon an interview with Wilfred B. Humphries, American Red Cross man, recently returned from Russia

By W. A. PRITCHARD

II.

As a representative of the American Bureau of Publicity, and later of the American Red Cross, he was compelled by the nature of his work to travel extensively over Russia and Siberia. Thus he was afforded many excellent opportunities to study the people of Russia, their habits and outlook upon life. He found that the former owners of great estates wanted their property back, that the former officers in the Russian army wanted their uniforms and all those privileges, etc., that those uniforms symbolized, and that the manufacturers wanted their factories. There were further a number of apparently sincere people who thought the time was not ripe for the establishment of a working class state.

The Bolshevists justified their expropriation of land on the ground that they had taken it from the descendants of expropriators, that they had taken for the people what had been taken from the people. They argued that they were confiscating only the great estates and the great industries. If, for example, a man had five thousand acres, with a house and machinery, they would let him keep the house and machinery and about enough land for his own use and they would take the rest. Their idea was that he and his family should have what they could work themselves.

• • • •

"The Bolshevists did not carry out their own land program. They didn't believe in cutting up the land into small holdings. They wanted land cultivation done scientifically, on a big scale, by the use of modern implements, including great tractors. One farm should produce sugar only, another should produce wheat. No farm should produce a dozen things. Their purpose was to take the land for the peasants, that is, for the people at large, all the people, the inheritors of the earth. They were following the spirit of the Marxian philosophy. But they found that, if they were to carry the peasants along with them, they would have to work out the principle of small holdings after the old-fashioned way, in the end the least productive. Later they hoped to be able to persuade the peasants that it is farbetter from every point of view to encourage agriculture on a large co-operative scale. Already the Russians had reached a pretty high development in their co-operative movements. Many years ago great co-operative creamery establishments were started by the Danes in Siberia. Now there are many enterprises in Russia and Sibria managed by the Russian workmen. The Russians seemed to have a natural liking for working together in co-operative rather than competitive ways. The Bolshevists say that they don't want a government that shall own everything. They see the dangers that would result from this kind of bureaucracy. They wish to take over only those enterprises that have reached the monopolistic stage. The others they would like to see established on the principle of workmen's control.

"What Is Being Done in This Direction Now?"

"In each factory there's a workmen's committee. Each committee sends delegates to a local council of workmen's control. These local councils in turn send delegates to the All Russian Congress of Workmen's Control, convened, as a rule, once every three months. A central executive committee is elected by the congress. It is called the Suprme Council of National Economy. These Soviets of Workmen's Control provide for the auditing of the books of the concerns under their jurisdiction. They exercise an intimate supervision over the finances. They are particularly solicitious about regulating the supply of raw materials, seeing that they are apportioned first to the industries socially most useful. They also look after the sanitary conditions in the factories, regulate the hours of labor and the wages, and settle labor disputes. The control is maintained on the principle that the workmen are not mere employees, they have a vital interest in their work."

"Do You Think That the Bolshevists Really Understand the Principles of Government?"

"They understand the principles that used to be used in government and that are still used to a considerable extent. They are opposed to them and intend to have little or nothing to do with them. All they care for is a government that shall function effectively according to the will of the people that do the work. Naturally, much that they are undertaking is experimental. But a good many of their ideas are pretty generally accepted by the economists today. For instance, they are determined to put an end to all monopolies in things that the people need. Strong as they are for the workers in an industry they don't propose to allow even the workers to prey on the public. They wouldn't let the Baku oil workers demand any price they wanted for their oil. They wouldn't let a similar injustice go on in coal or iron. They organized for the benefit of the people the steel trust of Russia. They expected to achieve all the economies that would go with a successful trust anywhere, without encouraging any of the injustices and tyrannies. The steel trust is now directly controlled by the central Soviet government and operated on a national scale. But, wherever it is possible to make a success of the co-operative system the Bolshevists prefer it to government ownership; success from their point of view, I mean, with consideration always for the people.

"How In So Short a Time Could the Bolshevists Acquire Efficiency You Give Them Credit For?"

