

THE WORKERS' DREADNOUGHT

For International Socialism.

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Price Twopence.

THE PROMISED NEW WORLD.



KURT EISNER.

Picture postcards are being lavishly sent out free from His Majesty's Stationery Office; their subjects include: "When Baby's teeth come give him crusts to strengthen them"; "Fresh air and exercise are good for baby"—which shows the mother putting her child to play in a country cottage garden—and "Look here, upon this picture, and on this." Here is shown a crowded kitchen, in which there is a big bed in which a baby is asleep, and where a woman is ironing, and a man and some children are having a meal. Beside it is another picture, in which the door and window are open, the children are outside, the baby is in a small cot, and the woman nicely dressed is at tea with the man. The people are apparently prosperous, whereas in the other picture they looked very poor. The transformation, according to the inscription on the card, is supposed to have been wrought by putting the baby in a separate bed, covering the milk, having a fireguard, removing rubbish, opening the window, and sending the children to play outside. The bed has disappeared. Has the family decided to do without one? Evidently the family has acquired another room, but the picture postcard does not tell us where the money is to be found to pay the rent. The fire has ceased to smoke: did the fireguard accomplish that? No, the landlord has perhaps provided a new fire grate or put a cowl on the chimney, but how are we to induce him to do that? The woman has suddenly ceased to be overworked. Evidently she has got new clothes and put the washing out—will the Ministry of Health pay for that? The Government is forcing us to pay for these postcards to be given away free; but what are the postcards for? Evidently Mr. Lloyd George has found that the

"new world" he promised is too expensive and has decided to give us these postcards instead. That they are very inartistic and badly drawn need not surprise us.

LETTERS CARRIED FREE IN RUSSIA.

The Soviet Government of Russia has decreed that from January 1st, 1919, letters and postcards weighing less than 15 grammes shall be carried free of charge. No charge is to be made for letters and parcels dispatched by Soviet institutions.

No charge will be made for carrying postcards sent to Russia from other countries, and the People's Commissariat for Posts and Telegraphs is instructed to propose to foreign states that postcards and letters not exceeding 15 grammes in weight should be carried to or from Soviet Russia without charge.

THE GERMAN REVOLUTION.

The general strike and the Spartacus attacks have forced the German Government to agree to the Socialisation of industry and the inclusion of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in the Constitution. Exactly what relationship the Council will bear to the Constituent Assembly and the Government itself is not stated. These concessions show that the Socialist Revolution is near to success and the concessions are made by the Government in the hope of regaining enough popular support to enable it to defeat the Spartacists.

In Vienna people are dying of a mysterious epidemic which they call "bone-softening": its cause is starvation.

TORTURING THE C.O.s. By Guy Aldred.

What Forcible Feeding Means.

THE Government re-arrested Harding, one of the Wandsworth hunger strikers, and apparently attempted to forcibly feed him. It was compelled to release him owing to twelve other men going on hunger strike. Dutch, one of Harding's fellow "mice," who returned to prison on hearing of Harding's re-arrest, was released at the same time, not temporarily, but permanently. Apparently Harding is to be arrested yet again. And then there are the Winchester men. Under these circumstances I wish, in the columns of THE DREADNOUGHT, to call attention to the history of forcible feeding.

Crime is an economic question. So is the prison despotism which affects to cure it. And it is so in more ways than one. Every warder open to corruption and the Home Office toadies to rank. In the fall of 1909, that reactionary son of the hypocritical G.O.M. of Hawarden, Home Secretary Gladstone, sanctioned the process of forcible feeding. I am proud to have stood in the dock about this time and to have been found guilty of sedition by a jury of nondescript shopkeepers, partly for ridiculing Gladstone's willingness bombastically to settle everything by saying he took full responsibility. When a man wars against the ashes of Dhingra as this mediocrity did, his "responsibility" tends to become a public scandal. Apparently, even the Government thought so, and transferred him to Africa accordingly. However, this worthless politician inaugurated forcible feeding, and the first victim

was Mrs. Mary Leigh. Her experiences will serve as an index to the sufferings which are falling to the lot of C.O.s. to-day, after nearly three years' imprisonment. They illustrate the terrible penalties inflicted for something like thirteen months upon Ribiero, the Manchester C.O., whom the Government had to release after repeated arrests, releases, and re-arrests.

Mrs. Mary Leigh was pinioned by having her arms and legs held down, and her head was forced backwards. An india-rubber tube was then inserted through the nose or mouth, and pushed down the throat. At the end of the tube was a cup, through which liquid was poured. Perhaps the chaplain was looking on, in case he was required to read the burial service. That would be in accord with his duties. It was established subsequently by the testimony of leading medical men that, in the case of sane, conscious, and unwilling patients, this feeding by force does not nourish the victims. It is consequently not only futile, but brutal and dangerous, being an attempt to undermine a starved stomach. Describing the process, Mrs. Leigh said:—

"The sensation is most painful. The drums of the ears seem to be bursting. There is a horrible pain in the throat and breast, with noises in the head. It made my eyes gush out with water, and I was horribly sick. The after-effects are a feeling of faintness, a sense of extreme pain in the breast-bones, and a noise in the ears."

At the time of writing, I expect, but am not sure, that my comrade Thiel, a re-arrested "mouse" from Twickenham, is enduring this torture in Wandsworth. During my recent Glasgow lectures, I was informed that some of my Scotch C.O. comrades are undergoing this

agony. And by the time these lines are in print I expect to be re-arrested myself,* and to be enjoying a like experience.

