

STARVATION AND THE STATE.

By WM. GALLACHER

The "Daily Herald" has made a staggering discovery of the dirty work contemplated by the Government, in the event of a miners' strike. According to their disclosure troops are to be used to blockade the mining districts, and the miners crushed into subjection by the threat of having their women and children starved to death.

Of course, Mr Lloyd George hastens to deny the allegation, but then Mr Lloyd George is the most prodigious prevaricator in Europe. He can tell a deliberate, calculated lie with a face as guileless as a Celestial cherub. He is the wonder of the age. The boss hypocrite in a land of super-hypocrites. He denies the "Herald" story; that means it's true.

But why should the "Herald" Editor be so astonished at this projected move of the Government? What else do they expect? Do they expect the bosses of this country to treat British strikers, who threaten their trade prosperity, any better than Austrian, Russian, or German workers? If they do they are in for a painful disillusionment.

If those responsible for the "Daily Herald" would give a little more attention to the Revolutionary movement, and considerably less to the muddle-headed vendors of Parliamentary wisdom who run the Labour Party, they would not be so thunderstruck at what is after all the natural development of the State under Capitalism.

In the present groggy condition of our finances a strike of the miners might well bring down the whole Capitalist state in ruins. Capitalism is face to face with bankruptcy, and its most valuable asset is coal. If the production of coal is stopped the exchange will go down with a run.

Capitalism will be unable to meet its debts, and the Red Revolution will enter in as receiver. The watch-dogs of Mammon are alive to the situation. They know what a miners' strike would mean, and they are prepared to crush it right at the start, if crushing it be at all possible.

The State must smash the Strike or the Strike will smash the State. Every effort will be made to sidetrack the miners, and hold off the issue in the hope that sooner or later the old wretched system may get stabilised. Compromise is the alluring pasture-land that will lead the workers off the road to Revolution. But only for a time. Soon even that will become barren, and then nothing will stop the last great fight between the dispossessed and their exploiters.

When the fight does come the chief weapons of the State will be brute force and starvation. The Capitalist class control the army and the food, and just as they have always been prepared to shoot the workers when the need arose, so also will they starve them without the slightest compunction, if such a course is necessary to retain their own position of ascendancy. We have never had any doubt about this at all. In fact we have continually asserted that the weapon of starvation would be the first the State would put into operation. Is it possible neither Comrade Lansbury nor any member of his staff has read "Direct Action"? We hardly think it is. Yet how else can we account for their expression of "horror" at the proposed action of the State. If they had taken the trouble to read that pamphlet, they would have found on page 22 a short examination of the State in its relation to the modern strike, in the course of which the writers say:—

"Several courses are open to the State. It can, for example, declare the strike illegal, and arrest all the active men. It can attempt to overawe the strikers by a display of armed force. If these measures are not productive of the desired results, it can proceed to kick the workers in the stomach. It can interfere with the food supply. In the case of an industry that is highly localised, as is the case with the mining industry, the cotton industry, or the engineering industry, it can blockade the affected districts, preventing food supplies reaching the striking workers."

The pamphlet has been on for sale for several months, and only cost threepence. We have seen it being sold at meetings in London, although we have never seen any notice of it in the "Daily Herald." Surely the industrial editor of the "Herald" has read it, and surely he of all others has made a sufficiently close study of the State to know that it will always be used to keep the workers in subjection.

The revolutionary knows what he's up against, and makes an effort to prepare for it. What is wanted is not condemnation of the State but organisation that will enable the workers, when the strike does come, to frustrate any attempt to starve and bully them into submission.

The greatest difficulty in getting such organisation is caused by those pitiable place-hunters, who strut around the Labour platforms and exhibit themselves as States-men. These Labour apologists for the State fool the workers all the time by giving them a totally misleading conception of what the State really is, and how it will perform when war breaks out between the workers and the bosses.

As an example of what happens, take the messages sent from Glasgow to the "Herald" the day following the exposure.

Those who sent them trumpet forth their indignation and—stop there. It's a sort of sensational thing, and may probably help to get them votes. That is the one great concern. They will make splendid capital out of it by publicly protesting about it, but they will do damn all in the way of helping to get organisation to deal with the situation when it does arise.

These embryo States-men will mislead the workers by talking about the "wrong" of such a thing as a blockade of the mining areas, when they ought to know that right or wrong doesn't enter into the matter at all.

Necessity knows no laws, and what will count will not be sentiment or morality, but power. If the State is strong enough to crush the workers by military might they will be crushed.