"You must bear in mind the Russian people have been preparing for the revolution many years. The Soviets first showed their strength at the time of the revolution in 1905. When it failed they were supposed to go out of existence. But, in a sense, they went on existing under ground. They became powerful after the czar was overthrown. They were the actual power long before Kerensky lost his grip. The first revolution, in March, 1917, was political. The second was industrial. If the Allies and the United States had accepted the situation created by the second revolution there might have been world peace a year ago. Through Raymond Robins, head of the Red Cross in Russia, the Bolshevist government sent word to the Allies and the United States that if they would recognize the government and would promise not to try to overturn it, it would go on with the war against the Germans. This proposal wasn't even replied to. It was made during the ten days' interruption of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, when the barbarous nature of Germany's terms became evident. It is my belief that at Brest-Litovsk the German imperialists made one of their most stupid blunders. In the end it proved fatal to them."

The Soldier and the War

The following passages comprise one of six fragments appearing in the "Dreadnought" from a novel by Dudley Howard Tripp, a young soldier who enlisted early in the war and here records his impressions.

FROM THE "WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT," LONDON, ENGLAND

V.

. . . . There is only one crime that we cannot forgive, and of which we ourselves have been guilty. The crime of narrow patriotism; the crime of not having insisted on open diplomacy and full, unvarnished facts; the crime of not extending to international relations, international disputes, the same procedure, the same judicial system of prosecution and defence as we enjoy in the courts of common law. There is the world-crime of infinite folly, infinite ignorance, infinite tragedy. . . .

It was towards the end of 1915 that I began to see that; it was then that I began to think and wonder. I had been a year in the trenches. I said to myself one day, looking at a shivering uncomplaining man upon the bitter parapet: "He did not make war." It was an astounding thought; it burnt into my brain with sudden, penetrating fire. It took me from him to the Kaiser, from the Kaiser to his Generals of armies, and his chancellors, and from those great men to the simple, suffering, grey-coated guard in the line opposite our own.

I pictured him then as ignorant, as helpless, as uncomfortable, as heroically uncomplaining as the khaki-clad figure a yard away from me. I could see him drawing his coat-collar round his ears as the rain lashed him, hear him muttering doggedly to himself: "It must be seen through; I must 'stick' it; it is just."

Put them side by side—grey and khaki—the rain glistening on their sodden great coats, streaming from their caps, marked their numbed hands, broken nails, red-encircled eyes; listened, even, to their terrible laughter.

Then I said: "Naked men, both of you, when you came into the world! Today, if I sent you forth in your multitudes, silent and uncomplaining, stripped of your uniforms, and bade you fight, how would you say, either of you: 'This is my enemy; him will I kill!'?"

It is not in your ranks that the enemy is to be found; it is not in your home that the spirit of hatred and revenge makes its bed. Uniform is thrust upon you, and made symbol of racial enmity; nationality is impressed upon you, and made a synonym for false pride. You have not been taught; you have not understood that all war is civil war, that all men bleed red no matter what color be their skin or their hair, that the brotherhood of man—Internationalism—is the truth of Christ, the very key to the citizenship of the world.

. . . . So I looked deeper, and the deeper I looked the more terror-stricken I became. For I saw that, *somehow, millions of every land were* bound by the thread of an idea to the will—if necessary to the evil will—of a few. I saw that they were emerging half blinded from holes in the ground, from darkness and ignorance, helpless as yet in the growing light, and flung hither and thither in their blindness by those accustomed to command. I saw the chains of economic serfdom, the lack of education, the absence of the critical faculty that made them easy slaves to an unrelenting wheel. I understood, or began to understand, how their ideas and ideals were shaped for them by those whom, unreasoningly, they had learned to obey; how the Press ceaselessly hammered partisan creeds into their indiscriminating ears; how a half-truth for lack of its balancing moiety became to them a convincing whole; how their lack of individuality had made them dependent on the care-free agent of mighty class and financial interests.

. . . . And then I looked for light. For a long while I saw none. For many days in this first groping of mine I beat against dark encircling walls. So many things were hidden from me, so many books and ideas shut away from those blood-stained lines. Thought, dimly stirring, became agony as it moved like a child in some confined womb. Then. . .then, Noel was killed.

