QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

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SOCIALIST - LABOR COLLECTION

REVISED EDITION

8D
The SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT
The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

HOLDS—

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Socialist Party of Great Britain, 33 Gloucester Place, Portman Sq., W.1
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF
GREAT BRITAIN
AND
QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

PREFACE
TO
REVISED EDITION

This pamphlet was published first in July, 1932, with the object of explaining briefly the origin of the Socialist Party of Great Britain and its attitude towards some of the issues confronting the workers. The pamphlet proved to be a useful addition to Party literature and was selling steadily up to the time when the edition of 10,000 copies was exhausted.

It was decided to issue a revised edition but various circumstances have delayed publication until now.

The principal changes made in this revised edition are the omission of the chapter on War, the inclusion of a chapter on Religion owing to the pamphlet "Socialism and Religion" now being out of print, an extended
chapter on Fascism, and a chapter on Post-War Reconstruction. Other chapters have been partly re-written and brought up to date.

The reader may reasonably ask why, in a pamphlet of this nature, there is no section devoted to the most important question of the day—the War.

Some time after the outbreak of the war the Government introduced legislation and made orders affecting the press which are capable of a very wide application and carry drastic penalties. In the editorial columns of the Socialist Standard at the time we explained our position in relation to these orders, which was that, in the existing circumstances, the penalties were not worth risking. We are still of the same opinion.

To deal with the war adequately from our point of view would almost certainly result in the suppression of our literature, and would, therefore, preclude us from getting our Socialist message to the working class. As we are a Socialist Party, and not merely an anti-war party, we would fail in our duty if we risked suppression in order to explain our attitude upon only one of the facets of capitalism. We prefer, therefore, to leave the question for future examination rather than to produce an emasculated version of our case, and consequently a botched job, which would only lead to misunderstandings. Neither martyrdom nor fireworks will help the cause we serve, as both are appeals directed solely to the emotions of workers, whereas our Socialist message is directed to their intelligence.

This being our interpretation of the present position,
all we can say here is that the basis of our attitude to
war is the same as it has always been, and our opposition
the same as it was in the last war.

The aim of the pamphlet is to let the reader know
how the Socialist Party of Great Britain came into
existence, and how it has profited by the mistakes and
failures of other organisations to work out a body of
sound principles indispensable to a party striving for
Socialism. Bearing this in mind, the reader will see that
Chapter II. on the founding of the Socialist Party is
not merely the record of a forgotten controversy. It
shows why an earlier attempt to form a Socialist Party
in Great Britain broke down and why those who have
refused to learn from that earlier experience have failed
and will fail again in the future.

Similarly, the chapters dealing with various political
parties, and with the Co-operative Movement and the
trade unions, are intended to explain to men and women
who have been disappointed with the poor results of their
activities in those organisations why it is that their
work and loyalty have not been better rewarded. In doing
this some repetition has been unavoidable owing to the
need to make different phases clearer by placing them
under separate headings. For a simple connected outline
of Socialist theory as distinct from its practical applica-
tion to current questions the reader is referred to our
pamphlet "Socialism."

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

1942.
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The SOCIALIST PARTY of GREAT BRITAIN and Questions of the Day.

Chapter I.

THE POSITION OF THE WORKERS.

In presenting the case for Socialism we are not seeking to construct "a brave new world" on a plan built by us out of dreams and longings. What we have to say we know from studying the world we live in. We are socialists as a result of trying to find practical solutions for our own problems. Non-socialists are also aware of these evils, but we differ from them in recognising that the evils are bound up with the capitalist system and cannot be avoided under it, and that it is possible to replace Capitalism by Socialism.

We do not hold that Capitalism itself has been an evil thing which the human race might have avoided. It has been but one stage—a necessary stage—in the progress of man's age-long efforts to bring the forces of nature under his control. It has made possible the staggering increase in wealth of modern times, equipping the world with material things as never before in man's history. Yet as the years go by, Capitalism succeeds less and less in meeting the needs of the majority of those who live under it. It does not succeed in giving comfort and security to the great majority of people. It does not avoid wars abroad and industrial strife at home. It produces ever greater contrasts of riches and poverty.

Capitalism has solved the problem of production, so that everyone could be fed, clothed and housed without overwork or the risk of famine, but it causes a more and more unsatisfactory distribution of the products. Its structure now stands in the way of further progress.
The whole tendency of capitalist production is to build up vast organisations in which each worker is but a unit taking a particular detail part in a huge co-operative network of operations that result in a finished product. The whole world is drawn upon. Raw materials and human energy from the most distant places are contained in the commonest articles that appear in the shop windows of any busy street. In short, there is social production today, but these socially produced articles are privately owned. What we urge is that ownership should, and must, be brought into harmony with production, and private ownership give place to social ownership.

By social ownership we mean that the means of production shall be owned and democratically controlled by the whole people. Men and women act in what they believe to be their own interests. When they realise that the new system offers them the satisfaction of their essential needs with a minimum of labour, and yet leaves ample time and opportunity for the employment of their faculties in a multitude of ways suitable to themselves, their hostility to Socialism will vanish.

Many people, including capitalists themselves, who are anxious to remedy the evils that press on the workers, have believed that it could be done by tackling these evils piecemeal. Efforts in this direction by political parties, by trade unions, and by philanthropic societies have clearly failed to touch the root of the problem. They have failed because they have not taken account of the position the working class occupies in the capitalist system.

The workers—all those who are dependent for their livelihood on the sale of their labour-power (their mental and physical energies)—are a propertyless class. The capitalists, by their shareholding, are the owners of the land, the factories, the railways, and so forth, by means of which both capitalists and workers live. The workers produce wealth for the capitalists and not for themselves. Out of the wealth produced the capitalists return to the workers in the shape of wages and the so-called social services, an amount which is roughly sufficient to maintain them in a state of efficiency and able to bring up their families. The surplus product, after meeting all the expenses of production, is kept by the propertied class.
The worker's portion tends to become relatively less. The workers compete for employment among themselves and are constantly subject also to the competition of machinery and improved methods of production. A rise in wages—other things remaining unchanged—gives the employer an additional inducement to install more labour-saving machinery and improved methods, and this increases the number of unemployed, who serve to depress wages again. It is, of course, true that the level of wages differs from industry to industry and from country to country, owing to causes that would take up too much space to explain here, but this does not affect our contention. As a matter of fact, wherever the workers may be, all they get on the average is their cost of subsistence.

Whatever their standard of living, the position of the workers is always that of having to struggle to maintain their wages. The vast and wonderful improvements in the productive process mean stupendous wealth for the owners, but the workers do not obtain a share in the increase unless some change occurs which gives them added strength in the struggle, and, as pointed out above, machinery and improved methods leading to more unemployment always place limits on any such tendency. All the reforms and all the philanthropy cannot touch this position. Remove the unemployed to-day, to-morrow machinery will have produced them again. Give the workers free houses or free bread—they must struggle just as hard for the remainder of their necessities.

Attempts at reform are always in the long run useless. They are defeated by the operation of the economic forces of Capitalism. The only way out is to establish a new system of society.

Social scientists have shown that society evolves, that it evolves by revolution (at all events, in historical times), and that these revolutions are always the conscious work of a revolutionary class.

Every class in history which has acquired ruling power has been revolutionary in its time, but no class has continued to be revolutionary after its object has been attained. The rising revolutionary class strives to wrest control from the ruling class, succeeds, and in the nature of things consolidates its position and strains every nerve to maintain the new social order. It becomes reactionary.
In the course of time the means of production outgrow the conditions imposed by the existing social structure, and a new revolutionary class arises whose interest it is to set up a new social order. There is a class struggle terminating in another social revolution.

Capitalism was enabled to displace Feudalism because the latter was based on the control of the land, which was only part of the means of production—the most important part at one time, it is true. But there was another form of wealth outside the control of the feudal nobility—merchants' wealth, and later, manufacturers' wealth. Those who possessed this wealth, the capitalists, achieved their revolution, and are now a reactionary class.

Up to the present, each class that has conquered power has brought with it the seeds of its own destruction, because each has depended for its existence upon the exploitation of another group within itself, which only became a clearly-defined and separate class after the successful outcome of the revolution.

But under Capitalism productive property is controlled by the capitalist class. There is no other class of property owners to kick against their rule. It is impossible for the rulers to become the conscious agents of their own overthrow—and only conscious agents can carry out the revolution, because, though a system can be destroyed without its destruction being consciously aimed at, the setting up of a new one—the other half of the revolutionary process—presupposes knowledge of what is intended. Who, then, are to be the agents of the revolution that will achieve Socialism? The only class that is left to carry out the revolution is the working class.

But in order to fit themselves for this task, the workers must acquire the consciousness which can alone enable them to do so. This consciousness must comprise, first of all, a knowledge of their class position. They must realise that, while they produce all wealth, their share of it will not, under the present system, be more than sufficient to enable them to reproduce their efficiency as wealth producers. They must realise also that, under the system, they will remain subject to all the misery of unemployment, the anxiety of the threat of unemployment, and the cares of poverty. They must understand next the implica-
tions of their position—that the only hope of any real betterment lies in abolishing the social system which reduces them to mere sellers of their labour-power, exploited by the capitalists.

They will see then that, since this involves dispossessing the master class of the means through which alone the exploitation of labour-power can be achieved, there must necessarily be a struggle between the two classes—the one to maintain the present system of private ownership of the means of living, and the other to wrest such ownership from them, and make these things the property of society as a whole. This is the struggle of a dominant class to maintain its position of exploitation on the one hand, and of an enslaved and exploited class to obtain its emancipation on the other. It is a class struggle.

A class which understands all this is class-conscious. It has only to find the means and the methods by which to proceed, in order to become the fit instrument of the revolution.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOUNDING OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY.

Sixty years ago books and pamphlets dealing with the fundamental problems of social life were neither so plentiful nor so accessible as they are to-day. The writings of Marx, Engels, and other pioneers, were hardly known in the English-speaking countries, except to the few who had a knowledge of foreign languages. Consequently when the Social Democratic Federation was founded in 1881 as a professed Marxian organisation (though Engels would have nothing to do with it) very few of its members were acquainted with the writings of Marx. The new organisation had the merit, however, of pushing the name and works of Marx before groups of working men. Although the few well-to-do people who were at its head sought to keep it in their pockets as a private concern of their own, the information they made available bore fruit after a number of years and led to much questioning of principles and finally to an attempt to clarify the basis and policy of the organisation to bring it more into harmony with the political needs of the working-class movement.
Much of the early policy of the Social Democratic Federation consisted of urging the adoption of measures of reform put forward to ameliorate certain outstanding grievances of sections of the working class. These ameliorative measures were not sufficiently broad to meet the aspirations of a group of Radicals who had become dissatisfied with the Liberal Party, and wanted a programme that would appeal to the so-called "professional classes." This group, therefore, formed the Independent Labour Party in 1893. Even the new programme of remedial measures was not nebulous enough to attract the large body of people desired, so the leaders of the Independent Labour Party, assisted by certain trade union officials, took part in forming in 1900 yet another new organisation—the Labour Party (known until 1906 as the Labour Representation Committee). From that time onwards the problem of uniting these three parties occupied a good deal of the time and attention of their respective officials and members, and periodical "Unity Conferences" were held. The idea put forward was that they should present a "United Front" to the "Common Enemy"—an idea that still befogs many who claim to be acting in the interests of the working class.

In the meantime, dissatisfaction with the two-faced policy and hero-worship of the Social Democratic Federation had been growing, and a small group of critics developed who set out to tie the organisation to class conscious political action, and to induce it to cut away the self-destructive reformist policy.

At the 1903 Conference the discussions were lively, and at the Conferences during the following two years they were livelier still. On the one side was a small, youthful group endeavouring to keep the class basis of the party clear, and on the other side the official group of older men (mainly well-to-do) who wanted to rule the party and broaden its basis to include all "sympathisers who were against social injustice," and were straining hard to achieve unity with other non-socialist bodies. Another bone of contention also was the two-faced attitude of the Party Organ, "Justice," edited by H. Quelch, but owned by a private group over which the party had no control. At one time it opposed the I.L.P. and the Labour Party and their leaders, and at another time it flattered them. At one time
it denounced Keir Hardie, Philip Snowden, and others, and at another time urged members and branches to help in the election of these people to Parliament. The members who objected to this policy and urged genuine independence were dubbed by Quelch “The Impossibilists.”

In August, 1902, a paper commenced to appear in Scotland published by Scottish members of the Social Democratic Federation, with the title “The Socialist.” The third issue contained an attack on the leaders and policy of the S.D.F. signed “Impossibilist.” The attitude of the paper gradually became more hostile, until in 1903 its adherents formed the Socialist Labour Party, copying the American organisation of the same name. This party was crippled at birth, however, by the fact that it had a programme containing “immediate demands.” At first the new party held to the position that the immediate object should be the conquest of political power, but later, under the influence of its American parent, it was swept away by the theories of Industrial Unionism. In fact, it soon became apparent that the members of this party had really only changed their idols: Hyndman, Quelch and company were deposed, and De Leon and Connolly took their places.

From 1902 until 1904 the columns of “Justice” contained a good deal of correspondence from members criticising the attitude of the party and its leaders, and much impatient denunciation of the critics by Hyndman, Quelch, Lee and Max Beer. At the 1902 Conference there were some heated discussions on the political arrangements that had been made with Liberals, Tories, Labour, etc. There were also some caustic remarks made about the public banquet to Hyndman, to which people of all political persuasions were invited, and at which they all indulged in back-patting, in spite of previous mutual denunciation as sworn enemies.

During 1902 a member (P. Friedberg) wrote a criticism of the party and its leaders which, as “Justice” would not publish it, he sent on to the American “Weekly People” (the organ of the American Socialist Labour Party). For this action the Executive expelled him and, later, expelled his Branch (Finsbury Park) for supporting his action. The matter came up at the 1903 Conference and, under the influence of the ruling clique, the expulsion was endorsed.
and another member (G. S. Yates), who supported the action, was also expelled by the Conference on account of articles in the "Socialist" criticising the S.D.F.

Throughout 1903 the volume of criticism against the autocratic attitude of the Executive Committee and its compromising policy grew stronger. The critics became more numerous, compact and anxious to make their voices heard.

At the 1904 Conference, which opened at Burnley on Friday, April 1st, matters were brought to a head. Protests were called forth on the first day by references in the E.C. report to "Impossibilists," and a warm discussion followed. The next day (Saturday) the Conference had hardly assembled when Herbert Burrows asked for and was granted urgency to move that those who were constantly criticising the E.C. be called upon to apologise to the Conference and pledge themselves, without any reservations whatever, that such conduct would cease. This was carried by 56 votes to 6. The six were then called upon for an explanation or an apology. None of them apologised. After hearing their explanation two of them were summarily expelled and left the Conference. The two expelled members, J. Fitzgerald and H. J. Hawkins, were candidates for the new E.C., and some of the delegates present (who had voted for their expulsion) had been instructed to vote for their candidature. In speaking to the expulsion resolution, Quelch (Editor of "Justice") accused Fitzgerald of fostering discontent by means of economics classes!

The official group complained that the "Impossibilist" movement was a campaign of calumny and intrigue against old and experienced members and therefore against the entire body. They appealed to the Conference on the sentimental grounds of age, connections, and years in the struggle, assuring the members that their experience had proved the necessity of political arrangements, "broadening" the basis of membership, and of supporting political representatives who did not share their basic views.

The method by which delegates were selected was guided by the prevailing feeling of reverence for leaders and old comrades, and left the way open for considerable wire-pulling. In consequence, many of the delegates were
members of the E.C., past members of it, and personal friends of E.C. members. It was with the assistance of these delegates that the E.C. secured a vote giving them full powers to expel without appeal any member or Branch not falling in with the E.C.'s view.

The two members expelled were delegates from Branches who had received instructions to vote on certain items on the Agenda dealing with questions of policy, but they were expelled before the items came up. The significant fact was that both had been nominated for the E.C. by several Branches, and therefore constituted a menace to the old official group. In fact, at a subsequent meeting of London members, J. Kent stated that he was present when the expulsions were arranged by Hyndman, Quelch and others around the tea-table on the evening of the first day of the Conference.

The action of Herbert Burrows the next morning was, therefore, "according to plan."

After the Conference the Watford Branch wrote to the Executive asking why their delegate (Fitzgerald) had been expelled. They were informed that unless they too complied with the Conference findings on the question of criticism they also would be expelled. This was an example of the method that was being adopted all round. The majority of the members of the S.D.F. were unclear on principles; the Executive deplored discussion of principles, claiming that "we are all Socialists, we want to get on with the practical details." It was alleged that narrowness had hindered the growth of the S.D.F., which "was no longer a sect surrounded by hostility." It was sought to "broaden the base" and unite all "progressives" on temporary objects. The official group carried a packed Conference with them, and secured a vote giving them power (for three years) to expel members and Branches who were not prepared to give unqualified support to the compromising and reformist policy that was being followed.

After the return of the delegates from the Burnley Conference, a meeting of London members of the S.D.F. was held on Sunday, April 24th, 1904, at Shoreditch Town Hall, to discuss the expulsion and matters arising therefrom. On the plea that they were no longer members of
the organisation, Fitzgerald and Hawkins were excluded from the hall.

At this meeting there were two surprises: Jack Jones—later a Labour M.P.—who all through had given indications of supporting the so-called "Impossibilists," backed down and supported the official group; Jack Kent, who was thought to be hand-in-glove with the Executive (of which he had been a member), gave the game away and told of the wire-pulling to get rid of the more dangerous of the critics.

After several hours of angry discussion, the meeting supported the official attitude by a vote of 119 to 83.

The small group that had been working by means of economics classes, circulars, and discussions, in the endeavour to convince the members of the necessity of class-conscious revolutionary political action, saw that the position was hopeless. As the S.L.P. was also in the mire, the only way left was to form an independent political party.

Closely following the Shoreditch meeting, a Protest Committee was formed, which issued a leaflet setting forth the grounds of dissatisfaction with the existing policy of the S.D.F. It was signed by 88 members, though some of these had, in the meantime, been summarily expelled by the executive for protesting. Summarised, the criticisms and proposals were as follows:

The expulsions were an attempt to gag or expel members who had been bold enough to criticise inside the organisation the policy pursued by representative men and more particularly by the late Executive of the S.D.F.

It was a question of determining whether the tactics and policy in future should interpret socialist principles, or whether this Party was prepared to resort to measures that would tend to sterilise the socialist propaganda of past years of plodding exertion and self-sacrifice.

The protesters do not believe in impossible political tactics, but assert that political action must be such as to awaken the workers of this country to full class-consciousness, and to the desire to abolish wage-slavery. They therefore feel the necessity of avoiding any action that would endanger or obliterate their
socialist identity or allow them to be swallowed up by a labour movement that has yet to learn the real meaning of the class struggle.

The policy of permeating the Trade Unions had resulted in prominent members getting official jobs that prevented them from preaching the class struggle. The policy adopted of voting Tory "to dish the Liberals," and vice-versa, confused the workers and rendered propaganda difficult.

The basis of the Party was undemocratic. It had been dominated for years by certain leaders over whom there was no real or effective control. The final clothing of the Executive with autocratic authority to expel without appeal showed that it is no longer an administrative body, and, according to rules which can only be revised every three years, it is empowered to decide and entirely control the electoral policy of the Party. A man in his capacity of a Trade Union official is allowed to do what would render others liable to expulsion.

The Party has neither ownership nor control of the Party organ, Justice, which was mortgaged to the Trade Unions. The Party was called upon to give official endorsement to candidatures of non-socialist Trade Unionists. Questions of policy could be, and were, decided in secret. Conference amendments on serious questions of organisation were not even discussed.

Opposition to the official policy was denied free expression, and members were called upon to apologise for actions of which they were not guilty and which only existed in the imagination of their accusers, the climax of which was the unconstitutional manner of the expulsion of Fitzgerald and Hawkins. Many of those who voted for the expulsions did so in direct contravention of their instructions to vote for these members in the election to the new Executive. All who voted for the expulsions did so without any instruction whatsoever, thus violating the rules of the S.D.F. The vague charges made against the two members were only put forward to cover the intentions of the old clique to get rid of those who wanted the Party to adopt an uncompromising revolutionary policy, and
who were carrying on the agitation quite constitutionally within the organisation.

The signatories to the leaflet then urged:—

The adoption of an uncompromising attitude which admits of no arrangements with any section of the capitalist party; nor permits any compromise with any individual or party not recognising the class war as a basic principle, and not prepared to work for the overthrow of the present, capitalist system. Opposition to all who are not openly and avowedly working for the realisation of Social Democracy. A remodelled organisation, wherein the Executive shall be mainly an administrative body, the policy and tactics to be determined and controlled by the entire organisation. The Party Organ to be owned, controlled and run by the Party. The individual member to have the right to claim protection of the whole organisation against tyrannical decisions.

Such was the position put forward by those who eventually founded the Socialist Party of Great Britain. Subsequent events made plain the correctness of the view of these pioneers. The Party they sought to clarify and were finally compelled to leave in disgust was afterwards swallowed up in the opportunist movement, and on the outbreak of war in 1914 sided with the capitalists. Leading members of it, through the Labour Party, became capitalist Cabinet Ministers, and it has finally taken its place as a warning and a lesson to working men, of the fate reserved for those who give adherence to mere numbers in place of clarity of thought.

