

Treaties and "Boes"

In Two Parts: Part Two.

THE pressure of credit on Europe: the struggle of finance for dominance: and its concrete effort to subdue Germany and Russia to its will involves an effort of expansion and concentration unparalleled. As a matter of fact, Germany is wiped off the map as an independent commercial, and its resources do but strengthen the economic advantages of her industrial rivals. To balance their budgets and stabilize their exchange, the nations have—by various means—tariffed off imports. But, as we have tried to show industrially, reduced imports, inevitably entail reduced exports and vice-versa, of course. Because commerce is international and purchasing power hinges on exchange. The pressure of finance on industry, and the pressure of Bolshevism on both has brought the nations to the verge of crises. To ward it off, to steady and impart some activity to industry there is the German loan. The modern "God of Bentham," Plainly, it is wholly inadequate for the purpose. Nevertheless in the application of it, the German proletariat, and with them the British—the whole world in fact—will find themselves in the tension of a struggle for existence, unequalled in all history. The machine will control us with draconian ruthlessness; living standards will be driven down; and clamoring need, chained to its necessity, by the power of a finance—i.e., the capitalist system—whose privilege is the measure of our ignorance. Moreover, if Britain is become dominant in central and south eastern Europe, it can only be at the expense of La Belle France. With La Belle on the edge of the abyss: the franc artificially maintained; with paper money on the limit of 40 b. Francs; with forced loans and unbalanced budgets: and burdened with "reparations"—we may say that such power is to be achieved only by force. Hence "our" feet appear to be quite firmly planted on the road that leads to war. Whether "agreement" can prevent war: whether the possession of oil may render it impossible; or whether social intelligence will drive it forever into oblivion, we cannot say. Our intent is to hasten the latter. Here we connect up with the main issue.

Walton Newbold says (supporting the Labor party) "I want a union with Soviet Russia to keep the Baltic and North Seas open for the security of the food ships. I want peace with France," "and co-operation with the states of Europe." Peace and co-operation with the states of Europe means the "peace" of exploitation. It means the reconstruction and readjustment of European chaos, for a common share in their common privilege of their common "justice," of exploiting the resource and peoples of the world, for their individual aggrandisement. Consequently, bourgeois "peace and co-operation" is not the problem and has no interest to the proletariat. Security, sea routes, good ships, are not the problems of socialism. Not yet. Nor can they be organized for the purpose—yet. Granted that industrial Britain cannot feed itself by 80%. It is not our problem to help the capitalist class to perpetuate "business." Nor to overcome its direct sequences. That is the problem of the capitalist class whose intensified exploitation has brought its miserable slaves to the verge of utter starvation. Let capital fear for its results. And let us open the eyes of the slaves to its cause. For, be assured, unless labor knows the cause, and controls the issue, then it will be the capitalist class by the power of its governments, that will control both the food ships and the sea routes, and the peace—by violence if necessary.

And despite the commonly expressed opinion of labor, that the Labor Government is a revolutionary government; despite Com. Harrington's remark that "the indications are sufficiently revolutionary to warrant admiration," despite Com. "C's" implication that the "drifter" is wrong: who sees in the Labor Government only the safe guarding of capital-

ist interests, we say expressly that such opinion is fallacious and confuses the issue at stake. "Drifting" is no policy of socialism. It is, on the contrary, the principle of the Labor Party,—borrowed from the "Manchester School." The Labor Government is neither a revolutionary government, nor the imitation of it. Nor ever will in its present form. And its whole business has been the "safeguarding" of capitalist interests. It has openly repudiated the very name of socialism. It has sought to sustain the prestige of British tradition. It has striven to alleviate the excesses of capitalist exigency. It has endeavored to negotiate a treaty with Russia, in the interests of bourgeois industry, on the specious plea of the capitalist class that commerce is beneficial to labor. Even against its own pledges, it has ratified the Versailles Treaty as no former government had ever done. It has accepted Dawes, thus banding Central Europe to finance—pleading the necessity of the Rhur evacuation in the interests of "peace and reconstruction." While to different capitalist ambitions, it has refused the withdrawal of British troops from Egypt—pleading the usual interests. It has offered no whisper of comment on Irak—for Irak is oil; nor on Turkey—the intermediary of diplomacy; nor the dictatorship of Italy—privilege; nor the insurrection in Georgia—against the Soviet. Truly, as Com. Harrington says, "Socrates may be a man one day, and a moon, the next." It has stood by while Kenya is being enslaved. It has forgotten the mandates and the slavery of the Pacific Isles. And it was as silent as a god in the day of trial, when the striking textile workers in India were shot down by government troops in the streets. Not to mention its domestic "naval ratings," etc. But never a word about the source of the profit; the reason of the 'deed'; the nature of the peace. Never a hint of the blood and tears, so lush in the cutting of the bond. Never a whisper of the class struggle; never an allusion to property right. Always it has veiled the issue in temporising expediency. Always occluded the fact, with the flying films of the omnipresent. Hence it has made the task of education more difficult; the cause of the conflict more obscure; the advent of socialism more distant. Its record is the record of a capitalist government. It has toiled obsequiously in the service of business. And of necessity, it has betrayed the working class and its freedom.

