

# THE RED FLAG

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FIVE CENTS

## On Dictatorship

By WILLIAM STEWART

[From the Glasgow "Forward"]

THE idea of dictatorship as a method of government has ever since the revolution in Russia become familiar in discussions concerning national and international politics. It has been discussed almost as if it were something new, whereas it is the only method of government that has been practised in the history of organized society. Nearly every form of what is called Democracy has merely been camouflaged dictatorship, nominally vesting the power of government in the people or in sections of the people, but retaining it actually in the hands of a select minority. In Russia alone has Democracy frankly accepted the responsibilities of Government, and declared itself as the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The un concealed alarm of the other practitioners of governmental dictatorship the wide world over, but especially in this country, is at once comical and tragic. They are prepared to shed tears over the dangers to the sacred principle of Democracy. They are also prepared to raise armies to destroy the dictatorship—in Russia. But there has always been dictatorship in Russia, and up till two years ago our British statesmen were in no hurry to organize military expeditions for its destruction. So it would seem that the objectionable thing is not the dictatorship but the people or interests who wield it. The dictatorship of the Romanoffs was tolerable, even admirable, and international alliances could be made with it, but the dictatorship of Lenin and Trotsky! that is a horrible thing. No respectable civilized government can have any truck with it, and if alliances are to be made they must be against it, not with it or for it. The one was avowedly the dictatorship of a dynasty, that is to say, of a family. The other is, or claims to be, the dictatorship of the people. What some too logical minded persons want to know is why dynastic dictatorship should be considered tolerable, and proletarian dictatorship should be considered intolerable, and especially why the latter should be held obnoxious by British statesmen, who plume themselves as representatives of that most paradoxical creation of evolutionary dictatorship, an Imperial Democracy. I am making no plea for dictatorship, either in principle or practice. I merely record the indisputable fact that it is

the method of government that has hitherto prevailed, and prevails now. And if in the whirligig of time, in any part of the world, the dictatorship has fallen at last into the hands of the common people, on what ground is it possible to object to them making use of it? In all ages and in all lands the sect, or class, or caste, or family who have held the dictatorship have made use of it to their own advantage, and to the last ditch have defended their prerogatives against all comers. It has certainly been so in this country. The Kings held the dictatorship for some centuries, and claimed that they held it as a right Divine. The Barons assumed the dictatorship, and, for as long as they were able withheld from others any share in it. The House of Lords and the Crown stand to this day as evidence that neither Kings or Lords have yet finally relinquished their claim to dictatorship, and on occasions they are both allowed to assert it. Time and again the Church and the feudal landowners fought for the dictatorship over the lives of the people of this country. They plunged the nation into civil wars over it. Out of the struggles for dictatorship came great and memorable changes in the social order. Henry the Eighth objected to the dictatorship of Rome in his matrimonial affairs, and so began the English Reformation. It is really an exceedingly interesting study this ques-

tion of dictatorships, and not devoid of humorous aspects.

But it is said that the Russian revolutionists refuse to allow the bourgeoisie any share in the dictatorship. Naturally. It wouldn't be a proletarian dictatorship if they did. It may be wrong and reprehensible, but that is what dictatorships have always done. In this country the feudal dictatorship refused to allow the new middle class—the bourgeoisie, in fact—any share in the Government, until the middle class nearly rose in rebellion and threatened to play the very deuce with the venerable British Constitution. The combined feudal-commercial dictatorship refused to allow the working class any share in the government; and now, if the working class should assume the dictatorship, and should in their turn exclude these others, it will doubtless be altogether undemocratic, but it will certainly be according to precedent. And it will have this distinction. For the first time dictatorship will be in the hands of the majority. In the past minorities have dictated. Can it be that the dictatorship of the working class is merely the consummation of the long evolutionary process gradually transferring power from the few to the many? Can it be that the dictatorship of the proletariat is simply the practical expression of the will of the people? If so, the organising of military expeditions to stifle it will be not only foolish but futile.

Evolution cannot be stopped, not even when it takes the form of Revolution.

### THE TRIAL OF JAURES' ASSASSIN

A correspondent who was a friend of Jaures writes:—

I see that the "Nation" to-night speaks of the last interview that Jaures had with M. Viviani a few hours before he was assassinated. I heard the story a short time after the event from some who were present, and, if my memory does not deceive me, Jaures had an interview with M. Viviani. He went to the Foreign office and asked to see the Minister, but the minister could not or would not see him. A young secretary came down to explain this. Jaures gave him a message for the minister that if the government did not hold Russia back he would raise the social revolution against them.

"I know," he said, "that I may be taken out and shot for this, but give my message to the minister." "No! No! No!" said the secretary, "there is no question of that." "I know what I say," said Jaures; "give my message to the minister."

From there Jaures drove away in a taxi with one or two friends to the restaurant where he was to be murdered. On the way the driver drove recklessly or Jaures thought he did. At the end of the journey someone remonstrated with the driver, and he showed that he knew whom he was carrying. "I would not risk the life of citizens, Jaures," he said.

But the sense of doom was upon Jaures and a few minutes later his foreboding came true. He thought of no madman—but he had made up his mind to challenge the whole might of Government

### COMRADES JOE KNIGHT AND MRS. KNIGHT VISITING THE WEST COAST

Comrades Joe Knight and Mrs. Knight, of Edmonton, are at present on a short visit to the coast and comrades here are pleased to see them.

On Sunday afternoon, May 18, Com. Knight gave a short address to a capacity meeting, held under the auspices of Local No. 1 of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Council of Canada, in the National Theatre. In the evening he took the platform at the Empress Theatre under the auspices of the Vancouver Local No. 1 of the Socialist Party of Canada and a full house listened intently to his fine exposition of the working class position. The Local has secured his services again for the following Sunday evening meeting. During the week Comrades Mr. and Mrs. Knight will pay a visit to Victoria. Unless the spell of fine weather we are enjoying and the attractions of life in the summer time on the coast prevail upon them to change their plans, they will leave for home again on Wednesday. The comrades here all shall see them here again before the summer is over.

### BRITISH STRIKE JULY 1

LONDON, May 22.—(Reuter's.)—The quarterly meeting of the Iron and Steel trades confederation practically unanimously carried a resolution submitted by one of its branches in favor of the declaration of a general strike on July 1, to enforce the withdrawal of British troops from Russia.

## SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

### PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

SUNAY, MAY 25

At 8 p.m. Sharp

EMPRESS THEATRE

Corner Gore and Hastings

Speaker..... Joe Knight, of Edmonton