

The Workers' Opposition in Sovrussia.

Workers' Dreadnought

FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM.

Founded and Edited by SYLVIA PANKHURST

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FALSE PRETENCES TOWARDS IRELAND.

OUR VIEW.

The Plebiscite Proposal Dishonest.

The proposal, urged from many professedly advanced quarters, to take a plebiscite in Ireland on the independence question is, in our view, a dishonest one.

We regard it as dishonest, because we believe that those who put it forward have no idea that the Lloyd George Government would grant Ireland Independence if the plebiscite were to declare for it; their hope is merely that a vote of the Irish people might declare for something less.

We believe, too, that the plebiscite proposal is put forward as a means of evading the responsibility of standing for or against the direct issue of Independence.

Dominion Home Rule Not Offered.

Mr. Arthur Henderson, generally recognised as the leader of the Labour Party, has said it is disappointing that the Lloyd George terms have not been accepted by Sinn Fein; but, that if the British Government's offer means Dominion Home Rule, this should be stated in clear language.

Mr. Henderson, of course, knows too much about Dominion Home Rule to be under the illusion that the form of Home Rule at present offered to Ireland can be so described.

Let us consider in detail the conditions which are inconsistent with Dominion Home Rule.

1.—NAVAL DEFENCE.

"The British Navy alone should control the seas around Ireland and Great Britain."

Ireland is not to have a navy; the British Navy remains in control; but it was on the naval question, that the British Dominions first made good their claim to Independence. Under the Naval Agreements of 1907-11, they established their right to withhold their own naval forces in the event of war; to remain neutral in a war waged by the Empire. The Dominions are entitled to possess their own navies, and their contributions to the British Navy are free gifts.

2.—THE ARMY.

"The Irish Territorial Force shall conform, in respect of numbers, to the military establishments of the other parts of these islands."

The Irish Army is called a Territorial Force, and it is to be limited by Britain. The Dominions are not under such limitations.

3.—AIR SERVICE.

"Great Britain shall have all necessary facilities for the employment of defence, and of communications by air."

Apparently Ireland is to have no Air Service, and, both for military and civil purposes, the British Air Service is to have the monopoly in Ireland. With a British Navy and Air Force in control of that little island, who could pretend it was independent? The Dominions are not thus controlled; their status is free and equal.

4.—RECRUITING AND FINANCIAL BURDEN OF ARMY AND NAVY.

The British Army, Navy, and Air Force will carry on voluntary recruiting in Ireland and Ireland will be expected to pay her share of the cost of these forces.

The Dominions are not thus obliged to contribute, and, if there is to be recruiting for the Forces in Ireland, there will doubtless be barracks and establishments; in short, the British Naval and Military system will remain in control as before.

But those who insist that there is something new and magnanimous in these terms, will tell us that the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force are of small moment in our daily life, and that so long as Ireland remains at peace with Britain—"and why should she not?"—the substance of Independence is assured. Such statements are false.

5.—CUSTOMS.

"The British and Irish Governments shall agree to impose no protective duties or other restrictions upon the flow of transport, trade, and commerce between the ports of these islands."

Cleverly phrased, Mr. Lloyd George, but such agreements are only binding upon the stronger party: in this case, the stronger party, the British Government, does not wish to erect tariffs and Customs duties between Britain and Ireland. The weaker party, Sinn Fein, desires to do so, in order to build up Irish industries, without the difficulty of competition with old-established, highly-capitalised British industries.

Sinn Fein an Economic Movement.

The Sinn Fein movement, the Irish Independence movement generally, is largely an economic movement; a powerful mainspring of its force is provided by the Irish bourgeoisie, desirous of becoming successful manufacturers and merchants. They look to tariffs to aid them. Ninety per cent. of the Irish external trade is with Britain: to prevent tariffs being applied to ninety per cent. of Irish trade, is, obviously, to destroy the cherished tariff policy altogether.

The Dominions are quite free in this respect; they may impose what tariffs they please; that is one of the basic rights of the British Dominions.

6.—IRELAND TO SHARE THE WAR DEBT.

Ireland is to assume a share of responsibility for the United Kingdom War Debt. In default of agreement, the amount to be determined by "an independent arbitrator," to be appointed from within his Majesty's Dominions.

The British Dominions do not contribute to Imperial taxation. One of the great reasons why the Sinn Fein movement has been so greatly accelerated since the war is that the Irish do not wish to pay the British War Debt. No one likes to pay increased taxation, and whoever finds a conscientious scruple for refusing, is especially delighted. Of course, the Irish are proudly vaunting their objection of principle to labouring under the load of War taxes. There would be an immediate revolt if Parliament were to attempt to force the Dominions to contribute to its expenses. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa would at once prove themselves as anxious as Ireland to escape from the Union.

Let there be no mistake, the local Government offered to Ireland is not Dominion Home Rule.

7.—ULSTER.

Union between North and South Ireland can only come by consent. The British Government cannot consent to any proposals that would kindle civil war in Ireland."

The reply of the Sinn Fein Ministry to this passage, on August 10th, was dignified and apt:

"Let England cease to throw her armed forces into the scale on the side of one party to a domestic difference. Ireland will not

bring force to bear upon the Northern minority. Irishmen will effect a 'complete reconciliation' for themselves. This was the course adopted in the case of Canada in 1867, and of South Africa in 1909."

Yet the quarrel between North and South will not be easily settled: it springs from deep economic causes, and will trouble the island for many a long day.

The Lincoln Analogy.

