THE WORKERS'

# DREADNOUGHT

Socialism, Internationalism, Votes for All.

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## THE BALKAN STATES AND THE GREAT POWERS.

By ALBERT COURIEL, Socialist Deputy for Salonica.

However difficult may be the struggle towards the integral emancipation of the organised workers in the great European nations, the working class of the smaller States have a greater difficulty to face, for, in almost every case, to the internal enemy is added another and more formidable enemy: the capitalism of the great industrial States.

This is especially true of the Balkan States. Their existence as independent nations is a comparatively recent one, and, therefore, without the favourable opportunity of development such as is to be found in Switzerland, in Holland, or in Denmark. They are situated where all the conflicting interests of the capitalists of the whole world seem to cross and meet. The backward state of their industrial development and the peculiar conditions that attended their birth have always caused them to be, in their relations with the Great Powers, more or less in a position of inferiority.

This position arose firstly from their dependence upon the obligation of small loans; then of larger private investments; gradually groups of financiers and manufacturers installed themselves there, formed a close net-work of interests that soon made them the true masters of the economic life of these small countries.

These financial ventures generally paid well, because the foreign capitalists had only to face a native competitor, short of machinery and ignorant of the swift and modern manipulation of capital which already prevailed in Western Europe. They had ready for their use a working class despised, humbled, and still without any form of organisation: a population that practically had no voice in public affairs; the foreign capitalists could, consequently, impose onerous terms, such as could no longer be obtained in more advanced countries.

Gradually, the economic domination became also a political one. The ruling classes of the Balkan States, in general, were always ready to favour this foreign economic penetration, for their very political existence depended upon the backing they could get from the Great Powers which were, in all but in name, their true masters.

In fact, the party in office always was the bonded, and at times the abject, servant of the interests of one or another of the Great Powers, either openly or through the working of underground wire pulling. Naturally enough, the struggle for supremacy amongst the various great capitalistic States found its echo there also.

As time passed, as political interests shifted, and the Powers of Europe variously grouped themselves, each set went about intriguing for the domination of the Balkan States. We saw in the present war how well the policy of drawing the smaller States within the orbit of one or other Great Power worked out to the Great Powers' own selfish advantage. The action of the Kaiser, who in 1913 favoured the cession of Kavalla to Greece, is an eloquent example. The subsequent pro-German policy of King Constantine repaid him with usury. Even before the war the predominance in the Balkan States of the interests of the great foreign capitalists was of far-reaching importance. There were the private speculations; the highly advantageous investments of money subscribed to national loans: all of which tended to extend and consolidate their influence.

Things grew worse still, when, spurred on in their national rivalry, skilfully fostered by the diplomacy of Europe, the Balkan States foolishly started a race for armaments—a blind alley from which there was no exit. A road leading down to a precipice upon which no halt was possible.

They seemed to be guided by one desire only, which, as a glowing light, blinds them to any sober reasoning: each to increase their territory at the expense of the neighbour; one and all aiming at the occupation of the richer provinces of the Peninsula. Entwined with this obsession we find, at times, a glimmer of sincere, yet foolish idealism. Sincere, because underlying it was the desire of freeing oppressed brothers, aiming at the building up of a complete national unity; foolish because by war this aim could not possibly be achieved. War does not liberate peoples; a nation is no sooner defeated than it takes steps to prepare for revenge.

It was a mad race towards a dangerous goal The economic conditions were daily growing worse and the political servitude ever greater and deeper. All these facts tended to promote a state of affairs favourable to the capitalists of the Great Powers. They could lend their capital—to nations greatly in need of it—at a higher rate of interest than before. They were able to sell obsolete warships to their poor creditors on very profitable terms and to palm off on them munitions of war hopelessly out of date which they wished to get rid of and replace. Consequently, even the relations between the Balkan States themselves were strained.

One by one, all the Balkan nations became entangled in the present war. It could not have been otherwise. I myself believe that but for the assumption—impossible in cold reality—of the simultaneous advent to power of the working class in all the Balkan nations, not one of the ruling classes, whatever its political denomination, could have kept its own country out of the war. Their economic relations were too closely knit together with one or other belligerent Power. They were politically compromised. The historic structure of the Balkan countries was so recent and weak that they were drawn in the vortex of destruction almost fatally. Even a change of Governments could not have kept them out of the war; at the very utmost such a change could only determine on which side to enter.

What, then, is to be the fate of the Balkan States? We know the conditions of Serbia wholly occupied by the forces of the Central Powers, her people decimated by epidemic diseases and privations. Belgium and Turkey are not much better off. Rumania has suffered all the sorrows and ravages of war; drunk the bitter cup of humiliation. Greece, who, as it were, has but just entered, cannot yet gauge its purport nor extent.

Equality of misery now unites all the Balkan States. In another thing also they are linked together, and it is: that for many years to come they have all lost their independence and, consequently, all possibility of national development. They have now to live from hand to mouth on the crumbs cast to them by the Great Powers. The extermination of their youths on the field of battle finds its counter-part in the direful sufferings of the civil population.

(*Continued on Column 2 back page.*)

## THE DANGER OF A MONEY TRUST.

The Treasury Committee on Bank Amalgamations has just issued a report recommending that there shall be no more banking amalgamations except by permission of the Treasury and the Board of Trade. It is suggested that these Boards should set up a Statutory Committee to advise them, consisting of one commercial and one financial representative. It is pointed out that since 1891 the number of private banks has fallen from 37 to 6, and the number of joint stock banks from 106 to 34. If this process continues:—

"it can only lead, and fairly rapidly, to the creation of a very few preponderant combinations; and if those combinations amalgamated, or enter into a joint agreement as to rates and policy, &c., the Money Trust would immediately spring to birth."