Remember, that the Government has for three years endeavoured, by a continuous prison persecution, to break down my health and to destroy my power of resistance. It has placed me in a filthy semi-underground cell for several months, without books, letters, or visits. But my constitution is virile. The attempt to destroy me has failed. And so it must needs pursue these tactics. Suffering with me, in various prisons, will be other comrades, possessed of like firmness of endurance, like determination, like constitutional vigour. Are these characteristics criminal? Does their possession argue a justification for such persecution? Is it the will of the workers that these tortures should continue?

Let me cite once more from the past to show that this indictment of forcible feeding and prison treatment is no extravaganzas, but a sober statement of fact. In November, 1910, Mr. Hugh Franklin was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment in the second division for deliberately and intentionally assaulting Mr. Churchill. Thirteen months later, Mr. McDougall was convicted of an unpremeditated and, consequently, unintentional assault on Mr. Lloyd George. McDougall was only eighteen and Lloyd George received no injury whatever. It was thought, consequently, that McDougall would receive a light sentence. Instead of this, he was sent to hard labour for two months. The difference

* The writer was arrested at Clapham Common on Sunday, March 9th.

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THE SOLDIER and THE WAR.

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

III.

... Ten days are over and we are not relieved. We are probably in for another five. I have no words to tell my misery. The damp has eaten into my very soul and taken away the last shreds of my courage.

Days pass now without a laugh or song. Why should we laugh or sing? The succeeding dawns bring nothing new—the darkness ushers in no rest. Something made of terror and despair, one seems to be pounding about in a brain. It reminds me of the serpent I have seen beaten into the roads at home, till the surface is flat and level and, one might say, dead. My brain is being stamped in the same way, all its fibres crushing and grinding and solidifying...

Yet still, there is the pulse of pain, the harried feeling of pursuit by merciless forces. Sometimes a sharp "light" seems to rush through me from my eyes and leave me dazed. I am going to be ill. If I believed in God I'd pray to be ill.

... Fifteen days now, under almost unbroken fire. The guns are still enflaming us. We have to crawl from fire bay to fire bay. Still we are allowed no fires, no hot food...

Flynn, poor beggar, is a wreck. His eyes are sunken and great hollows are in his cheeks, the bones stand out in sharp ridges. We have not spoken to one another, I think, for three days.

Donoghue is still worse. He crouches on the firestep like a starved and dying animal. There is no light in his eyes and his hands shake like those of an old man.

It rains continuously...

Oh! I have never been so glad in my life! We are quitting to-night. Flynn looked at me, grinned and straightened his equipment. To hear this is in the nature of a death sentence reprieve. I have never known such a longing for rest and peace and sleep, and for a drop of hot tea to rinse my tongue. The thought runs through my body and brain like good, red wine. It revives hope and life, makes the world look almost decent again...

We have to stay! Orders are cancelled. Do you know what I feel, can you imagine my disappointment. It is too cruel, too cruel... There is talk of a German attack. The wires are cut. New troops, ignorant of the sector would be useless for defence, so they say. But we—

BETWEEN OURSELVES. By L. A. Motler.

Unemployment seems to be as catching as the flu, so I was not very much surprised when my friend Joe came to me with his ghastly secret. He explained, between sobs, that he had had a kind of disagreement with the kind-hearted capitalist. The eventual result of this was that, after filling up several forms at the Labour Exchange, and producing his birth certificate and tattoo-marks, my friend Joe was entitled to draw the princely sum of twenty-nine shillings a week.

Now when you have been riotously living on three pounds a week, you do not find life all bitter and honey (controlled) on twenty-nine bob, so Joe had been around some places for a kinder master. One of the latter had offered to take him on, provided he joined the Union. And here Joe was to ask me to come round to the Union offices. And by "Union" he did not mean the Spike.

We passed up the porphyry and emerald steps of the Union offices and applied our faces to a pigeon-hole marked "Enquiries." The pigeon inside disclaimed all knowledge of our mission

and we fit to fight? After eighteen days on broken biscuit and jam—we whose company fighting strength is thirty instead of two hundred?...

We may well ask why we volunteered, well ask what our country cares now that we are in her clutches. Our poor cracked voices never reach England, our staring eyes never glimpse it; and who but a coward, going home on leave, would add to the anxiety and terror of mother and sister by describing the real soul of war. War is seen through a mask; none across the sea knows its true face. Could I tell my mother now, that I am expecting death from hour to hour, that the fibres of control are so eaten away that I can no longer face it with the soldier spirit of which one reads so much; that terror, sickly terror is tapping, tapping at the gates of my reason; incoherent fear rusting my very vitals? Am I to tell her that all my love, all nobility, all self-effacing generosity has left my heart, and that I am a beast grubbing in the clay for a degrading and miserable life?...

Ah! Why should I die when I am young! Why should blood be the price my youth pays for its beauty; and its strength be chained to the service of murder and lust?

Is any law, or reason, or love hidden in the tangled madness of such a web? Where is the brow of Christ beneath such thorns!

Waiting, waiting, waiting... they are blowing us to hell.

The dust, and acrid powder stench is choking. All our faces are black with clay and smoke. The whole line seems to be rocking and quivering beneath the blows of the shell.

