

RUSSIAN PEOPLE RULED BY A FEW COMMUNISTS

While it is admittedly difficult to get a right understanding of affairs in Russia, practically every publication being a partisan on one side or the other, it is equally to be admitted that such papers as the New York Nation would not represent the Soviet Government to be any worse than it is.

Mr. Fisher emphasizes the fact that the various Soviets which are elected have in reality no more authority than the old Dumas. The Communist party is the master of Russia. It numbers now 585,600 out of a population of approximately 140,000,000.

The Communist party is ruled in turn by the Committee of Nine or Political Bureau, composed of Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Kanenev, Dzerzhinski, Rykov, Bukharin, Zinoviev and Tomaki.

Communist leaders have found, of course, that many of the new members are not animated by the same spirit that distinguished the pioneers in the movement in the days when membership was extremely hazardous.

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bling, bribe taking, drinking, engaging in capitalistic enterprises. The Communists, except for their blood-thirsty tendencies, are extreme moralists and no member is supposed to drink or gamble.

Unless a man is a highly trained expert or a Communist it is impossible for him to hold an important government position in Russia. But with this great power for the Communists go equally great responsibilities.

LABOR HOURS IN STEEL MILLS

Within the past few months tens of thousands of steel workers in the employ of the United States Steel Company, who formerly were compelled to stand by their furnaces for twelve hours a day and seven days in the week, have been given an eight-hour day.

In Switzerland the hours established by law are 48 per week, and the steel producers have found it necessary in order to meet world-competition, to increase the schedule to 52 hours weekly.

One of the basic policies of the German Revolutionists was an eight-hour day for six days a week. The steel makers and coal operators of the Ruhr, like those of Switzerland, have declared that they cannot compete in the world's markets unless a nine hour day is restored.

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Australian Labor and The Communists.

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.—"The Communists have a standard of conduct which ordinary men and women are unable to understand, much less appreciate," says the Australian Worker in a leading editorial on the tactics of revolutionists outside and inside the labor organizations.

"They refused to have anything to do with the labor movement in those days, as though they were endowed with some intellectual or spiritual superiority that constituted them a race apart."

"The insincerity of it all is palpable. The repulsive features of hypocrisy leered at us. No one who has studied their literature and their public utterances can doubt that with the communists of Australia obedience to bolshevik authority differs very little from the prostrations of superstition."

LUMBER INDUSTRY. In the Province of New Brunswick there are approximately 600 saw mills which give annual employment to 9,000 men whose aggregate salaries amount to \$5,700,000.

WHAT THE MINERS ASKED

Continued from page 1. That minimum is only about 40 per cent above pre-war rates of wages, while the cost of living is officially given as 75 per cent above pre-war.

It will, therefore, be seen that the owners have most definitely rejected

the demand which would have immediately affected the present wage-rates.

Profit Division. The division of profits would have no immediate effect, but the lower percentage proposed to be allocated to the owners would have the effect of lessening any deficiency required to make up the minimum wage.

It should be observed that any deficiency at one audit has an effect on subsequent audits, and tends to keep wages on the minimum when they might otherwise rise.

STORY OF THE CRISIS. The crisis which now approaches in the British mining industry had its beginnings back in the winter of 1921.

Immediately the government subvention ceased, the men were subject to the agreement which ended the lock-out of 1921.

A severe slump in prices and in trade operated, under the agreement, to bring wages tumbling down.

Within a very short time many districts were down almost to the minimum named in the agreement—viz. 20 per cent above standard rates. Those standard rates were those of 1915, and were practically pre-war figures.

The Miners' Federation approached the owners and the Government seeking help to soften the blow, but help was refused.

By March, 1922, 10 of the 23 areas were actually on the minimum—which meant wages far below in value those received before the war.

The appalling condition in the industry was brought before the House of Commons in that month by the Labor Party. The Government was asked to set up an inquiry, but this was refused.

In June, 1922, the Miners' Executive reviewed the situation further, and Mr. Hodges declared:

"So low are the wages and so bad the situation in the mining industry, that, in my judgment, it can be said that the British famine has begun."

The situation was again raised in Parliament in July, 1922, when the Home Secretary (Mr. Bridgman) repeated the refusal of an inquiry and refused any financial help.

Approach Owners. At the annual conference of the Miners' Federation on July 20, 1922, the Executive was directed to consider means of improving the existing agreement and to approach the mineowners.

That decision forms the starting point in the patient attempts to secure revision of the agreement which have now ended, 17 months later, in deadlock.

In October of last year the Miners' Executive met the owners, who refused to consider the request for an advance in wages which would give rates equal in purchasing power to the pre-war rates.

Consequently an approach was again made to the Government. The Executive saw Mr. Bonar Law on December 2, 1922.