With the death of a real pal something dies, but something newer and deeper is born. We had been pals for a long time, had suffered and wept, laughed and sworn together. We had broken a last crust evenly, and licked at a tablespoonful of water. We had buried men—even our intimate pals—together. I understood, for the first time, what the love of a chum meant, the good, clean, honest open love of a man for man. . . I saw him die. I had not thought before that he could die. . .

Peter's voice shook a little.

He did die, for he took the last spark of credulity from me. He died; ah! don't forget this, without having touched the fingers of the thought that was awakening in me. He died, having missed, missing something. There had been no questions on his lips. His grave faced many a silent German grave—in silence. He did not ask why men should die as he died—in agony, choking, with black, bitter blood, and silent save for their moans. But he made me see that the living alone can talk, that the living alone have the key of thought, the key of action, even though they must pluck it from the grave.

Do you see what I mean? The chain of thought is easy and swift. When you **know**, when you **feel** that a dead German is on common ground with a dead Britisher, or a dead Frenchman; when you comprehend that their death is similar, the stopping merely of a heart-beat, you begin to understand the significance, the similarity of their life. Death broadens the issues you have to face, lines in and then erases your class distinctions, gives you perspective. The common bed of humanity, generally speaking, is the same; you realize that whether you look at it from the altar of the alehouse, or the city slum and the warehouse, or the green open fields of God.

DUDLEY HOWARD-TRIPP.

OUR BOOK REVIEW

(Continued from Page Two)

power in letters from the same alphabet that the Allies are now trying to teach the Germans.

"Then the old Central Executive Committee stepped down, and in their places appeared Trotsky, Kaminiev, Lunatcharsky, Madame Kollantai, Nogin. . . . The hall rose thundering. How they had soared, these Bolseviki, from a despised and hunted sect less than four months ago, to this supreme place, the helm of great Russia, in full tide of insurrection."

The order of business at the first meeting of the Congress of Soviets—Organization of power, war and peace, constituent assembly—shows further that the Bolsheviki grasped and understood wherein lay their strength, and if there was any doubt on the matter, at the same moment that "Organization of Power" came up for discussion in the Congress, the methodical muffled booming of cannon sounded from the Bolsheviki gunboat Aurora shelling the Provisional Government in the Winter Palace.

"So with the crash of artillery, in the dark, with hatred and fear and reckless daring, new Russia was being born."

BENNETT.

NOTE: The Editor informs me that he cannot let me have the whole paper. As this is as much a propaganda article as a review, and there are many who may not be able to get the book, I will tell you some more next week of the part played by the workers in the Red Guard, of the sailors from the fleet, of the trades unions, of the cowardly bourgeoisie and their hireling press, and of the tireless and resourceful men and women who made history during these ten days.—W. B.

OPINION IN GREAT BRITAIN ON INTERVENTION IN RUSSIA

The London "Common Sense," of April 12, whose editor is the well-known economist, F. W. Hirst, protests, in a long article, against the criminal folly of intervention in Russia by Great Britain. The writer of the article says "that intervention has produced three results. It has caused the death and imprisonment or large numbers of persons suspected rightly or wrongly, of counter-revolutionary activities. It has immensely aggravated the sufferings of the mass of the people directly, as a consequence of the blockade; indirectly, as a result of the diversion of the productive resources of the country to military operations. It has strengthened the Bolshevik government."

After reviewing the whole political and economic situation in Russia, the growing strength of the Bolshevik regime in the face of foreign invasion and at the same time explaining the desperate need for locomotives, agricultural machinery and engineers, he closes his article as follows: "The Revolution has gone too deep to be permanently overthrown; but for a period it might be submerged in blood and chaos.

"This, then, is the prospect to which those who clamor for more war would hurry us. If we pursue it we can gain nothing of the slightest worth to this country, while we shall assist to reduce a vast number of people to indescribable misery, and shut off from any use or profit to the world as a whole a vast storehouse of potential wealth—material as well as moral. To enter upon negotiations with Lenin and Trotsky—as the Allies themselves proposed to do in January—commits us to nothing save the opportunity of securing peace and the possibility of Russia's regeneration. No vital interest of ours will be compromised: no sound principle endangered. When we made the alliance with the Czar we went further in approval of an infinitely worse government." It was an exploiters' government though, and a fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.