It must finish soon; God! it must finish soon! Flynn wips that blood off your face! you're splashed all over. Don't look at me like that! Is it your blood?...

Up into the Hell! What does it matter? The very air is trembling; the light is bad...

I can see no one, nothing. My rifle's hot, my hands are shaking and jumping so that I can scarcely hold a cartridge. The guns are lifting to the rear, the dust is less thick. Out in the dusk, strange moving figures seem to rise from the ground. Grey-coated guards! Lead, lead... Pump it in to them; no stopping; no stopping. They're coming on still, still...

Out of the trench! No use meeting them down in the pit. Level terms Grey-coats! Steel and blood and madness. They are through the wires, crowding on us, hundreds of them, on and on, and on. Hold fast! Oh, Christ Almighty, Hold fast! It's mad, all mad... Ah!... Oh! Christ have pity...

Dudley Howard Tripp.

take a seat on a bench—and wait. A beautiful framed specimen of writing by the office boy informed us in pure English that "Conveniences for expectoration were provided on the floor," and members were invited to use them whilst waiting for the Secretary to attend to them.

After we had exhausted the beauties of the distempered walls, and were religiously battling against sleep, Joe's name was called and both of us took our places in a queue drawn up on the stairs leading to the office. As one by one the men entered the fateful chamber, we were gradually moved one stair up at a time. At last our turn came.

Mr. Pigeon had a list with Joe's name on, and there was an ominous interrogation mark against it. I wondered what terrible crime Joe had committed since I last saw him.

"Have you got your form with you?" Mr. Pigeon asked Joe. Joe admitted the soft impeachment. He handed it over—the form I mean. The Pigeon's feathers ruffled, and he emitted a long-drawn agonised "A-ah!"

"This should have been handed in at five o'clock," he said.

I supported Joe's statement that Mr. Pigeon had distinctly told us to bring it in at ten to seven. "It should have been handed in at five o'clock," said the Pigeon, now become a parrot.

"Well, you've got it there," said I.

"The rules is that it has to be handed—"

"What do you want to make all that fuss for? You've got the form there, isn't it properly filled in?" asked Joe.

"The Secretary," Mr. Pigeon-Parrot explained patiently, "has to have the form handed in at five o'clock, and transferred—"

"Well, the Secretary is here now, isn't he? You can easily transfer it to him right away. The old bird shrugged his shoulders at such crass ignorance of Union procedure.

"It has to be discussed," said he.

"Discuss it now," said Joe, "whilst you are all there."

The feathers ruffled again with supreme contempt.

"It has to be handed in at five o'clock and then transferred. The Secretary and Branch Committee—"

"Oh, blow the Branch Committee!" exclaimed Joe, "it seems to me all a lot of red tape."

"It is," assented a demobilised soldier in the queue behind us.

"Well, you see how it is—" the pigeon began, when an important-looking person, with a fountain pen held dangerously in his hands, looked out of a door marked "Private."

"What's the row about?" Mr. Pigeon trembled. The awful truth might give Mr. Importance a shock. He just managed to stutter it out. The fountain pen wagged ominously, then the holder spoke:

"Come round again with the form on Tuesday next and hand it in at five o'clock; it will then be transferred and—"

But Joe had collapsed.

THE PORTSMOUTH SOCIALIST SCHOOL.

The Portsmouth Socialist School was started by the local W.S.F. and is supported by other Socialist organisations. The school is running most successfully and the local comrades are hoping shortly to build a permanent school. A building fund has been started and the secretary of the Building Committee, H. Ireton, 57, Cardigan Road, Kingston, Portsmouth, Hants., urgently appeals for donations.

IMPRISED FOR FLYING THE RED FLAG IN AUSTRALIA.

Mrs. Jennie Baines, well known in this country as a fighter for freedom, was in December arrested with Mrs. Jane Aarons for flying the Red Flag at meetings at Yass Bank, Melbourne, Australia. The women declared that as Socialists they were proud to fly the Red Flag and did not believe illegal to do so. They were fined and ordered to enter into a bond not to fly the Red Flag again. In default Mrs. Baines was to go to prison for 14 days, Mrs. Aarons for 7. Of course they refused to sign the bond. H. R. Long received the savage sentence of 6 months' imprisonment for the same "offence."

MAXIM LITVINOFF ON SOVIET RUSSIA.

Extracts from two letters on the situation in Russia, addressed by M. Litvinoff, former Russian plenipotentiary in London, to an American correspondent at the end of January and the middle of December last. The January letter being of a more recent date is printed first:

... Since my last letter a good deal has changed. The authority of the Soviets has extended in every direction. The Lettish Communists have firmly established themselves in Lettia, the Lithuanian Communists have occupied the greater part of Lithuania, and the Ukrainian Communists have captured almost all the big towns with the exception of Kiev, such as Kharkoff, Poltava, Ekaterinoslaw, Tchornigoff, &c. The Petliurians are impotent and may sell themselves at any moment to the Entente just as they previously sold themselves to Germany. The Estonians alone have had bad luck. They did not possess sufficient forces to retain the districts which they had recaptured, while the Russian Soviets refrained from sending troops there in order not to provoke Finland to war.

Measures, however, have been taken to prevent the Estonian and Finnish White Guards from proceeding beyond the present front. In the East, after the capture of Orenburg and Ufa, we are expecting the fall of Zlatoust. The defeat at Perm, which has been so much exaggerated abroad, was scarcely noticed in Russia. There, as in Esthonia, it was a case of treachery on the part of the commanders. In the South, General Krasnof is idling his time away. It is said that his army has melted away. In Siberia the workers and peasants do not cease to rebel.