After the issue of the above-mentioned leaflet, events moved rapidly. The autocratic official group continued their expulsions from the S.D.F. A meeting of sympathisers with the policy outlined in the leaflet was held at Sydney Hall, Battersea, on May 15th, 1904, and at that meeting it was decided to launch a Party based entirely upon Socialist principles and opposed to all other political parties. A meeting to formally constitute the Party was held at the Printers' Hall, Bartlett's Passage, Fetter Lane, E.C., on Sunday, June 12th, 1904. Such was the formation of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

The new Party was forced into existence without
literature, offices, printing facilities or funds, apart from the contributions of the 120 members who took part in its formation. Its early Executive meetings were held in the bedroom of one of the members, his bed providing the main seating accommodation. However, they entered with enthusiasm and energy into the work of building up an organisation, and, with considerable personal sacrifice, had the satisfaction of seeing the first number of The Socialist Standard appear on September 3rd, 1904, containing on its seventh page the Object and Declaration of Principles that has guided the Party ever since.

The first Annual Conference was held at the Communist Club (now defunct), 107, Charlotte Street, London, on April 29th, 1905. The membership had by then reached 150.

From its formation the Party has been controlled entirely by its members, and policy has been thrashed out in many lengthy and stimulating discussions. All its meetings and discussions, apart from the period of martial law during the War, have been open to any who cared to attend and listen.

The soundness of the Party's principles as a sheet anchor was particularly demonstrated on the outbreak of the War in 1914. While all the other alleged working-class parties (including the Socialist Labour Party) were entirely at sea as to what line to follow, and were consumed by the war fever, the S.P.G.B., from the declaration of war to the armistice, never deviated from opposition to it as a capitalist war. The September, 1914, issue of The Socialist Standard contained our War Manifesto, and subsequent issues, brought out under tremendous difficulties and in spite of Governmental raids on the Central Office, continued to state our position on the war.

The result of this policy brought devastation for a time. Our members were scattered to distant parts of the world. A good deal of the work at the Head Office was done by women members who ably carried out work the men were precluded from doing. When the Armistice enabled the members to gather together once more, it was a sadly battered Party that emerged. But, in spite of the knocks it had received, the Party was sound, and the members proceeded with enthusiasm to rebuild the broken organisation, with such good results that it is now stronger and more
firmly established than ever and has been the means of developing young organisations on a similar basis in other countries. Our Declaration of Principles has been adopted (with minor modifications required by local conditions) by the Socialist Party of Australia, the Socialist Party of Canada, the Socialist Party of New Zealand, and the Workers’ Socialist Party (U.S.A.).

In this way was built up the organisation that is now attracting more and more of those who give serious thought to the problems that confront the working class.

Chapter III.

Social Reforms.

The task of achieving Socialism has in many minds come to be associated with movements to make Capitalism run more smoothly by means of social and political reforms. It is important to the Socialist Movement that the two purposes should be kept quite distinct. Only convinced socialists can work for Socialism, but reform movements attract conscious as well as unknowing defenders of Capitalism. Some of them are anxious only to alleviate suffering, others support reforms as a method of making Capitalism more secure.

It is not only the workers who, through Trade Union action, endeavour to place certain limits upon their exploitation by the capitalists; the State, which to-day exists for the purpose of preserving Capitalism, is also compelled in the course of its activities to take such steps.

In the early days of the nineteenth century, when the modern factory system was still struggling with earlier methods of production (based on handicraft in its later phases), the workers were able to reap some slight advantage from the divisions among the masters.

Thus the landed interest, organised in the Tory Party, passed the early Factory Acts; and the tradition developed that by supporting one political party against the other the workers could gradually improve their conditions. With the further development of industry, however, the wealthy
manufacturers bought land, and the landlords in turn began to invest in industry, until to-day the division has practically ceased to exist. In addition, certain of the manufacturers discovered that the legal regulation of hours of labour and the curtailment of so-called sweating could be made to hit their poorer and less effectively equipped competitors more than themselves. Hence the Liberal Party eventually took a special interest in pushing through the type of measures which they had previously opposed, and a considerable section of the workers came to regard the Liberals as their friends. In proportion, however, as modern industry develops, the value of such measures to the workers declines. The less efficient workers are precipitated into the ranks of the unemployed through legislation fixing legal minimum wages, and thus their last state is worse than their first.

This brings to the fore another type of reform which arises from the growing mass of destitution at the bottom of the social scale. This destitution constitutes a standing incentive to crime and is, therefore, a constant source of expense to the public authorities and, through them, to the propertied class in whose interests they function. Following the break-up of Feudalism in this country, in the reigns of the Tudors, the ruling class cowed the destitute into submission by savage repression, but as the peasants, by various means, were driven off the land in increasing numbers, the Poor Law had to be instituted. During the eighteenth century the farmers relied on this to supplement the wages of their labourers, and again in recent years miners and others have found it necessary to appeal to the Poor Law even when in work. Coupled with the fact that the present-day volume of Poor Law relief had reduced many local authorities to bankruptcy, this led to the demand by various sections of the property-owning class that the state should assume part of the burden of destitution nationally. Hence we have Unemployment and Health Insurance, Old Age Pensions, etc., designed to relieve the pressure on the local authorities and, incidentally, pacify the workers by removing the pauper stigma. Such measures, being organised on a national scale, spread the burden over the entire capitalist class. They are thought to be more economical and to simplify the work of administration.
Nothing is easier than for astute politicians, whatever their label, to put these measures forward as being specially intended to benefit the workers. Yet the number of persons compelled to seek assistance is vastly greater than it was thirty years ago. It is thus evident that as a preventive of poverty, these measures are considerably less helpful than was Mrs. Partington's mop in dealing with the Atlantic.

Education, sanitation, and the supply of houses by public bodies are other reforms for which Liberal, Tory and Labour politicians claim credit; yet it is clear that the education received by the worker's child merely fits him to be a wage-earner, sanitation removes the threat of epidemic disease which does not spare the wealthy, while cheaper housing enables the workers to accept lower wages. Taken all round, these measures are intended to raise the standard of efficiency on the part of the workers, and thus make them more productive of profit for their masters.

In order to finance these measures the State is obliged to levy increased taxation upon those who alone can bear it, the property owners; and again nothing is easier than for so-called Labour leaders and others to represent this taxation as "socialistic"—an attempt to equalise incomes. The fact that the wealth of the large capitalists increases out of all proportion to the increased taxation, and that it is only the small fry that get squeezed out, is ignored.

Many self-styled leaders of the workers belonging to the Labour and Communist Parties will readily admit that reforms on similar lines to those outlined above will not solve the problem facing the workers, and that Socialism is the only solution. Yet they claim it is necessary for their parties to have such reforms upon their programme in order to gain working-class support and thus obtain political power. "The workers want something now!" we are told, the implication being that the workers' party should imitate the capitalist parties and make promises in order to catch votes. Such reasoning ignores the fact that a party which rises to power in such a manner cannot establish Socialism.

Socialism cannot be imposed upon the workers from above. It is a system which implies their conscious recognition of its necessity. The workers cannot make the means of life common property without being aware of what they
are doing. A programme of reform is, therefore, useless to a Socialist Party, even as a strategic move. The failures of "Labour" Governments, the world over, to make any appreciable difference to the workers' conditions bear eloquent testimony to the soundness of our claim that, so long as Capitalism exists because it is accepted by the workers as a necessity, it will be run in the interests of the capitalist class, and not of their slaves.

Wherever we turn, the plausible tales of the "reformers" concerning the need of "something now" merely serve to hide from the workers the fact that, in spite of Trade Union and State action, their exploitation and degradation grow greater rather than less, and must continue to do so with every improvement in machinery, technique, and industrial organisation.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain will not barter its independence for promises of reform. For, no matter whether these promises are made sincerely or not, we know that the immediate need of our class is emancipation, which can only be achieved through the establishment of Socialism. The workers' interests are opposed to the interests of all sections of the master-class; whether bankers or industrialists, landlords or commercial magnates, all participate in the fruits of exploitation. All capitalists will unite, in the last resort, in defence of the system by which they live. The progress of socialist knowledge among the workers, producing uneasiness in the minds of the masters, will itself do more to induce the granting of reforms than any alliances would do.

For the party of the working class, one course alone is open, and that involves unceasing hostility to all parties, no matter what their plea, that lend their aid to the administration of the existing social order and thus contribute, consciously or otherwise, to its maintenance. Our object is its overthrow.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TRADE UNIONS.

The Socialist Party and the Trade Unions have a common origin in the class struggle. The former is the organised expression on the political field of the conscious
recognition of that struggle by the workers. Its growth is
the measure of their determination to end the struggle by
converting the means of living into common property, thus
establishing a harmony of interests within society.

The class struggle, however, does not commence with
the conscious recognition of it as a fact, "in the beginning
is the thing"; the idea follows in its wake, and is its
reflection in the human mind.

Long before the origin of the Socialist Party the class
struggle was in progress. Strikes and lock-outs, machine-
breaking and penal legislation, have testified to the antagon-
ism of interests in modern society for over a century.

With the rise of the factory system, the workers found
themselves involved in the struggle in grim earnest. It was
not of their choosing, but thrust upon them with relent-
less and increasing force with every step forward in indus-
trial evolution. At first the workers acted instinctively
rather than rationally. The Luddite machine-smashing
riots in the early 19th Century were a type of this phase
of the conflict, but with further experience and time for
reflection the need for some form of organisation im-
pressed itself upon the workers. The grouping together of
the workers in the factories provided a basis for this
organisation. They began to realise that the machines had
come to stay; that henceforward they were condemned to
lives of toil for the profit of the factory owners: and that
the former independence which they had enjoyed, while still
often working in their own homes under the old system,
had gone for ever. Hence the Trade Unions arose, uniting
the workers in similar or allied occupations in order to get
from the masters the best terms obtainable.

From the first the strike was their most important
weapon. Under the handicraft system, in its closing
stages, workers sold the articles they produced to mer-
chants and had to bargain with them about the price, but
later all this was changed. The price of the workers' own
labour-power became the subject of dispute. They sold
their energies piecemeal, by the hour, day or week, and the
system of piece-work, which was retained here and there,
disguised but did not alter that fact. The individual worker
had lost all substantial freedom, and his only alternative to
working on the terms of the master was starvation. Hence
the right to withhold his labour-power in conjunction with
his fellows became an essential means of resistance. With­
out it the workers would have been crushed beyond power
of recovery, and would have become, as Marx argued in
his pamphlet, "Value, Price and Profit," quite incapable
of "initiating any large movement."

From the outset, however, the Trade Unions found
arrayed against them, not only the individual masters or
groups with whom they were directly struggling, but the
forces of the entire master class, as represented by the
State. For long enough the Unions were subject to legal
persecution as unlawful conspiracies and monopolies, and
only by dint of considerable perseverance were those
obstacles overcome. The workers, indeed, had their backs
to the wall, and only the fact that the Unions were rooted
in the new conditions saved them from annihilation.

By degrees, however, the master class saw the un­
wisdom of trying to destroy the new organisations, and the
Unions were granted a legal status. In like manner the
teeth of the Chartist's movement were also drawn by the
partial granting of their demands.

In the course of time the masters discovered that
"respectable" labour leaders, whether upon the field of
industry or politics, were useful in helping to maintain
industrial peace, which was so much needed by the
employers.

Judicious flattery, not to speak of more tangible induce­
ments to make terms favourable to the employers, have
stimulated the ambitions of numerous leaders whom the
workers have all too readily trusted. Underlying this pro­
cess, however, has been the steady progress of capitalist
industry. The constant improvement of machinery, methods
of working, and financial organisation on the part of the
masters, have placed for generations past very strict limits
upon the demands of the workers, because the latters' power
to exact these demands has grown steadily less. Trade
Union organisation has failed to keep pace with its capi­
talist counterpart, mainly for the reason that competition
between the workers grows keener as the army of the
unemployed increases and the number of competing capi­
talist concerns grow less numerous. In these circumstances,
the efficiency of the Unions as fighting forces has been
steadily undermined, until it has become recognised as a matter of course among the observant, that even on the occasions when market conditions are relatively favourable to the workers, the employers are able to fob them off with a meagre concession.

More ominous than any of the factors mentioned above is the part played by the armed forces of the State. As the magnitude of the forces engaged in the struggle on either side increases, so the intervention of the State in industrial disputes is rendered more certain. The necessity for maintaining order on behalf of Capitalism leaves the Government no alternative, and as the technical efficiency of the forces at its disposal (as exemplified in bombing planes and poison gas) has now reached a terrifying pitch, the weakness of the strike as an offensive weapon against the State authorities should be obvious to every thinking person.

Also, in recent years, the Trade Unions and the Trades Union Congress have been to an increasing extent drawn into the administration of capitalism. The Unions help to administer the Health Insurance and Unemployment Insurance Acts, and the Trades Union Congress General Council is constantly being consulted by the Government on industrial, social and defence questions and legislation concerned therewith. As Mr. G. D. H. Cole says in his "British Trade Unionism To-day" (Victor Gollanz, Ltd., London, 1939, p. 183): "Nowadays there is hardly a Committee of importance set up by the Government upon which Labour has not its representatives, and increasingly the General Council of Congress is the body to nominate such representatives."

It may be argued that some of these activities are a logical development of the functions of organisations formed to protect the workers within the capitalist social system, but it is obvious that they are likely to distract attention from the principal purpose of Trade Unions, which is to resist the pressure of the capitalist class on the workers. Mr. Cole, after the reference to the General Council quoted above, says: "This development has its dangers as well as its possibilities."

What, then, is to be the future of the Trade Unions? At present they appear to have become to a large extent
mere jumping-off grounds for so-called Labour politicians, and to that extent less useful to the workers; but there is no obvious reason why, with the spread of understanding among their members, they should not be valuable centres of resistance to capitalist attack.

As we have seen, the Trade Unions arose from the pressure upon the workers of their immediate needs in the early days of Capitalism. They necessarily took the form most convenient at the moment, and have adapted themselves to changing circumstances more or less blindly. They have, therefore, invariably over-emphasised the occupational and other distinctions between the workers. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, organised as it is for the emancipation of the workers as a class, insists upon the necessity for subordinating all such distinctions to class solidarity. On the political field the workers have but one interest, and that involves winning political power, and dispossessing the master class. The supreme conflict with that class leaves no room for sectional antagonisms between the workers.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, while recommending Trade Unionists to offer their utmost resistance to the worsening of their conditions, never fails to point out that under Capitalism the pressure upon the workers is inevitable. It is insufficient, therefore, merely to apply the brake to these worsening conditions. The system that gives rise to them must be abolished.

Chapter V.

The Conservative Party.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, in England, Commerce fought to remove the shackles of feudal law and privilege that were hindering its development. During the struggle all those taking part against feudal privilege, including the lowest section of the population, gave voice to complaints about the evils from which they suffered. At the beginning the revolution assumed a thoroughgoing appearance and threatened to sweep away entirely all the props of Feudalism. The drastic nature of the early proposals frightened sections of the rebellious, and led to
splits in their ranks and, ultimately, to a compromise with certain elements in the old ruling class.

The progress of the revolution through the Commonwealth and Restoration periods was a reflection of the struggle within these groups which ended up in the settlement of 1688. Places were found in the new constitution for the old Royalist elements and the Church. The monied group had come to power, but the political settlement left the landowning section of it in control, and they kept that position as long as they met the needs of commerce.

The new ruling class was therefore composed of revolutionary and reactionary elements. On one side were the large landowners, the nobles (inheritors mainly of the plunder of Monastic lands) and the rich merchant princes (who had bought land to obtain a share in political power). On the other side was the growing group which obtained its wealth from trade and manufacture.

The revolution was originally fought around the ideas of "The Divine Right of Kings" and "Liberty of Conscience," but those taking part had a tendency to change sides as they found their economic interests threatened by new legal and administrative proposals. The first compromise of 1688 was a limited monarchy blessed by the Church.

These were the conditions that gave birth to the parties that to-day take the names of "Conservative" and "Liberal." It is significant that their birth pangs were coincident with the appearance of the unemployed problem and the Poor Law.

The early division was into Tory and Whig, and represented the separate interests of Land and Trade. The Tories represented land and identified themselves with Royalty, while the Whigs represented trade and formed the opposition to the royalists.

The two parties, however, were united in resisting any serious claim to betterment on the part of the lowest social group, the land and industrial workers. As K. Feiling puts it in "The History of the Tory Party":—

"... no economic cleavage was strong enough to divide a powerful and coherent ruling class." (p. 24.)

It was then, just as now, a striving of sections within the
ruling class for the largest share of the wealth wrung from the workers.

As economic development gradually fused the landowners and the industrialists into one group, the larger differences in sectional interest disappeared in fact, but were retained as a tradition that helped to blind the workers to the real source of their oppression.

Changing conditions demanded new programmes to meet changing needs, and the successors of the old landed aristocracy were compelled to whittle away and remould the original programme, until it lost almost all semblance of its early form.

The Tories represented the old order that was passing away. The conversion of land in modern times into a source from which to draw dividends has converted these landowners into owners of capital and drawers of dividends indistinguishable from other capitalists.

The changes in the basis of the Tory Party led in time to the adoption of a new name, that of "Conservative." One has only to look at the people who, to-day, take the name of Conservative to appreciate the change. Shipowners, bankers, newspaper proprietors, and financiers join with people who have turned their lands into a source of dividends, in demanding minor legislative and administrative changes in the name of Conservatism.

In the course of history the Tories fought to safeguard their privileges against the more revolutionary industrialists, and in these struggles they sought to enlist the aid of the workers. This was the reason for Tory interest during the last century in factory legislation, which touched the pockets of the industrialists more than their own. To-day, when this division of interest has vanished, the Tory feeling for the conditions of factory workers has also departed. While Tory landlords, infuriated by the attack upon their rents implied by the Corn Law agitation, were twitting the factory lords for their interest in negro slavery, they themselves were guilty of similar hypocrisy.

The altered character of farming during the 19th Century made superfluous a large part of the agricultural workers. Labourers were evicted from their homes, their cottages were destroyed, and finally their pauperisation was
accomplished. The workers, driven off the land, were huddled into hovels in small scattered villages, where overcrowding and insanitary conditions prevailed. The labourer was reduced to living on the minimum of subsistence, and became a mere slave to the landed proprietors and farmers, and the worst evils of the factory system of child labour were transferred to the fields. Agricultural gangs came into existence for the purpose of doing certain field labour such as weeding, hoeing, manuring, removing stones, and so forth, thus reducing the number of permanent workers required on farms.

These gangs were composed of women, boys and girls (from six years of age) working under an overseer, who took them about the country for several months, lodging them in barns without regard for decency or comfort, and often subjected them to coarse brutalities. Their pay was miserable, although all the time landlords and farmers were making huge profits. The system was defended on the ground that it was necessary to profitable agriculture—a similar excuse to that put forward by the factory owners in defence of child labour.

On pages 770 and 771 of "Capital" (Allen & Unwin edition) Marx mentions some of the evils of the system, quoting authorities in footnotes:

"As a rule the gang-master settles his accounts with the members of the gang in a public house. Then he returns home at the head of the procession, reeling drunk, propped up right and left by a stalwart virago, the children and young persons bringing up the rear, in boisterous spirits and shouting bawdy songs at the tops of their voices. Sexual incontinence is the order of the day. It is common for girls of thirteen or fourteen to be put in the family way by lads of the same age. The open villages from which the members of the gang are drawn become Sodoms and Gomorrah, the illegitimate birthrate of these places being twice as high as elsewhere in the kingdom. A while back I showed what sort of wives women bred up in this school are likely to become. Their children are born recruits for the gang—unless got out of the way by means of opium before they become old enough."

In a footnote, Marx says that the Liberal Press "enquired how it was that the fine gentlemen and
ladies and the beneficed clergy with whom Lincolnshire abounds could possibly have allowed such a system to grow up on their estates or under their eyes, and commented on the inconsistency of persons who send missions to the antipodes 'for the improvement of the morals of South Sea islanders.'"

These were facts that did not interest a Conservative Government or a Conservative Opposition.

In like manner, later on, the fate of merchant seamen left them cold. At the time when Samuel Plimsoll was elected to Parliament as member for Derby, in 1868, rotten hulks were sent to sea, overloaded and overinsured, to founder in the first rough water they met. After agitation by Plimsoll a Royal Commission was appointed, and in 1875 a Government Bill was introduced which Plimsoll accepted, though he regarded it as inadequate. On the 22nd July the Conservative Premier, Disraeli, announced that the Bill would be dropped—he had bowed to the wishes of the shipowners. Plimsoll lost his temper, and, rushing up to the Speaker's table, denounced the Government. "Were the sailors to go down in coffin ships during another winter's storms when the Bill could be passed this session? By God it must be passed, though all the murdering insurers of rotten ships were there to stop it."