"Such a combine [says the report] would mean that the financial safety of the country and the interests of individual depositors and traders, would be placed in the hands of a few individuals, who would naturally operate mainly in the interests of the shareholders."

It is further said that the position of the Bank of England would be seriously undermined by such a combination and that the Government of the day might find it difficult to adopt any course not approved by the Money Trust.

We think that that position is already reached. Is it not an accepted fact that the bankers were the first people consulted concerning the declaration of the present war, and did not the Government agree to stand behind the bankers in order that the bankers would support the war? Is not the influence of the financiers constantly asserted wherever legislation is concerned?

If the Government desires to free itself from the control of the banking interest it must nationalise banking.

*The Manchester Guardian*, in a leader on this subject, complains:—

"The Post Office Savings Bank has throughout its history been crippled at the dictation of the private banks, who feared and fear its rivalry. They have imposed upon it the chains of the maximum inconvenience—limitations of deposits, limitations of investments, limitations of interest. That is the reason why the Post Office Bank has grown so little and counts so little in the economic life of the nation."

*The Guardian* urges that to free the Post Office Savings Bank from "its shackles" is the "true constructive policy" to avert the money trust. We do not agree with *The Guardian* in its piecemeal policy. We want to see the complete abolition of the individualist capitalist banking business. But we must point out that the question of the nationalisation of banking is largely a middle-class question. The workers, having little or no margin for saving, only bank to a very small extent. And so long as the management of the country is in the hands of Governments composed of persons who represent capitalistic interests, even a national banking system, if nationalisation were adopted would be carefully organised in the interests of the greater capitalists. Let us make no mistake about that.

Now as to the immediate effect of the proposed Government control of banking, if it be accepted, (and a Bill to establish it may be rushed through Parliament at any time) what is likely to be the result? What are the risks to be guarded against? Will the controlling Government Department be empowered to ask the banks which come seeking amalgamation: "Who are your investors?" Will any conditions be attached to the amalgamation permit given; such, for instance, as the course to be pursued in case trade unions desire to withdraw deposit during strikes. Trades unions have already encountered trouble through banks refusing to pay in time of industrial crisis. The Labour movement now proposes to make the Co-operative Movement its banker. Will Government control affect that relationship in any respect? The situation must be carefully watched. More and more our Governments are "business Governments" working in close co-operation with powerful capitalist combinations. When the Munitions Act was passed the workers were urged to submit to the clauses giving the Ministry of Munitions power to control their liberty and wages on the ground that the profits of the employer were being limited. Will the workers be told at some inconvenient moment that as the state has regulated bankers it must also take the power to regulate depositors?

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# THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

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## EMPIRE AND NATIONALITY.

Tagore, in his 'Reminiscences,' tells us that a new pleasure came to him when he began to see his fellows, not in relation to himself and his desires of them, but as the artist sees the subjects of his pictures, regarding them for their own sake, all self-consciousness obliterated. Then the limbs and the features of passers-by revealed to him unexpected beauty; there was abounding interest in the thoughts of those with whom he spoke. He writes: "My heart flung open its doors and let the crowd of worlds rush in, greeting each other."

Few are so soulless as to deny the beauty of the storm-rent sky because the wind blows cold upon them, but how many of us are able to take a disinterested view of human relationships? The competitive struggle in which mankind is engaged has so sharply accentuated the possessive tendency, that the enjoyment of all sorts of human intercourse is thereby limited and the mental stature is dwarfed.

Very clearly is this seen in the views generally expressed on the Irish situation. The Government, to justify the arrest of the Sinn Feiners, has issued a condemnatory statement. It is a one-sided statement. The Sinn Feiners' case in reply to it has not been heard. The evidence on which the statement is based has not been legally tested.

Mr. Lloyd George says:—

"Much of it cannot be published without endangering the public safety, because it gives away the sources of our information, and no taunts will drive us to the publication of that part of the evidence."

The excuse will not satisfy fair-minded people; it savours too much of bluffing. In the Wheeldon case Alec Gordon, the man on whose statements the accused people were mainly convicted, was not produced, the prosecution stating that they did not wish his identity to become known. In the Sinn Fein case the evidence itself is to be withheld. A fair trial is impossible in any case, political or other wise, if the evidence for the prosecution is to be taken on trust. The history of Piggott's forged letters, by which in 1886 it was sought to implicate Parnell in the Phœnix Park murders, should be sufficient warning against the acceptance of any but the strongest evidence of Irish plots. The Government statement quotes the Report of the Royal Commission on the Easter week rebellion of 1916:—

"It is now a matter of common notoriety that the Irish Volunteers have been in communication with the authorities in Germany and were for a long time known to be supplied by money through Irish-American societies."*

Sinn Feiners have always protested that the Commission was prejudiced and unfair; but, in any case, its findings only referred to the rebellion of Easter week, 1916. That rebellion was paid for by many executions and imprisonments, and it is a principle of British law that no one may be punished twice for the same offence.

The present Government statement further asserts that "negotiations between the executive of the Sinn Fein organisation and Germany have been virtually continuous for three and a half years." If this be true, how long has it been known to the Government and how were the facts brought to light? Did the Government intercept the messages as they passed? Did it wait, biding its time, whilst the plot grew, in order that the disclosures might be used to smash the movement against conscription when that question should become acute? Or has some spy or *agent provocateur* newly produced the evidence? In that case it should be most carefully sifted, for history proves that informers have been frequently the authors of the crimes they have revealed.