The committee of the Constituent Assembly proposed to the Soviet Government an alliance for joint action against Koltchak. Tolsternoff, who had fled from Koltchak to Ufa, has received permission to return to Moscow. The Mensheviks, who have re-emerged, but continue to chant their dirges. A new conspiracy of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries has been detected, but of a local character. Lenin is trying to unite all the Socialist parties which recognise the Soviet régime, but down below, among the masses, the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionaries inspire great distrust.

The army continues to grow, and in a couple of months will amount to several millions. Thanks to imports from the Ukraine, the food situation at Moscow has lost its acuteness, but there is little fuel, and the people are suffering exceedingly from cold. At Petrograd even the food situation is very bad. The reports about disturbances are lies.

We are ready to make peace with the Allies and make them financial concessions. We accept, in principle, the proposal of the Paris Conference, but we insist upon a more central spot for the gathering.

The Allied blockade is condemning the country to starvation and cold. The Scandinavian countries have broken with us, very unwillingly, yielding to the pressure of the Allies who presented them with an ultimatum. Owing to this rupture, we are unable to import from Denmark vegetable seeds to the amount of 40,000,000 roubles which we had bought there and paid for in cash. We cannot import agricultural implements and machines from Sweden; and the British have forbidden them to export even paper to Russia.

A large quantity of flax bought by the Swedes in Russia and conveyed from Petrograd in Russian bottoms was seized by the British at Revel and taken to British ports. We are being strangled and deprived of the possibility of bettering the internal conditions, and yet it is we who are made responsible for the consequences. Neutral countries are being forced to boycott us, and then the fact is used as proof of our wickedness...

II. The decisive factors in the situation at present are: (1) the complete collapse of the counter-revolution and the disappearance of opposition inside the country, and (2) the formation of a large, efficient, and well-disciplined new army. Whatever view one may take of the activity of the Extraordinary Commissions (for Fighting the Counter-Revolution, Speculation, and Sabotage), they are entitled to the credit of having succeeded, within a short time, in clearing Russia of all the most active counter-revolutionary and conspiring elements. This has been achieved not so much by physical extermination, as by the liquidation of the bourgeoisie. The big capitalists, monarchists, and Socialist-Revolutionaries of the right, choosing the better part of valour, have, for the most part, sought safety in flight choosing the Ukraine, Finland, and foreign countries as the

fields for their intrigues. In Russia itself, apart from small riots which sporadically break out in isolated villages in connection with the mobilisation, or under the influence of the agitation of reactionaries from outside, there have of late been no conspiracies and no rebellions. These have been speedily and peaceably coped with for the most part. The most important revolt during the last three months was the action of some 500 sailors in Petrograd, but that bore more the character of a protest demonstration. The ring leaders were shot at the instance of the demonstrators themselves.

The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who, up to the time of the German Revolution, had been indulging in lachrymose complaints about the "Brest noose," have now calmed down and for the most part fused with the Communist party in virtue of a decision of their central committee. The Menshevik Central Committee is appealing for the support of the Soviet Government and for a fight against the counter-revolution, though it repeats, to save appearances, its hopes towards the Constituent Assembly. Even the Jewish Bund is, individually and collectively, migrating into our camp. Of the Internationalists and the "Novaya Zhizn" group scarcely anything need be said. They have for a long time past been working conscientiously in Soviet institutions. Gorki and Andreyeva [his wife] have unreservedly joined us, confining their criticisms to the little details of the big machine.

Among the workers the influence of the Communist Party is no longer disputed with the exception of one or two factories in Petrograd and in a few provincial towns, where the Mensheviks have entrenched themselves. At the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in November, which was attended by more than a thousand delegates, the combined opposition only commanded about a dozen votes, and even those were silent.

As for the villagers, their frame of mind is best illustrated by the recent congress of the Communist Party of the Union of Northern Communes, which was attended, beyond expectation, by no fewer than 16,000 delegates. A suggestion to form a model regiment of 4,000 from among the members of the congress was met by the immediate offer to enrol on the part of 6,000 delegates. Altogether, the formation of the Poverty Committees in the villages has proved a successful measure. These committees are waging a successful battle with the village vultures and the rich who had contrived to entrench themselves in the village Soviets of the old type. But the rich peasants, too, are hostile to the Soviet Government as to the collection of taxes.

Mobilisation is proceeding almost everywhere pretty successfully. The peasants gather at the various centres without any compulsion whatsoever. The idea of the necessity of actively protecting the People's Government is striking deep roots...

