

KNOWLEDGE MUST PRECEDE ALL INTELLIGENT ACTION

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THE ORGAN OF NATIONAL WORKERS COMMITTEES.

A TONIC FOR THE HOPELESS, A SCOURGE FOR THE SPINELESS.

Registered at G.P.O. as a Newspaper.

Edited by JOHN S. CLARKE.

No. 134.

18th JUNE, 1921

Price 2d.

## THE I.L.P. AND COMMUNISM.

A Challenge to Wallhead: By William Gallacher.

During the war the worst enemies the anti-militarist had to contend with were the traitor Labour leaders who, prior to the outbreak of hostilities, had been most vigorous in their advocacy of a general strike to break the power of the Imperialists if and when any attempt should be made to drag the nation into war.

Yet when war did come, the Tillets, Sextons, etc.—all the nasty crowd of them—vied with one another in their protestations of super-patriotism. From every platform they howled for the extermination of the Germans and the forcible suppression of such who had the courage to remain true to the cause of working-class solidarity, and who stood four square against the warmongers right through all the bitter years of war.

The special trick of these worthies was to attack the anti-militarist wherever opportunity offered, with a view to goading them into saying things that would make them liable to prosecution under the D.O.R.A. It was a common thing to have these fellows hang around the meetings, and then at the finish put a question in such a way that an answer to it would almost certainly lead to imprisonment.

Always they were suggesting the line of policy that ought to be pursued by those who were endeavouring to entrap them.

If I mistake not, they succeeded in landing Willie Stewart and G. Houston, thus getting them to answer questions put for that specific purpose.

Yes, they were a dirty lot, with not a shred of principle left to cover their mean little naked souls. And, oh, how the idealistic I.L.P.ers went for them! The pure souled, high spirited Macdonald, the Snowdens and Wallheads, wailed to the high heaven against the moral depravity of these social traitors.

But even while they condemned, they must have studied these tactics, prophetically anticipating their utility in the years immediately following the war. When you get a potential "statesman" like Emmanuel Shinwell mouthing from the platform that the left wingers ought to go up to Maryhill and endeavour to get at the soldiers there, what is it but the same old game played by the Gilmour crowd, of suggesting to the authorities that these bad Communists are a purely illegal organisation, and ought to be attended to!

Then take "Forward" of last week, and you find a sentence like this from the immaculate Macdonald:—"Those who must talk seditious nonsense should confine themselves to quotations from Carson, etc., which is another way of

saying that while the doughty Macdonald is in favour of a campaign for civil liberties, he recognises quite frankly that those of us who get into trouble are only getting what we ask for.

In the early days of the war, following a demonstration in North Frederick Street, Shinwell, Regan, Helen Crawford and one or two others were summoned to the Central Police Court for obstruction. We had hired and used a lorry for the demonstration. One after another we pleaded not guilty until it came to the lorryman. He had obviously been got at, and, to our surprise, he pleaded guilty, and was fined 5/-. We were then in the difficult position of defending ourselves against a charge to which another man had admitted being guilty: A truly hopeless position. And Regan and Shinwell had some very hard things to say about that lorryman and of the game that had been played on us.

But will they have anything to say about the National Labour Press, at the head of which is Philip Snowden and Coun. Whitely?

Summoned to appear at Court in connection with the Inkpin case, the National Press, with the most indecent haste, pledged themselves never again to publish anything for the Communist Party, and entered a plea of guilty to the charges levelled against them.

Again, at Coventry the majority of the I.L.P. branch there decided to form themselves into a branch of the Communist Party, and being in the majority thought they were entitled to retain the branch premises and furniture. But the Macdonaldites, however much they love democracy, love private property with a more endearing affection, immediately took them into Court to invite the support of boss class justice; and in presenting their case they claimed that the Communist Party was a seditious organisation.

At meetings they hang around the fringe of the crowd in very many cases waiting to put leading questions about force, about a red army, propaganda among the forces, and what not—all in the best Gilmour-Sexton style—to try and inveigle the speaker into the position of having to refuse an answer, or take the risk of getting into trouble.

It is in such a spirit that Wallhead offers to debate with McManus on the policy of the Communist Party. Wallhead, who has rattled from left to right, and who flounders around not knowing where he is going to land. He wants to debate on the policy of the Communist Party?

Well, he has to be in Kilmarnock next week, and I will be only too happy to take him on,—

provided he is prepared to put down a definite policy against the Communist Party.

He is Chairman of the I.L.P.; and if that organisation has a policy, he ought to know it. I have stated time and again that the sole aim of the I.L.P. is to get a majority in the House of Commons. In that aim all their members are agreed. But, what after that? How are they going to use the power when it has been given them by the workers?

Some time ago, while lunching at Cranston's, Willie Regan made an effort to sketch what he thought should be the policy of the I.L.P.—if, and when, the workers put power into their hands by giving them a substantial majority.

Recognising the fact that the army, navy, civil service and law courts were controlled by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie, Willie said the first duty of the Party would be to sack every officer out of these services, and organise them under proletarian control; they would also put such a strict censorship on the Press as would prevent any bourgeois criticism of the I.L.P. government, and, generally speaking, hold firmly on to power until they emancipated the workers, by ending capitalism for good and all.

Tom Johnston and a number of other active I.L.P.ers were sitting listening all the while, so also was "Dick" Wallhead; when Regan finished I asked Wallhead if he agreed with him, and Wallhead said he did.

Since then I've heard a number of others try to work out some line of action to be followed—when the requisite majority is obtained; but each one differs from the other, their only point of agreement being—getting a majority in the House.

Now, if Wallhead, as chairman of the Party, will make a public statement of the policy to be pursued by the I.L.P. when the workers have voted them into power, then we will be able to meet on something like fair terms. I will gladly take my stand by the policy of the Communist Party. Can Wallhead—or any other potential statesman—discover anywhere an I.L.P. policy that can by any possibility be put up against it?

Wallhead is in Kilmarnock next week. So am I. Why shouldn't we have it out?

The land belongs to no one person, but to all; all that an individual acquires beyond the means of existence is a social theft.—Jean Jacques Rousseau.