This idea of the more or less revolutionary indications of labour, and the practical need of conciliative associations, comes out once more in Com. MacLeod's editorial (Sept. 16) "The working out of a philosophy may occasion as much argument as the philosophy itself, but it is apparent that in Russia's case each is merged in the other. A rigid ideal may be set so high that pronouncement upon it becomes a very logical formalism. Altogether, without prejudice to those who hold by the tactical values of the latter position, with working class education in view, it is apparent that practice imposes its claims in work-a-day affairs, big and small."

Whence also, it is apparent that philosophers are not always philosophical. The working argument of the philosophy is occasioned, either by a false philosophy or a false interpretation of it. Its truth—or otherwise—rests on the test of experience: its principles formulated on that test. In other words, the philosophy is the incidence of fact; its principle the key to its service. In our case, that incidence is socialism, and although its philosophy is dialectic (consequential change) it does not follow that its principle is subject to the same process. If the philosophy is false, turn it; if it is misinterpreted, resolve it; if it is true, go forward with its enlightenment. For that enlightenment alone, can abate the "argument" of its working. That this philosophy and its working are merged in the case of Russia, is not only not apparent; but it isn't true. (1) The treaty with Russia was a trade treaty, in the interests solely of bourgeois commerce. It was

promulgated, long ago, at Genoa, by that wily opportunist Lloyd George, in the service of precisely the same commerce. Commerce is the consummation of necessity in Britain; Russia is a potential market for that necessity; and the treaty a potential opening for the possible capitalisation of Russia. A treaty with Russia on those terms is of no more value to the workers than a similar treaty with America or Nippon. And it facilitates the social intercourse of the peoples, no more than legislation facilitates sobriety. The one interest of the workers is to understand that philosophy: the one business of the philosopher is to help them to that end. Not to agitate organisations for purchase of a "right," that can never be for sale. The workings of exploitation have brought the working class to the degradation of near extinction. To resolve the sequence of that excess is the problem of the capitalist class. Not ours. Our problem is to forward the enlightenment which alone can abolish the system whose necessary sequence is the brilliant technology of the industrial arts and the awful degradation of the society which suffers its insolence of privilege. That is neither a rigid ideal, nor a logical formalism. On the contrary, it is pragmatic necessity. And the implication that socialist education may wait on the practical affairs of work-a-day life, is nothing more than the dangerous beginnings of the "aptitude" of labor politics for obscurantist tactics. And the only reason that practice imposes the specious claims of the dead past on living life, is the ignorance of our class—of all society—to the hoary superstitions of power and its "changing" justice, of "eternal truth," and if a tithe of the energy were directed to the destruction of the fantastic lie, that is now consumed in the "practical politics" of the blind leaders of the blind, our ideal would be realised today.

The class struggle—that is the real issue. In these days of a dying civilisation; with a hard pressed master class; with a short lived phase of finance, bonding, restricting, crushing the social forces on all sides; with markets dead and unemployment rampart; with debt irredeemable and taxes by default; with the clamoring of necessity more insistent, and the gathering of the forces of revolution more ominous, with the securing of life more precarious, and the precocities of destruction more appalling—these are the broad winged harbingers of revolution; the crimson eve of a social austerity whose morrow will awake to the destruction of its emperors. They are past all hope of reform; they are crushed by the armour of their own security; and they cry with the surging, swelling, thrilling clamancy of necessity, abolition, abolition of capitalist property.

(1) If this remark applies only to Russia, it still does not alter the case—much. The "philosophy" being worked out in Russia is not socialism, but the philosophy of the Soviet revolution. Not quite the same thing, is it? Nor does it lead to the same thing. The Soviet revolution appears as an attempt to force an issue other than the simpler intent of the Russian people. That intent being accomplished, the larger issue is frustrated. Why? Because that larger issue is unseen. Western capital with its unseeing proletariat forces a development always tending away from that greater issue. And unless quite other causes supervene the process of its 'working' is like to "merge" in an altogether different philosophy. Hence the struggle—and its obvious lesson—the class issue. Here, not in Russia.

ALBERTA NOTES

Calgary

Business meeting of local Calgary, A. P. of C., to hold every second Tuesday at 8 p.m.

Communist class every Thursday at 8 p.m.

Address: 124 1/2 Ave., West, Calgary, Alberta. Everybody Welcome.