It was a foregone conclusion that the Government's accusations would be accepted without question by the Unionist papers, which appear to regard as treasonable even purely constitutional efforts to secure Irish self-government. The attitude of the Liberal newspapers is more complex. A. G. G. in *The Daily News* describes, (using as his mouthpiece a Mr. St. Loe Strachey of Cork) the conquest of Ireland and its oppression and misgovernment by Britain for 750 years. He says that the Irish have not been "governed" because they have been perpetually "to be conquered"; their institutions and speech were "blotted out"; they were given "Parliaments without power," which were "taken away without reasons," or corrupted to betray their own people; their lands were given to those who had sold the remnant of their liberties; their thriving industries were destroyed to remove competition from British manufactures; alien settlers were introduced as a privileged garrison; the Irish faith was made a bar to citizenship; the Irish people were put under an armed police; and British soldiers were sent to evict the people from their holdings. A hundred years ago the Irish numbered seven million: to-day there are but four millions, whilst the population of Britain has quadrupled during the century. After generations of constitutional struggle the Irish seemed on the brink of winning at least a measure of freedom; the Home Rule Bill had passed the various stages necessary to become an Act by British law. Then, as A. G. G. makes his Mr. "St. Loe Strachey of Cork" say:—

"Your governing classes conspired with the privileged garrison of Ulster to organise an armed rebellion with the aid of German guns to defeat us. The leader of that rebellion walks in and out your Cabinets to-day."

All this A. G. G. recounts with evident sympathy; yet he insists that, if there has been a Sinn Fein conspiracy with Germany, "the nation will look for stern justice.... It cannot palter with plots against its life." Is it not possible to view this question with detached, impartial mind? If England has done to Ireland all that A. G. G. describes, and if, as he says, "the Almighty never created one people good enough to rule another"; if "self-government is better than good-government," surely it is imperative that Ireland should be free. No, Mr. A. G. Gardiner, your position is untenable. You make your Mr. St. Loe Strachey say: "The history of England in Ireland is a history of tyranny without parallel for duration and bitterness in European annals." How, then, can you speak of "*justice*" in connection with this "tyranny"? You say that "the nation cannot afford to palter with its life." From your own showing, it appears to be Ireland's life, not England's, which is at stake! If you are not prepared to follow the arguments you have employed to their logical conclusion, would it not be more straightforward to refrain from using them? We should not mention the matter but for the unfortunate fact that, your attitude is largely shared. The logical deduction from your arguments is that the Irish rebels cannot be blamed for fighting for their country's freedom and that the proper way to meet them is to make peace with them by assenting to Irish independence. Why do you shrink from this conclusion?

Do you believe that the life of the British nation would be endangered if Ireland were made free to-morrow? The bogey that an independent Ireland would be turned into a German submarine base has grown fashionable during the war. It was not taken seriously in peace time. Does any one say that the Irish after obtaining their freedom would deliberately ally themselves with Germany against Britain? The Government asserts that a group of Irish patriots has sought to do this in order to secure national freedom; but those who imagine that a free Ireland would choose such a course can hardly believe in the story that Germany is the foe and Britain the friend of small nations!

Mr. George Lansbury in *The Herald* last week expressed the wish that the Irish people should now be set free to decide their own destiny and his confident belief that they would vote to remain a part of the British Empire. We have often expressed a similar wish, but we do not anticipate that the Irish, if able to choose quite freely, would choose as Mr. Lansbury predicts. Neither do we think that there is the least possibility of their allying themselves to Germany, unless under compulsion, or in a desperate, mad effort to become free. All the indications appear to us to show that the Irish will become more and more determined to establish themselves as a self-governing community, unattached to any empire. We shall be told that the tendency of the age is towards the further consolidation of great empires and that it is becoming ever less and less possible for the little nations to survive alone.

In reply we turn to the great exemplar of modernism—the Russian Revolution—as a result of which the great Russian Empire is being swiftly broken up into a series of independent republics, held together only by a loose federal tie. The Bolsheviki, those exponents and creators of newest sociology who are to-day controlling Russia, intend these independent republics to be the nucleus of a federation which shall comprise, not a Russian Empire, but the Federated Socialist Republics of all Europe and, in time, of all the world.

The nineteenth century was the century of the growth of great capitalist empires; the twentieth century, we think, will see their disintegration; and the substitution of the world-wide Socialist confederation of free nationalities. We shall be told by some that this confederation will be built up by the gradual absorption of all the small nationalities into the existing great empires and the eventual coalescing of the great empires. We do not think so; we believe that the great empires will be disintegrated, and that the bursting forth of the small nationalities will hasten the world's progress to the eventual Socialist confederation of all peoples.

It should be noticed that the small nations to-day striving to free themselves are no longer, as in the old days, assembled under the standard of some native prince; they are in each case demanding a republican form of Government and the propaganda of nationalism is linked with that of democracy. Several of the Russian provinces which are claiming their independence have established their own Soviet government and all are striving towards Socialism. British Socialists deplore, in fact, that Sinn Fein is not avowedly Socialist and undoubtedly it contains many non-Socialist elements; yet the proclamation of Easter week, 1916, showed unmistakably the influence of the Socialist ideal.

