

Meanwhile to obtain a profit from the present production, the workers have been reduced to starvation level, while the capital and therefore the real profits of the undertakings have remained not only intact, but ever increase their burden on the workers.

## Geographical Footnotes to Current History

### Singapore

THE main sea road of the British Empire is the road to "the Indies"—through the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, the Red Sea, and so to the Indian Ocean. That ocean is today a British lake; and over each of the "gates" to it there floats the Union Jack. Aden guards the short (Red Sea) way to Europe. The Cape commands the longer ocean way round Africa. The key to the eastern gate, which connects the Indian Ocean with the Pacific, is Singapore.

The most cursory study of the map is sufficient to indicate the vital importance of Singapore to Britain. The British Empire, scattered almost haphazard over all the Seven Seas, can be held together only by ocean power; and ocean power means control of key positions on vital routes. Singapore is such a key position. It is important to Britain whether considered as guarding India and the whole Indian ocean against any enemies coming from the east; or as the gateway leading from the Indian or East African bases to the lands and the commerce of the Pacific.

It was just under a century ago that a distinguished empire-builder bearing the not inappropriate name of Raffles\*—"anticipated" the Dutch, then the chief commercial power in the Malay regions, and seized it for His Majesty King George IV. This was in 1824. So were established the Straits Settlements. The Straits Settlements led to China. And a few years after the Union Jack first floated over Singapore it floated over Hong-Kong also.

China, and the way thither, is even more important in 1923 than it was in the mid-19th century. As the "Morning Post" put it (June 16th):—

At Hong Kong is focussed all the trade from Europe to China and Japan, a large Western-owned China coasting trade, the Australian trade, and the trans-Pacific trade with Canada and America, either direct or via Chinese and Japanese ports. But Hong Kong, without the backing of Singapore, is so isolated that her tenure of possession against an aggressor from the north would merely be a matter of hours.

"An aggressor from the north," note. Who is this likely to be? Look at the map—at the possible starters. It will not be China; for China is quite fully occupied in resisting aggression, and is not likely, on her own account, to become an aggressor. It will not be Russia, for similar reasons. What of the United States, firmly established in the Philippines? No—the "Morning Post" has no fear of America; is indeed only too anxious to oblige her:—

Those responsible for American rule in the Philippines will feel half their burden lightened if they know that their greatest friends are in a strong enough position to stem the Asiatic tide on the spot. No such opportunity for the protection of the Philippines is possible to America herself, and she would be far more likely to work in harmony with British trade interests if she was thus sure of their mutual protection.

You can see for yourself the only other name on the map. . . . The Anglo-Japanese alliance is very dead!

The Anglo-American one, on the other hand, is very much alive. And America's position in the Philippines is "isolated." The Washington Conference "solved" the Pacific Problem by a status quo arrangement which precludes the building of new naval bases in the Pacific. Singapore is a mile or

\* Explanatory note for non-playgoers:—Raffles is a gentleman-cracksman, hero of the play of the same name.

two outside the Pacific. Praise be to God for Singapore!

One other point the Morning Post is candid enough to mention:—

Another aspect of the Singapore scheme is that it must add renewed strength to the British position in India, since whatever untoward events might occur in the big Indian ports as the result of mutiny or revolution, a strong naval force could quickly be flung northwards, irrespective of what reinforcements were hurried out by the Suez Canal. To the Indian, as to other Asiatics, this very tangible reminder of our strength would not be without its effect.

Yes. It would seem that that far-seeing man, Sir Stamford Raffles, builded even better than he knew.

J. F. HERRABIN—The Plebs (London)

### ENVIRONMENT

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the absurdity of freewill individualism; negating itself by its developed negation of society. It is a mirage, woven from the wavery cloud-wraiths of emotion; distorted by the precession of social change; and crumbling before the gathering brilliance of human achievement. While the idealism, kindled by the union of time condition and sentiment reaction, finds its function in the harmony of monistic reality. Beginning with the concept of a vital material, inert and circumscribed, it ends with the necessity of a material vitality whose circumference is as wide as the horizon of sentience.