Mr. Law refused action, and suggested that conditions would presently improve.

Waiting for Hearse. A special delegate conference of the miners later in December decided to await the assembly of Parliament.

In February of this year Mr. Law was again seen. His reply was: "Can you not wait for a trade improvement?"

Mr. Herbert Smith retorted: "It's like waiting for the hearse."

In June last the Labor Party introduced a Bill to amend the Minimum Wage Act of 1912, and so secure a higher minimum for the miners. The Bill was rejected.

Then, at the annual conference, in July last, the Federation declared that the agreement must be revised, and negotiations have proceeded since up to the deadlock of this week.

WHAT LABOR MIGHT DO

Measures Designed for the Public Good.

There is much to be said for the policy of Labor taking office if the opportunity is given (write a political correspondent).

Not only would such a decision prove conclusively the bona-fides of the Party's persistent and consistent declarations regarding unemployment but it would show the general body of electors that, despite difficulties and dangers, the Labor Movement is prepared to shoulder the burdens of power in order to set the country on the path to a solution of its problems.

Moreover, apart altogether from these psychological results, Labor in power could by administrative measure and by legislation take steps to deal with three of the country's most pressing problems—Unemployment, Housing, Foreign Affairs.

Let us take the last first and consider what could be done without the slightest possibility of the proposals leading to defeat in the Commons. Labour in power could:

(1) Put the Russian situation to rights once and for all by giving full and complete Recognition to that country. The only opposition to this would come from a small section of the Tory Party.

(2) Call an International Conference to deal with the problems of Reparations, War Debts, and the Versailles Treaty. To that conference

not only the War Allies would be invited, but also Germany, Russia and America.

France, knowing that practically the whole of the British people have, in various ways, approved of this plan would, in all likelihood, accept such an invitation, and thus the first real step towards rehabilitating Europe would have been taken.

Turn to Housing and the possibilities are even more bright. Labor in power could:

(1) Safeguard the tenants by establishing the principle that until there is a sufficiency of houses there shall be no evictions and no increase of rents.

(2) Start a national housing scheme through the local authorities with a view to meeting the admitted shortages. In doing this it would—

(a) Take the necessary steps to prevent the building trusts from fleecing the public by charging exorbitant prices.

(b) Prevent the private building speculators from erecting "rabbit-hutches" at rents fit only for mansions.

(c) Secure the local authorities by loans at the lowest possible rate of interest.

(d) Leave the local authorities to act as the primary authority, subject to the requirements laid down in the housing law. These requirements would include the abolition of slum property and insanitary dwellings.

The effect of such a scheme would be to reduce unemployment and thereby relieve the Exchequer and the Local Authorities of considerable expenditure. But still further measures for meeting unemployment could be taken by administrative or legislative action. Labor in power could:

(1) Extend and develop the Trade Facilities Act, under which credits are advanced to enterprises both home and foreign, which entail employment for the British Worker.

(2) Set on foot National Schemes for the development of Roads, Waterways, Land Reclamation, and Afforestation.

(3) Fix the leaving age from school of children at 16, and make provision for Maintenance Grants in order to relieve the parents financial strain.

In order to find money for these enterprises drastic economies could be effected in expenditure on the Army, Navy and Air Services, which could be brought back to pre-war costs, the Singapore escapade could be ended, steps could be taken to

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(3) Prevent any further inroads on Education, Trade Boards, Factory Inspection, Medical Service and so forth.

(4) Remove the disabilities on Old Age Pensions, and later, unless the receipt from the Land Values Tax to operate a scheme for Mothers' Pensions.

A Great Record. Then labor could go the country on this record of work done, coupled with its proposal for a Capital Levy to reduce the War Debt, the nationalization of Mines, Railways, Electrical Power, Land Reform, Fuller and Better Education, and its General Social Programme.

The work sketched out above is of a character that no party dare oppose and hope to live; it is admittedly necessary, admittedly beneficial, admittedly useful, and the party, or parties that attempted to obstruct it would receive short shrift from the electors when the Labor Government appealed to it.

Labor has nothing to lose by becoming the Governments, and much to gain.

But apart from that, Labor in power could:

(1) Reduce the taxes on tea, sugar, coffee, cocoa, and abolish the entertainments tax.

(2) Make up the deficit thus caused by raising the super-tax and increasing the death duties on the understanding that, with the passing of the legislation needed to implement the Capital Levy, these taxes would be removed.

(3) Include a proposal for the taxation of land values.

Such a budget would not be fought against, except by a section of the Tories.

Nor would this end the list of reforms Labor in power could accomplish. It would be possible for it:

(1) To abolish Royalties on coal and other mining.

(2) Re-establish the Agricultural

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