If any one is asking us whether we are evading the question of Ireland being seized as a German naval base, we must reply that this seems to us quite a small question in comparison with the happiness and satisfaction of peoples. The argument that some Great Power will make use of a little nation could, of course, be used in every case, whether it be that of Ireland, Denmark, Switzerland, Holland, or any other. But, imagining that after Ireland had won her freedom, Germany should seek to invade her, we presume that Britain would be on the watch to prevent the invasion. To do so effectively the British Government might consider it necessary to violate Irish neutrality and to establish a garrison on Irish soil. That would be unpleasant for the Irish, we could not assent to the procedure as a just one. But the Irish would find it much less objectionable to endure, however unwillingly, such a temporary occupation, established for the sole military purpose of preventing an invasion and pledged to interfere as little as possible with the ordinary life of the people and to withdraw at the end of the war, than is the present arrangement, which is a denial of all title to existence apart from England.

Trotsky's pamphlet "War or Revolution"* comes as though to restore our sense of proportion and perspective; to make us realise that in the march of evolution the world is ever-changing; and that, although only minor reforms may appear to have been effected within our memories, yet the pace of social growth is quickening, and the war is bringing swiftly towards us one of the age-awaited periods of tremendous change. Trotsky tells us that we have been passing through a period of waiting, necessarily devoted to reformism, from which further social development will enable us to pass into the revolutionary period anticipated by Marx. He asserts that:—

"Capitalism has created the material conditions of a new Socialist economic system. Imperialism has led the capitalist nations into historic chaos. The War of 1914 shows the way out of this chaos, by violently urging the proletariat on to the path of Revolution."

He urges that humanity has before it only the choice between Socialism and perpetual war. He explains what should be self-evident to every thoughtful person, that the natural tendency of our economic system is to break through the State boundaries, the whole globe having become "one economic workshop, the different parts of which are inseparably connected with each other." Therefore:—

"The present war is at bottom a revolt of the forces of production against the political form of nation and State. It means the collapse of the national State as an independent economic unit."

Capitalism has grown strong within the national boundaries, but now it overleaps their confines in a struggle for ever new markets and raw materials, which its enormous production renders always necessary. Only this circumscribed earth, which man cannot enlarge, can supply these new fields of capitalistic exploitation. Already, by means of the national State, capitalism has "divided the whole earth among the oligarchies of the Great Powers, around which were grouped the satellites, the small nations, who lived off the rivalry between the great ones." But the demand for further fields of enterprise still urges on the Governments to the next stage—the world dominion of economic resources by the capitalist class of the victorious nation. This war, says Trotsky, "is a struggle of life and death between Germany and England."

Trotsky devotes his attention primarily to Germany, explaining that, having become a great capitalist power, the first in the world, he tells us, Germany "finds herself colliding with the hegemony of England in her further course of development."

(*Continued on page* 1013, *col.* 1.)

* Devoy has replied from America that the money was subscribed by Irish Americans.

* 'War or Revolution,' by Leon Trotsky. Commission of the Russian People's Government. Socialist Labour Press, 50, Renfrew Street, Glasgow. Price 2d.



# WORKSHOP NOTES: By W. F. WATSON.

### INDUSTRIAL RECONSTRUCTION.

I have received the first quarterly report of the Industrial Reconstruction Council, together with a circular explaining the aims and objects of the Council; also a covering letter urging me to become an individual member and my organisation to become affiliated.

These reports and circulars are well printed on the finest paper and, apparently, no regard is paid to the scarcity of paper or to expense. It could easily have been reduced to one-third its size. When one considers the difficulty experienced in getting paper for journals like THE DREADNOUGHT, and compares it with this elaborate production one can plainly see how the dice is loaded against us! Evidently the Ministry of Reconstruction has unlimited funds at its disposal and the appeal to subscriptions from members is merely camouflage to give it a semblance of democracy for the purpose of beguiling the trustful Dubbs! There is a President, Treasurer, Chairman, Secretary, Hon. Secretary, an Executive Committee, and *Honorary Solicitors!!* Can you imagine, dear readers, any of that grasping fraternity going without their fees? On the Executive of this precious council appears the name of BEN TILLETT, M.P.!! I have two vivid impressions of Tillett. One May Day I saw him speaking from a van in Hyde Park, his hair blown about by the wind and the accusing finger pointing towards Park Lane, whilst he held forth in true Tillettian style about the Park Lane parasites. The second is on Tower Hill, on that famous day during the great Dockers Strike, when he invoked the aid of some supernatural power to remove Lord Devonport from this celestial globe. I never thought the day would ever come when I should see Ben's photo in *The Sketch* in company with the Duke of Rutland, or associated with men like Herbert Field, Wilfrid Stokes, J. L. Garvin, and other implacable foes of the workers. Apparently, Ben is the decoy-duck, for we find no mention of his name in the report, neither is he on any of the sub-committees.

Now let us examine the Council's preamble. It purports to be: "A propagandist body having for its object the awakening of national interest to the need for a complete system of Industrial Self-Government." It says:—

"That a trade is greater than the sum of its parts, that it has an existence quite apart from those engaged in it....

"It is the duty of all those engaged in a particular trade—capital, management and labour—to join hands for the study and betterment of that trade. The output of most of our trades could be many times increased by proper attention to such matters as education, scientific research, statistical research, and the study of markets....They interest labour equally with capital; they call for co-operative action.

"It is because the Whitley Report shows the means by which this genuine and practical co-operation can be realised that the Industrial Reconstruction Council advocates the general adoption of its recommendations. The goal before us is nothing less than the complete organisation of every trade—every man in his union, every employer in his association—and from the two an elected Trade Parliament in each industry, with proper official status and endowed with a full measure of responsibility for the promotion of its common interests....