But the Bill was not passed, and Plimsoll was forced to apologise. The conditions of the seamen were so bad, however, that agitation compelled the Government to pass a Bill eventually which was amended into the Merchant Shipping Act and further amended in 1890, giving power of inspection to the Board of Trade and limiting the load a ship could carry by a mark which became known as the "Plimsoll line." There is something further on this, under the heading of "The Liberal Party."

The Conservatives, as Government or Opposition, during the past thirty years have been no improvement on their predecessors. They have acted fundamentally on behalf of the class they represented, the capitalist class, with just a special eye to sections of it. The interests they specially favour are high finance and land, hence their various tariff policies.

They have shown themselves to be every bit as ready as the Liberals to use the weight of Government to force
workers to accept lower wages and to drive them back to work when they have the temerity to strike against intolerable conditions. During the so-called "General Strike" of 1926, no one was more bitter in denunciation or stronger for repression than the official Conservatives.

Finally, the Conservative Party has always thrown its weight on the side of the exploiter against the exploited, because it represents the interest of the exploiting class. From them the workers can only expect the forging of stronger links in their chains.

**CHAPTER VI.**

**THE LIBERAL PARTY.**

As already noticed, the Whigs originated as the representatives of the interests of the Industrialists. In power and out of power they supported the abuses that caused so much turmoil during the years from the 1688 settlement onwards. At the beginning of last century changes in production, caused by the use of steam and machinery, brought wealth and influence to the manufacturing section of the ruling class. They wanted a share in control of political affairs, and were dissatisfied with the slothful and largely antiquated Whig Party. The active members of the party adopted the name of "Liberal," and pressed forward their claim for better political representation, which they obtained under the Reform Act of 1832. Like the Tories, they enlisted the aid of the workers to help them carry the measure, on the plea that they were able and willing to ameliorate the workers' conditions. Once they had obtained their object, they conveniently forgot their promises and their dupes.

After the passing of the Reform Bill the Liberals commenced a crusade for the repeal of the Corn Laws, urging that the abolition of these laws would give to the workers cheap bread. After the repeal, however, it was found that the manufacturers obtained cheap labour and the workers more oppressive conditions. The Liberal Party urged the principle of *laissez-faire*—let things be. In other words, it wanted no interference with the conditions under which
men, women and children were worked to the utmost limit in unhealthy surroundings, and for a wage that barely kept life in the body.

The history of the workers during the last century is a terrible one. The labourer had been driven from the land by the long series of laws known as the Enclosure Acts. The hand worker had been superseded by the giant machinery that had lately come into existence. The workers, thus impoverished, were forced to look for work in the factories. There they were at the mercy of the Liberal manufacturers, who took ruthless advantage of their defenceless condition. Out of the excessive toil of men, women and little children, these factory lords piled up the wealth that laid the foundations of "England’s Greatness"; and among those factory lords were Cobden and Bright, the early stars of the modern Liberal Party.

At a time when Liberal manufacturers were fiercely resisting all attempts to improve the condition of factory workers, the condition of the latter had reached an appalling state, and the children were subjected to an oppression unparalleled in history.

Those who have any doubt about the vileness produced by the insatiable greed for profit should read the description, by H. de B. Gibbins, of child slavery in England under the factory system of the middle of the 19th century. It commences on page 179 of his book, "The Industrial History of England." It is, unfortunately, too long to include here. Children were worked sixteen hours a day for seven days a week, and slept by relays in beds that "were never cool." They were fed on the food served out for their masters’ pigs, and were goaded to work when exhausted by blows, kicks and the pricking of sharp instruments. Those who tried to run away were manacled by irons riveted about ankles and hips. Many died and were buried secretly at night. The children were taken from the poor-houses, and one idiot had to be taken away with each batch of children.

The account is one of almost unbelievable savagery, and Gibbins makes the following comment.—

"...I need only remark that during this period of unheeded and ghastly suffering in the mills of our native land, the British philanthropist was
occupying himself with agitating for the relief of the largely imaginary woes of negro slaves in other countries. . . . The spectacle of England buying the freedom of black slaves by riches drawn from the labour of her white ones affords an interesting study for the cynical philosopher."

When stating the foundations of Liberalism one must certainly include hypocrisy as one of the foundation stones. In further illustration of this, Cobden is a case in point. He opposed the legal limitation of the working-day, and Morley, in his "Life of Cobden," referring to this, writes:—

"What he maintained was that all restriction, however desirable, ought to be secured by the resolute demands of the workmen themselves, and not by the intervention of law." (p. 68.)

Yet when the workmen did combine to try and improve their conditions, the Liberal manufacturer was furious:

"Singularly enough, while he thus trusted to the independence of the workmen, he objected to workmen's combinations. 'Depend upon it,' he wrote to his brother, F. W. Cobden (Aug. 16th, 1842), 'nothing can be got from fraternising with trade unions. They are founded upon principles of brutal tyranny and monopoly. I would rather live under a Dey of Algiers than a Trades Committee' " (p. 68).

Peel, Cobden, Bright and Villiers opposed Fielden's Bill to limit the labour of women and young persons to 60 hours a week. Bright also vigorously opposed the 1844 Bill for limiting the labour of children under 13.

When a Tory Landowner—Lord Shaftesbury—succeeded in getting Factory Acts passed they were practically dead for years as the Liberal administration would not provide inspectors to see that the Acts were carried out. The reports of Leonard Horner and Alexander Redgrave (Factory Inspectors) are full of bitter complaint about the lack of assistance and actual hindrance from the administration when they tried to bring manufacturers to book for evading the Acts.

The Melbourne Ministry (Liberal) passed the Emancipation Act, limiting the hours that an adult Negro slave could be worked by the planters to 45 per week, while
the same Ministry allowed children in this country under 13 years of age to be employed for 72 hours per week! It was only through the connivance of the Tories (who wanted to hit back at the Liberals on account of the abolition of the Corn Laws), and after long and bitter struggle, that a number of Acts were eventually passed limiting, to some extent, the Liberal manufacturers' unbridled lust for profit.

In other directions a similar thing happened. The efforts of the workers to obtain Education and the Suffrage met a bitter resistance from the Liberals. Those who tried to bring out cheap papers for the people were hunted and imprisoned, and the Chartist movement was smashed.

To-day Liberal manufacturers in the North are still carrying on the tradition of exacting from the workers as much as they can, and resisting outside interference as much as possible. The insistence on more looms per worker is a recent example.

The 19th Century was essentially the Liberal century as, during the greater part of it, the Liberals had practically unfettered control of legislation, and it is probably the blackest period in the history of the working class of Great Britain.

They prosecuted, in 1832, the Lancashire miners for threatening to strike, the Southwark shoemakers for picketing, and the Bermondsey tanners (in 1834) for leaving their work unfinished; and in 1835 sentenced to seven years transportation six Dorchester labourers (some of whom were subsequently sold into slavery) for attempting to form a trade union. When Frederick Harrison presented a Bill in 1869 to legalise trade unions the Liberal Government opposed it. Time after time, at the behest of the employers, Liberal Governments have despatched troops to act against striking workers, as for example at Belfast and Tonypandy.

The Liberals had a majority in most of the nine Parliaments from 1832 to 1867, and although repeatedly pledged to give the workers a share in the franchise, they broke their promises, and it was left for the Conservatives to do so in 1867 against Liberal opposition.

We have already referred to the Plimsoll line. It remains to add that in 1906, when Lloyd George was Liberal President of the Board of Trade, the life work of Samuel
Plimsoll was undone by a stroke of the pen. The load line was raised by an Order in Council and "coffin ships" again put to sea.

The record of the Liberal Party during the present century has been in harmony with its traditions—the bludgeoning of striking workers and the bringing of native races under the plundering régime. They were in power at the outbreak of war in 1914, and shared responsibility for it.

Of late years they have been superseded by the Labour Party, who have done their work for them. At the end of 1931 the main body of Liberals participated in the National Government that made such a fierce attack upon workers' wages and conditions.

There has only been space to refer to some of the more glaring instances of Liberal history, but they are sufficient to show what the workers must always expect to get from the Liberal Party, which, like the Conservative Party, stands for the present system of exploitation.

Chapter VII.

The Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party

The Labour Party and the Independent Labour Party were formed with the idea of improving the worker's lot by means of social reforms, and it is appropriate to consider them together in spite of the friction that from time to time arises in their mutual relationships.

The Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.) was formed in 1893 with the professed intention of winning the Trade Unions away from Liberalism, and of gaining them for the idea of independent working-class political action. But right from the start the I.L.P. gave prominence in its programme to reforms of the capitalist system. As it preached reform it naturally attracted reformers of various kinds into its ranks, with little or no understanding of Socialism, or interest in it.

On February 27th and 28th, 1900, on the initiative of the Trades Union Congress, and with the support of the I.L.P., an organisation was formed called the Labour Representation Committee. Its object was to promote the
Parliamentary candidature of men representing Trade Unions and other working-class bodies. In 1906 the L.R.C. became the Labour Party.

The outlook of the I.L.P. and the Labour Party in later years has been much the same as that of the I.L.P. delegates at the inaugural meeting of the Labour Representation Committee. After the meeting had passed a resolution ("Resolution I") in favour of working-class opinion being represented in the House of Commons by candidates of the organisations that had delegates at the meeting, Mr. Keir Hardie and the other I.L.P. delegates moved the following:

"That this Conference is in favour of establishing a distinct Labour Group in Parliament, who shall have their own whips and agree upon their policy, which must embrace a readiness to co-operate with any party which, for the time being, may be engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interest of labour, and be equally ready to associate themselves with any party in opposing measures having an opposite tendency, and further, members of the Labour Group shall not oppose any candidate whose candidature is being promoted in terms of Resolution I."

(Report of Conference on Labour Representation, February 27th, 1900.)

The motion was carried.

This policy of co-operating with other parties later on led to the Labour Group giving steady support to the Liberal Government, and was the natural outcome of the I.L.P.'s practice of running candidates on a non-socialist programme, for which Liberal electors could give their votes.

If the I.L.P. delegates who moved that resolution had appreciated the real position of the working class in capitalist society—wage-slaves producing wealth for the owning class—they would have seen the absurdity of supposing that a working class organisation could usefully co-operate with capitalist parties in the manner suggested. They would have seen that the capitalist parties would never be "engaged in promoting legislation in the direct interest of labour" at the expense of their own interests.

It was on such misconceptions that the members of the
I.L.P. and Labour Party excused the electoral bargains they made with the Liberals before 1914, Labour votes in the House being exchanged for Liberal support in the constituencies. The late Mr. Philip Snowden (Lord Snowden), writing in the "Labour Leader" (June 26th, 1913), said:

"The present Labour representation in Parliament is there mainly by the goodwill of the Liberals, and it will disappear when that goodwill is turned into active resentment."

Subsequently, with the decline of the Liberal Party after the war 1914-1918, many of the Liberal voters flocked into the Labour Party, but the policy of bargaining still continued, and the Labour candidates were still dependent for election on the votes of non-socialists.

To socialists it was clear that this policy would bring disillusionment and apathy to the working-class movement, but criticism was met with the answer that the practical work of solving "bread and butter" questions could only be done in this way. The events of the intervening years have shown that our criticism was justified. It is true that Liberal and Tory Governments have introduced a number of reforms, but of what value are they? They may have served in a niggardly way to take the edge off some of the worst evils of working-class life, but the constant growth of new evils has left the workers no better off than before. This so-called practical work has been wasted effort. The workers have been disheartened on seeing their programmes whittled away in order to bargain for support from other parties.

In the eyes of the socialist there is one objection to such conduct which overshadows all others. The cause of the poverty of the working class is the private ownership of the means of production and distribution, and it is through political control alone that the capitalists can maintain their private ownership. All persons and parties lending themselves to bargains with capitalist candidates are helping to maintain Capitalism. From that conclusion there is no escape. Members of Parliament who are not returned with socialist votes behind them, to replace Capitalism with Socialism, must be helping to maintain Capitalism. All of the Liberal M.P.s, for whom the Labour Party and the I.L.P. told the workers to vote in pre-war years, were
working to maintain Capitalism. The Labour M.P.s who later solicited Liberal support for their own candidatures were not in a position to use their Parliamentary victories for purposes other than the reformist programmes on which they had been elected.

The following are typical instances of the arrangements made by the Liberal and Labour Parties.

Speaking as a Labour Demonstration in the Manchester Free Trade Hall on December 17th, 1909, Mr. Arthur Henderson urged members of the party in every constituency where no Labour candidate had been put forward, to give their support to the Liberals."—("Daily News," December 18th, 1909.)

At the same general election the North St. Pancras I.L.P., by resolution, recommended its members to vote for the Liberal candidate in the absence of a Labour candidate ("Daily News," January 8th, 1910). Mr. J. Pointer, elected as Labour M.P. for Attercliffe, wrote to the "Labour Leader" (January 21st, 1910) as follows:—

"... the Liberal Party, after deciding not to nominate a candidate against me, followed up with a manifesto and declaration that since, on three very important points, viz., the Budget, the Lords and Tariff Reform, they and we were in agreement, it would serve the general interest best if they supported me by work and vote. This they did loyally."

The "Labour Leader" (January 28th, 1910) commented after the election on "the superb success of most of the old leaders of the Party, whether in straight fights or running practically alongside the Liberals in two-member constituencies." (italics ours). At this election the late Mr. Philip Snowden, writing in the "Labour Leader" (December 17th, 1909), defended the practice of "making even an alliance with another political part for some temporary purpose," and urged the Labour Party to support the Liberals because of the House of Lords issue. "The support of the Labour Party," he said, "can make it a genuine agitation, and our support can compel the Government to deal with the matter."

The failure not only of that Liberal Government, but also the two Labour Governments in 1924 and 1929, to abolish the House of Lords, shows how little justification there was for Mr. Snowden's defence of pacts. Later on,
the "Labour Leader," official organ of the I.L.P., had changed its ground somewhat, and was demanding the cessation of the "open alliance with Liberalism of certain Labour Members" (January 23rd, 1913). In this issue of the "Labour Leader" the names of six constituencies were given in which there was an open arrangement with the Liberals.

On January 21st, 1909, the "Daily Chronicle" gave nine double-member constituencies in which Labour Members were returned with Liberal support, the Liberals and the Labour Party each running one candidate only. Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Snowden were two of the nine Labour M.P.s referred to.

This was the way in which the Labour Party and the I.L.P. built up their so-called independent party in the House of Commons. It is a structure that has always borne the marks of its unsound foundation.

When war broke out in 1914 the knowledge that they held their seats with the help of Liberal votes was one of the factors which forced the Labour M.P.s to support the war even in the case of those who were hesitant about doing so.

The political events of the war and after-war years, and the great working-class dissatisfaction with the Liberal Party, gave rise to a vastly stronger Labour Party.

In 1921 the Labour Party was voted into office on Liberal votes. The great majority of Labour M.P.s then, as in succeeding Parliaments up to October, 1931, were members of the I.L.P., although elected as Labour, and not as I.L.P. candidates. Indeed, the "New Leader" (February 8th, 1924) claimed that the Labour Government "is to an overwhelming extent an I.L.P. Government." That "I.L.P. Government" distinguished itself by laying down five new cruisers against the protests of the Liberals, and by being prepared to use the Emergency Powers Act to deal with striking tramwaymen and underground railwaymen. The "Daily Herald" reported:—

"Had the underground railways been stopped, a Royal Proclamation was ready to have been issued on Saturday last, declaring a 'state of emergency.'" (April 1st, 1924.)

Mr. J. R. Clynes, deputy leader of the Labour Party
in the House of Commons, said all that needs to be said in condemnation of the first Labour Government. Addressing a meeting at the Public Hall, Croydon, in January, 1926, he said.—

"There was nothing in the Labour Government's record of 1924 to which any Liberal could turn with real disfavour." ("Daily Herald," January 25th, 1926.)

The record of the second Labour Government is dealt with separately in further detail. It was another example of the basic unsoundness of the doctrine upon which the Labour Party and the I.L.P. have been built up. They were not and are not socialist parties, but only reform parties. As the late Mr. Philip Snowden wrote in the "Manchester Guardian Commercial Reconstruction Supplement" (October 26th, 1922):—

"The British Labour Party is certainly not Socialist in the sense in which Socialism is understood upon the Continent. It is not based upon the recognition of the class struggle; it does not accept the teachings of Marx . . . . The Socialism of the Labour Party is just a matter-of-fact, practical aim for the extension of the already widely accepted principle of the democratic ownership and control of the essential public services. . . .

"The nationalisation of . . . public services does not carry the Labour Party further than many Radicals, who would vigorously disclaim being socialistic, are prepared to go. The nationalisation of mines has been recommended by a Royal Commission, not preponderately Labour or Socialist. The Land Nationalisation Society has among its vice-presidents a large number of M.P.s who do not belong to the Labour Party."

A few years later Mr. James Maxton, Chairman of the I.L.P., and the late A. J. Cook, writing on the Labour Party programme in "Our Case for a Socialist Revival" (Workers Publication, Ltd.), said:—

"The new Labour Party programme . . . must be regarded not as a Socialist programme, but an enlightened Liberal programme." (p. 11.)

In the same pamphlet the joint authors declared:—

"If every measure in the Labour Party programme
was carried, then we would not have Socialism, but rationalised Capitalism.” (p. 17.)

It is important to note that, in spite of his denunciation of the Labour Party, Mr. Maxton and his fellow I.L.P. nominees continued to run as Labour Party candidates, asking for votes on this capitalist programme.

The I.L.P. has, at times, found its association with the Labour Party an embarrassment, particularly when attempts to administer Capitalism have made the Labour Party unpopular with the electors, and in August, 1932, the I.L.P. decided to break away. The issue, however, was not the fundamental one of the Labour Party’s non-socialist programme, but the irksomeness of the standing orders.

Then, after being “in the political wilderness” for nearly seven years, during which period the I.L.P. tried unsuccessfully to enter into closer relationship with the Communist Party, the I.L.P. Annual Conference, held in April, 1939, decided by 69 votes to 40 again to seek “conditional affiliation” with the Labour Party, but nothing came of this.

The I.L.P. has been largely instrumental in making the Labour Party what it is, and cannot escape responsibility. Mr. John Beckett, an active member of the I.L.P., who was a Labour M.P. in the 1929-1931 Parliament, and later became a Fascist, described the Parliamentary activities of the I.L.P. as follows:—

“Every fight put up has been for purely moderate and reformist measures, strictly in line with election promises and Party policy.” (“New Leader,” June 6th, 1930.)

How useless that kind of activity is can be seen from a declaration of the National Administrative Council of the I.L.P., issued in June, 1931:—

“It must be noted as a remarkable fact that to wage a Socialist fight against the poverty of the working class is made more difficult when a Labour Government is in power than at other times, and that obstacles are put in the way of, and threats are directed against, working-class organisations maintaining that fight.”

Nevertheless, the 1931 General Election found most I.L.P. members (including members of the National Administrative Council) standing as official Labour Party can-
candidates, again telling the workers to put their trust in Labour Government. Other I.L.P. members stood without the official endorsement of the Labour Party, but in every instance they solicited votes as usual on a programme of reforms. Whether inside or outside the Labour Party, the I.L.P. retained its belief in reformism as the road to emancipation.

The Labour Party, too, has not been changed by its growth and success. It is still essentially what it was at its formation.

**Chapter VIII.**

**THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT, 1929-1931.**

When the Labour Government entered office in 1929, Mr. J. H. Thomas declared on their behalf that they "were going to do what they could to reduce unemployment while accepting the present order of society" (see "Daily Herald," July 6th, 1929).

Such an attempt was bound to fail, and what is true of unemployment is equally true of the poverty problem in general.

Immediately the Labour Government took office we dealt with its certain failure in our official organ, *The Socialist Standard* (June, 1929), in the following words:

"We deal elsewhere in this issue with the failure of Labour Government in Queensland. We prophesied that failure, and with absolute confidence we prophecy the similar failure of Labour Government here. No matter how able, how sincere, and how sympathetic the Labour men and women may be who undertake to administer Capitalism, Capitalism will bring their undertaking to disaster. As in Queensland, those who administer Capitalism will find themselves, sooner or later, brought into conflict with the working class. Like their Australian colleagues, the Labour Party here will find themselves in a cleft stick. Having no mandate to replace Capitalism by Socialism, they have pledged themselves to solve problems which cannot be solved except by doing the one thing for which they have no mandate."
When, in August, 1931, we witnessed the inglorious exit of the second "Labour" Government after more than two uneasy years of office—two years of broken promises, political bargaining, and cowardice—all that we foretold had come to pass. During that time the cherished theories of the Labour Party were tried, found wanting, and abandoned.

The Labour Party was to be a "high-wage" party. More than four million workers had their wages reduced while Mr. MacDonald was Prime Minister in the Labour Government. The Government confessed its inability to prevent the reductions, and indeed played an active part in some of them—notably those affecting its own employees.

It was confident that unemployment could be reduced by means of its schemes of development. Yet we saw unemployment mount to what was then a record figure, 2,700,000; the percentage of insured workers on the unemployed register equalling the highest previous figure (23 per cent.), reached under Mr. Lloyd George's Government in 1921.

