

The German Revolution.

Workers' Dreadnought

FOR INDEPENDENCE OF THOUGHT AND SOLIDARITY OF ACTION.

VOL. X. No. 7.

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 1923.

WEEKLY.

FROM DAWN TO DAWN.

By Morris Rosenfeld.

I bend o'er the wheel at my sewing;
I'm spent; and I'm hungry for rest;
No curse on the master bestowing,—
No hell-fires within me are glowing,—
Tho' pain flares its fires in my breast.
I mar the new cloth with my weeping,
And struggle to hold back the tears;
A fever comes over me, sweeping
My veins; and all through me goes creeping
A host of black terrors and fears.
The wounds of the old years ache newly;
The gloom of the shop hems me in;
But six o'clock signals come duly;
O, freedom seems mine again, truly
Unhindered I haste from the din.

Now home again, ailing and shaking,
With tears that are blinding my eyes,
With bones that are creaking and breaking.
Unjoyful of rest . . . merely taking
A seat; hoping never to rise.

I gaze round me; none for a greeting!
By Life for the moment unpressed,
My poor wife lies sleeping—and beating
A lip-tune in dream false and fleeting,
My child mumbles close to her breast.

I look on them, weeping in sorrow,
And think: "When the Reaper has come—
When finds me no longer the morrow—
What aid then?—from whom will they
borrow

The crust of dry bread and the nome?

"What harbours that morrow," I wonder,
"For them when the breadwinner's gone?—
When sudden and swift as the thunder
The bread-bond is broken asunder,
And friend in the world there is none."

A numbness my brain is o'ertaking . . .
To sleep for a moment I drop:
Then start! . . . In the east light is breaking!—
I drag myself, ailing and aching,
Again to the gloom of the shop.

EXISTING.

In Glasgow.

13,195 houses occupied by 58,000 people are officially declared unfit for human habitation. Sixty-six per cent. of Glasgow houses contain only one or two rooms.

In Edinburgh

A young man guilty of incest declared he was driven to it by overcrowding.

In Cowdenbeath, Fifeshire.

A family of four adults and four children occupy one room.

Three separate families occupy a two-roomed apartment.

Two separate families live in one room.

Five people live in a scullery.

Nine adults and three children live in two rooms.

Eleven adults and five children live in two rooms.

In Lanarkshire.

69.3 per cent. of the houses consist of one or two rooms.

In Hamburg.

Every family of five persons is allowed six rooms. Whoever retains more than this allowance of rooms is taxed in proportion to find rooms for the homeless.

The Labour Party Unemployment Bill.

As one re-reads this Bill, already introduced in several sessions, one wonders how it can be that the Labour Party rank and file who may be themselves unemployed at any time, have tolerated this iniquitous measure being foisted upon them as their own proposal.

Indeed, there is nothing in the Bill for which a Tory or Liberal Government need hesitate to make itself responsible.

Should the Bill be handed down to future generations, historians will surely say that the Labour leaders of our time were unable to read and write, spoke only a rude dialect, and were quite unable to understand legal phraseology or Parliamentary technicalities. Therefore, they induced a clerk in one of the Government offices to draft this Bill. The clerk, being bribed thereto by some Machiavellian politician, played a trick on the Labour leaders, and drafted a Bill in their name, with provisions which were quite opposite to their wishes. If any records remain showing that such a person existed as Mr. Walton Newbold, the Right-Wing Communist M.P. for Motherwell, and M.A. of Victoria University; and if any copies of "Hansard" remain to prove his support to the bogus measure, the historians will have difficulty in accounting for his action. Eventually they will probably decide that the strain of attempting to follow the gyrations of Third International policy destroyed his eyesight, so that he was unable to read the Bill.

Government by Order in Council.

An incontrovertible proof that the betrayal of the illiterate Labour leaders of the twentieth century was by a Whitehall clerk, historians will cite specially the following passages:

8. There shall be transferred to the Minister of Labour:

(a) Such of the powers and duties of a Secretary of State with regard to aliens as His Majesty in Council may by order prescribe, other than the power of making an expulsion order.

6. There shall be transferred to the Minister of Labour all the powers and duties of the Board of Trade and of a Secretary of State relating to the regulation of the hours and conditions of labour as His Majesty in Council may from time to time by Order prescribe.

The historians will point out that it had long been an axiom, not merely amongst Radicals, but amongst all who professed any respect for democratic and Parliamentary institutions, that Government by Order in Council, instead of by the sanction of popularly elected representatives, was indefensible.

Having observed this most obvious fault, the historians will point out that the most vital things in the Bill are left to the Minister of Labour to decide, Parliament again being ignored; for instance:

9.—(1) The Minister of Labour shall establish and maintain, in such districts as

he thinks fit, such institutions, including receiving houses for temporary accommodation and residential colonies, as he shall deem requisite.