Some foolish person started the story that Lloyd George's refusal to grant Independence to Ireland, which, he declares, would be to "tear up the United Kingdom," is the same as Lincoln's refusal to agree to the secession of the Southern States of America. Lloyd George, who loves to pose as playing a grand part, has taken up the analogy, and declares that he is adopting Lincoln's stand. Lincoln, however, refused to assent to secession when the Southern States desired to secede in order that they might safely continue and extend the practice of slavery. There is no such question here. The Lincoln argument did not occur to Lloyd George when he was helping to dismember the Austrian Empire.

To Communists, the question of Ireland's Independence is only important because the workers in an independent Ireland would be more free to learn that their real enemy is Capitalism, and because the break-up of the British Empire means the destruction of a great bulwark of the capitalist system.

RUSSIAN MEASURES TO COPE WITH FAMINE.

Red sailors of Baltic Fleet have given up 10 per cent. of rations to famine areas.

Red garrison of Tver has given up two months' pay, over one million roubles.

Workers of steam mills contribute 15 per cent. of their flour ration.

Peasants of Tula giving from 3 to 10 lbs. of grain per dessiatin.

Free performances in Petrograd are discontinued, and the proceeds of the theatre go to Famine Fund.

The All-Russian Relief Committee sent three sanitary trains to famine area with food for children.

Peasants suffering at Tula had received 25 trucks of grain by barter, but on hearing of frightful conditions in Volga district gave up 20 waggon.

Moscow newspaper employees are to issue a special supplement to be sold at 2,000 roubles each. The issue will be 500,000.

International Proletarian Aid for Russia.

In answer to an appeal by Henrietta Rolland-Holst in a few days nearly 1,000 gulden arrived at Dutch Tribune Office, coming from individual workers.

Central Committee of Swiss Communist Party has decided to ask all workers to give one day's pay.

Central Committee of Italian Socialist Party has issued an appeal to all comrades for relief in Russia.

Communist Party of France has asked for relief for Russia, and is supported by Seine Trade Unions, Dockers' Union, Textile Workers and Metal Workers, all of whom call on members to contribute.

10,000 francs has already been raised.

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TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

The Moplah rising, aided by the Sepoys of the British Government's police and military, may be quelled without great difficulty; on the other hand, it may be the opening of a chapter of prolonged warfare in India, which will end only with Indian Independence.

When the break-up of the British Empire comes, it will begin just in this way: an outbreak of a section of the people somewhere, to which the rank and file of the forces of law and order give aid. That the break-up of the British Empire will come some day is assured to us by the evidence of history, and by the fact that Society is in a state of flux, always developing towards new forms.

The Irish struggle is tending in the same direction; the passing of the British Empire, which is one of the main pillars of Capitalism, one of the great outstanding features of yesterday.

The Lloyd George Government's offer to Ireland is represented as an offer of Dominion Home Rule to Ireland, as a great advance on all previous proposals, as an offer of the substance of Independence, the name only being withheld. The offer embodies none of these things; the illusion that it does is another evidence of Lloyd George's great gift for stage management; he is at his old trick of advertising that he has provided a solution for a problem that remains unsolved. It is remarkable that he is still able to gull so many people.

The Labour Party policy, bankrupt of courage, ideas, and ideals on so many questions, is in nothing more bankrupt than in regard to Ireland. Its leader, Arthur Henderson, has said it is a disappointment that the Government's offer to Ireland has not been accepted. Had he been a strong leader of a strong party, he would have shown that the offer ought not to have been accepted; he would have explained where it failed to reach the standard of acceptability; but Mr. Henderson is a weak leader of a weak party, which professes sympathy with Ireland's demand for Independence, without being prepared to assent to the satisfying of that demand. The Labour Party will not officially declare for Irish Independence, because it is not prepared to run the risk of losing votes and incurring odium by such a declaration; also, because it is not prepared to take the risk and responsibility of granting Independence to Ireland when it becomes, as it intends, His Majesty's Government.

This week the Communist International has devoted to propaganda amongst the Youth—the men and women of to-morrow—for whom all we Socialists, all we Communists, all we revolutionaries are working, if our work has any value or purpose at all. There is no more important Communist task than this of rousing the Youth to the truths of Communism; no method by which we can more surely lay the foundations for the world of to-morrow.

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:: CORRESPONDENCE. ::

Dear Editor,—I am not worrying about any "sly dig" that Mr. Sara may make at "Freedom," but am very much concerned about the truth or falsity of a statement which appeared in it. Mr. Sara said definitely: "A forged statement is in circulation, bearing signatures of prominent Anarchists like Emma Goldman, Alexander Beckman and Shapiro." Such a statement was published in the June issue of "Freedom," so I asked him to supply the proof that it was a forgery. Mr. Sara does not do so. He says he does not read "Freedom," therefore he could not have referred to the statement published therein. He says: "The Times published a similar manifesto on one occasion, and it was this I had in mind at the time of writing." Was that manifesto signed by Emma Goldman, Beckman and Shapiro? If so, will he please give me the date of the issue of the Times in which it appeared? It may be the same statement as appeared in "Freedom," which is what I am most concerned about. I have admitted that statement to Sasha Kropotkin, who writes: "I know it is genuine, because I had a letter from it." Still, I will look up that manifesto in the Times if Mr. Sara will give me the date.

Yours, etc.,
THOMAS H. KEELL.

C. Perry (Melton House, Durand Gardens, Clapton Road, S.W. 9).—We should be obliged by a reply to our repeated communications.

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