Foremost in the Labour Party's programme was the belief that the workers could be protected against the worst evils of the capitalist system by means of social reforms, and further, that their standard of living could be permanently raised by these additions to wages. In practice, social reforms, which reduce the necessary expenditure requiring to be met out of wages, have the effect of permitting corresponding reductions in the workers' wages without detracting from their efficiency as profit producers for their employers. The report of Lord MacMillan, who was appointed by the Labour Government to inquire into the wages of wool textile workers, accepted this as a matter of course, and recommended lower wages on the ground that the social services had relieved the workers of expenditure on unemployment, on medical attention, and on maintenance during old age.

The Labour Party for the whole of its existence had preached Nationalisation. Then, when they came into office on this occasion, their spokesman calmly dropped that doctrine and put in its place the advocacy of Public Utility Corporations of the kind introduced by Liberals and Conservatives in the Port of London Authority and the Central Electricity Board. Mr. Herbert Morrison frankly accepted
these as the model for his proposed London Passenger Transport Board, although in a letter to the "Daily Herald" on July 30th, 1923, he had denounced the Port of London Authority as a sort of "capitalistic soviet" and as thoroughly objectionable from a working class and socialist point of view. Nationalisation and Public Utility Corporations would leave ownership in the hands of the capitalist investors, who hold Government or Corporation stocks. Neither of them would solve any working-class problem; but the Labour Party, until it took office, professed to believe in the former as a panacea, and rejected the latter.

One of the principal arguments put forward for Nationalisation was that State employees would be better paid than the workers in private industry, and thus the standard of living as a whole would be lifted by the Nationalisation of one industry after another. Yet the seven Labour Party supporters on the Civil Service Commission (1929-31), three of them Labour M.P.s, signed the report rejecting this doctrine in its entirety. They declared that Government employees must not be paid more than is being paid for comparable work by private employers. They recommended lower pay for certain Government clerks for no other reason than that private employers were getting similar types of workers for a lower wage.

The sum total of all the Labour Party schemes of reform was to be a process of converting the workers by the example of practical measures. The Labour Government promised to give the workers one after another of the beneficent reform in its programme, so rousing more and more of them to a state of enthusiasm, until a majority would be led to vote for Labour Government.

The events were far different.

The enthusiasm of even the staunchest Labour voters was undermined by instance after instance of successful attacks on their wages and working conditions, carried through by employers without a word of protest from the Labour Government. How, indeed, could they protest, while they were reducing the low pay of their own Post Office and other workers, and while the co-operative societies with representatives in the Government were doing the same?
The general defence of the Labour Cabinet was that they were the victims of an "economic blizzard." But it was precisely because they professed to be able to protect the workers against such blizzards that they went into office. "Economic blizzards" are a normal and recurrent feature of Capitalism. It is an illusion to suppose that Capitalism can exist without these crises of "overproduction."

Their promise to give the workers "something now" in the shape of reforms was not only unfulfilled, but they ended up by proposing to make a direct attack upon the existing social reforms.

The "Daily Herald," in its issue for Monday, August 24th, 1931, admitted that a majority of about 12 members of the Cabinet (out of a total of 21) were in favour of reducing unemployment pay in order to meet the wishes of the Conservatives and Liberals and of the banking interests. This was the cause of the final political crisis which ended the Labour Government.

Alongside its other principles the Labour Government also disregarded its supposed belief in independence. It took office on Liberal votes, just as it had done in 1924. It carried on constant discussions and negotiations with the Liberal leaders in order to keep their support. At the end the negotiations were extended to include the Conservatives also. That formal negotiations went on with the Liberals, while the Labour Government was in office, and long before the final crisis, was admitted by the "Daily Herald." In its issue of March 23rd, 1931, it reported as follows:

"Already there have been a number of meetings between Labour and Liberal spokesmen. . . .

"Among those who have taken part in these discussions are the Prime Minister, Mr. Arthur Henderson, Mr. Philip Snowden (before his illness), Lord Sankey, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Herbert Samuel, and Lord Lothian."

On May 29th, 1931, the "Daily Herald" reported that the Labour Government was "assured now of Liberal co-operation," and that in consequence "there is no reason why Mr. MacDonald should not hold office for a full and fruitful term."
The socialist criticism of the Labour Party's policy is unanswerable.

It is not possible for the Labour Party or any other party to administer Capitalism in such a way that the workers' problems can be solved within the framework of the existing system. The failure of the Labour Government was not an accident. It was not due to mistakes in tactics, or to the failure of the personal element.

Knowing that Socialism is the only solution, and that it can be brought about only when the electors become socialists, we have consistently opposed the Labour Party and the I.L.P., both of which seek election on a programme of reforms of capitalism though some, at least, of those who do it know that the reforms will not solve the problem. Their dishonesty was on this occasion soon exposed. They fought the 1929 election on the promise of an improved standard of life for the workers. The end of their inglorious tenure of office found them hand-in-hand with their erstwhile opponents, declaring the need of "sacrifices for all." The result was a crushing defeat at the election.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LABOUR PARTY DURING THE WAR, 1939.

A new stage in the development of Labour Party policy came in 1933 with the rise to power of the Nazi Party in Germany, marking the revival of German capitalism and the efforts of the German ruling class to use the Nazi movement as an instrument to recapture territories and markets lost through defeat in the war, 1914-1918.

Although the Labour Party had during that war been represented in the War Cabinet they did not endorse the action of Mr. G. N. Barnes in signing the Versailles Peace Treaty. Affirming that "‘The Treaty involves a violation of the principles embodied in Labour and Socialist Conference decisions," the National Executive of the Labour Party, in a manifesto issued on June 4th, 1919, declared that it contained the seeds of future wars. During the years which followed the war Labour Party conferences, along with support of the League of Nations and plans
for mutual disarmament, had urged the revision of the peace treaties and more generous treatment of the vanquished countries, but with the series of aggressive moves by Japan, Germany and Italy Labour Party policy took a new turn, which was to lead by a natural sequence to eventual inclusion in the Churchill Government on May 11th, 1940, for the purpose of the more effective waging of the war that had begun in September, 1939.

While, however, Labour Party opinion was strongly apprehensive of the growing power of Nazi Germany, with its threat to democratic institutions in neighbouring countries, different views were held as to the method of meeting the situation. One group, led by Sir Stafford Cripps, opened a campaign for a Popular Front Government. It was argued that the critical times demanded that all the "genuine friends of democracy"—Liberal, Labour, Conservative and Communist—should come together on a limited programme of reforms, and of the defence of democracy at home and abroad. Only in this way, it was said, could the Chamberlain Government be defeated at a General Election and democracy be made secure.

The Labour Party Executive, standing on the resolutions of Annual Conferences and backed by the executives of most of the big trade unions, opposed the "Popular Front," and answered it by launching early in 1939 a Labour Co-operative joint campaign to secure the election of a Labour Government. The programmes of the two sides did not differ materially, for both, of necessity, had to appeal to a largely non-Socialist electorate. Both stressed the need to link up with other "peaceful" and "democratic" countries (particularly Russia) to withstand the menace of revived German Capitalism. Only in the accompanying explanations did the phraseology differ. The Labour Party, through the Editor of its organ, the "Daily Herald," claimed that the Labour programme was a Socialist one, and that the "great Socialist crusade" needed in reply to Fascism could "only be harmed by alliance with those who do not share our Socialist beliefs." ("Daily Herald," December 2nd, 1938.)

Sir Stafford Cripps, for the Popular Front, frankly admitted that their policy involved putting Socialism into cold storage for the time being. It also involved, on the part of Sir Stafford Cripps, the repudiation of the view he
had previously held about party alliances. In a pamphlet, "The Choice for Britain" (quoted in the "Daily Herald," March 2nd, 1939) he had written:—

"It will be fatal if we do as the Social Democrats did in Germany; that is, combine with any anti-Fascist forces for the sake of saving democracy. That way lies disaster.

"The very compromise that is intended to bring together all the forces in favour of democracy, destroys democracy, because it renders it incapable of achieving the economic change which is essential to its survival.

"Nothing, in my view, is more dangerous than the idea that some temporary alliance of pro-democratic forces should be brought about not based on the achievement of Socialism.

"Such an alliance, like the Labour Government of 1929-31, would find itself incapable of doing anything except deepening the crisis of capitalism, with the inevitable consequences of the bankruptcy of democracy and its elimination in favour of some sort of dictatorship which would come from the right and not the left.

"We must, then, firmly and definitely abandon any idea of working in association with any other political group or party that denies the absolute necessity of Socialism."

Early in 1939 it was apparent that the Popular Front campaign had failed. Sir Stafford Cripps and others were expelled and remained for a time outside the Labour Party. Within a year, however, the outbreak of war had led to the formation of a Government containing Conservatives, Liberals, and Labour Party representatives, with Sir Stafford Cripps as an important member of the Cabinet.

The Labour Party entered the Churchill Government on May 11th, 1940, having gained their demand that Mr. Chamberlain should cease to be Prime Minister, though he continued to be a member of the Cabinet. The decision to enter the Government was approved by the Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth by 2,413,000 votes to 170,000 after Mr. Arthur Greenwood, in a speech, had pointed out that the Party had for years "built up a strong policy of
resistance to aggression, and when at long last a wavering Government plucked up its courage to resist, the Labour Party had no alternative but to accept the implications of its own policy.” (“Daily Herald,” May 14th, 1940.)

He went on to prophesy:—

“Because we have the courage of our convictions as a movement now, we shall have greater power when it is over than we have to-day. We shall have a trembling capitalist system which can never recover again. We shall have broken the back of the vested interests, and we can build a socialist commonwealth which will be a powerful factor in the world.”

Socialists would wish that the words were really prophetic; but time will show them to be otherwise. Socialism does not spring from the catastrophe of capitalism at war any more than it came from the other catastrophe of capitalism, the crisis of ten years ago. No doubt Mr. Greenwood hopes that something else as well as victory may come out of participation in the Government; but Socialists remember similar hopes in the last war when the Labour Party, in its 1918 declaration of policy, “Labour and the New Social Order,” affirmed that it would not tolerate the revival of the social and economic system which the war was supposed to have destroyed, but would seek to build up a new social order based on co-operation in production and distribution for the benefit of all who labour by hand or by brain.

Nothing came of those hopes, and the men who cherished them still do not show that they understand why. They spent years preaching peace and disarmament, and trying to lessen international antagonisms, and tried equally hard and unsuccessfully at home to lessen the evils of the social system. The two things they did not face up to are that there never can be any real solution to the twin problems of poverty and war until capitalism has been replaced by Socialism. So, little by little, each one of them had to abandon his belief in Peace by disarmament or appeasement or League of Nations. It is not, as Socialists have been at pains to point out, that war is a kind of capitalist conspiracy, but that capitalism forces States into deadly rivalry even though at a given period one group of States may be doing their utmost to preserve peace against the encroachments of their rivals.
Similarly, in home affairs, the Labour Party fails to make the clear-cut choice between Capitalism and Socialism, hoping always that goodwill and good intentions combined with careful planning will make it possible so to administer the capitalist system that there will be a successful and continuous march towards a new social order. Capitalism makes a mockery of such hopes. It can only be administered in accordance with its own basic laws; the exploitation of one class by another, production for profit instead of production solely for use, and the never ceasing struggle for markets. Efforts to administer capitalism on lines incompatible with these basic laws are certain to fail and may even aggravate the position, since the expectation of profit is an integral part of the functioning of industry while in capitalist hands. The problem facing the workers is, therefore, essentially the same now as it was in 1914 and in 1904, when the S.P.G.B. was formed. The cycle of war and peace has brought the Labour Party in 1942 back to the position it occupied in 1914-1918, with the same vain hopes of the future and the same certainty of failure. It is true now as when the S.P.G.B. first proclaimed it, that there can be no Socialism without Socialists. Therefore, the paramount task is not that of trying to reform Capitalism either in office or in opposition, but that of making Socialists and organising for the change-over from Capitalism to Socialism.

CHAPTER X.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT.

In the minds of many workers the Co-operative Movement is regarded as being in some way linked up with Socialism. When the co-operators take up this attitude they claim in justification that Robert Owen, the co-operative pioneer, was actively concerned for some part of his life with possible means of escape from the capitalist system.

Owen lived in an age when production by machinery was first making its brutal way in the factories. It was an era of amazing profits for the factory owners and almost incredible suffering for the workers. Robert Owen saw that the workers were helplessly enslaved to those who
owned the land and factories, and he thought he had found a way out, by securing for the workers land and machinery which they could work for themselves. Of course, he soon discovered that the ruling class had no need and no wish to give up their property.

It must be remembered that in the early years of the 19th Century the workers had no votes and were unorganised, and it was unthinkable to Owen that they could hope to obtain possession of the wealth of the country against the opposition of the owners. Robert Owen's solution was that small groups of workers should try to establish self-supporting "villages of industry," in which there would be no employer, no master. They would constitute, as it were, little oases in the desert of Capitalism, owning the "land and means of production in common." He anticipated that the movement would grow until finally the workers would have achieved their emancipation.

The difficulty of obtaining the money to buy the land, etc., was to be overcome by starting "union shops" which would buy goods at wholesale prices and sell them to the members at retail prices. Thus would accumulate in the hands of the co-operative societies the surplus which would otherwise have gone into the pockets of private shopkeepers in the form of profit. The funds thus to be built up would be used for the setting up of the "villages of industry."

Between 1825 and 1834 some 400 or 500 of these "union shops" were started, but the movement was a complete failure, due partly to loss of enthusiasm and partly to the lack of a legal standing. The law did not provide protection for their funds against misappropriation.

In 1826 one such store was formed in Brighton, and the Co-operative "People's Year Book, 1926" (p. 3), suggests that that year ought really to be regarded as the beginning of the modern Co-operative Movement. The writer says, however, that even as early as that the pioneer co-operators at Brighton and elsewhere had lost their interest in the more ambitious and far-reaching schemes of Robert Owen for reorganising the social system. The writer makes the significant remark that "the schemes of Owen were as much unlike the aims of the first co-operative societies as chalk is unlike cheese."
Although the early shops did not prosper, later efforts, beginning at Rochdale, in 1844, were successful. They were based upon the idea of returning a "dividend" to purchasers, calculated on the amount of their purchases. These societies have spread all over the country until now their membership is over 8,000,000 and the "share and loan capital" amounted, in 1937, to nearly £190 million. The large profit made in 1930, more than £22 million, represented, according to the co-operative newspaper, "Reynolds's Illustrated News" (December 27th, 1931), nearly 20 per cent. on their share capital. Surplus funds are invested outside the societies. For example, large sums were put into War Loan.

A writer in the organ of the Union which caters for co-operative workers claimed that, as regards profits, the co-operative societies "show even better results" than the large multiple stores run by ordinary companies. ("New Dawn," November 10th, 1928.)

But in spite of this success, the Co-operative Movement cannot solve the basic economic problems of the workers as a whole, or even of the co-operative societies' own members. Its success is merely the success of an essentially capitalist undertaking competing with other capitalist undertakings.

In spite of the impressive total figure of the capital of the co-operative societies it represents only a very small amount per head of the members, and is negligible in comparison with the wealth of the capitalists.

The co-operative members are all (except the tiny minority who are actually employed by the societies) living upon the wages they receive from outside capitalist employers. Wages are dependent on the cost of living, and to the extent that the Co-operative societies can reduce the cost of living generally, they merely enable the employers, as a whole, to pay lower wages without reducing the efficiency of their wage-earners. Mr. Alfred Barnes, Chairman of the National Conference of the Co-operative Party at Blackpool, April 3rd, 1931, admitted this close relationship between wages and prices. He said:

"Capitalism never held out less hope for the wage-earners. Their wages were like the grand old Duke of York's army, ' they march up and down the
hill' as prices rise or fall, but the net result was very much the same." ("Manchester Guardian," April 4th, 1931.)

The large profit of the co-operative societies is, like all profits, the proceeds of the exploitation of the workers. In 1929, a typical year, the average pay of the whole staff for the 12 months was £130 per head, whereas the total profit of the societies would have been sufficient to pay each employee another £148—i.e., more than sufficient to double their wages. The profits are pocketed by the co-operative societies' members, but owing to their large numbers amounts to little for each. Yet, in spite of this profit, the societies have failed, as they were bound to fail, to solve the problem of the relationship between them and their workers. Time after time we have read of strikes and lock-outs in co-operative concerns, and the societies have on occasion actually had to call in the Minister of Labour in a capitalist Government to settle disputes.

In times of depression they reduce wages, taking advantage of unemployment and the reduced cost of living. They instal labour-saving machinery and dismiss the workers no longer wanted. At the 63rd Co-operative Congress held at Bournemouth, in May, 1931, the president, Mr. W. J. Salmon, said:

"To management committees I would say: fix your wage scales on a high level, and always remember that those who are not worth good wages are not worth keeping and should be ruthlessly weeded out." ("Manchester Guardian," May 26th, 1931. Italics ours.)

This is the brutal doctrine of Capitalism in all its nakedness. Imagine the horror with which Owen would have regarded it. Could anything be further removed from the real idea of co-operation?

The same capitalist methods of business are in vogue at Rochdale, the spot to which the modern Co-operative Movement looks as its place of origin. In 1923, according to the "Co-operative News," the Committee of the Rochdale Provident Society had decided to discharge thirty-seven adult employees and replace them with fifteen
juveniles. They were taking this action on grounds of economy.

In their comment upon this action the "Co-operative News" (August 18th, 1923) quoted from the "Daily Mail" the views of Mr. H. Gladwell, the president of the Rochdale society, as follows:

"To keep our Society in its present sound financial position we have to attract trade. This will only come if our goods are cheap and dividends are big; for the co-operator to-day does not care a rap about co-operative ideals. He or she is simply concerned about cheap commodities. To sell cheaply we have to adjust our wage costs. For the past two years we have been paying men big wages to do boys' work, and we cannot continue on those lines."

Even in respect of its interests considered simply as a trading concern, the Co-operative Movement has had to recognise that its possibilities are limited. The "Scottish Co-operator," reviewing the position in 1923, confessed that "relatively to its rivals and enemies," the movement was weaker than before the war, "weaker financially and weaker administratively." ("Scottish Co-operator, August 23rd, 1923.)

In spite of its huge membership the volume of trade of the Co-operative Movement is admitted to be only about 10 per cent. of the total retail trade of the country. ("People's Year Book," 1939, published by the Co-operative Wholesale Society, p. 67.)

It is also admitted that "during recent years the average trade per member has tended to fall, when adjustments are made for price changes," and that "one reason for lower standards of loyalty is the influx of less co-operatively-minded members. . . ."

The recognition of this weakness drove the co-operators to enter politics in order to secure by that means what they could not achieve by carrying out the ideas of their founders. The formation of the Co-operative Political Party was nothing less than an admission that co-operation could not hold its own against its trade rivals, let alone make inroads into the capitalist system, supposing, that is, that it had wished to do so.

Mr. Barnes, who is a Co-operative Member of
Parliament, made this quite clear in a speech explaining why the Co-operative Party was formed. He said:—

"The Rochdale pioneers desired to solve the land and housing problems of their generation... Co-operators now realise that these problems can only be solved by Parliament. They have entered politics to realise the ideals of the pioneers." ("Daily Herald," April 24th, 1921.)

But the Co-operative Party, like the Labour Party, with which it is closely associated, is a party aiming at protecting the interests of the Co-operative traders, and at introducing certain reforms of Capitalism. It is in no sense a socialist organisation.

Co-operation cannot emancipate the working-class. Only Socialism will do that. The workers cannot escape from the effects of Capitalism by joining Co-operative societies. Neither could they escape Capitalism by retiring into Owen's "villages of industry." They must obtain for society as a whole the ownership of the means of production and distribution, which are now the property of the capitalist class. For this they must organise to control the machinery of government. Once possessed of power they can then reorganise society on a socialist basis of common ownership. Owen's original aims can only be achieved by socialist methods.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RUSSIAN DICTATORSHIP.

During the past twenty years the socialist movement throughout the world has been challenged to re-examine its theories and actions in the light of the Russian so-called "Dictatorship of the Proletariat." It is worth while considering what the Bolsheviks have achieved and what their experience can teach us.

Russia before 1914 was a country of big but inefficiently farmed landed estates, side by side with millions of peasants impoverished by the high rents they had to pay to the landlords, and a growing population of industrial workers. Capitalist industry had made big strides (largely by the investment of foreign capital) and railways had been
built bringing Russian grain to the outside world. Further development was hindered by the lack of a home market where the industrial products could be sold. Apart from the minority of capitalist farmers and landlords, the rural population (peasants and labourers) were too poor to buy industrial products in large quantities. Discontent was rife among the peasants, and the prolonged industrial depression and consequent unemployment in the towns during the early years of the Twentieth Century, provided the material for working-class trade union, and political organisation. On top of this, the majority of the capitalists were also strongly opposed to the Czarist régime, because its repressive methods and undemocratic structure were out of keeping with the needs of capitalist industry and commerce.

The Russian Social Democratic Party was divided into two sections which ultimately became separate parties—the “Mensheviks” (a word meaning “Minority”) and the “Bolsheviks” (meaning “Majority”). The Mensheviks believed that Russia must pass through the normal stage of capitalist development and democratic government. The Bolsheviks urged the need for illegal organisation and activities, and as early as 1905 believed that the conquest of power in Russia might precede and inspire revolution in the advanced countries of Western Europe. (See “An Illustrated History of the Russian Revolution,” translated from official Russian sources, and published by Martin Lawrence, Ltd., London, 1928. Vol. I, p. 31). Both sections of the Party put forward a programme of reforms as their immediate demand.