"Industry will be recognised as one of the highest forms of national service, and we shall do something to lay the foundations of peace and prosperity in the future."

On the whole it is very subtle and cleverly drawn up. It clearly shows the student of industrial affairs that the Government is determined on a course which will weaken any movement of a revolutionary character by foisting upon the workers something that appears to be democratic in its construction. Next week I propose to expose and criticise the economic fallacies of this so-called Industrial Reconstruction Council.

### THE FOREMEN'S DILEMMA.

There is a shop not many miles from Charing Cross where the conditions are what is known as "comfy." That is to say, the Boss has discovered that by paying more than the rate and by treating the men decently he gets better results. The Works' Manager was anxious to introduce a production organiser into the firm, apparently against the wishes of other members of the management. The Manager had his way, the organiser duly made his appearance last week, and to make room for him the Shop Foreman was put as foreman in the Tool Room, which amounted to an "Irishman's rise." Now the toolroom is extremely small, there being only twelve toolmakers, and it had hitherto given every satisfaction to the management, therefore the toolmakers resented this innovation. We are pleased to record that the whole of the workers, men and women, in the engineering department are solid on this question and we have every hope of a settlement satisfactory to the workers. The very interesting point in this dispute is the fact that both the new Organiser and the Shop Foreman are members of the A.S.E., and the Organiser, in view of the fact that he may be compelled to relinquish his appointment, has sought the advice of A.S.E. officials, with a view to claiming his expenses. It appears that he is in a very curious position. He is forced from his position by fellow trades unionists, and has to invoke the aid of his trade union to compel the Boss to recompense him for expenses incurred.

There is good material here for another tragi-comedy. You cannot serve two masters, says the old adage, and here is an illustration of its truth. We conclude by informing our readers that there is a branch of the A.S.E., nearly 1,000 strong, composed entirely of foremen, managers, and employers. And some people wonder that the Employers' Federation is able to get hold of our Corresponding Lists!!! The time is rapidly approaching when the A.S.E. will have to adopt a rule making it incumbent on any member accepting a foreman's job to resign from the A.S.E.

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Mr. S. J. C. Warr, a member of the Salvation Army, writes urging that that body should devote an international day of prayer "for an early and lasting peace with true brotherhood."

### EMPIRE AND NATIONALITY

(continued from page 1012.)

Therefore, she wills to overthrow that world enemy by creating a Middle European League of Nations, including Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Balkan Peninsula, and Turkey, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Italy, and, if possible, France, Spain, and Portugal.

Trotsky has less to say of Britain, but he declares that Czarism is "an indispensable reservoir" of man-power, we suppose, "for the financial imperialism of France and the conservative colonial power of England." Numerous well-known British writers have given their views on the British effort to hem in Germany and to crush her out of the world's markets. Zinovy Preev, a strong supporter of the Anglo-Russian economic and commercial entente on the old capitalist lines, and a determined anti-Bolshevik, naively puts the Allied capitalist position.* He warns Allied capitalists that if Germany, at peace with Russia, is able to help Russia to organise her agriculture, industries, transport, and finance she will have won the war. Having secured the economic exploitation of "practically two great continents, with a population of 180,000,000 souls, and unlimited natural resources which are practically untapped," Germany, he says, would be compensated for "the shattering of all her Western and South-Eastern dreams." He urges British manufacturers not to allow Germany "to steal a march on them":—

"It clearly behoves every British manufacturer who can see beyond the immediate days of the war, who is ambitious to secure a share for himself in the future import trade of Russia, to take such steps, and to take them now as will enable him to 'get there first' before the Germans."

Trotsky assures us that this is not a war of nationality, though the war has brought to the fore problems of nationality which had not been settled. He regards the problem of nationality as an earlier problem than that of capitalism, but he agrees that "the nation must continue to exist as a cultural, ideologic, and psychological fact."

Zinovy Preev, writing of Russia purely from the standpoint of commercial development, unconsciously confirms the dictum of Trotsky, a member of the Socialist Government which has set the Russian nationalities free, declaring that that decentralisation is a step in the right direction though the separate national republics will remain economically dependent on each other.

Trotsky summons us to renewed belief in the ideals of Marxian Socialism; he calls for the building of a new international, showing us the causes which led to the failure of the old international and exposing the sad fact that Socialist reformism has actually led, in some cases, to Socialist imperialism. He shows that the assertion, so commonly made by British Labour leaders, as well as by German Majority Socialists, that the possessing classes will reward the patriotism of the workers by material concessions, is based on the hope that "a military victory would create for the bourgeoisie a broader imperialistic field for enriching itself at the expense of the bourgeoisie of other countries." This would enable it to share some of the booty with its own proletariat.

Trotsky urges Socialists to make "the immediate stoppage of the war" their watchword, saying that for Socialists it is not merely a fight to save humanity's material and cultural possessions, but still more, a fight to preserve the revolutionary energy of the workers which he fears may be "consumed in the horrible work of mutual annihilation." As an answer to all the false and foolish stories told against Russian Socialist Government came this message from Arthur Ransome in *The Daily News*, dated Moscow, May 16th:—

"Only the continuance of the Soviets and the gradual awakening of public consciousness will educate the peasants, who are the chief obstacle to Russia's feeding herself. No change of Government could do anything but arrest the awakening which is going on under our eyes, and postpone its completion to the indefinite future."