If it has the power to starve them into submission, protests from indignant Labourites will be of no avail.

If we would save ourselves from the terrors of militarism or the pangs of hunger, then we must acquire power of our own. We can never acquire power by delegating men to talk for us in the national joss-house.

We can only acquire power by organising in such a way that we can control the production and distribution industries of the country.

Organise in the workshop. Build up sound, effective Workers' Committees. Organise in the district where you live. Get a real, live Social Committee (or Soviet) formed there.

When each workshop has its Council and each district its Soviet, then the State may launch its most formidable attack. We will meet it on the solid front of working-class solidarity, with the sure and certain hope that the result will be the speedy triumph of the workers—a triumph that will usher in the dawn of the British Soviet Republic.

The Two Internationals.

By J. R. Campbell

From now until the end of the Easter Conferences the question of the International will be the foremost theme of discussion amongst all active Socialists. It is therefore fitting that a full and comprehensive statement of the position of each of the Internationals should be presented to the rank and file for consideration.

There has been a tendency on the part of the official group of the I.L.P. to misrepresent the position of the Third International, but in this volume are all the authentic documents relating to the formation of that body, which will furnish an effective antidote to efforts of that kind.

The book traces the growing division of the Socialist forces throughout the war, beginning with the setting up of the Zimmerwald Commission, and leading up to the formation of the Third

International. Not that theoretical divisions were not manifest in the Socialist movement before the war, but in practice people of divergent views continued to work together in the electoral activity which was the main form of Socialist activity previous to the war. But the war and later the coming of the Bolshevik revolution cleared the air, and showed the absolutely irreconcilable divergence of opinion between the two wings. The Zimmerwald Conference was merely a gathering of anti-war Socialists, differing from other sections, not so much in their attitude to general Socialist tactics, as in their opposition to the war. But in the subsequent conferences, held at Kienthal, a transition from Pacifist Socialism to Revolutionary Socialism was becoming evident, and with the breakdown of the Stockholm Conference it was decided to make a clean break with the Second International. In the book the manifesto calling the first meeting of the Third International, and also the subsequent manifesto giving detailed arguments in favour of the policy of that body are given in full. Students will have the opportunity of comparing this carefully written and scientifically argued document with the Macdonaldesque pronouncement of the I.L.P., where the failure of Parliamentary democracy is gravely attributed to "the wickedness of Mr Lloyd George," instead of being a phenomenon common to all countries caused by the development of financial Capitalism and expressing itself in the same political corruption everywhere. The Communist theory with regard to the State and Parliamentary democracy is excellently summarised by Mr Dutt. "The theory of the Communists begins with an analysis of the modern state as the machinery of class rule. The typical developed form of this machinery in Capitalist society is held to be political democracy. The ground for this is that political democracy serves to overthrow the last stronghold of pre-Capitalist privilege and allow free play for the forces of Capitalism, while at the same time covering the reality of bourgeois dictatorship with an appearance of popular consent which is rendered unreal by the Capitalist control of the social structure. Political democracy cannot affect the reality of social exploitation, because (a) whatever party comes to power must keep the machinery going—'the King's Government must be carried on. (b) No party that is fundamentally revolutionary can come to power in face of the Capitalist control of all the vehicles of political life and thought; the revolutionary Socialist must either remain in a permanent minority or else dilute his programme and become 'practical' in order to obtain power."

"The main strength of this argument lies in its appeal to the familiar facts of the present regime and its insistence that the existing abuse of the Parliamentary system is not accidental—'the wickedness of Mr Lloyd George'—but inherent. The case of the Communist is strengthened by his claim. The only suggested remedy of the political democrat is propaganda and education, the main organs of which are admittedly in the hands of the Capitalist class."

The book, by merely bringing into contrast the two rival positions and stating them fairly, will do more to show the crushing strength of the Third International position than a violent ex parte statement would do.

The most valuable part of the book for those who will be attending the I.L.P. Conference is the statement of the point of view of those organisations who desire a left wing conference of the advanced groups generally referred to as the Fourth International. The Second International stinks in the nostrils of all sections of the Socialist movement in this country. No one dare openly advocate adherence to that contemptible body. So the Fourth International is being trotted around to attract the attention of those timid spirits who want to appear revolutionary, while shirking the responsibility of going in for a definite revolutionary policy. The impression is being spread abroad that the Fourth International stands for a fairly homogenous policy, embracing the best elements of Third International tactics with those of the wavering centre. It would be a mighty queer mixture if it did, but an examination

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