The basis of the Bolshevik illegal organisation in the years before 1914 was the three “fundamental” slogans: a democratic republic; expropriation of the landowners; and the eight-hour day. Both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks believed in seeking seats in Parliament and were, in fact, represented in the “Dumas,” which the Czar called as a promised step towards representative government.

When Russia entered the War in 1914, the Bolsheviks opposed it and voted against war credits. They strongly condemned all of the so-called socialists who supported the War on the one side or the other, and, indeed, they solicited the assistance of the Socialist Party of Great Britain to gain publicity in England for their manifesto protesting
against this conduct. (See "Socialist Standard," March, 1915.)

After years of defeat at the front, Russia came to the stage where a continuance of the War became impossible. The backward industrial development of the country put it beyond her powers to conduct warfare in conflict with a highly industrialised power like Germany on the enormous scale of the 20th Century. Another factor was pro-German influences at the Russian Court. The hardships imposed both on the civilian population and on the troops through inadequate transport, defective equipment, scarcity of food, and high prices, together with the inefficiency and corruption of the ruling class, brought about conditions of revolt. There were constant strikes in the large towns, not only for higher wages, but also for peace. There were mutinies of troops at the front. Soldiers brought out against the workers at home openly sided with them. Crowds attacked the houses of Czarist Ministers.

In this situation the Czar, on March 11th, 1917, ordered the dissolution of the Duma, but the Duma decided to carry on. ("Illustrated History," Vol. II, p. 566.) After the revolt of a number of regiments and a few days of confused fighting in the streets, the Czar abdicated on March 15th, 1917 (dates according to the English calendar).

A Provisional Government was formed by the Liberals and other capitalists' and landowners' representatives in the Duma, together with Kerensky, who, as Minister of Justice, was supposed to represent the workers and peasants. ("Illustrated History," Vol. I, pp. 86 and 98.) At the same time Councils of Workers, Peasants, and Soldiers ("Soviets") were being formed.

The Provisional Government was Monarchist, although convinced that the Czar must go, and was in favour of continuing the War.

At first the Soviets were largely controlled by delegates hostile to the Bolsheviks, and they gave general support to the openly capitalist Provisional Government.

Kerensky, Minister of Justice in the Provisional Government, was Vice-President of the Soviet, and was the connecting link between the Soviet and the Committee of the Duma, the two bodies by which the Provisional Government was organised. (See "Leaves from a Russian Diary," by Pitirim Sorokin, Kerensky's Secretary, published by
Hurst & Blackett, London, p. 21). The Soviet of Workmen and Soldiers had, from the first, established the right to hold its sittings in the Hall of the Duma, where the Duma Committee also met. (Sorokin, pp. 17 and 53.)

In May, 1917, the Government became a coalition, in which the avowedly capitalist parties had a majority. ("Illustrated History," Vol. I, p. 152.) Then in July Kerensky became head of a Government containing a majority of so-called socialists and supported by the Soviets.

The fact that the Kerensky Government had the backing of the Soviets was of decisive importance. Because of that the Bolsheviks were for the time being unable to make headway against the Government. The position was entirely changed later on when the Bolsheviks obtained control of the Soviets, but until then the Soviets were used to suppress Bolshevik activities.

For example, in June, 1917, the Bolshevik minority called for an armed demonstration of soldiers and workmen with the slogan, "Down with the Capitalistic Government! Down with the War! All Power to the Soviets!" The counter proclamation appealing to soldiers and workmen to abstain was issued jointly by the Peasants' Soviet, and the Workmen's and Soldiers' Soviet (Sorokin, p. 54). The latter appeal was successful and the Bolsheviks called off their demonstration.

It was on the motion of Mensheviks that a Joint Conference of the two Soviets (July 3rd-5th, 1917) passed a resolution recognising the supreme authority of the Soviet, and denying membership to those who would repudiate or try to overthrow it (Sorokin, p. 63). Troops called from the front to suppress a Bolshevik armed rising acted with the support of the Soviets. They were claimed to be protecting "The Government and the Soviet" against the Bolshevik minority. (Sorokin, p. 70.)

Later, when the Government had to deal with the revolt of Korniloff and his military supporters it was to the Soviets that Kerensky turned for help. (Sorokin, p. 87.)

During this period, with the War dragging on and with the former hardships aggravated by army officers attempting to seize power, the Bolshevist Party, in spite of persecution by the Kerensky Government, was carrying
on active propaganda in favour of peace, the giving of the land to the peasants, etc. At first the Bolsheviks had demanded the calling of a democratically-elected Constituent Assembly to decide on the future constitution of Russia. Then in April, 1917, they were popularising the slogan, “All power to the Soviets,” although this would have meant at that time power falling into the hands of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who had a majority on the Soviets (“Illustrated History,” Vol. II, p. 302). In July the Bolsheviks, believing that there was no longer a chance of splitting these groups from the openly capitalist parties, abandoned their slogan of “All power to the Soviets,” only to revive it again two months later (“Illustrated History,” pp. 303 and 304). In September, 1917, they were even prepared to support a Menshevik and Social Revolutionary Government responsible to the Soviets, on the condition (in the words of Lenin) of “absolute liberty of agitation, and the calling of the Constituent Assembly at the date fixed, or even within a shorter period.” This offer came to nothing.

In the meantime, owing to the general discontent, Bolshevik propaganda made continual headway. The whole political situation was transformed when they managed to get the support of a majority of the Soviet delegates, thus coming into possession of the most representative political machinery of Russia at that time.

On September 9th a Bolshevik was elected President of the Kronstadt Soviet. On October 1st the Moscow Soviet elected a Bolshevik majority. On October 8th Trotsky was elected President of the Petrograd Soviet, which, on October 15th, demanded the transfer of all power to the Soviets, and the conclusion of an immediate peace. During October there were seizures of land by the peasants all over Russia. On October 22nd the Petrograd Soviet formed a Military Revolutionary Committee to control the “red guards” of soldiers and armed workers. Faced with this new situation the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, on October 23rd, accepted a resolution moved by Lenin in favour of armed insurrection.

The All-Russian Soviet Congress was arranged to meet on November 7th, 1917. On that day the Petrograd Soviet (with a Bolshevik majority) declared in favour of the overthrow of the Government. At the All-Russian Soviet Con-
gress there were 670 delegates, of whom 390 (a clear majority) were Bolsheviks and 179 were Left Social Revolutionaries who, in the main, supported the Bolsheviks. ("Illustrated History," Vol. II, p. 431.) The Congress passed resolutions moved by Lenin in favour of peace, the abolition of landowners' right to possession of the land, and the setting up of a "temporary" workers' and peasants' government pending the summoning of a Constituent Assembly (p. 442). Congress approved the "victorious insurrection of the workers and the garrison of Petrograd" and declared that "the Congress takes all power into its hands." (p. 431.)

On November 9th a victorious rising took place in Moscow, inspired by the events in Petrograd.

The Bolsheviks, within a comparatively short space of time, consolidated their position, based upon the support of majorities in the Soviets.

The significance of these episodes of Russian history in 1917 is the one Marx so constantly stressed, viz., the need to gain control of the political machinery. The Bolsheviks were enabled to do this through controlling the Soviets. (The Duma, elected on a limited franchise, which excluded most of the workers and peasants, was less representative and less popular than the Soviets, and had accordingly fallen into the background soon after the overthrow of the Czar.)

Trotsky has brought out the point well in his "The Lessons of October, 1917" (Labour Publishing Co., Ltd., London, 1925). Writing of the struggle during 1917 between the Bolshevik minority and the Kerensky Government, he says:

"The struggle between us and the compromisers centred round the constitutional position of the Soviets. In the minds of the people the Soviets were the source of all power. Kerensky, Tseretelli, and Skobelev came from the Soviets. But we, too, were closely connected with the Soviets, for our cry was 'All Power to the Soviets.' The Bourgeoisie considered that they inherited their rights from the State Duma. The compromisers inherited theirs from the Soviets, and so did we; but they wanted to get rid of the Soviets, and we wanted to transfer all power to the Soviets."
compromisers could not yet break the Soviets, and so they tried to make a bridge, as quickly as they could, from them to a Parliamentary system. And this was why they convened the Democratic Conference and created the Preliminary Parliament. . . .

"But it was our interest, too, to take advantage of the constitutional position of the Soviets. At the end of the Democratic Conference we forced the compromisers to agree to convene the Second Congress of Soviets. Convening the Congress embarrassed them very much; they could not oppose it, because then they would have given up the constitutional position of the Soviets; and yet they could not help seeing that this Congress—on account of the way it was composed—promised them very little good.

". . . . It was one thing to make an armed insurrection under the mere naked cry of seizing power for the party, and quite another thing to prepare an insurrection—and carry it out—under the cry of protecting the rights of the Congress of Soviets." (pp. 63 and 64. Italics ours.)

With regard to the peculiar position of Russia, a backward country overwhelmed by the strain of the war, Trotsky says:—

"The first necessity was an army that did not want to fight. The whole course of the revolution would have been changed, if at the moment of the revolution there had not been a broken and discontented peasant army of many millions, and this applies especially to the period from February to October. . . . It is only because of this that the experiment with the Petrograd garrison was successful; and that experiment determined the October victory." (p. 67 and 68.)

The "experiment" referred to by Trotsky was a decision of the Petrograd Soviet in September, 1917, opposing the removal from Petrograd of troops garrisoned there. This was, says Trotsky:—

"really an armed insurrection . . . armed though bloodless . . . an insurrection of the Petrograd regiments against the provisional government . . . under
the cry of defending and protecting the Second Congress of Soviets.” (p. 61.)

Trotsky described this as an “almost constitutional armed insurrection”:

“We call this insurrection ‘Constitutional’ because it grew from the ‘normal’ relations of the existing division of power. It happened more than once, even when the compromisers were in power, in the Petrograd Soviet, that the Soviet examined or amended decisions of the Government. This was, as it were, part of the constitution under the régime named after Kerensky. When we Bolshevists got the upper hand in the Petrograd Soviet we only went on with the system of double power and widened its application. We took it on ourselves to revise the order sending the troops to the front, and so we disguised the actual fact of the insurrection of the Petrograd garrison under the tradition and precedents and technique of the constitutional duplication of authority.” (p. 62.)

It only remains to add that when the Constituent Assembly met on January 5th, 1918, a body which the Bolsheviks had themselves demanded, they promptly dissolved it on finding that a majority of its delegates were opposed to them. (“Illustrated History,” Vol. II, p. 494.)

Having been voted into power on their programme of “Peace, Bread and Land,” by peasants and workers who wanted these things but who in the overwhelming majority knew nothing of Socialism or Capitalism, the Bolshevik Government was then faced with the problem of using dictatorship to establish Socialism. We will now see how they fared in this, their main purpose.

The Work of the Bolshevik Government.

The Bolsheviks kept their pledge to confirm the peasant seizure of the land and to stop the war. They dealt energetically with one after another of the attempts, fostered by foreign governments, to overthrow them. They unified Russia. They tackled the 1921 famine. Then when their political position was so firmly established that attacks upon them ceased they set about their attempt to apply their theories to industry and agriculture. Their great and unsolved problem has been one which arises from the condi-
tion of Russia and of its people, that the peasants—the
great majority of the population—did not and do not under­
stand or want Socialism. They wanted the land, indeed
they were fast taking it before the Bolsheviks obtained con­
trol. A large majority of the town workers also were and
still are lacking in an understanding of Socialism.

Every step by the Bolshevik Party that has ignored
these conditions has been brought sharply up against the
solid opposition of the non-socialist majority. It is in order
to emphasise a very important lesson, and in no spirit of
belittling the Bolsheviks for what they have done or what
they aimed at doing, that we have insisted from the first
that it was impossible for them to institute Socialism in
Russia. Every new development—from the new Economic
Policy of 1921 to the Five-Year Plans—has served to de­
monstrate the inescapable truth of our case. Russian
industry and agriculture have developed and are develop­
ing rapidly under the Bolshevik Government, but the
growth is not the growth of Socialism to which the Com­
munists used to look forward, but the growth—on lines
suitable to Russia and to the 20th Century—of a great
commercial power, a formidable competitor to other powers
in the markets of the world.

In the years 1917-1921 the Communists talked of a
quick transition to Socialism. Now—twenty years later—
they are still promising Socialism, but not immediately.
Now it is only to be after further Five-Year Plans! But
the chief characteristics of Capitalism have not disappeared,
and are not in process of disappearing. Goods are not
produced for use but for sale to those who have the money
to buy, as in other countries. The workers are not mem­
biers of a social system in which the means of wealth
production are socially owned and controlled, but are wage­
earners in the employ of the State or of semi-State con­
cerns, etc. The Russian State concerns are no more
“socially owned” than is the British Post Office or the
Central Electricity Board, or any private company. In both
countries these enterprises are forms of investment for large
and small capitalists, although in Russia the investors are
so far in the main small investors. The Russian Govern­
ment estimated that it would borrow in all £600 million in
order to finance the first Five-Year Plan. These figures,
which were published in an official Soviet publication,
The Bank for Russian Trade Review, (London, June, 1929), were in fact much exceeded. In 1931 and 1932 alone the estimates provided for the borrowing of £158 million and £275 million ("Review," January, 1932). In 1935 the estimated income from loans was 4,415 million roubles, equivalent at the par of exchange to about £465 million. (U.S.S.R. Handbook, 1936. Published, Gollancz, Ltd., London, p. 323.) The total National Debt in 1934 was 14,369 million roubles. This money has been raised in the main inside Russia, at comparatively high rates of interest—8 per cent., 9 per cent., 10 per cent., or more—though in recent years these rates have been considerably reduced.

Although big incomes derived from investment in State loans are no doubt rare, the system of steeply graded incomes in industry, agriculture and the Government-administered services results in a wide and increasing gulf between the standard of living of masses of employees and the privileged group. This results not from the payment to individuals in the same group of wages related to their output, though that also operates under the Russian wages system, but from the practice of paying different groups on a different standard. It is only partly offset by social services and by heavier income tax on higher incomes. Mr. Paul Winterton, a writer favourable to the Bolsheviks, was in Russia in 1937 on behalf of the "News Chronicle." He reported that the lowest paid worker then received 125 roubles a month and the highest paid (with few exceptions) 3,000 roubles a month. ("News Chronicle," July 30th, 1937.) He also reported being told of the head of a constructional enterprise receiving 12,000 roubles a month.

The Webbs, in their book, "Soviet Communism" (p. 711), give information obtained from official sources about the gradations of pay, and show from Stalin's speeches that this system of inequality is the deliberate policy of the Russian Government. It should be noted particularly that when Lenin was alive the Bolsheviks proclaimed a policy the reverse of the policy of the present Stalin administration.

In a speech delivered in April, 1918, reprinted as a pamphlet with the title, "Soviets at Work," Lenin endorsed "the principle of the Paris Commune and of any proletarian rule, which demand the reduction of salaries
to the standard of remuneration of the average worker."

He regretted that necessity at that time compelled the Russian Government to pay high salaries to specialists, and he did not pretend that it was anything but a backward step. He said:—

"Such a measure is not merely a halt in a certain part and to a certain degree of the offensive against capitalism... but also a step backward by our Socialist Soviet State, which has from the very beginning proclaimed and carried on a policy of reducing high salaries to the standard of wages of the average worker."

He went on to say that "to pay unequal salaries is really a step backward; we will not cheat the people by pretending otherwise."

According to Bolshevik standards as proclaimed by Lenin, Russia's industrial progress has been at the expense of social progress, Russian methods coming more closely into line with those practised in "enlightened" capitalist enterprises outside Russia. The guiding principle in the administration of industry is not that of Socialism. "From each according to his capacities; to each according to his needs," but the principles of inequality of status and payment according to output, and with the aim of making a profit. Describing the operation of Russian State farms, the "U.S.S.R. Handbook, 1936," a book compiled from Russian sources, with the help of distinguished Russian writers, says:—

"The State farms are operated in the same manner as mills and factories—on 'business principles,' i.e., on the basis of yielding profits defined according to the balance sheet of each farm.

"The internal management of a State farm rests on the personal authority and responsibility of its director." (pp. 158-9.)

It can be said that Socialism was impossible in Russia owing to the non-Socialist outlook of the great majority of the population there and in the rest of the world, and owing to Russia's industrial backwardness which is only now being overcome, and that, in consequence, there was no alternative but to conform more and more to capitalist
methods. It is also claimed by the Bolsheviks that the standard of living of the Russian population as a whole has been raised above the level of Czarist times and is still rising, but it is not for this that the Bolsheviks and their supporters abroad claimed justification for the Dictatorship. The Dictatorship—a dictatorship of a ruling clique, not of the working class—was to be judged by its usefulness in achieving Socialism. Judged by that standard it fails.

The tragic side of the Russian experiment is the effect upon the workers and upon the Bolshevists themselves. Faced with the many and difficult economic and political problems inseparable both from Dictatorship and from the administration of a backward capitalist country, they have had to use violent means in order to retain power. In order to justify their actions they have described "State Capitalism" as "Socialism." Instead of teaching the principles of Socialism and showing the workers what must yet be done before they can introduce social ownership of the means of production and distribution, the Bolshevik Government and Party have emulated the Labour leaders in Western Europe, who describe Nationalisation and Public Utility Corporations as Socialism. They have had to introduce the customary capitalist methods of stimulating output by the use of bonuses, etc., but in addition, they have disguised the objectionable nature of these by calling them "Socialist competition." Unable to eradicate the class conflict, they have been faced with constant propaganda or forcible opposition, and have dealt with it like Governments of capitalist States by resorting to imprisonment, suppression, exile and death. The series of public trials of once famous and trusted Bolshevist leaders charged with terrorism, plotting against the life of Stalin, and conspiring with the German and Japanese Governments to dismember Russia, have proved beyond question that the social system in Russia has not the stability and freedom from class conflict which the Bolsheviks claim for it. Whether the charges were true or false they disclose bitter conflicts and mistrust within the ranks of the Russian Communist Party, which can only be explained by the existence of strong discontent in wider circles of the population.

The same conclusion can be drawn from the fact that the much-heralded "democratic" constitution inaugurated
in 1937 is based upon the same suppressive system as was
the dictatorship which it replaced—the prohibition under
severe penalties of all political parties except the Com-

munist Party.

If inside Russia the dictatorship has failed—as
Socialists knew it must—to impose Socialism on an unready
population, so outside Russia the scorn which Communists
poured on democratic parliamentary institutions and
methods played a considerable part in helping other
opponents of democracy—the Nazis—to power.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

A socialist movement will grow in Russia, but it will
come from the workers, not from the Russian dictators.
The revolutionary fervour, as in past revolutions, has a
tendency to work itself out as time goes on. The revolu-
tionisers of the beginning are followed by waves of more
and more reactionary successors.

Neither in their views on the gaining of power, nor in
their belief—now rapidly losing the hold it at first gained
abroad—about the possibility of imposing Socialism by dic-
tatorship, have the Bolshevists added anything to the
knowledge possessed by Marx. Marx’s words, from the
1867 preface to the First Edition of Volume I of “Capital,”
still remain unchallengeable:—

“One nation can and should learn from others.
And even when a society has got upon the right track
for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement
... it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by
legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive
phases of its normal development. But it can shorten
and lessen the birth-pangs.” (Swan Sonnenschein
Edition, p. xix.)

The Bolshevik attempt to usher in Socialism by “legal
enactments” and by “bold leaps” before the economic
conditions were ripe, and before the mass of the population
desired Socialism, has been a total failure. In course of
time that failure will become obvious to the workers inside
and outside Russia.
THE COMMUNIST PARTY.

The Bolshevik conquest of power in Russia had as one of its consequences the attempt, through the Third (Communist) International and through the affiliated parties, to secure support all over the world for Bolshevik theories. The formation of the Third International (Moscow, March, 1919) meant a break with the Second International (Labour and Socialist International). In this the Communists were following years afterwards in the footsteps of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, which withdrew from the Second International, on realising its essentially non-socialist character, nearly ten years before the War made that plain to Lenin and his associates.

The Communists are at present, posing as friends of democracy and parliament, but this is only a recent development. In the past and at the formation of the Communist Party they denounced what they now support, and were advocates of dictatorship.

The Communist International and all its affiliated parties were based upon the "Statutes of the Communist International" adopted by the Second Congress at Moscow, in August, 1920, and published in London by the Communist Party of Great Britain, which was formed on July 31st, 1920. The "Statutes and Conditions of Affiliation" of the International include the following:

"The aim of the Communist International is to organise an armed struggle for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and the establishment of an international Soviet Republic as a transition to the complete abolition of the Capitalist State. The Communist International considers the dictatorship of the proletariat an essential means for the liberation of humanity from the horrors of Capitalism; and regards the Soviet form of government as the historically necessary form of this dictatorship." (p. 4.)