The food supply has greatly improved, but is still defective, partly on account of the difficulties of transport, but also in part owing to the dishonesty of the above-mentioned elements. Bread, however, is supplied to the towns pretty regularly, while other articles of consumption, such as tea, sugar, butter, &c., are distributed only now and then, when sufficient quantities reach the towns. In the corn-growing provinces, the number of which has of late considerably increased, thanks to the clearing-out of the Czechoslovaks from the Volga, the peasants supply the elevators with sufficient quantities of grain, but the further transport to the capitals still leaves much to be desired. Illicit self-provisioning has been suppressed, yet the rich bourgeoisie still contrives to obtain absolutely everything for money. All the restaurants have been closed, and in their place public kitchens have been opened where the population can get coupon dinners, far from luxurious and not always satisfying. Their number is still insufficient, and queues, unfortunately, are not of rare occurrence. The shops, too, are almost all closed or nationalised, and all articles, as well as foodstuffs, are distributed by the food committees among the district centres, whence they are delivered to the house committees. Prices are fixed for everything, and are, comparatively speaking, not high. Bread, for instance, is sold at Moscow (at 60 kopecks (i. e. 3d. at pre-war rates) a pound, while the bourgeoisie pays, by buying from illegal traders, 10 roubles (\$1 at pre-war rates) a pound. The same ratio between the fixed and free prices holds good in the case of all other articles. It is clear that the more ruthlessly illicit trading and illicit self-provisioning are suppressed the more products will be available for the public stores to distribute among the

people at reasonable prices. I had occasion—involuntarily—to spend a day and a night at Helsingfors, and to convince myself that there, under the White Guard régime, the food situation is worse than in the Sovietia. There, it is true, the restaurants and shops are open and products at high prices are more accessible to the bourgeoisie; but, on the other hand, the poorer classes obtain much smaller and less regular supplies for their coupons.

In all, the Commissariats' new constructive work is being carried on feverishly, but, naturally, the practical administration is considerably behind the legislation. Perfect public order reigns in the streets and the streets are absolute fabrications. In Moscow the streets are full of people up to midnight. Not only the common inhabitants, but also the People's Commissioners go about in the night without any escort and without fear of attack.

Lenin has quite recovered from his illness, which has left absolutely no trace behind it, though the bullets have not yet been extracted. He speaks at meetings, even open-air meetings, as before.

Moscow is absolutely calm. In the processions in connection with the celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution almost the entire population took part. Even the bourgeoisie exhibits no sign of hostility or mischief-making. If it had not been for the secret hopes of the overthrow of the Soviets by the Allied armies, the bourgeoisie would have already reconciled itself to the new régime, and would have adapted itself to it. What is causing complaints is not the régime itself, but the corruption of individual officials, of which I spoke before. This, indeed, is our chief evil at present. It is the legacy of the Tsar's régime, intensified by the war and the increased cost of living caused by it. As such, it is no longer a specific Russian evil, but is well-nigh international, being rife in all countries of Western Europe, especially in Germany. Of course, this and other defects of the new régime can and will be eliminated, and, in spite of the gigantic difficulties in their way, the Soviets have, in the course of twelve months, carried out constructive work of colossal dimensions. The activity of the Commissariat of Public Instruction is evoking the admiration even of the bourgeoisie, more particularly the provision of hot breakfasts for all children in the schools. The theatres are working as before, and even the former Court actors and actresses have remained at their posts, being highly satisfied with the large measure of autonomy granted to them.

Factories can only be restarted according as raw material and fuel become available. The economic reconstruction is hampered, to a large extent, by the militarisation of the country. Having created a large army and carrying on a war at so many fronts, we are obliged, in a measure, to restore to its place of honour the old principle, "Everything for the war." Instead of using the available rolling stock for the conveyance of raw material and foodstuffs we are obliged to employ it for the transport of troops, food, and war material to the fronts. If you add to this the severe blockade by the Allies, who do not allow even neutral countries to supply us with the means of production, which they are prepared to exchange for our surplus stocks of raw material, you will understand that it is not the weakness of the Soviet régime, but our desire to restore healthy economic conditions in Russia, which has prompted our offer of peace to the Allies...

We are going to repeat it once again, and if it is refused, there will be nothing left for us to do but to throw upon the Allied Governments the responsibility for the colossal bloodshed and the devastation of Russia which will inevitably result from their further intervention. Knowing as I do the feeling of the masses, I can confidently predict that in case the Allies or the White Guards, supported by them, should attempt to advance against Central Russia, they will not find any bourgeoisie left there: it will be exterminated to a man. Even now the Government finds it very difficult to restrain the popular wrath against the foreign and native bourgeoisie—the wrath caused by the rupture of diplomatic relations by the neutral Powers which have decided on this step mainly under the pressure of the Allied ultimata. However, the Soviet régime places its chief hope upon the working class in the Allied countries, which, it expects, will ultimately realise the real aims and objects of the intervention, which has now lost its former pretext of fighting the Germans...

[Received from The People's Russian Information Bureau.]

GIVE THIS PAPER TO A FRIEND.

ask ourselves. Here might be reason in the Bill, the meantime out of right it had to claim more immunities. admittances. right of the peoples vs. us that Mr. Bonar National Federation "Newer Endians" grant facilities. statement.

We now learn on good authority that since last July John Maclean has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding. Is this country to be the last in granting reprieves. Germany has shown the way by treating Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When are we going to have our political prisoners released? All sections of the community should protest against

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STARVATION IN RUSSIA. An Answer to Mr. Keeling.

The Westminster Gazette has discovered a certain Mr. H. V. Keeling, and on February 26th published an interview with him in which it is said that he returned from Russia on January 9th and that he, "alone probably of Englishmen, has seen the Bolshevik movement from within and can report from his own knowledge what the Russian working class think of it." The Westminster Gazette here ignores the testimony of Philips Price, Arthur Ransome, Reynolds Ball, and Dr. Bickman, all of whom have first-hand knowledge of the Soviet system, and all of whom have testified to the good work accomplished by the Bolsheviks.