NOW READY

A HANDY TEXT BOOK

on the economics of Capitalistic Production, being the first nine chapters of:

Vol. 1 Marx's Capital with the 32nd chapter on the Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation included, also an extract from the preface to the same author's "Critique of Political Economy", which formulates the materialistic interpretation of history.

Prices are as per the following quotations: Post paid in all cases

Single copies, paper covers, 50c.

25 copies or more, paper covers, copy, 40c.

Single copies, cloth bound, $1.00 per copy.

10 copies or more, cloth bound, copy, 75c.

We await your orders, and we hope you will keep us busy, as success in this venture means much to the publishers' future efforts.

Make all remittances payable to C. Stephenson, 401 Pender Street East, Vancouver, B. C.

Our Book Review

Some wise animal, at some period more or less remote in history, said that, "to the writing of books there is no end," a fact apparent enough to be free from debate. Ink and paper, in immeasurable quantities, have been used up on the slightest, and on no pretext at all. Every rising of the sun, every falling of the night, every change of the wind, every happening, in fact, provides a fertile source for huge outpourings of words, now the garb of ideas, now their hiding place, and at other times concealing the lack of them entirely.

Russia is the latest subject of such as suffer from scribbler's itch. Since the declaration of war in 1914, the land of the Muscovite has been the theme of numberless volumes, most of the kind that few will read and nobody in any case will pay any attention to. There are a few, on the other hand, that, because of their content, will be added to the libraries of the historians of the future. To this latter class belongs the book now under review.

To the most of the western Europeans, the real Russia has been a closed book. The cheap novelists of the 19th century, writing in French and Eglish, could color their tales of Russian life and character, according to the depth or vividness of their imagination, without fear of contradiction. Nihilist plotters, police spies and a beautiful princess, wth a background from the Arabian Nights were sufficient to form the basis for a thrilling six-shilling shocker, for the edification of the reading public. Such was the Russia of the novelists and of the vast majority. Of that section of the people known as the cultured and intellectual, we may say that their knowledge was confined to the works of a few great Russians: Turgenev, Gogol and Dostoyevsky; Chaikovsky and Rubenstein or Mendelyeff and Metchnikoff, according to whether their slant on life was literary, musical or scientific.

On a western world with this limited knowledge came the news of the revolution of March, 1917. Immediately scenting copy of the human interest variety and wishing to gather data that would enable our American manufacturers to know best how to HELP the Russian people, correspondents poured into the country. A few also found their way there from different motives. One of these latter was John Reed. Acording to a pass signed by Antonov, Chief of the Military Revolutionary Committee, John Reid was the representative of the New York Socialist press.

The book as he says himself is a "slice of intensified history." In the preface the author says, "In this struggle, my sympathies were not neutral." In such a struggle as he describes, we can take this for granted, as there are no neutrals when the workers line up in a struggle for political power, and every last word in the book shows that this is what was happening in Petrograd during these "Ten Days that Shook the World."

The revolution of March, though hailed by many as a proletarian revolution, proved as we in the S. P. of C. interpreted it to be, purely bourgeois, and the provisional governments that held sway during the eight months following could not give to the masses of the Russian people the things that would satisfy their demands—bread, peace and land.

Six months after the fall of the Romanoffs, Reed found an impression prevailing among the bourgeoisie in Petrograd, that the revolution was slowing down and on the other hand the workers considered that it had much more to accomplish. That is to say, it had reached that point where the bourgeoisie were well satisfied to let things rest. It had accomplished as much as the English or French revolutions. The field was now clear for the organization of a capitalist state, where political and industrial development could take place along the lines of our great free American democracy and the exploitation of wage-slaves could proceed apace.

"TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD."