"The Communist International fully and unreservedly upholds the gains of the great proletarian revolution in Russia, the first victorious Socialist revolution in the world's history, and calls upon all workers to follow the same road." (p. 4.)
"The general condition prevailing in Europe and America makes obligatory upon the Communists of the whole world the formation of illegal Communist organisations alongside of those existing legally. The Executive Committee has charge of the universal application of this rule." (p. 4.)

"The class struggle in almost every country of Europe and America is reaching the threshold of civil war. Under such conditions the Communists can have no confidence in bourgeois laws. They should create everywhere paralleled illegal machinery which at the decisive moment will do its duty by the party and in every way possible assist the revolution." (p. 9.)

The idea of an armed rising and civil war as a means of gaining power was imposed upon the Third International by the Russian Party, which then and ever since has completely dominated the Third International through its large membership. It is still the basis of the Communist International and its affiliated parties, though, in practice, the Communist parties in Great Britain and elsewhere now urge the workers to oppose dictatorship and fight for democracy.

It is as self-styled democrats that the Communists in Great Britain advocated the Popular Front in which democratic Liberals, Communists, Conservatives and the Labour Party were to unite against the Chamberlain Government. It is necessary, however, to remember the basis on which the Communist Party was formed and how recently they have opposed what they now say they wish to defend, because with a further change in the policy of the Russian Government they may revert to their own fundamental beliefs. Their changes of policy are dictated not by conviction, but in keeping with the varying views of the Bolshevist authorities, as to the foreign policy best suited to Russian interests.

Some further declarations of Communist views on armed insurrection are given below.

Bucharin, speaking for the Executive at the 1928 Congress of the Third International in Moscow, said:

"Mass actions must be regarded as one of the best means in our struggle. Our tactics must be to mobilise the masses, to become masters of the streets,
to attack again and again the law and order of the bourgeois State and to smash it, to capture the street by revolutionary means, in the strict sense of the word, and then to go further. Only on the basis of a whole series of such events and on the basis of the development of these events—mass actions, etc.—only through such a process can we prepare ourselves for fiercer and more stubborn mass struggles on a larger scale.” (“International Press Correspondence,” July 30th, 1928.)

At the Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain, held at Leeds at the end of November, 1929, fresh evidence was given of this dangerously reactionary Communist method.

A special correspondent of the “Manchester Guardian” reported a speech in which Mr. H. Pollitt, the prominent Communist and member of the Communist Party Executive, said:—

“Only through social revolution, only through armed insurrection, can the workers gain power.” (“Manchester Guardian,” December 2nd.)

In the “Workers’ Life” (December 6th, 1929), appeared a report of a speech delivered at the Congress by Mr. W. Gallacher, another prominent Communist, and also a member of the Central Committee. In it he said:—

“They had talked of a Revolutionary Workers’ Government, but did they realise what was implied? Would the organisation of the workers for the revolutionary government be a legal one? The task of fighting for a revolutionary government would be a task of bringing the workers out on to the streets against the armed forces of Capitalism.”

Wherever this policy has been tried it has been disastrous for the workers.

The other distinctive feature of the Communist Party has been its belief (shared by the Russian Party) that a party which solicits support on a programme of reforms and co-operates with non-socialist parties, can be used for the purpose of furthering Socialism. The Communist Party of Great Britain inherited this reformism from the parties out of which it was formed in 1920, e.g., the British
Socialist Party, and certain local groups and organisations. The inaugural Conference voted by a small majority (100 to 85) in favour of seeking affiliation with the Labour Party. ("Communist," August 5th, 1920.) Several times they tried without success to get into the Labour Party, and undertook, if accepted, to abide by its constitution. Until 1931, most Communist candidates, including their M.P.s, Saklatvala and Walton Newbold, ran as Labour candidates, or with Labour support.

In 1921 they were in open opposition to the Labour Party's parliamentary candidates, the late J. R. MacDonald at Woolwich, and Mr. Morgan Jones at Caerphilly. ("Communist," August 20th, 1921.)

In 1922, preaching the policy of the "United Front," they gave "conditional" support to Labour Party candidates at the General Election ("Communist," October 28th, 1922), and pledged themselves, if accepted into the Labour Party, "to conform to the constitution," subject to the right of criticism of policy or tactics "in common with all affiliated bodies" ("Communist," June 10th, 1922). In 1922 they supported Mr. MacDonald at Aberavon.

In the 1923 General Election they gave unconditional support to all Labour Party candidates ("Workers' Weekly," December 7th, 1923), and did the same in 1924 ("Workers' Weekly," October 17th, 1924).

Late in 1926, after the General Strike, they still supported Labour candidates, "even if the latter are Right Wingers," and including an ex-Liberal, Commander Kenworthy, who still proclaimed his faith in Liberalism. (See "Communism is Common-sense." C.P.G.B. pamphlet, published in July, 1926, and a Hull Election Leaflet issued by the Communists in November, 1926.)

In 1928 ("Communist Review," February, 1928) they were still prepared to support all the Labour candidates. At this point Moscow intervened and ordered a complete reversal of policy. ("Workers' Weekly," February 24th, 1928.)

At the 1929 General Election they were willing to support Labour candidates who would accept certain "minimum working-class demands." ("Sunday Worker," April 14th, 1929.)
At the 1931 General Election the C.P.G.B. for the first time did not give its members instructions to vote for any Labour candidates.

In 1938 and 1939 the official policy of the Communist Party was to support Labour candidates, but also to press for a Popular Front Government. On March 30th, 1939, the “Daily Worker,” published the following in bold headlines:—

“COMMUNIST APPEAL TO ATTLEE, SINCLAIR AND CHURCHILL—URGED TO DEFEAT CABINET AND FORM NEW GOVERNMENT.”

It went on to say:—

“In a swift and sensational move to get practical action to save the country in the rapidly deepening crisis, Harry Pollitt, on behalf of the Communist Party of Great Britain, yesterday addressed to Major Attlee, leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, Sir Archibald Sinclair, leader of the Liberal Party, and Mr. Winston Churchill, most prominent of the Conservative ‘rebels,’ an appeal that they shall ‘get together without another minute’s delay’.”

Six months later when war broke out this was still the Communist policy, put forward with even greater insistence than before, since the Communist Party officially and wholeheartedly supported the war and urged the removal of the existing Government in order to make the prosecution of the war more effective.

Only a month later, because the Russian Government late in August, 1939, had made a pact of friendship and non-intervention with Hitler, the Communist Party decided to oppose the war and explained that the earlier action of supporting it had been due to a failure to appreciate its imperialist nature. Mr. H. Pollitt and others made abject confessions of error.

When, in May, 1940, Mr. Attlee and Sir Archibald Sinclair actually joined the Churchill Government, thus carrying out what the Communists had urged in March of the previous year, the Labour Party, instead of receiving the Communist blessing, was denounced by the “Daily Worker” for associating with Mr. Churchill: “What a
man to take under the wing of the Labour Party!" ("Daily Worker," May 10th, 1940). The workers were now urged to "fight against Labour participation in Churchill's new Government" ("Daily Worker," May 11th, 1940), for the reason that the Government still included Mr. Chamberlain and other "Men of Munich."

In June, 1941, when Germany attacked Russia, the Communists again reversed their policy and supported the war and the Churchill Government.

It is only necessary to list these ceaseless bewildering changes of Communist policy for it to be apparent that the Communist Party, with its dependence on the instructions of the Government-controlled Moscow International and its adherence to the pernicious doctrine that any means are justified to achieve the aim of the moment, is not, and cannot be, the Party of Socialism and the working class.

Having relatively large funds, which enabled it to undertake propaganda on a large scale, the Communist Party has been a failure from every point of view. Instead of spreading knowledge of Socialism and the way to obtain it, the British Communists have sown disillusion and despair in working-class circles in which, in 1920, there was active discontent and a determination to seek a way out. The lesson of these activities is that a party based on a reform programme and led by would-be revolutionaries, is no more useful as a means of getting Socialism than are the reform parties controlled by unscrupulous office-seekers or Liberal-Labour politicians.

Chapter XIII.

Parliament.

We have several times referred to the necessity of gaining control of the machinery of government. Let us now explain more fully why this is so.

The State is the public power of coercion. It arose out of the early division of society into classes, and developed with the development of class conflicts. It is the result of the desire to keep "order"; that is, order in the interests of the class that is supreme; order to allow the ruling class
to subdue and exploit the rest of the population without hindrance. Through the ages the State has been controlled, as a rule, by the class that has been economically the most important. It is maintained by taxes, and hence a class that has outgrown its economic importance can often continue for a time to control social affairs. As the State grew in size and complexity it became more burdensome, and the taxes grew with it. This led to quarrels among property owners over the amount of their contributions. Much of the apparent cleavage between parties in modern States is at bottom only indicative of a struggle as to which section of the property owners shall take the weight of taxation.

In the development of the State the modern Parliamentary system emerged as the most appropriate means for securing the domination of the capitalist class, the last class to obtain social control. Parliaments were subjected to modification in the course of time and the modern product ensures to the capitalist the unquestioned right to the proceeds of the exploitation of the working class.

But the State controlled a huge aggregate of people of various social standings and nationalities, a relatively small number of whom moved in a circle so distinct from the majority that they might almost have belonged to another world. Production and distribution of wealth also developed on such a tremendous scale that social affairs became correspondingly burdensome and complicated. One could compare the past with the present as the comparison between Stephenson's first locomotive and a modern railway engine. In order to run the State smoothly and secure the peaceable flow of profit, it became necessary to alter Parliamentary procedure so that the voice of the mass of people could be heard and their needs met; but only in so far as such alterations did not, in the opinion of their leading thinkers, jeopardise the rule of the capitalists. Thus, in due course, the electoral machinery was modified until universal suffrage became the rule in many countries.

Parliament is the centre of power in Great Britain. It makes the laws and provides for their enforcement. Local bodies have certain law-making and enforcing powers, but these are subservient to the central body, which is supreme, and which, where required, supplies the local body with any extra force necessary.
The instruments of power are the Army, Navy, Air and Police forces. The final word for setting these forces in motion rests with Cabinet Ministers. The Cabinet is the executive council which carries out the will of Parliament. Its members belong to the majority group, or are allowed to function by that group, or by arrangement are allowed to function through a coalition of parties. In other words, the group that has an absolute majority in Parliament can put into operation whatever decree it wishes by means of its control of the executive—the Cabinet. In theory the Prime Minister is appointed by the King (though the selection is confined within narrow limits) and has a free choice in the selection of his Ministers; but in fact no Cabinet could live long without a Parliamentary majority to sanction its proposals.

Members of Parliament are elected by adult suffrage, and the vast majority of the voters are members of the working class. The result is near enough democratic to ensure that when the mass of the working class understand the meaning of Socialism they have the means to bring it into being through Parliamentary action if they desire to do so.

Up to the present, the mass of the workers have lacked political knowledge and have voted for people instead of principles. They have given their votes to the people who made the most alluring promises, and as time proved the hollowness of the promises, the workers turned in disgust from one group of people to another, and then back again, as the memory of previous disappointments faded, to the original group.

This fact has led many to question the usefulness of Parliament and to advocate industrial action. But those who have done this have forgotten that the workers have been as readily betrayed on the industrial field as they have on the political field. They have forgotten that whenever the workers have placed their trust in leaders they have almost always been let down. The trouble has not been due to the field of combat. It has been due to the method adopted. When the workers cease to regard certain individuals as endowed with some special capacity of “leadership,” they will adopt the method of issuing to delegates instructions that are to be carried out regardless
of the delegates' own views or wishes. The ground will then be cut from under the feet of those who prosper out of leadership, and such people will no longer have a saleable article for the capitalist in the shape of a blind following.

There has not yet been a Parliamentary test of the power of delegates acting on instructions given them by a large body of workers who knew exactly what they were after and how to get it. In fact, outside the Socialist Party of Great Britain and its companion parties abroad, the method has never been really applied. Time after time the specious words of some acknowledged leader have diverted groups of workers from their original aims, generally on the plea of "expediency." The word "expediency" has for generations acted as a useful veil to cover the compromising activities of leaders. The truth is that the foolish and cowardly belief in this fetish of leadership has been a considerable barrier to working class knowledge and progress. The power and wealth leaders acquire induce them to fortify their positions and insist on the necessity for leadership as a permanent institution, accompanied by appropriate means of wire-pulling and mutual bargaining for position. The Labour Party has given striking proof of this in recent years.

Socialism will not be possible until the mass of the workers understand it and are prepared to vote for it. If a working class that did not understand Socialism were to vote for it, the result would only be chaos, as the first attempts to put it into operation would bewilder the majority of people and leave the way open for a counter-revolution. When the workers understand Socialism they will know what to expect and what will be involved in putting it into operation, and here they will defeat the efforts of any delegates ready to sell themselves to the opposition. In such circumstances a delegate could only sell once; he would not get a second chance.

Parliament has supreme power. As Marriott points out in "English Political Institutions":—

"Under the English Constitution there would be no greater difficulty, in a formal and legal sense, in decreeing the abolition of the House of Lords or the House of Commons, than in procuring an Act for the
construction of a tramway between Oxford and Reading." (p. 20.)

The armed forces, too, are only kept in existence by the yearly voting of supplies in Parliament. The Army Council controls the Army, but, as Sir John Creedy, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War, showed in his memorandum to the Civil Service Royal Commission, December, 1929, the Secretary for War, who is a member of it, is supreme and is solely responsible to King and Parliament. The Permanent Under-Secretary is solely responsible to the Secretary for all internal finance.

The Privy Council has no legislative authority; cancellations from it and appointments to it are at the discretion of the Prime Minister. Privy Council proclamations are not made at full meetings, but where the presence of two or more members is arranged by the Cabinet. In practice not more than four members are summoned, and rarely is anyone invited to attend a Council meeting who is not an active Cabinet member. It is executive in those matters only where the Cabinet does not require Parliamentary authority.

Marriott ("English Political Institutions") adds the following relating to the Admiralty:—

"The Board of Admiralty now consists of six Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, a Financial Parliamentary Secretary, and a Permanent Secretary. The responsible minister is the First Lord, invariably a civilian and a member of the Cabinet.

"The Board meets at least once a week, and is in a very real sense responsible for the first line of National Defence, though in a technical and parliamentary sense the First Lord has undivided responsibility." (pp. 116-117.)

A similar organisation obtains in the Air Force, the Air Minister being the responsible official.

The above shows how complete and secure is the grip Parliament has upon the armed forces, and the strikes and disturbances of past years have shown how readily these forces are put in motion, and also upon whose side they act. They are a forcible illustration of how necessary it is for the workers to obtain control of Parliament before attempting to uproot the existing foundations of society. They further show that the only way to obtain control is
by the legal one of sending delegates to Parliament.

It has been suggested that when the workers' movement began to really challenge the position of the capitalist, the latter would suspend Parliament. The suspension of Parliament would, in the first instance, abolish the right of the workers to combine, and would thus put a legal end to all forms of working-class combination, trade union as well as political. But the cost to the capitalist of the permanent suspension of the Constitution would be the end of their rule and the beginning of chaos. The State machine would be unable to function, owing to the conflicting views among civil and military employees of the Government.

The size and complexity of a modern nation is so great that the time has long since gone by when members of the ruling class could occupy any considerable number of the administrative posts and manage any appreciable part of its activities. From top to bottom all departments are filled by paid or elected officials, and only a very few of these officials are drawn from the capitalist class itself. Practically all the work of controlling the activities of society to-day is performed by people who depend for their livelihood upon the pay they get for the work they do—members of the working class.

Thousands of functions have had to be delegated to subsidiary bodies, such as County Councils, Town Councils, Parish Councils, and the like. Year by year this delegation of function grows greater and representation increases at the same rate.

Circumstances, therefore, have compelled the masters to place administration in the hands of elected bodies. If they withdraw it they will bring their house down about their ears.

The importance of Parliament is quite plainly recognised by the capitalists, and they give clear evidence of this at election times by the amount of wealth they spend and the inconvenience they suffer in order to ensure their control of it.

**How the Fascists got Control in Italy.**

A useful illustration of the need to gain control of
the political machinery is given by the Fascist Movement in Italy.

The attitude of the Socialist Party of Great Britain has been logical and consistent. We hold the same view as Marx as to the necessity of the workers gaining control of the machinery of government before they can establish Socialism. We also hold Marx's view that in the advanced capitalist countries the vote will give that control. The one way to prevent the capitalists from using political power against the workers is to refrain from voting them and their agents into political power. We have accordingly always urged the workers not to vote for any candidate who is a supporter of Capitalism. The reformist parties, Labour and Communist, which for reasons of tactics have been prepared to support such candidates, have helped to place in the hands of the capitalists the means of suppression to be used with violence when occasion arises.

The Communists have put forward two other theories, both of them dangerous and impracticable. One is that the workers can gain control without the vote, by means of an armed rising. The other is that the workers can set up their own machinery of government in opposition to the capitalist State. The two theories converge because in practice the capitalist class, controlling the armed forces through their parliamentary majority, will see to it that no hostile armed force comes into being to challenge their supremacy. Fascism, in Italy, gives apparent support to this theory of armed revolt, but only to those who are credulous enough to take Mussolini at his own face-value and to believe the stories about his great march on Rome in 1922. Actually, the deciding factor in that incident was the possession of the machinery of government, vested in capitalist representatives by the democratic vote of the electors. Let us cite four Italian witnesses, a Trade Union official, a Communist, a Liberal and a member of the Socialist Party of Italy, to show what took place.

Ludovico D'Arragona, Secretary of the Italian General Confederation of Labour, writing in the "Labour Magazine" (February, 1923), said that the Fascists were "openly favoured by the State authority."

Bordiga, a Communist, wrote in the "Labour Monthly" (February and March, 1923):—

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"After the Nitti, Giolitti, and Bonomi Governments, we had the Facta Cabinet. This type of Government was intended to cover up the complete liberty of action of Fascism in its expansion over the whole country. During the strike in August, 1922, several conflicts took place between the workers and the Fascisti, who were openly aided by the Government. One can quote the example of Bari. During a whole week of fighting, the Fascisti in full force were unable to defeat the Bari workers, who had retired to the working-class quarters of the city, and defended themselves by armed force. The Fascisti were forced to retreat, leaving several of their number on the field. But what did the Facta Government do? During the night they surrounded the old town with thousands of soldiers and hundreds of carabineers of the Royal Guard. In the harbour a torpedo boat trained its guns on the workers. Armoured cars and guns were brought up. The workers were taken by surprise during their sleep, the Proletarian leaders were arrested, and the Labour headquarters were occupied. This was the same throughout the country. Wherever Fascism had been beaten back by the workers the power of the State intervened; workers who resisted were shot down; workers who were guilty of nothing but self-defence were arrested and sentenced; while the magistrates systematically acquitted the Fascisti, who were generally known to have committed innumerable crimes. Thus the State was the main factor in the development of Fascism."

Professor Salvemini, a Liberal, gives similar testimony ("Manchester Guardian," October 19th, 1927). He wrote:

"Mussolini was assisted in the civil war (1921-1922) by the money of the banks, the big industrialists and landowners. His Black-shirts were equipped with rifles, bombs, machine-guns and motor lorries, by the military authorities, and assured of immunity by the police and the magistracy; while their adversaries were disarmed and severely punished if they attempted resistance."

And lastly, Modigliani, of the Socialist Party of Italy, tells us ("Daily Herald," October 27th, 1927): —
"It was by their" (the Italian Cabinet's) "contrivance and with the help of military forces of the State, that Mussolini and his gangs were able not only to administer castor oil, but to murder and burn for two years. And it is in that way that they finally reached the point of the march on Rome, in face of which the King openly and personally sided with the anti-Labour onslaught."

One lesson to be learned is that so long as power is placed in the hands of parties of capitalism masquerading as parties aiming at helping the workers by the reform of the capitalist system, so long will the workers be at the mercy of those who hold that power. In the case of Italy and still more in the case of Germany, the rise to power of the enemies of democracy was helped, negatively, by disappointment with the achievements of the democratic reformist parties and, positively, by a cunning pretence of attacking capitalism. The outcome was that the workers of these countries were wantonly thrown into war to gain capitalist ends.

The remedy for the failure of democratic reformism is not to take up Communist or Fascist dictatorship but to keep steadfastly on the road of democratic, uncompromising Socialism.

CHAPTER XIV.

FASCISM AND DEMOCRACY.

"A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism." Thus Marx and Engels in the opening sentence of the world-famous "Communist Manifesto." Almost a century later, however, it is another spectre: the spectre of Fascism.

It is not necessary here to go into the social origin of Fascism. In the main, it is the concrete, practical differences between the fascist and democratic forms of political administration that interest the working class. Under Fascism, the traditional forms of working class political and economic organisations are denied the right of legal existence. Freedom of speech, assembly, and the Press, is severely curtailed and made to conform to the needs of a single political party that has, for the time
being, secured a monopoly in the administration of the state machine. Under Democracy, the workers are allowed to form their own political and economic organisations, and within limits, freedom of speech, of assembly, and of the press is permitted as well as the possibility of the electorate choosing between contending political parties.