But Mr. Keeling takes the opposite side: he is opposed to the Soviets and to the Bolsheviks. Therefore he is made much of by The Westminster Gazette and other capitalist newspapers, and his sole testimony is supposed to outweigh that of all the rest.

Mr. Keeling has much to say of the famine in Russia; he places the blame for it upon the Soviet Government. He entirely ignores the Allied intervention as a factor in the situation.

Mr. Keeling says: "I believe myself that there is enough food in Russia to keep every one alive, for last harvest was very good, but it cannot be got and it is all being hoarded and concealed."

Lenin himself has said something rather like that. Lenin has said that grain is being hoarded whilst the people in the industrial districts are starving for lack of it, because those who have grown it refuse to sell at the standard price and desire to undermine the State bread monopoly which has been established to protect the poor.

Mr. Keeling says: "The people who have got food won't sell it for roubles, because they are worth nothing and there is nothing to buy with them."

Why is there nothing to buy? Mr. Keeling refers to tobacco. Tobacco is grown in the south of Russia, and has not Mr. Churchill told us that this is a source of strength to General Denikin, to whom Britain is moreover sending arms, munitions, and equipment?

Mr. Reynolds Ball, who also has returned recently from Russia after a stay there dating from before the fall of the Czarism, tells us that oil is scarcely to be obtained for household use, either in town or country, and that the people improvise tapers which burn only for a few seconds. Coal also is terribly scarce. The Russian railway engines which normally burn oil now burn half oil, half wood. The trains are slow and infrequent. The oil shortage is due, of course, to the British troops and to the army of General Denikin in the Caucasus. Coal supplies are also held up by the counter-revolution, which is helped by the Allies. Interference with railway communications means interfering with supplies of all kinds. Hence, as Mr. Keeling says, "there is nothing to buy."

And the food growers prefer to hoard it whilst their Russian brothers and sisters starve. In times of famine the naked brutality still existing in human nature is revealed. Mr. Hoover, when he was working with the American Relief Commission in Belgium before he became United States Food Controller, told us that the Belgian growers were also hoarders, although their countrymen and women were starving. In every country there are food hoarders and

profiteers. They are the product of capitalism. The foreign intervention in Russia has a twofold result: it is the cause of there being "nothing to buy," and, at the same time, it causes the hoarders and the profiteers to believe that some day the Soviets may be overthrown. Therefore, instead of settling down to Socialism, they fight against it, and continue each to work for his own private interest instead of for the community as a whole.

Mr. Keeling gives another reason for famine in Russia. He says that the peasants are only doing as much work "as they must to keep themselves alive; and many of them are likely to live all this year on last year's harvest and what is being hoarded. The next harvest is likely to be very bad, and then the famine, which is now in the towns, will begin to spread to the country."

Mr. Reynolds Ball explains what Mr. Keeling has but superficially observed. He says that the peasants' land committees shared the land equally between the land workers, but that there was so little seed at the last sowing that few of the peasants were able to sow the amount of land allotted to them by the land committees. It was thought that there would be a great conflict at the sowing between the poor peasants who would sow their full share of land and the richer agriculturalists, whose old lands had been curtailed. But the shortage of seed for the time being obviated the conflict; the poor peasants could only sow a small part of the land allotted to them. The richer people—who, having more seed, could still sow more land than the poor, though not so much as in times of plenty—smiled and said: "The poor people think the extra land allotted to them is theirs, but we shall see."

Mr. Keeling, according to The Westminster Gazette, asserts that the Bolsheviks "maintain their power by providing food for those who 'keep in with them' and starving those who do not. He says:—

"The population was originally divided by the Bolsheviks into four categories which exactly turn upside down the social classes of other countries. These are (1) manual labourers; (2) clerical workers, provided they employ nobody; (3) everybody who has employed anybody...; (4) all the former idle rich, princes, aristocrats, landowners, courtiers, and rentiers of every description... in the last few months there has not been anything like enough for the first class, and scarcely anything for the others."

He adds that all children are in the first class. Class 4, Mr. Keeling thinks, has disappeared; some of its members have turned themselves into workmen to get food—for the most desirable consumption, in our opinion! He adds:—

"The other classes have got sorted into two classes; those that got some food and those who got hardly any officially."

"You have cards and coupons very much as here, but all private trading is forbidden, and nearly all the shops in Petrograd are shut. To take their place there are a few hundred municipal shops, and you have to be registered at one of these and take your coupons there, if you are in the feeding class. You are supposed to receive the feeding of bread a day, and potatoes, butter, meat and sugar at reasonable prices; but as a matter of fact, for a long time past nothing has been sold but bread and even that has failed for seven days in December, and three days without anything to eat, except the so-called public dinner, which consists of watery soup, a small piece of very salt fish and one-eighth of a pound of bread. Sometimes they have offered me oats, as if I were a horse, when there is no bread. All the children are in the first class, for the Bolshevik idea is that all the children should be at the charge of the State while their parents go to work. But the children are starving all the same in great numbers."

Mr. Keeling did not like it; most naturally he would have preferred to live in a land of plenty where there is no war and no blockade. But how strange that he does not blame the counter-revolution and the Allied intervention which is causing this famine!

Mr. Keeling even objects to the attempts of the Soviet Government to secure an equal

supply of food for the poor by rationing the supplies. He says:—

"It makes it worse that you have quantities of money in your pocket, but can buy nothing. I have had roubles worth £600 according to old values, in my pocket, and not been able to buy a piece of bread."