By John Reed. 370 pages $2.00

Boni and Liveright, Publishers, 109 W. 40th St., New York

This was, however, reckoning without the working class. As in all previous events of like character, the task of carrying the revolution to a successful termination was imposed on the enslaved masses, the workers in the factories, the soldiers and peasants. Workers' organizations in the cities found themselves in pretty much the same fix as their fellows in less democratic countries, lockouts and strikes were an everyday occurrence. Land committees of the peasants acting in accord with the proclaimed intention of the government were landed in jail and the army committees of the men continually found themselves at variance with their officers.

In Petrograd the life of the city ran on as usual. The multitude was not interested in the squabbles of the political sects. The bread queue still shivered in the cold: theatres and moving picture shows presented the latest in Italian melodrama: the aristocracy indulged in pink teas and longed for the good old days; the Intellegenzia attended its lectures on Theosophy and kindred cults; gamblers and bejewelled prostitutes held sway by night.

To those actively interested in the struggles of the contending parties, these were, however, busy days. All the forces of the bourgeoisie and the Mensheviks were called into play in their efforts to offset the propaganda of the Bolsheviki. After years of patient and unceasing endeavor, after exile in foreign lands and Siberian prisons, the spokesmen of the proletariat worked like Trojans to rouse the masses to action. Those men and women, Lenin, Trotsky, Antonov and Kollontai and all the others whose names are now embodied in revolutionary history, worked through lurid days and sleepless nights till on the 7th of November the Bolsheviki secured control of the Second Congress of Soviets of Workmen's and Soldiers' Deputies, proclaimed the Russian Soviet Republic, "all power to the Soviets," and laid the foundation for the proletarian dictatorship.

The despised and rejected Russian worker, until now considered stolid and unimpressionable as the ox, took his destiny in his own hands, the greatest event in Russian history since Rurie and his Viking brothers accepted the invitation of the Slavic peoples to come and rule over them, a thousand years ago.

All this John Reed saw from the inside. He describes the moves and counter-moves of the revolutionaries and reactionaries. His standing as a Socialist correspondent placed him in a decidedly advantageous position. The proclamations, decrees, handbills and newspaper quotations with which the book is well furnished will help to an understanding of the task the Bolsheviki set themselves to accomplish.

Bourgeois democracy in all countries finds it political expression through parliaments and constituent assemblies and bases its shibboleths on the cornerstone of constitutional law. Thus arose in Russia the cry for a constituent assembly.

At the same time, however, out of the lingering institutions of communal Russia and the revolutionary aspirations of the mass of the Russian workers, a new political instrument came into being. During the 1905 revolution, the workers had organized themselves into local councils or soviets based on geographical and other considerations. When the revolution was crushed beneath the heel of the Cossack, in a merciless riot of blood and murder and thousands of workers deported to Siberia, the soviets ceased to function.

Immediately on the overthrow of the Romanoff dynasty the soviets re-eappeared, all over Russia; the same in character in the Far East as in cosmopolitan Petrograd. The sailors on the battleships in the Meditterranean and the soldiers of the Russian army on the western front elected soviets to give expression to their needs.

Between these two instruments friction immediately developed. The bourgeois constituent assembly or the proletarian Soviet, one or other but not both!

The insignificance of the bourgeoisie as a political force gave added power to the proletariat; their weaknesses being all to the advantage of the workers. The formless, hazy concepts of the army and the peasants had allowed all kinds of professionals and intellectuals to blossom forth as spokesmen of the new order.

With the proletarian revolution in sight we find these people in control of all the directing and administrative bodies of the Republic, the Duma, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, the Peasants' Congress and the Army and Navy committees. Having no understanding of the questions involved, they had no solutions to the problems presented to them. To satisfy the demands of the masses would mean to abolish themselves.

The Bolsheviks during these months were not idle. Although a majority when they acquired their name, the March revolution discovered them very much in the minority. By constant work and ardent propaganda they explained the class nature of the struggle and placed their solution before the workers.

After the July rising, many of their best members like Trotsky and Kollantai landed behind prison bars and others like Lenin and Zinoviev went into hiding. We can well remember the detailed accounts of Lenin's flight through Finland to Scandinavia at that time. Like most of the capitalist news this incident had its origin in the mind of some newspaper bonehead, as Lenin was in Petrograd during the whole period doing his share of the work that was to result in the glorious 7th November.