Let us work for a similar awakening.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST.

* The Russian Riddle by Zinovy N. Preev, London: John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, Ltd., Oxford House, Great Titchfield St. 6d. net.

### A SOLDIER'S LETTER.

"I have been at this place now a fortnight, and, although the place itself is very good being near the sea, I seem to detest it because of the reason for which I am compelled to remain here.

Every day, Sunday excluded, the men are taught to kill, kill, oh, how awful! To me the very idea is repulsive, and yet what can I do? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

Of course, I have to learn how to kill. The men are told the vital parts of men for the purpose of inserting bayonets. It really makes me feel ill. The men are taught to fire rifles, to throw bombs, to fire trench mortar batteries, in fact, the men are taught every conceivable means of putting an end to the life of a man whom they do not know. And this, after two thousand years of Christianity.

To-day at church parade, the parson during the course of his sermon, said that the Holy Ghost meant the giving of life, and that every good deed done by a man was really God working, using the man as an agent, and that every bad deed put on one side by a man was also God working. He also said that the good action was God's work even if that good action were fighting and killing. I really could not see the sense of the reasoning. To me if the Holy Ghost (or God) gives life, then it is only the Holy Ghost who should take life away. I suppose the parson intended to convey the idea that if I were to kill a German I should not really do it, but God using me as an agent, and so the Holy Ghost who gave life, using me as an agent, would take the life of the German. But I cannot agree....

I feel very thankful, indeed, for that band of gallant people, who are using every means in their power to spread the gospel of pacifism, for those people are really the only friends of the army. And I do hope that before very long their efforts will be crowned with victory, and peace reigns."

*To the Editor of* THE DREADNOUGHT.

DEAR EDITOR,—Stefan Zweig's 'The Tower of Babel' (which appeared in last weeks' DREADNOUGHT) is the most forcible commentary I have yet seen on the all too general conception of God—a God responsible for this war. The most extraordinary thing is that in a century so much advanced in many things such a God is still the object of worship and glorification. If I had got no further than such a conception of God, then I should desire to be known as an Atheist. I am sure one of the causes of the present war is our pitiful conception of God—God being the name we give to our highest ideal. In my conception of God I include common sense. He must have given us, or we ourselves have achieved, free will. Let us grant for the minute that a God has bestowed free will on us. How have we used it? We have acted in such a manner that a beautiful world has been turned into a most damnable hell. Would a commonsense God say: "Poor things! Instead of helping each other all these years, they have been trying to over-reach one another—now the fat is in the fire! I must put things right for them?" Of course not. Like a sensible parent, such a God would say: "The best way to teach them is to let them experience the consequences of their past actions." That is how I should expect my God to reason, and I do not consider my ideal a very high one—at least, I hope that our ideals of God are going to be something increasingly noble. Meantime, I will not be guilty of such hideous blasphemy as to discredit my ideal of God by fastening upon it responsibility for the evil which a comparatively small amount of goodwill could have prevented.—

Yours, &c., J. E. FRANCIS.

### THE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' WAGE.

Every one remembers that when the Corn Production Bill was before the House an amendment to raise the proposed legal minimum wage for agricultural labourers from 25*s.* to 30*s.* was defeated and that certain Labour ministers voted against it. Nevertheless, the Wages Boards are all reporting in favour of a rate of at least 30*s.* a week. Surrey, Norfolk, Oxford, Suffolk, and Devon; counties in which in 1912 wages were 19*s.* 7*d.*, 17*s.* 6*d.*, 17*s.*, 18*s.*, and 19*s.* respectively, have now fixed minimum wages of 34*s.*, 30*s.*, 30*s.*, 30*s.*, 30*s.*, and 31*s.*, with overtime and a half holiday. The moral of this appears to be that the Labourers are able to bring more pressure to bear on their employers than on the Government—even than on the Labour ministers. The Labour ministers can scarcely be feeling proud of their record in this respect! The British Agricultural labourer must not remain satisfied with the present improvement in his conditions. In Russia the land has been freed to the landworker and he is no man's servant!

## WHATS' ON?

### W.S.F. FIXTURES

### OUT DOOR

FRIDAY, MAY 31st.
Pretoria Road, Walthamstow.—5.30 P.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, JUNE 1st.
Great Push for Peace, Socialism, and Votes for All in Camberwell.—Meet at 2.45 and 5 P.M. at 85, Camberwell Grove; meetings at 3 P.M. and 6 P.M. Speakers: Miss Horsfall, Miss Price, Mrs. Walker.

SUNDAY, JUNE 2nd.
Osborn Street, Whitechapel.—11.45 A.M., Mr. L. Hogben.
"Flagstaff," Hampstead.—3 P.M., Miss Price
Victoria Park. 6 P.M., Mrs. Cressall and others.
The Square, Woolwich.—7 P.M., Mrs. Walker.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5th.
Beckton Road, Canning Town.—6.30 P.M., Mrs. Cressall.

FRIDAY, JUNE 7th.
Queen's Crescent, Kentish Town.—6 P.M., Miss Price.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8th.
Great Push in Hammersmith.

### INDOOR

MONDAY, JUNE 3rd.
44, Malden Road, St. Pancras W.S.F.—2.30 P.M., Miss Lambie.
400, Old Ford Road.—8 P.M., Bow Branch Social.

THURSDAY, JUNE 6th.
29B, Lincoln's Inn Fields.—7.30 P.M., Miss Helena Normanton, 'Women and the Law'; Ed. Fuller, 'The Present Outlook.'

### OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

KINGSLEY HALL, Bow.—Sunday, June 2nd, 8.15 P.M. Speaker, Dr. Henry Hodgkin; subject, 'True Freedom.'

WALTHAMSTOW LEAGUE OF RIGHTS. — Tuesday, June 4th.
William Morris Hall, Somers Road.—2.30 P.M., Mrs. Sizer, and others.

## OUR FUNDS

**Donations to be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Miss N. L. Smyth, 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, E.3**

**All parcels to 400 Old Ford Road Bow, E.3**

### Gratefully Acknowledged

GENERAL FUND. — Irene, per Mrs. Drake (20*s.* weekly) £2; Mr. J. E. Phillips, £2; South Norwood W.S.F. (proceeds from Sale of Work), £1 10*s.*; Miss M. Gibson, £1 1*s.*; Marie Schaub, 5*s*; Mrs. A. Clarke, 5*s.*; Mrs. Vickles, 2*s.* 6*d.*; Mrs. Motchewitz, 1*s.* COLLECTIONS: Mrs. Walker, £2 18*s.* 9½*d.*; Miss Price, £1 17*s.* 0½*d*; Bow People's Hall (Peace), 16*s.* 6½*d.*; Leeds W. S. F., 15*s.* 1*d.*; Poplar W.S.F. (farthings), 5*s.* 10*d.*; Bow Social Evening, 4*s.*; South Norwood W.S.F., 3*s.* 1*d.*; Mrs. Hooper, 2*s.* 7*d.*; Leyton W. S. F., 1*s.*

'DREADNOUGHT' FUND.—Anon., £5; Mr. David Evans, £1 3*s.*; Miss Miriam Gliksten, £1; South Norwood W.S.F. (proceeds from Sale of Work), £1; Mr. Lawes, 14*s.* 8*d.*; 2nd Southern Co., Portsmouth N.C.C., 12*s.* 6*d*; Miss Frisby (card), 10*s.*; Mr. Botham, 5*s.*; Mr. A. E. Pratt, 5*s.*; Mr. Harrison, 3*s.*; Mrs. Brimley (2*s.* 6*d.* weekly), 5*s.*; Mr. De Gruyter, 2*s.* 6*d.*; Mrs. Richmond (fortnightly), 2*s.*; Mrs. Clarges, 2*s.*; Miss Prewett, 2*s.*; Mrs. Hatcher, 2*s.*

GENERAL DISTRESS.—Miss Burgis (Sale of clothes), £4 14*s.* 7½*d.*; Profit from Nursery Social, £3 9*s.*; Mr. Chas. E. Foster, £2 2*s.*; Mr. J. Payne, £2; Mrs. M. Boswell (monthly), £2; Winifred Sinclair (card), £1 8*s.*; H. J. Nathan, Esq., £1; Nurse Hebbes (10*s.* weekly), £1; Mrs. P. E. Shaw, 10*s.*; Mrs. Richmond (fortnightly), 10*s.*; Miss Fox, 4*s.* 6*d*; Miss E. Crabb (monthly), 3*s.* 6*d.*; Miss Bate, 3*s.*; Miss Barrowman, 2*s.* 6*d.*; COLLECTIONS: L.S.A. Toolroom, £2 9*s.* 8*d.*; Misses E. Lagsding and J. Watts (Greens Yard), 19*s.* 10½*d.*; Bow collection, 15*s.* 5¼*d.*; Miss H. Lagsding and Mrs. Bertram (Cubitt Town), 11*s.* 0½*d.*; Mothers' Arms Collecting Box, 4*s.* 10½*d.*

CLOTHES.—Miss Schofield, Miss Goodliffe, Miss Schaub, Mrs. Ryley, Mrs. Mintern Scott, Mrs. Parry, Mr. and Mrs. Hamilton Gibson, Mrs. P. Chennells, Anon., Anon.

## FEDERATION NOTES.

The following are amongst the resolutions carried at the W.S.F. Annual Conference on May 19th and 20th, 1918:—

1. That the name of the Federation shall be the "Workers' Socialist Federation."

2. This Conference declares its opposition to all war and its desire for the abolition of armies and navies. It recognises that the present conflict is being waged by all the belligerent governments in the interests of the capitalists and that the war in its every aspect is antagonistic to the workers of the world, to popular and personal liberty, and to the general welfare of humanity. The Conference calls upon the British Government to recognise the Russian Socialist Government, and to co-operate with it in initiating immediate peace negotiations on the basis submitted by the Russians at Brest-Litovsk: "no annexations, no indemnities, and the right of peoples to decide their own destinies." This Conference calls on the British Government to submit its terms to Parliament. It urges the British workers to return as many international socialists as possible to Parliament at the next election, and to vote for no candidates who are supporting the war, to whatever party they may belong. The Conference further pleads for the immediate summoning of an International Socialist Conference to adopt united peace terms, to be pressed for in all countries, and urges British Socialists to combine in endeavouring to secure a Socialist administration in this country, in order that the peace policy of the International may be faithfully carried out.

3. This Conference demands that the right of self-determination shall be applied to the peoples of Ireland and India and other nationalities within as well as without the British Empire.

4. This Conference protests against the militarisation of education and against the dismissal of teachers on account of religious or political principles; it calls on Parliament to throw out those clauses in the Education Bill which would make for militarisation. It also calls upon the parents to resist the operation of these clauses should they become law.