Now, unlike many people intoxicated with a newly-found love for democracy, the Socialist Party of Great Britain has always insisted on the democratic nature of Socialism, and on the value that the widest possible discussion of conflicting political views has for the working class. When we refuse to unite with non-socialist organisations for the purpose of defending democracy, it is most certainly not because we in any way minimise or underestimate the importance of democracy for the working class or the socialist movement. It is simply because we are convinced that democracy cannot be defended in such a manner.

And as proof of this contention, the working class has a rich experience from which to draw. The policy of the "lesser evil," that is, a policy of concessions to, and compromise with, non-fascist parties and elements of capitalism which was pursued and justified by the Social Democratic Party of Germany on the grounds that such a policy was dictated by the necessity of defeating Hitler Fascism: the more recent experience of the same policy operated under a different name, that is, the "popular front" in France, both point to the same lesson. Namely, provided the "Fascist Menace" is real, the formation of a bloc of non-socialist anti-fascists does not impede the advance of Fascism, but if anything, serves to expedite its progress. In order to make this point quite clear, it is necessary that we should understand the nature of democracy, and its usefulness to the working class. Democracy, in itself, cannot solve the problems of the working class. Unemployment, poverty, insecurity, and other evil effects of capitalism remain, no matter whether the form of its political administration be democratic or dictatorial. Freedom to cry working class misery from the house-tops will not, in itself, abolish that misery. Democracy is a weapon, potentially invaluable, it is true; but like every other weapon, it can be used either for self-preservation or
for self-destruction. And the painful fact is that in Germany the working class, lacking in an understanding of how to use the democratic weapon in its own interests, chose to commit political suicide with it instead.

The constitution of the German "Weimar" Republic—set up in 1919 but already doomed before Hitler took power—was formally one of the most democratic in the world. Nevertheless, so miserable had the existence of wide masses of the German people become, that in the last free election held in Germany a majority of the electorate voted for the abolition of democracy. For in spite of the concern for democracy which is expressed by the Communists nowadays, at the time of that election both Nazis and German Communists were united in their hatred of what they called "bourgeois democracy." The chief difference between the followers of the Communists and Nazis was that they chose different vehicles through which to express their hatred of democracy. Lacking an understanding of their social position, disgusted by the antics and ineptitudes of self-styled socialists, the mass of the German people found the source of the grievances not in the capitalist nature of the social system, but in the democratic form in which it was administered. Hence, in their uninformed despair, they fell an easy prey to astute and unscrupulous demagogues, who never failed to reinforce the belief that democracy was the cause of social distress.

Fascism does not exist in the blue of the heavens: like every other social phenomenon, it is related to, and has its origin in, a social background. And that background is the democratic capitalism that "popular-fronters" and other exponents of working class compromise with capitalism, wish to administer. That capitalism inevitably gives rise to working class problems has already been mentioned; but with equal inevitability it also gives rise to problems of a specifically capitalist nature, such as maintaining the profitability of production; securing new, and retaining old markets; the necessity of forging "national unity" when faced with war with rival capitalist groups, etc. And it is precisely in an attempt to solve these problems that the ruling class has recourse to Fascism. That these problems can be permanently solved is precluded by the nature of the capitalist system itself; but that will not prevent the capitalists from making the
attempt where no other means will serve. Fascism, then, is the political form best adapted to meet the needs of certain contemporary capitalist states.

As long as the working class supports capitalism and capitalist policies, it will be tempted ultimately to give its support to that policy best calculated to meet the political and economic needs of capitalism—even though that policy may be fascist.

Democracy for the working class can only be consolidated and extended to the extent that the working class adopts a socialist standpoint. To renounce Socialism so that democracy may be defended, means ultimately the renunciation of both Socialism and democracy.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HITLERISM.

Nazism marks a stage in the national reconsolidation of German capitalism. A variety of factors contributed to its success, most important of which we have attempted to outline below.

In "Revolution and Counter Revolution," Frederic Engels has described the state of Germany in 1848 in the following words: "The composition of the different classes of the people which form the groundwork of every political organisation, was in Germany more complicated than in any other country. While in England and France feudalism was entirely destroyed, or, at least, reduced, as in the former country, to a few insignificant forms by a powerful and wealthy middle class concentrated in large towns and particularly in the capital, the feudal nobility in Germany had retained a great portion of their privileges. The feudal system of tenure was prevalent almost everywhere. ... Feudalism was more flourishing in some localities than in others, but nowhere, except on the left bank of the Rhine, was it entirely destroyed. The feudal nobility, then extremely numerous and partly very wealthy, was considered officially the first 'Order' in the country. It furnished the higher government officials, it almost exclusively officered the army." Engels then goes on to show how circumstances ripened in Germany for the overthrow of feudalism. The capitalists, supported by the majority of the peasantry and the workers, took the initiative in an attempt to dislodge their feudal oppressors from power,
but capitulated in cowardly fashion the moment these former elements sponsored their own independent demands. Says Engels, in weighing up the results of the revolution: "The industrial and commercial capitalist class were more severely defeated in Germany than in any other country; they were first worsted, broken, expelled from office in every individual State of Germany, and then put to rout, disgraced and hooted in the central German Parliament. Political Liberalism, the rule of the bourgeoisie, be it under a monarchial or republican form of government, is for ever impossible in Germany."

The semi-feudal empire established in 1871 granted the capitalists a large number of economic concessions in return for the latter's acquiescence in the political domination of the Hohenzollerns. From this period onwards the capitalists directed their main attention to the possibility of enriching themselves at the expense of the ever-growing number of proletarians brought about by the rapid industrialisation of the country. The Bismarckian Empire was not a unitary state. It was composed of twenty-two federal states, each of which had its own ruler, its own government, and even its own legislative bodies. A number of these states also had their own postal and railway administrations, and even their own armies.

It was against this background that Social Democracy arose. The Eisenach Party, formed by August Bebel in 1869, adopted a programme which, in the light of the period, constituted a definite advance in working class ideas. When, in 1875, that movement abandoned its original programme in favour of a policy of compromise and reformism, Marx bitterly denounced it. However, three years later, Bismarck's anti-Socialist laws forced the party underground. In 1891 the resuscitated movement was reconstituted with a new programme—the Erfurt Programme—in which the influence of Marx and Engels once more made itself felt. But not for long. The inclusion of a policy of "immediate demands" very soon swamped the party with reformist elements. The original goal was lost sight of and by 1914 the party had degenerated into a pure and simple reform movement. So much so, that, with few exceptions, it was to be found aiding and abetting the capitalists and Junkers in their prosecution of the World War.
Defeat in the War, 1914-1918, had as its consequence the breakdown of the German military and semi-feudal state apparatus. When the Kaiser fled the task of rehabilitating capitalism fell into the hands of Social Democracy. They were by far the largest party and had the greatest backing throughout the country from the war-weary workers now ready to give parliamentary democracy a trial. In 1919 the Weimar Constitution was drawn up and, as a result of the elections, plus support from the Catholic Centre Party, etc., the Social Democrats became the first republican government. The latter was, however, handicapped in consolidating its authority by several hostile forces. Principal among these were the Spartacists—followers of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg—and another group, which desired to imitate the Russian example (later it became the Communist Party). Feeling its authority undermined, the government, in order to crush the rebels, enlisted the aid of reactionary generals and officers—the extreme right-wing, as they were called. Such action could not but spell disaster for the republic, for these reactionary hirelings, once reinstated, plotted against their benefactors and came out openly against them when their influence amongst the workers had waned. The rehabilitation of capitalism in a defeated country created a mass of problems to a party ushering in a new political régime. Social Democracy, being unable to master those problems, the inevitable discontent vented itself on the democratic, Weimar constitution.

On the other hand, the capitalists, sighing for the return of their markets and trade routes, were beginning to look elsewhere, turning a sympathetic ear to the new message of Adolf Hitler, national capitalism, mis-labelled "national Socialism."

From being a mere handful of disgruntled officers who had severely suffered in prestige as a result of their abortive attempt to seize power in 1924, the Nazis soon gained in influence. Adolf Hitler had learned a lot from his failure—particularly had he learned the need to win over the masses. Hence the new party adopted a programme wide enough to appeal to practically all sections of the population. Mob oratory, anti-Semitism, nationalism and pseudo-Socialism now became his stock-in-trade. The objective situation became ripe for the Nazis after 1930.
The economic crisis which had then broken out became aggravated by the widespread withdrawal of foreign investments and the cessation of loans. Meanwhile the numbers of the unemployed had increased to seven millions, whilst those in employment were periodically having their wages reduced. The failure of government after government to master the situation brought the democratic republic into ever-greater disrepute. A state of parliamentary paralysis had begun to set in (the "Communists" as well as the Nazis are to blame for this). The Nazis were not slow to profit by this anti-parliamentarian sentiment. But, in addition, the leading capitalists ceased their support for the Republic. The Social Democrats had served a purpose. They had preserved capitalism in the post-war years. They could no longer aid the capitalists in their long-delayed quest for aggrandisement. For that a new type of militarism was necessary. Not the militarism of the early Bismarckian era, utilised mainly in the interests of a backward land-owning group, but one which looked beyond the borders of the Prussian State for its ideal. A movement, in short, which could bring to reality all the unfulfilled dreams of a century—national centralisation and consolidation, with a view to re-entering the imperialist arena, this time unfettered by any feudal restrictions. The Nazi movement embodied these ideals and Hitler had set them down in "Mein Kampf." And so it came about. With widespread support of the masses, Germany became a "totalitarian state." All autonomous regional governments were abolished. Austria, Memel and Czechoslovakia were overrun. Thus the Nazi movement has been instrumental in consummating the unification of Germany as desired by the bourgeoisie in 1848, in addition to preparing the ground for the war. This is the real historical content of Hitlerism stripped of all confusing detail. It is only by the appreciation of this analysis that any effective struggle against Fascism can be waged.

And now what of the future? Is all lost as far as Germany is concerned? Unquestionably the possibility of working for Socialism there received a drastic set-back, but opposition to Nazism still went on. That this is so as proved by the existence of secret police, concentration camps, and by the brutal methods of suppression. For the latter would surely be unnecessary if ninety-nine per
cent. of the population were actively behind the Fuehrer. If war had not intervened capitalism was bound, sooner or later, to produce a major economic crisis, which would have shaken the confidence of the masses in the infallibility of their hero. But by whatever means Hitler is eventually overthrown, Fascism can be no more a permanent phase than was the tyrannical Napoleonic régime of the Second Empire in France.

CHAPTER XV.

SOCIALISM AND RACIAL THEORIES.

The racial question has become an urgent problem in political controversy in recent years owing to the significance given to it in Germany, where appeals to race prejudice have been used mainly to promote discrimination against the Jews. Antagonism to the Jews is also showing signs of developing in quite unexpected quarters. It is therefore worth while devoting a little space to a brief examination of the question.

In the first place what does the word "race" really mean? Immediately we ask this question we realise into what a morass we have stepped, because the terms is used to cover quite different meanings. For instance, the "Black Race," the "Brown Race," the "Yellow Race," each covers groups of people in varying stages of culture and with contrary attributes apart from the colour of their skins. The "American Race," the "British Race," the "African Race," applies to the inhabitants of a particular territory. The "Mohammedan Race" and the "Jewish Race" is a religious distinction. The "Celtic Race," the "Aryan Race" and the "Semitic Race" refer to particular types of language.

Here, then, are four different meanings commonly applied to the term "race," and there are many others including those that apply to the shape of the head and to the nature of the hair.

The meaning that it is attempted to foist upon the word "race" is that there are certain groups of people to-day who, like the thoroughbred horse, have kept their blood free from alien mixture for hundreds of years,
At the outset it may be pointed out that there are no physical distinctions that can denote purity of blood. People from this country who spend most of their lifetime in the Colonies develop physical characteristics that mark them off from their relatives who have remained at home. In a book by Brunton entitled "Kings and Queens of Ancient Egypt" there are a number of coloured illustrations of Ancient Egyptian women. If one covers the headdress of many of these women alleged to be racially pure their features and colouring are the replica of many present-day English women who have a murky heredity. The reader can multiply instances from his own experience where a black face, apart from its colour, is the facsimile of white faces of allegedly pure blood. Every physical characteristic that one seeks to use as the hall-mark of a particular "race" bristles with exceptions. There are all varieties of white, black and red faces. It is therefore obvious that neither the colour nor the contour of a face is evidence of racial purity.

It may be added that round heads, long heads, and nondescript heads are associated with all varieties of colour, hair and facial characteristics, and even differ in the same family.

Again, place of birth is nothing to go by, as man has been on the move for thousands of years, and the most important geographical areas are inhabited by a vast assortment of mongrels. England is an example in point where one meets many who proudly boast of their "British Nationality" in strange accents. Think, also, what a hotch-potch America is where nationals from all over the world have gone into the melting pot, and British and other film stars and "famous" people have recently become "American citizens." Again, consider the people abroad whose fathers and grandfathers were born abroad, and yet the present generation still calls itself English—they look to England as their "country." Consider also the varieties of people of alien origin born in England.

These facts banish place of birth or country of origin as a criterion of race.

The fact is that man's wanderings over the earth have promoted such a mixture of blood that there is no such thing nowadays, even in remote places, as genuine
blood purity. Twenty-five thousand or so years has bred many varieties of the human species and will go on doing so. A name may be carried down for generations, but the blood associations of that name through the female side are beyond calculation. Many a fine name has a bundle of skeletons in the cupboard.

Language is also no guide to purity of ancestry. The most diverse people speak the same language now, and did so in the past. For example, at one time Latin was the language of both Roman and Barbarian. To-day Spanish is the language of native inhabitants of South America as well as the people of Spain. English is the language of that mixture of people occupying England, South Africa, Australia, America, Canada and other places. Here we come to another point—the question of "Aryan Race." But Aryan is a language and not a blood connection. The Aryan-speaking peoples, like the Celtic, were of mixed descent. The barbarian hordes that flooded Europe in the middle ages and mingled with the population destroyed any possibility of racial purity existing in our day.

There is, in fact, no single scheme of classification that will satisfactorily cover the different types of human beings in existence. Alpine, Nordic, Mediterranean and other strains are present in varying degrees in all the peoples of Europe.

The human race comes into the world naked, and clothes itself with habits and traditions the result of social circumstances. Different sections of the human race rise and fall in culture or importance according to the nature of the social environment, irrespective of colour, language or religion. Egypt, Greece and Rome were each at the top of the cultural scale and each has come down since the time of flowering.

In the long run the social environment blends people of different stocks into one type, with similar habits and outlook. In modern times the United States is an excellent example of this.

The people that to-day are regarded as representative of a low cultural stage may, under favourable social circumstances, rise to supremacy to-morrow. The Australian Maori, not long ago looked upon as at the bottom of the cultural scale, is imbibing the arts of civilisation at a
remarkable rate, and may soon be equal to the highest product of civilisation.

In mankind purity of race is impossible, even if it were desirable. Even among domestic animals the greatest care can only guarantee purity from a certain point. The classic example, the thoroughbred racehorse, is only thoroughbred from the already mixed Arabian strain that was introduced into Europe two centuries ago. On the other hand, mixture of peoples has been synonymous with cultural advances from the time of Babylon and Egypt to the present day. Peoples which have not been subjected to the invigorating influence of alien blood have, like the Chinese, stagnated.

The Jews, over whom race prejudice has been revived in a violent fashion, are of mixed origin, and represent a type with a religious basis and a particular historic tradition. It may be noted that a people that has been battered and hunted for centuries is liable while, and wherever, those conditions exist, to display the characteristics of the battered and hunted—distrust, clannishness and cunning.

Throughout the middle ages the Jew was ruled out of practically every occupation except finance, and consequently they became adepts in that business. Since then, as other occupations have been thrown open to them, they have brought into the new spheres the single-minded concentration forced upon them by their social history and have consequently excelled. This ability has produced distinguished workers in music, literature, science and the art of war. Jews are also as generous, brave, cowardly, self-seeking as other types of peoples who are proud of their nationality. These "virtues" or "vices," it may be remarked, have really nothing to do with race, but depend to a great extent upon age, health, sensitiveness, knowledge and circumstances, and vary as much in one type of people as in another. It may be added that they also depend upon the point of view of those concerned.

While, in certain circumstances, the rich Jew is fair game for the rich non-Jew, the poor Jew is always fair game for both under capitalism.

Finally, the Jewish question is not really a race question at all but an economic one. When other excuses fail,
it serves, as in Germany, to hide the real source of the misery of the mass of people of all colours and creeds. If it is not submerged by the mixture of races by that time it will certainly be solved by the advent of Socialism, under which there will not be economic crises, stagnation and poverty for millions that require a scapegoat to explain. Also there will not be either the competition for markets or for jobs that breed the unnatural fiends of envy, push-fulness and callous brutality.

It may perhaps be as well to add that we all use the word "race" loosely for want of better terms. But this does little harm as long as prejudice is not tied to it.

Chapter XVI.

Religion and the Workers.

Religion is woven like a thread into the texture of human society from early times to the present day. It is based upon man's ignorance of natural forces and has been propped up by rulers as a means of keeping slaves in subjection.

In early times religion was the means adopted by primitive man to explain and protect himself from happenings for which he could not find a natural explanation; happenings such as storms, earthquakes, falling trees, and the like. To the savage mind everything had life; everything was like himself in loves, hates, and passions. When the avalanche fell the rocks were angry; when the volcano belched forth destruction, the mountain was in a fury; when the ground rumbled and cracked, then the earth was determined upon destruction.

Savage man saw everything in his own image. When his mental development had advanced a stage further it was the mountain spirit and the river spirit and the earth spirit that was angry, and he commenced to devise means to propitiate angry spirits.

It was here that priesthood stepped in and the vague beginnings of what was eventually the Church that has harassed mankind across the ages, supported tyranny, and reaped much profit in the process. Priesthood became the
imaginary bulwark of man against the forces of nature and society; and religion his refuge when life was too burdensome.

In the early civilizations of Babylon and Egypt the priesthood was wealthy and powerful; chattel slaves and poor freemen toiled for its benefit. How powerful it was has been clearly shown by the treasures and manuscripts found in the tombs of rulers. By holding out the threat of eternal damnation to the unfaithful and the niggardly, the Egyptian priesthood accumulated vast wealth and property and stood behind the whips of the slave driver.

Each new religion, starting with the wail of the oppressed, has ended with the power of a new oppressor. Privileged classes learned early the value of religion and used it ruthlessly to support their domination.

The Christian Church was born out of the misery of the Roman world, when the peasant was being taxed out of existence; slave labour was rapidly using up the soil and the implements of labour; and the burden of arms and taxation was driving the Roman State to the brink of ruin.

In the Middle Ages the Church became the centre of Feudalism and the largest landholder. Its wealth was drawn from the work and misery of the bond slave, and it resisted with all its power movements that threatened to improve the lot of the labourer.

The magnificent churches scattered over Europe and the East are monuments to-day of the enormous wealth and power of the mediaeval Church.

The crusading lords of mediaeval times, who, according to legend, set forth to wrest Christian emblems from the heathen, but in reality had much less desirable motives, were forced to mortgage lands to the Church in order to fight the Church's battle. In England alone, in those days, the Church owned one-third of the land and half the wealth of the country.

When the growing commercial class, which saw with envy large quantities of the wealth of England passing over the Alps as dues to Rome, became strong enough it revolted and, under the guise of Protestantism, deprived the Catholic Church of its power and much of its wealth. Since then Protestantism has become the State religion in this country and has acted as a useful prop to support and
sanctify the capitalist system of wage-slavery. It has preached the slavish doctrines of resignation and obedience to rulers as the royal road to paradise in a mythical world to come after death.

When the capitalist system was getting firmly upon its feet in the middle of the nineteenth century children from six years of age were employed sixteen hours a day in the factory hells of this country and the Churches did not raise a finger to interfere with this diabolical system. Wilberforce, one of the shining lights of the Church, even defended the system. At the same time Christian missionaries abroad were paving the way to markets for the goods produced by these factories.

The effect upon one writer of the profit-hunting propensity of the time moved him to make the following bitter statements:

"The barbarities and desperate outrages of the so-called Christian race, throughout every region of the world, and upon every people they have been able to subdue, are not to be paralleled by those of any other race, however fierce, however untaught, and however reckless of mercy and shame, in any age of the world." (W. Howitt, "Colonization and Christianity," 1838, p. 9.)

One aspect of the Church's part in imperialism was explained over half a century later by Caldecott in "English Colonization and Empire." He put the matter as follows:

"... The whaler who harassed New Zealand, the sandalwood wretches of Polynesia, the convicts of Tasmania, the alcohol vendors who over-rode native chieftains in South Africa and drenched to madness and death their tribesmen, stood at the extreme end, not only of European barbarity, but of all barbarity whatever, for there was in them the mercilessness of selfish greed, not the fanatical rejoicing in the blood of enemies. And amidst all these dark doings Christian missionaries ever kept pressing in, and, as men of the Cross and men of the Bible, soothed and turned the spirit of despair and fear and hatred that seized the black man's minds in the early days of their con-
tact with our fellow-countrymen." (Page 254. Italics ours.)

In other words the Church smoothed the path of the oppressor.