In the play of mass on mind, thought is appalled by its own feebleness. But in the reacting play of mind on mass, it is inspired by the wondrous manifests of its own creative forces. With man, it has come trembling through the darkness of torn, yet tutoring, ages, groping, fear-haunted through the tangling wilderness of inexperience. Now, grown greater than mortal man, it stars the firmament of futurity with the grandeur of its regnant ascendancy. From the cogency of necessity there has developed the cogency of mind. And from the man, kneeling with curtained eyes under the vine and fig tree of anthropomorphic fear, has been created the man of the symbolic sheaf and sickle, who "dares to tell the omnipotent tyrant to his everlasting face, that his evil is not good." R.

## Paris--London via Ruhr

BY J. T. WALTON NEWBOLD.

THE situation presented to the British people, both the supporters and the opponents of capitalism, by the occupation of the Ruhr valley is serious in the extreme. The very fact that it affects alike the exploiters and the exploited renders it very difficult for a member of the Communist party of Great Britain to adopt a correct attitude. The German comrades naturally expect that the British worker should oppose with might and main the action of the French. They see it as an act of predatory capitalism, of imperialism in its most blatant form. The British worker, in so far as he is class conscious and intelligently informed concerning the situation, regards it similarly, but he requires to keep clearly in his mind the fact that the offensive of French imperialism reacts most immediately and most severely upon the equally predatory capitalism of Great Britain. In the conference at Essen the difficulty that presented itself to the British delegation was that it feared, in declaring itself strongly against the French action, it might seem to assist the propaganda of the British interests which, rightly, see in the occupation of the Ruhr the death-knell of British supremacy in the heavy industries. To the Germans of all classes and to the French outside of the official and metallurgical circles, the advance of the French army to Essen and Bochum appears only to be directed against

Germany. This, however, is not the gravamen of the whole affair. In reality, France, capitalist France, bankrupt but imperialist France, is attacking not so much Germany as, through Germany, striking a deadly blow at her age-long antagonist and competitor for world power, Great Britain.

If it were not for the fact, that Great Britain is dependent for its corn supply, for its metal, for its cotton and for many other essential raw materials either upon the U. S. A. or upon countries in South America from which ships must come along sea-routes easily to be menaced by the submarines and commerce-destroyers of the U. S. navy; were it not for the fact that Britain has been compelled by its creditor the U. S. government to reduce the size of its fleet and that the world commitments of Empire defence are such that the British government cannot afford to maintain so many squadrons of fighting aeroplanes, as are at the disposal of Monsieur Poincare, war between Britain and France would be a matter not of years or of months but of days and of hours.

The situation presented by the French advance into the coking coalfield of Germany is infinitely more menacing to Britain's economic and political position than was the advance of Major Marchand to Fashoda in 1898. Then, only an outpost of the Empire was threatened, though Egypt and the Soudan had a great value to Britain, lying as they do on the flank of that road to India which is the spinal column of the British Empire, but the Soudan is removed from the Suez Canal and it was "Honour" and "Prestige" rather than any more material safeguard that was threatened at the time of the Fashoda incident. Now, however, France is making her greatest effort finally to checkmate that cunning policy by means of which Britain has for centuries made it utterly impossible for any Power or combinations of Power so to co-ordinate the resources of Western Europe as to make them financially, industrially and politically stronger than Great Britain.

It has, for centuries, been a first principle of British statecraft to prevent either Holland, Spain, Austria, France or Germany getting control of that region known as Belgium. A study of the map will show, whether you examine it as it is drawn at the present time or any time since the seventeenth century, that the rich manufacturing and agrarian territory of northern France and of southern Belgium, geographically and geologically one, has been cut across by an arbitrary frontier delimited by order of and in conformity with the interests of British commercialism. Again ever since the Congress of Vienna in 1814, when the British merchants had already begun to appreciate the value to industry of coal, British statecraft has taken care to prevent the whole of the Saar coalfield belonging completely either to France or to Germany. Cunning Old England took very good care that these rich deposits should be divided between two hostile states. Again when in 1830 Belgium revolted from Holland with the approval of the English Liberals the enthusiasm of the latter for their new protege, "free" Belgium would not go so far as to permit the bourgeoisie of Brussels making common cause with that of Paris and attaching Belgium to France. Britain has ever stood for the self determination of "poor little Belgium," well knowing that in this case justice right and liberty consort with the interests of the London Stock Exchange and the Manchester Cotton Market.

Prior to the industrial revolution, France was much more populous and economically much more

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## MANIFESTO

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