Let us compare Mr. Keeling's statement with those of others. An American woman who came to this country from Russia this month classes that, according to Mr. Keeling, is not a "feeding class" and whose members, he says, "have to prowl about and try to get food secretly." This woman in the third class got 1/4 to 1/2 of a lb. of bread every two days. Mr. Keeling and the other manual workers and children in the first class got 1/2 lb. of bread a day. In September, October, and November she did not receive the bread ration regularly. When it was not forthcoming rice or oats were supplied instead. She left Russia in December and returned in the New Year. In February the bread ration was supplied regularly. She could regularly obtain bread and thin soup for dinner. But she was not condemned to starvation; she was eligible for certain rations at fixed prices. She could also buy unrationed food, including potatoes at 64 roubles per lb. and meat at a very high price.

Mr. Keeling complains that it was declared illegal for people to buy flour privately in the country and bring it to the towns. This provision was made because the Soviet desired to establish a State bread monopoly and a uniform price in the interests of the poor.

The same American woman reports that the restrictions in this respect are now relaxed. Any one may now bring up to 2 poods of black flour into Moscow and sell it in the market place. Transport difficulties are so great that an extensive use is likely to be made of the permission to fetch food from the country. People have to fight their way into the trains and many lie on the top of the carriages or even ride on the buffers.

Food was fairly plentiful in the country, but it is growing less so owing to the influx of people who are leaving the towns in search of food and work. The population of Moscow is now reduced to one million.

In the schools the children are given a bowl of soup as a free lunch, and though the children are rationed in the highest category they are too hungry to learn for an hour before lunch. The orphanages are living from hand to mouth and the hospital patients are short of food.

This American woman makes the important statement that there is remarkably little crime in Soviet Russia. She saw not a single drunken man there. But travelling through the part of Siberia controlled by Koltchak in a train filled with soldiers in his army, she found that all were drunk, except the Chinese. Vodka under Koltchak's administration costs 15 roubles for 5 pints. The justification for selling vodka given by the Czech-Slovak authorities who seized Samara, was that the only way to get money out of the peasants was to sell them vodka, and that the only people in Russia who had money were the peasants. When the Bolsheviks were in power in Samara notices were posted that any one found drunk would be shot. She thinks this proclamation was a warning never carried into effect. Such statements are interesting in view of the allegations that Bolshevism is synonymous with disorder, and that looting is part of the theory of Bolshevism. To those who reply that the fact that the death penalty is even threatened for looting reveals a disordered state of society, we must answer that ordered life and constructive work cannot fail to be disturbed by invasion and attacks by foreign troops, and that a naval and military blockade which turns scarcity into famine must inevitably arouse the ruthless, primitive instincts of self-preservation. But hear The Times of keeping order in Germany!—

"This morning the announcement was made—before it was time—that looters will be shot."

Continued on page 1259.

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH BILL.

This measure is being hailed as a great boon to the people; a veritable charter of security for the mothers and children of the country. But a scrutiny of the Bill provokes the exclamation: "How easily the people are gulled!" The Bill contains not one single provision to improve social conditions, not a single pledge to do anything. It merely transfers to the Ministry of Health the work of the Local Government Board, the Insurance Commissioners, the Board of Education, in respect of maternity and infant clinics, and other matters affecting the health of mothers and children under 5 years, the powers under the Midwives' Act, and the powers concerning infant life protection under the Children's Act of 1908. By Order in Council the medical inspection of children, the health of discharged officers and soldiers, and the treatment of lunatics and those who are mentally deficient may later be transferred to the Ministry of Health.

The Boards of Guardians, which are elected by popular vote, are abolished, and consultative councils may be set up to give the Ministry advice and assistance. Presumably the members of these councils are to be chosen by the Ministry, since no method of election is stated. Therefore the people are to lose what little control they have had over the administration of the Poor Law, which still remains as of yore. There is absolutely no reason to suppose that the poor widows, orphans, the aged and infirm will be better off than before. There is no reason to suppose that the mothers and children will be better cared for; not one single provision to benefit any of these people finds a place in the Bill. The only person who benefits under the Bill is the Minister of Health, who is to get £5,000 a year, instead of the £2,000 which used to be paid to the President of the Local Government Board. Ministerial salaries are showing a tendency to rise and the class of which Ministers are made is spared the hardships of the strike!

THE SHIPYARDS OFFERED TO LABOUR.

Mr. Bowerman, M.P., at the Conference between the Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies, said that the Government had paid the Labour Movement a great compliment in asking the Government to take over the shipyards started by the Government during the war. He thought it would be a great thing if the movement could do it, but it had not reached that stage yet. It is remarkable that men, appointed like Mr.

from Brixton. Watson's case is fixed for to-day (Saturday), at 2 p.m., at Bow Street; he will defend himself. All friends anxious to act as witnesses are asked to meet at 7, Featherstone Buildings, on Friday 14th, at 7.30 p.m. We urge all interested—and every supporter of free speech should be—to come to Bow Street to encourage Watson by their presence. Now is the time to make a stand.

We must see to it that the movement rallies to the support of those who are dependent upon our comrades, and donations towards this object addressed to the Revolutionary Comrades' Fund will be gladly received by the editor of this paper until, as we anticipate, a special committee has been formed to attend to this matter. But conscience and the sense of logic should remind all of us that we cannot thus buy ourselves out of the duty of doing our part in the revolutionary work. Victimization will continue and will increase until capitalism is overthrown. On with the educational work; on with the perfecting of the rank and file organisation; on with fearless creative thought which shall lead to vigorous action.