The position of Christian Churches in relation to imperialism and the exploitation of native labour was also made clear by Dr. H. Bode in "British and German East Africa," where he shows how trade can and does follow the Bible:

"The moral education of the native has been the work of missionary enterprise, which was already active in South Africa before England or Germany had political ambitions there. It is regrettable that the value of missionary work is frequently underestimated. It may be admitted that tactless persons, who will be found in every profession, sometimes cause trouble to the administrative officials; and it would perhaps be better if the doctrine of Christian fraternity were less instilled into the native than the Divine command that, 'if any would not work, neither shall he eat.' Still, it would be unfair not to recognise the great part which missionary societies have played, and still play, as pioneers of civilization." (p. 74.)

"The easy life which nature grants to the aborigines of the Tropics could not develop in them a great instinct for hard working. This is an argument which justifies in some way the institution of slavery .... The best way of accustoming the natives to regular work is to increase their economic needs." (p. 84.)

Thus did religion help to make native races humble, meek and forgiving and taught them the harrowing joys of wage-slavery.

Nowadays the shares held by religious bodies and religious dignatories in all kinds of commercial companies producing anything from pills to battleships gives them a direct interest in the continued exploitation of the workers.

G. Chatterton-Hill, Ph.D., a leading religious writer, explains the function of the Church in social life in the following illuminating extracts, which are taken from "The Sociological Value of Christianity." The title of the book is significant.
"See, then, how wonderfully the doctrine of fraternity, as preached by Christianity, is adapted to the necessities of social life. The great social law of inequality is admitted and recognised, but the inevitable hardships that accompany its working are softened, are rendered acceptable, by the introduction of the idea of moral equality. Discontent is stilled, the dignity of even the humblest labour is safeguarded. Egotism is restrained, by the fact that each individual being constantly reminded of his duties towards Caesar and towards God, towards the social law and towards the moral law by the fact of each individual being taught to practise humility. . . ." (p. 104.)

"Humility is essential for all classes. It is indispensable for those who are governed, for without it the duty of submission is hard to fulfil, the fact of social inferiority is hard to accept, although it be inevitable." (p. 105.)

"Fraternity admits social inequality. . . . Fraternity is a notion that responds to the needs of society . . . because social inequality receives thereby an ethical significance; and because in the doctrine of fraternity, social inequality is invariably limited by the idea of moral equality." (p. 107.)

The lion and the lamb are equal even though the lamb be inside the lion!

Pope Leo XIII, in his Encyclical on the "Condition of the Working Classes," asserts that private property, rulers and ruled, and inequalities of wealth are in accordance with natural and Divine law, and must always exist. Under the heading, "The Poor must accept their lot," the Encyclical says:

"As for those who possess not the gifts of fortune, they are taught by the Church that in God's sight poverty is no disgrace, and that there is nothing to be ashamed of in seeking one's bread by labour. This is enforced by what we see in Christ Himself. . . . From contemplation of this Divine Exemplar it is more easy to understand that the true worth and nobility of man lies in his moral qualities, that is, in virtue; that virtue is moreover the common inheritance of men, equally within the reach of high and low, rich
and poor; and that virtue, and virtue alone, wherever found, will be followed by the rewards of everlasting happiness. These reflections cannot fail to keep down the pride of those who are well to do, and to embolden the spirit of the afflicted; to incline the former to generosity and the latter to meek resignation. Thus the separation which pride would set up tends to disappear, nor will it be difficult to make rich and poor join hands in friendly concord.”

The “New Testament” (Romans, Chap. 13) puts the matter of rulers and ruled in clear and unmistakable terms: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”

In conclusion, then, religion depends upon faith—blind belief. It is, on the one hand, the hopeless wail of the slave across the ages. The despairing cry of the poor. On the other hand, it is a weapon in the hands of masters to keep the slaves resigned to their chains; in the belief that this life is a vale of tears, opening to a glorious paradise after death.

Misery in this world is proclaimed as the key to the doors of the paradise in the mythical world to come, when slaves have ceased from working and their bodies are at rest.

Socialism is the very opposite of this false and slavish doctrine. Its fundamental precepts signify hope, struggle, a determination to break the shackles of slavery for ever, and a looking forward to a future on earth where free men and women will work out their destinies under conditions that will ensure that each shall enjoy to the full the product of the associated labour of all.

Chapter XVII.

POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION: SOCIAL REFORM OR SOCIALISM?

The act of putting ideas into words should be a means of achieving greater clarity and understanding, for writer
as well as reader. It should help to clear the way for action, but often smooth words and rounded phrases serve only as a brake on action. If anyone doubts this he has only to read again some of the optimistic plans for a new world which were being drafted in great number a quarter of a century ago. They promised a world without war, without want and without insecurity. Little or nothing came of it all. Precious years were wasted while the world drifted to another war and now a new generation of sentimental (or sometimes cynical) planners are at work who have seemingly learned nothing and forgotten everything. In international affairs it is only necessary to recall the League of Nations. Hardly a hand is raised in its defence now and the Atlantic Charter drafted by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill did not trouble to mention it.

While the war is in progress plans to meet the post-war situation are being made from two principal points of view. On the one side are the spokesmen for the capitalists who, as of yore, promise us a "brave new world" the like of which we have never yet seen—though it is all framed in vague general phrases that only have the appearance of definiteness. On the other side are the Labour Party spokesmen who, also as of yore, expect sweeping changes that will alter the aspect of the world to the great advantage of the workers.

In examining the question it is worth while first of all considering at some length the Labour Party side in order to grasp how frail the foundation is upon which their hopes are built.

In the matter of post-war reconstruction we may compare the pronouncements of the Labour Party, "The War and the Peace," adopted at the Labour Party's Annual Conference at Whitsuntide, 1941, with an earlier report, "Labour and the New Social Order," adopted in 1918. The comparison brings out some interesting points. Much of the new document reproduces the arguments and assumptions of the old. Other parts are different but the difference sometimes reflects not an advance of thought towards Socialism but an adaptation to the trends in capitalism.

The 1918 plan suffered from three major defects. It
started with the wrong belief that the year 1918 was witnessing if not the death, "at any rate the culmination and collapse" of capitalism. "The individualist system of capitalist production," said the Report, "may, we hope, indeed have received a death-blow." Its second error was in assuming that the battle for a new order was already more than half won, based on a belief that one of the main pillars of the Labour programme (called "The Universal Enforcement of a National Minimum") "had already gained the support of the enlightened statesmen and economists of the world."

The third defect was that the Labour Party had not a practical alternative to offer to capitalism and one that would be understood and accepted by the electorate. The Report was worded to imply in a rather guarded way that the remedy was Socialism. It opened with the statement that "what has to be reconstructed after the war is not this or that Government Department, or this or that piece of social machinery; but, so far as Britain is concerned, society itself," and on page 4 is a reference to the "socialisation of industry." But in the rest of the Report it was clearly shown that the Labour Party was far from being finished with capitalism. It desired to control but not to abolish it; hence, for example, the remark in connection with taxation, "we are at one with the manufacturer, the farmer, and the trader in objecting to taxes interfering with production or commerce, or hampering transport and communications" (page 10). The Labour Party could hardly be at one with these sections of the capitalist class if the intention was to eliminate them and their system.

All these assumptions were groundless. Capitalism was not dead. Once the war was over it resumed its course, not much different from what it had been in 1914. The employers, and the "enlightened statesmen and economists," soon showed what they thought of the plan and of its detailed proposals when the post-war unrest had to be dealt with. Nor would the Labour Party's proposals stand serious criticism. They did no doubt appeal to a large number of electors and this enabled the Labour Party to take office in 1923-1924 and again in 1929-1931, but those two Governments found that the administration of
capitalism left them no time or inclination to introduce the main parts of their own programme. The Labour Party had by then forgotten its pledge of 1918 that it would "certainly lend no hand" to the revival of capitalism.

It is a melancholy thought that in 1942 most of these assumptions can still be cherished by the Labour Party.

The "four pillars" of the 1918 plan were (a) The Universal Enforcement of the National Minimum; (b) the Democratic control of industry; (c) the Revolution in National Finance; and (d) the Surplus Wealth for the Common Good.

There was to be a national minimum wage of 30s. a week (to be revised according to the level of prices), and this was also to be the basis of payment to the unemployed, the sick, the aged, and the victims of industrial accidents.

Industry and the land were to be nationalised, starting immediately with the mines, the railways and electric power, followed by the "expropriation" of the insurance companies. There was to be democracy in industry as well as in the Government, with "the progressive elimination from the control of industry of the private capitalist."

Taxation was to be changed and a capital levy introduced, both based on the principle of a very high levy on the highest incomes. The phrasing of these proposals throws light on the outlook of those who drafted the Report and of the delegates who accepted it. Taxation was to rise "up to 16s. or even 19s. in the pound on the highest income of the millionaires," and the capital levy was likewise to start at a small deduction from the wealth of people owning more than £1,000 "and a very much larger percentage from the millionaires." They only proposed to reduce inequality not abolish it.

Among the specific demands were the retention of war-time Government control of industry and of the minimum wage of miners and land workers, "equal pay for men and women," an extended scheme of unemployment insurance, educational reforms and a school leaving age of 16, "complete abolition of the House of Lords," various extensions of the franchise, and the organisation of schemes of public work to even out and to reduce the amount of unemployment; much like the Labour programme of today.
Among a very large number of other proposals was one for a League of Nations.

It will be seen that hardly any of the proposals bore fruit, and those that were adopted have left capitalism essentially unchanged and unregenerate. It is true that the franchise was extended, unemployment insurance was made general, and the League of Nations was set up, but apart from these and a few social reforms neither the Labour Governments nor the Tory and National Governments did anything to carry out the plans. The House of Lords is still with us, enriched by some Labour peers, unemployment has been greater than ever before, taxation on the rich has been increased but without any marked effect on the production of new millionaires, there has been no national minimum and the war-time Minimum Wage Acts for miners and landworkers were soon repealed after the war. No industries have been nationalised.

The inequality of wealth, the national minimum wage and nationalisation of industry are three questions worthy of special attention. Here are two statements on inequality, one from the 1918 Labour Party Report, the other from an article by a prominent Labour Party supporter in *World Digest*, June, 1941. They show how little capitalism changed:

Meanwhile innumerable new private fortunes are being heaped up by those who have taken advantage of the nation's needs; and the one-tenth of the population which owns nine-tenths of the riches of the United Kingdom, far from being made poorer, will find itself, in the aggregate, as a result of the war, drawing in rent and interest and dividends a larger nominal income than before. (1918 Report, page 19.)

That was 1918; now for 1941:

In Britain on the eve of this war for democratic principles, nearly half the total national income went to 10 per cent. of the people; 80 per cent. of the total capital belonged to less than 6 per cent. of the community. . . . At one end of the social scale twelve million people earned less than 50s. a week. At the other end there were many thousands with incomes of over £200 a week and some with incomes of over
THE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE AND NATIONALISATION

In 1918 the Labour Party demanded a national minimum wage for everyone. They thought it had the support of "the enlightened statesmen and economists of the world." On August 18th, 1919, the Lloyd George Government introduced a Bill to set up a Royal Commission "to inquire into legal minimum time-rates of wages," but the Bill was not proceeded with. Then on March 4th, 1924, when the first Labour Government was in office, a Labour motion was put down and carried that "in view of the practically universal acceptance of the principle that a living wage for all workers should be the first charge upon industry ... this House urges the Government to proceed without delay with the Bill introduced by the Government of the day in 1919, constituting a Commission to inquire into and report upon legal minimum time-rates of wages."

The Labour Government whole-heartedly accepted the principle of the resolution but pleaded pressure of business which would have to be cleared away before anything could be done. The opportunity did not arise before the Labour Government was defeated and left office. Nor was it done in the second Labour Government, and when on March 31st, 1931, Mr. Kirkwood asked the Minister of Labour, Miss M. Bondfield, if it was the intention of the Labour Government to introduce legislation for a minimum wage in mining, steel, textile, engineering, agriculture and other industries and in the railway and other services, her reply was a blunt "No, sir."

At the present time the idea is given less attention in Labour circles, and minimum wage proposals seem likely to be replaced by schemes to pay allowances to families with children.

Then there was the idea of nationalisation, on the lines of the Post Office. It was urgently demanded in 1918 but was pressed with less and less enthusiasm, until in 1930 it was quietly allowed to die. In its place came the demand for public utility corporations like the London Passenger Transport Board. This was due not so much to a change of heart but to the recognition that capitalism
was moving in a different direction. As has been pointed out by Mr. Geoffrey Crowther, editor of the *Economist*—

The choice now is not between individual competitive enterprise and centralised organisation by the State; it is between centralised control by the State and by private trust.—(*World Digest, September, 1941.*)

From the standpoint of solving the social problems instead of trying to patch things up the Labour Party in 1918 was in a false position. It wanted to be drastic but had not the understanding or desire to come out for Socialism. Neither the leaders nor the rank and file understood the limitations of their position. They were not prepared to face the fact that there could be no Socialism until the hard and long task of winning over a majority to Socialism had been completed.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THIS WAR?**

Before the United States entered the war in 1941 those who were in charge of its foreign policy, and who were deciding whether and to what extent munitions of war should be advanced to aid the British forces against the Germans, were naturally interested in the question what social changes are likely to occur in Great Britain after the war. American politicians asked questions and were given comforting—and, as it happens, quite truthful—answers. These answers give a better idea of the shape of things to come than do the rosy hopes of social reformers, for implicit within them is the fact that the capitalist basis of society will remain.

When Mr. Joseph Kennedy, former United States Ambassador in London, went back to U.S.A. he was questioned by a committee of Congress in connection with Roosevelt's "Lease or Lend" Bill to aid Great Britain, and one of the questions put to him was, "Is England rapidly going Socialist?" Mr. Kennedy did not think it was. He said, however:—

If you mean is the Labour Party becoming more effective in Government, that is so.—(*Daily Herald, January 22nd, 1941.*)

A well-known American writer, Mr. Mark Sullivan, had also been much disturbed by reports of the coming
of Socialism to Great Britain. The Manchester Guardian (February 19th, 1941) reports him as follows:—

Since our Congress is, in effect, about to underwrite British victory, it is reasonable our Congress should know any commitments that may have been made by responsible persons in Britain, to take effect in the event of victory; whether there are war aims which include Socialism for Britain.

The Manchester Guardian, commenting on this, professed not to know the answer—"we are afraid that not even a Senate Committee will be able to help him. Indeed, we shall have to admit him to the secret that we are just as much in the dark about what Britain (and the United States) will be like after the war as he is himself."

In spite, however, of this disclaimer, the Manchester Guardian knows well that Mr. Churchill and the Tory Party have not entered into a secret pact with Mr. Bevin and Mr. Attlee to dispossess the capitalist class on the day the war ends. The confusion only arises because the Guardian, like other newspapers, has the habit of using the word Socialism when it means something else. This is clearly brought out in the words that come after those quoted above: "But we might guess... that both countries will have gone a good deal further on the New Deal road." It is certainly correct that the post-war difficulties will bring a new crop of social reforms; but that is not Socialism.

Sir Walter Citrine was lecturing in U.S.A. and, according to the Daily Telegraph, he was answering similar questions. He appears to have replied in a similar way.

The tour (of Sir Walter Citrine) has been a great success and has proved very popular with American Federation leaders. In particular, it has had a reassuring effect on those who feared Britain was turning, or would turn, into a Socialistic State, which would prove as difficult for a democratic country like the United States to get on with after the war as Russia or Germany.—(Daily Telegraph, January 29th, 1941.)

If then it is agreed that Britain and America will not go over to Socialism at the end of the war, what will happen?
When it comes to questions of detail Socialists are no better able than the Manchester Guardian to guess what particular forms the post-war aches and pains will take and what remedies will be prescribed by the rival political parties. Certain conditions can, however, be discerned fairly clearly. When peace comes there will at once be acute political controversy about the abolition of war-time restrictions and controls and State regulation of industry. Those industrial, commercial and financial concerns with sufficient resources to weather industrial storms will want a free hand to get back to the normal ways of profit-making. They will make the most of a widespread popular reaction against restrictions and will exploit to the full any instances of civil service "red-tape" and inefficiency. The weaker firms and industries will, no doubt, look to Government aid to save them from bankruptcy at the hands of their bigger competitors, and will be prepared to support a continuance of Government control as the price that has to be paid. They will find themselves campaigning alongside the Labour Party, which will try to use increased State control as a means of extracting social reforms and of stabilising the position of the trade unions. The compromises resulting from this struggle will probably include legislation on such matters as pensions, workmen's compensation, hours of work, health and unemployment insurance, school-leaving age, the trade unions, etc.; no Government will dare to face the workers entirely empty-handed.

A forecast of the post-war world as it will affect one industry, cotton, has been sketched out by Mr. Raymond Streat, Chairman of the Cotton Board. The following summary is worth pondering over:

Mr. Streat starts from the assumption that the Lancashire cotton industry must export or die. Without a sufficient export trade added to the home trade the industry cannot retain the volume and variety of production necessary for efficiency and thus ultimately for survival. But can this sufficient volume of export trade be established in the face of foreign competition, which must be expected after the war to be even more formidable than before? Mr. Streat thinks it can be—within a period of five years, if the Cotton Board’s policy is adopted. This policy is a cam-
campaign on six fronts, or, as I would rather call it, a Britannia's trident with six prongs.

The first prong is Government assistance in the form of international trade agreements ("with a front seat for cotton goods every time"), export credits, etc. The second and sharpest is price control within the industry. "Managed prices," says Mr. Streat, "confer enormous benefits on the producers," but in return for these benefits they must sacrifice part of their former liberty; they must agree to tackle their own redundancy problems and must co-operate with labour and in technical advancement, "not defensively for the sake of their individual balance sheets, but aggressively for the good of the industry."

The third prong is commercial policy—a reform of Lancashire's merchanting organisation and a selling price policy based on the principle of "what the traffic will bear." The fourth prong is technical progress, the fifth a rational wages system—higher wage rates, but a sweeping away of obsolete operational practices and agreements—and the sixth is propaganda, sales promotion and market research.—(News-Chronicle, February 3rd, 1941.)

Here is a programme on which the employers, the trade unions and the Labour Party will probably be able to come together, but there is one very important feature to which the City Editor of the News Chronicle draws attention:

Such, very briefly, is Mr. Streat's programme. Underlying it is his conviction that post-war international commercial relations will be based on the same nationalistic, protectionist principles as obtained before the war. International trade will be a matter of hard bargaining between Governments on import quotas: exchange control will persist as a permanent phenomenon, and with it barter and bilateralism. So the cotton trade must discipline itself and arm itself with every offensive weapon known to modern trade warfare. Mr. Streat does not use quite this language, but this is really what it amounts to.

So it is not going to be a very different new world after all: and this is where Socialist propaganda comes in.
Mr. Streat's sort of programme means the danger of new wars if it is allowed to remain the basis of the social system for another 10 or 20 years after this war is ended. It is for Socialists to determine that that shall not happen. It is our task to explain to the workers why a seemingly "safe and sane" policy of seeking reforms and wage regulation is a policy surrounded by the same risks as existed before 1914 and before 1939. Probably people with Mr. Streat's ideas will have their way, but the only safeguard for the future will be a large and growing number of workers who can get below the surface and see what are the limitations and dangers of such ideas.

Above all, Socialists alone can do the invaluable work of persuading the workers to give up their weakness for meaningless abstractions. Such statements befog the clarity of thought without which there can be no correct action. It is necessary to beware vague appeals and promises about "justice," "fair play for everybody," "economic democracy," etc., and to insist always on explicit and concrete statements from the parties and politicians who promise to re-shape the world. Workers, make sure that you understand precisely which way emancipation lies. If you are still convinced that capitalism can be made to work provided there are sufficient laws restricting the freedom of action of the capitalist, then be honest with yourself and declare that you are for capitalism and against Socialism. At the same time remember that it is your own responsibility to understand what Socialism is before you reject it; no leader can take that responsibility off your shoulders without the penalty of your neglect some day falling on you. If, on the other hand, you perceive that Socialism is the only road of emancipation, it is your duty to devote your efforts to the achievement of Socialism.

A Word to the Unconverted

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is a political party composed of working men and women who have organised together to capture political power for the purpose of introducing Socialism. The Party is controlled entirely by its members, who determine its policy by majority decisions. It has no "great men" or "leaders," but is simply a party of workers who know what they want and the way
to get it. Holding that "the emancipation of the workers must be the work of the working class itself," it urges the workers to join its ranks and bear an equal share in the final great struggle—the struggle to banish privileged classes from the earth forever.

Reader, you should now have obtained a fair idea of the basis of the Socialist Party and its attitude to other parties, and to the principal problems that face the workers. If you have read carefully and pondered as you have read, you must realise that the position put before you is the only possible one for the workers to adopt, if they do not wish to remain mere instruments to provide wealth for others to enjoy, and if they do not wish to bequeath this heritage of slavery to their children.

In the limited space of this pamphlet there has been demonstrated the inability of the capitalists and reform parties to do more than leave you where you are—a propertyless worker, dependent for your living upon the sale of your mental and physical energies in a shrinking market.

You are urged to weigh carefully the whole of what you have read. When you have done so, then choose your line of conduct, for upon your choice depends the hope of the future.

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