Having their plans perfected, the Bolsheviks called for an armed insurrection on that date. This decision was arrived at only after long discussion as there were faint hearts even amongst the Bolsheviki. On October 23, armed insurrection was discussed at an all-night session of Central Committee of the Party. All the leaders, the party intellectuals and delegates from the Petrograd workers and garrison were present. Of the intellectuals Lenin and Trotsky alone stood for insurrection. A vote was taken and insurrection was defeated.

"Then arose a rough workman, his face convulsed with rage. 'I speak for the Petrograd proletariat,' he said harshly; 'we are in favor of insurrection. Have it your own way, but I tell you now that if you allow the Soviets to be destroyed, we are through with you!' Some soldiers joined him. . . after that they voted again . . . insurrection won."

Riazanov, vice-president of the trades unions, declared, "It's insane, insane; the European working class won't move." So the party was whipped into line in spite of the calamity howling of a few intellectuals. The vision of the proletariat was the keener as contemporary history is proving.

November 7th came, with the result known to us all. The disbanding of the Council of the Republic by the sailors, assumption of power by the Second Congress of Soviets and the proscribing of the Provisional government. The armed factory workers, the Petrograd garrison and the sailors from the Baltic fleet, executed the mandate of the proletariat with the modern expression of power—machine guns, artillery, armored cars and battleships. The Bolsheviki spelled

(Continued on Page Three)

The Soldier and the War *Russia Under the Soviets*
An Afternoon at the Industrial Relations Commission

THE RED FLAG

A Journal of News and Views Devoted to the Interests of the Working Class

VOL. 1 No. 15 VANCOUVER, SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1919 FIVE CENTS

THE TEMPER OF BRITISH LABOR

By LELAND OLDS

[From the New York "Nation," April 19]

IN order to see the British industrial situation in its true perspective we must consider the labor movement in England with reference to its effect upon modern machine production. From this point of view there can be no doubt that it had been a real burden upon industry. Organized before the automatic machine began the reduction of all factory labor to a single semi-skilled level, the craft unions had for years been enforcing certain rules which held up the normal advance of modern machine production. The labor movement had, in fact, served to protect the skilled worker against this very levelling process; it had maintained him in what might be termed a privileged position. By the rules of these skilled-trade organizations the introduction of certain automatic machines was forbidden, modern efficiency methods were prohibited, a limit to the production of the individual worker was tacitly admitted, and certain processes were reserved for the skilled workers. In short, trade unionism in England aimed primarily at guaranteeing the skilled worker a position at fair terms against the competition of the unskilled worker as the mere tender of a high-speed automatic machine. Only in the great organizations composing the Triple Alliance could one find anything approaching industrial unionism.

But the English industrial situation prior to the war was really an anachronism. High-speed modern industry was marching on, and the productivity of British labor was falling far behind that of such nations as Germany and the United States. The war, with its tremendous appetite for the products of great munitions plants, forced the issue. It offered the employing class a plausible excuse for bringing English industry up-to-date. Under the guise of patriotism the Employers' Association called upon the trade unions to surrender all the concessions which had been forced from employers by a generation of hard-driven bargains. Both sides knew that this would be a dangerous blow to the craft-union movement, that it would cause the skilled worker to sink back into the great sea of the unprivileged, and unprotected proletariat. As a result, the employers were unable to accomplish their purpose except through the agency of government. The Committee on Production, appointed for this purpose, reported that the national emergency required the giving up by labor of its right to strike, of its right to oppose the introduction of the latest efficiency machines and methods, and of its right to maintain lines of demarcation between various groups of workers. The trade-union executives had agreed to co-operate with the government in the conduct of the war; they were, therefore, bound to accept these conditions.