As an instance of the promptitude of the arm of the law, the offices of the L.W.C. were visited by eight men within half-an-hour of Watson's remand. The raiding party removed property from the premises in no way connected with the case!

THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' RIOT.

After Kimmel, the Strand; after Canadian soldiers, American. Why are the Canadian and American soldiers still detained here? Is it altogether a question of waiting for ships to take them home? Are they to be sent to Russia or to Germany? Are they to be used for labour disputes in the Allied countries? These questions stirring in the minds of the men longing to go home, together with the petty, longed-for and coercive restrictions of the military machine, and the profiteering of which they are the victims, are breeding a spirit of turbulence and unrest amongst them.

As to the details of the Strand riot, the Americans seem to have had a substantial grievance; two of their number were arrested for playing dice and two for looking on at the game. Though the rulers of this country have decreed gambling, except on the Stock Exchange and by other capitalist methods, to be illegal, dice playing is not illegal in the United States. When civilians are arrested by the police (and this applies in America as well as in this country) they are expected to obey quietly and leave the question as to whether the arrest was justified to the decision of the Courts. But the military claim to be on a different footing; the American military police are said to have claimed the right to take over the prisoners. The police refused to give the prisoners up. Hence a fight developed, and as a result the methods of the police will be much examined and much criticised. If they had been attacking a crowd of workers, as they did in Glasgow, the powers that be and the bulk of the Press would have insisted that the police could do no wrong. We hope that no feud between the police and the Army and Navy, or between the British and American forces, will develop out of these conflicts. The workers in all the forces have a bigger enemy to fight than each other. Nevertheless, we must approve the solidarity the American soldiers and sailors have shown in refusing to allow their comrades to be punished unjustly.

THE POLICE.

The police are showing an excellent spirit in their negotiations with the Home Secretary. The Representative Board, which after their late strike was given to them as an alternative to recognition of the Union which was refused, is acting as though it were the Union. The Executive Committee has come into conflict with the Commissioner, the Commissioner has ordered the Board to elect another Executive but the Board stands by the Executive. At length the Home Secretary agreed to receive a deputation but refused to discuss with the deputation the question upon which it had come to see him. Meetings of the police have shown that the men stand solidly behind their Executive.

DOMESTIC SLAVERY.

Protest emphatically against the attempts being made by the Government to coerce women into domestic service, and public money being wasted in the effort to provide mistresses with maids. The unemployment donation may, so the Government announces, be refused to women who do not accept domestic employment. The Ministry of Reconstruction lately appointed a Women's Advisory Committee to inquire into the servant problem and this committee has now reported advocating the establishment of training schools in which little girls between 14 and 16 are to be trained as domestics. It is suggested that the training shall be provided at no greater cost to the parent than if the girl were entering a commercial or industrial calling. These schools will merely

IRISH INDEPENDENCE.

Very curious is the Home Rule Memorial to the King presented by Irish officers who fought with the British forces in the war. The Memorialists state that they joined the Army because Home Rule had been granted, yet immediately war broke out the Government suspended the Home Rule Act to secure the support of the Unionists. The memorialists say that their reliance on the Home Rule compact was ill-founded, and that their comrades who have given their lives in that reliance have made a sacrifice, fruitless up to the present of benefit for the fatherland that they loved. They urge that the Irish question shall be settled by the Peace Conference. They refer to Sinn Fein as "a violent emotional upheaval," and it is announced that Sinn Feiners were not asked to sign the memorial. These officers have, however, in large measure virtually admitted the Sinn Fein policy to be right; they have admitted that it was a mistake to fight in the war; they have adopted the Sinn Fein tactic of appealing to the Peace Conference, and though they still desire the Home Rule Act which Sinn Fein rejects, if these officers could have an experience of its working, they would probably denounce it with unqualified heartiness. We think it not improbable that they will shortly throw in their lot with Sinn Fein.

For our part, we are surprised that Sinn Fein should place reliance on what can be achieved at the Peace Conference, since it is obvious that the Peace Conference is dominated by the Council of Ten and that the Council of Ten is quite prepared to accommodate each other on little matters of this kind.

We think that Sinn Fein will do well to continue its old policy of self-reliance, and particularly to develop in Ireland the power of combined industrial action. Irish Socialists will no doubt keep plainly before the Irish workers the fact that they must free themselves from Irish as well as from British capitalism.

POPLAR SOCIALIST SUNDAY SCHOOL. Re-opens on SUNDAY, 16th MARCH, at 2.30. AT 236, HIGH STREET, POPLAR, E.14. WHEN COM. J. BROWN and COM. FARRELL and WILL SPEAK. JOHN LAVIS, Sect. E. R. FLEMING, Sec.

here might be reason in the Bill, the meantime it had to claim more annexations. Germany has shown the way by freeing Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When we are going to have our political prisoners released? All sections of the community should pro-

We now learn on good authority that since last July John Macleera has been on hunger strike and undergoing forcible feeding. Is this country to be the last in granting reprieves. Germany has shown the way by freeing Karl Liebknecht, whose popularity has been increased enormously by the unjust treatment meted out to him. When we are going to have our political prisoners released? All sections of the community should pro-

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