5. This Conference recognising that the Government and the State are institutions erected for the specific purpose of protecting private property and perpetuating wage-slavery, pledges itself to work for the abolition of the capitalist system as the paramount question of immediate importance. It considers that Parliament organised on a territorial basis and government from the top are suited only to the capitalist system. It desires that the land and means of production, distribution and exchange shall be vested in the community and controlled by the workers in the various industries, the management of affairs being carried on by international, national and local councils of workers organised on an occupational basis. In order to attain these objects, we urge the workers to make use both of their political and industrial power and urge them to organise on an industrial basis and to build up a National Assembly of Local Workers' Committees, directly representing the workers which shall render Parliament unnecessary by usurping its functions.

6. This Conference demands that Ireland be forthwith set free to manage her own affairs in complete independence and that no attempt shall be made to impose conscription or any other form of military domination upon the Irish people. It learns with indignation of the arrest and deportation of a large number of Irish men and women, and in demanding their immediate release, expresses the view that the allegation that these persons have been concerned in a pro-German plot is a mere fabrication.

7. This Conference expresses profound indignation that the peoples of all the belligerent nations have been kept in ignorance as to the facts concerning the negotiations for peace between the Austrian Emperor and some of the allied Ministers which took place last March, also that they have not been informed of the recent German negotiations which Lord Robert Cecil has so callously described as a "peace offensive." This Conference demands the immediate publication of all peace negotiations and treaties.

Resolutions were also carried demanding the withdrawal of the Home Office order by which Mrs. Bouvier, an Italian subject of Russian birth who has lived in this country for thirty years, is prohibited from speaking or taking part in propaganda; the deportation order served on Edward Sœrmus, the great violinist who plays for the Socialist movement; the release from his sentence of five years' imprisonment of John McLean, and the release of the other anti-war prisoners.

The following Officers and Committee were elected: Hon. Secretary E. Sylvia Pankhurst; Hon. Treasurer, Norah L. Smyth; Hon. Assistant Secretary, Minnie Lansbury. Committee: Mrs. Brimley, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Cox, Mrs. Casey, Nurse Hebbes, Mr. Hogben, Mr. Hooper, Mrs. Edmunds, Miss E. Lagsding, Mrs. Pascoe, Mrs. S. Redgrove, Mrs., Walker.

On Saturday, May 18th, a very successful "DREADNOUGHT At Home" was held in Chandos Hall.

BULWELL.—*Hon. Secretary:* Mr. Forsyth, 114, Logan Street. The Trades Unions and Labour Party in Bulwell (Notts.) are protesting against the prohibition of W.S.F. meetings by the Chief Constable and Watch Committee, and are taking steps to use the Market Place for Labour meetings.—E. CROFT.

### THE BALKAN STATES. Continued from page 1.

What, then, has become of the question Wilson deemed so vital: that of freeing one's brothers from the oppression of the neighbouring race or nation, which so often has been made the pretext for patriotic wars? The peoples of the Balkan States, even more than those of Western Europe, are passing through the saddest period of their history. Complete ruin seems to stare them in the face. It is much to be doubted whether the Great Powers—with their powerful and yet unchecked capitalist interests—will be able to come to an agreement amongst themselves that will allow the peoples of the smaller States free development. Has any one of the Great Powers sincerely subscribed to the principles, at one time, so nobly put forward by President Wilson? Has the United States itself accepted them? Probably, whether the Powers have accepted them or not, it does not matter much, for they were based on a utopian conception of history. There was no mention in them of an effective democratic control; the aims of the workers had found no place in Wilson's declaration of principles!

Whilst we wait, in great anguish, the eventual dawn of a possible better day for all the peoples subjected to foreign domination and for the working class of the small Balkan States, with the rest, there appears to be only one hope: the emancipation of the international proletariat and, in particular, the proletariat of the great capitalistic States.

The future will show us if we have hoped and trusted in vain.


## MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

THE MOTHERS' ARMS CLINIC, DAY NURSERY, AND MONTESSORI CLASS; also CLINIC, 20 RAILWAY STREET, POPLAR, and CLINIC, 53 ST. LEONARD STREET, SOUTH BROMLEY.—Garments for Babies, Children, and Adults, Maternity Outfits, etc., Children's Toys, Pot Plants, Flowers and Branches, etc., always wanted.

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INTERNATIONAL YOUNG AGE PENSIONS

Dear Friends of Humanity,—In order to relieve the terrible poverty and suffering that is devastating Europe, let us endeavour to place the children and all those who are helpless in comparative safety by securing SEVEN SHILLINGS A WEEK each for them from the state, that we may be free to work for other reforms. At present, whilst they are exposed to cold, poverty and hunger, we can think of nothing else. 7*s.* a week would ENABLE FAMILIES TO MOVE AT ONCE INTO BETTER HOUSES, and to obtain better milk and food. This would stimulate local trade and reduce expenses of WORKHOUSES, HOSPITALS, PRISONS and LUNATIC ASYLUMS, and do away with all poor rates to such an extent as to be A GREAT SAVING to the taxpayers, and would enable sensible girls to marry where they would otherwise not dare to do so, and to bring up healthy happy children to become stalwart citizens and parents in their turn, besides relieving untold pain and suffering, and being an estimable benefit to the State.

The fact of a married man becoming automatically POORER at the birth of each child constitutes a cruel wrong to all children, and until each child has 7*s.* a week in its own individual right, as an infant citizen, suffering, war, disease, and poverty can never be abolished. Let us all demand this from our different Governments now, before it may be too late.

S. MACKENZIE KENNEDY.
[Advt.


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