(3) When any person who is admitted to any such institution has a wife or a child or children, or any other person legally dependent on him, the Minister of Labour may, if he thinks fit, grant to such person so admitted, and to such wife, or the person in charge of such child or children, or other dependent person, such amount of financial assistance, and under such conditions as the Minister of Labour may direct."

The Labour experts in bureaucracy lay much stress upon the fact that the Bill would unite under the Ministry of Labour many functions now scattered amongst various departments.

The historians of the future will realise, like the unemployed of to-day, that such administrative arrangements will not put food in the stomachs of the workless.

Several clauses are devoted to declaring that the Minister of Labour shall advise the Treasury and other Government Departments how public and private work may be organised so as to maintain a constant level of employment throughout the year.

Certain trades may be declared by any order of the Minister of Labour to be "casual labour of an undesirable character." In that case the Minister may make it obligatory to engage workers through the Employment Exchange, if taken on for not less than one month. It is expressly provided that no employer shall be required to employ or engage any particular person, or be limited in his choice of which persons he shall employ. Nevertheless, the unemployed worker under this Labour Party Bill may be refused maintenance for refusal to work for a particular employer.

Poor Farms.

The most important and dangerous clause in the Bill is clause 9 (already quoted), which directs that the "Minister of Labour shall establish receiving houses and day and residential colonies for the unemployed, granting, if he thinks fit, maintenance to their dependants."

This is no new provision; it is the old iniquitous plan of treating the unemployed worker as a convict, and breaking up the family.

The Bill says that admission to such institutions shall be voluntary, and that the inmates may leave at any time. So it is with

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Central London Group meets Thursdays, 152 Fleet Street, 8 p.m. For Group business, 9 to 10 p.m.

ASPIRATIONS

"The masses are so backward: they don't even think they are entitled to butter instead of margarine. If you can only get them to want butter instead of margarine: that's an aspiration!"

So cried the spokesman of opportunism in a debate the other day. As he spoke, fellow-worker, he threw out an arm, raised his voice to a shout, and struck an effective attitude, waiting for the gallery to applaud the pretence that the masses cannot be taught to desire Socialism.

It is the fashion nowadays to deery the masses. But the masses, fellow-worker, are, after all, not far removed from us. We belong to them, fellow-worker, however superior we may have grown.

Is it true, fellow-worker, that even the poorest of the masses, to whom we belong, remember, have no aspirations?

Have you noticed in the market streets where the poorest mothers of the masses go to shop on Saturday, how many of the women anxiously count over their scanty money and spare enough for a bunch of flowers?

Did it ever occur to you, fellow-worker, that the poor mother who deprives her household of some more material thing to buy a bunch of flowers, is thereby giving expression to the aspiration we also feel towards beauty and spirituality? Even the pinch of poverty has not crushed it out of her.

That aspiration towards beauty is a human attribute. It is rooted in all of us, fellow-worker, though we show it in different ways, and many of us have become too shy and timid to speak of it.

You will have noticed, fellow-worker, that not so many women, perhaps, are carrying flowers home from the market now, and that their bunches are smaller than they were during the war. The desire for the flowers is as strong as ever, though there are fewer coins in the mother's purse to-day.

The superior persons may tell you, fellow-worker, that the masses are devoid of aspirations: that they really desire Mr. Chamberlain's model dwellings, and the skimmed milk that is unfit for infants' food.

Such things may be said; but you know, fellow-worker, that when, and as, the income of the poorest begins to increase, their consumption and aspirations increase with it.

You also know, fellow-worker, that the poor are not content with their poverty. They submit to it only because they know no means of escape from it.

Show them the way out from poverty into plenty. Who is there that will not rush out with enthusiasm and with joy?

Not one, fellow-worker: not one will lag behind.

The workers do not love their poverty, you know it well, fellow-worker; they do not love to be poor and to be wage-slaves; but they do not know the way to escape from their conditions.

For generations they have been told that there is no way to rise from the mire of poverty, except by climbing upon the backs of one's fellows. They have been taught that the only thing to do is to practice thrift; to save money, in order that they may live on the labour of others; either directly, by becoming employers of labour, or landlords drawing rents; or indirectly, by investing their money in shares and drawing dividends made by other people's work.

The worker who cannot hope to live on the labour of others by thrift, follows such examples as Bottomley, and tries betting as a more likely means of getting something for nothing.

Do not blame your ignorant brothers and sisters, fellow-worker, they do but follow the advice of their pastors and masters.

It takes time and effort to eradicate such old and widespread example and precept. Do not crow over your ignorant brothers and sisters: do not play the superior person towards them.

Simply tell them what you know. Show them the way out that has been shown to you. If you are capable of teaching, fellow-worker, never fear: others will be capable of learning from you.

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