[He then relates some of the new conditions imposed on labor.]. . . The employers had thus secured the right to press labor to the limit of production. Henceforth there would be but one class of general factory labor, machine tenders, to be used as instruments of the community. A great supply of such labor would exist after the war—a sure guarantee of cheap production. Other results were to follow; yet I have been able to find only a single voice raised at the time to give warning of these results. In the "Economist" of June 5, 1915, there is the following comment:

> In some factories, where the managers are incompetent and are unable to get the best work out of their hands, . . . there is the masters' demand for compulsion. But employers who know the character of the English work people and of the trade unions know that the dangers of compulsion are very much greater than the difficulties which compulsion and bureaucratic interference are supposed to be going to cure. . . . By this means such voluntary organizations as the trade unions might be dealt a deadly blow, and instead of strikes and lockouts when masters and men fall out we shall have class movements and revolutionary movements by armed organizations.

This is a forecast of what is actually happening in England today. The change must have come inevitably in the course of years, for the automatic machine will not be gainsaid. The day of the great machine proletariat is coming. But the war and the employers' war legislation have hastened the process in England. The Munitions Act, dubbed the "Slave Act" by British workers, marks not only the decline of British trade unionism, but also the beginnig of new organization along industrial lines aiming more and more clearly at the conquest of industry by the workers. Hardly was the act signed before the miners struck in defiance of the law and secured nationalization of the mines for the period of the war. Certain shipyard workers defied the "Slave Act" and went to prison. The threat of a general strike in the industry brought about their release, and the investigation which followed secured the elimination of the imprisonment clause in the act.

[After describing the beginning of the shop-steward movement, he continues]:

In the spring of 1917, despite the demands of a critical military offensive, an important section of the munitions industry was tied up by a great strike led by this same organization of shop stewards. The strikers demanded the withdrawal and modification of the new Munitions Act; in other words, the strike was a political one. This time the trade-union leaders had no need to repudiate the strike; the rank and file through its new organization openly repudiated their leaders. The government threatened drastic action and arrested the strike committee. But, the new organization was now far more complete than it had been in the previous spring, when deportation was carried out with apparent success. The shop committees were organized throughout the whole district, with telegraphic code and a corps of motor dispatch riders. The threat of a general strike brought about the unconditional release of the arrested committee, and an agreement under which the bill was withdrawn and modified.

Out of this situation the report of the Whitley Sub-committee of the Reconstruction Committee was born, born simultaneously with the first Bolshevist demonstration in Petrograd. Its purpose was to meet a situation which threatened a similar demand of the British proletariat for a share in the government of industry. The effect of the weakening of trade-union organizations was at last apparent. The problem had become one of restoring the authority of the trade-union leaders without curtailing the real advantages gained by the employer as a result of the war. Trade unionism must be reconstructed to prevent more radical developments. Any general industrial organization must be joint organization. The proposed plan aimed to localize the activity of the shop stewards, to limit it to the consideration of certain matters already subject to trade-union negotiation, and to prevent its becoming a general class movement. A glance at the Whitley report will show that it recommends regularized collective bargaining, and that its chief purpose is to safeguard production against strikes and the opposition of labor to efficiency methods. Excepting in case of a general strike, power and authority, under the Whitley plan, will remain on one side of the table.

How far must the old order go to satisfy the demand of labor for a share in the control of industry? Early in 1917 a machinist organizer for the Birmingham district said: "It must be a real control. We have no desire or intention to be treated at the employers' table like poor relations." Recent events have proved that such a

(Continued on Page Five)

BRITISH TROOPS FIGHTING AGAINST SOCIALISM IN BULGARIA

LAST Saturday's papers gave the following Exchange message from Paris:

A telegram from Athens to the "Matin" says: A Bolshévik movement at Varna (the Bulgarian Black Sea port) having been attempted by Socialists and extremists from Sofia, the Allied authorities caused the town to be occupied by British troops, and martial law was proclaimed. All the ringleaders are to be tried by British court-martial and severely punished.

Does Parliament realize what this policy means? Suppose there were a Socialist movement in France, are British troops to be used to suppress it? We are trying to suppress "Socialists and Extremists" in Russia, our late ally, and in Bulgaria, our late enemy. Are we to do the same for our friends or for neutral governments? And if Socialists are to be tried by court-martial in Bulgaria, why not in England and Scotland? Besides, we surely have enough to do in our own empire in India, for example, and Egypt, and in our new conquests, such as Mesopotamia, Palestine, and the German colonies?—"Common Sense," April 16, London England.