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POLITICS

The Peace Comedy

By *Arthur Rosenberg*.

The Hague peace congress of 1922 will figure in history alongside the congresses which were held in the same city before the war. The trade union bureaucrats of to day will contribute about as much towards peace as the capitalist diplomats of that time. On the 30th of July 1907 the foundation stone of the Hague Peace Palace was laid by the Tsar's ambassador, Mr. Nelidov. On the 28th of August 1913 the palace was inaugurated in the presence of every possible great personage: 12 months later the divisions of the peace loving Tsar invaded East Prussia, and the cavalry of the peace-loving Kaiser reconnoitred near Paris! Where will we be in December 1923? If we are not in the midst of a new world war, it will not be the fault of Thomas and Vandervelde. The very memory of the Hague strikes alarm. The peace conferences of the Hague have hitherto been infallible overtures to war. May the proletariat be on its guard against the spirit of the Hague!

It is true that this time the messengers of peace have not met in the Peace Palace, that turreted building in imitation old Dutch style erected with American trust money under the blessing of the Tsar. This time the peace congress has had to meet in the Zoological Garden, the Peace Palace being occupied by a juridical conference. The congress is not to blame for being in the Zoological Garden. Jokes on the subject are cheap, and some animals are clever enough. But it does require a certain amount of self control not to make all kinds of unfriendly comparisons with regard to this perfectly grotesque congress.

What do the international reformist socialists really intend with regard to this congress, which is certainly a very expensive pleasure? For we cannot visit the land of the guilders without paying for it. It may be calculated that the German General Federation of Trade Unions alone, a by no means rich organization according to world standards, is spending 30 million marks to keep its troop of delegates here for a week. Why does this Federation spend so much money? Well, the winter is hard for the starving proletariat of Germany. A desperate struggle is taking place between the old bureaucrats and the communists within the trade unions. The workers are looking anxiously for a way out of the misery, but as the Amsterdam leaders cannot find them this way, they have to tell the workers some other story. They must make it appear as if something were being done. Hence the reason for the Hague Congress. With the aid

of this congress it may be possible to gain a month in Germany, and that is something this winter. It is worth 30 millions. Reports can be given, in the trade union meetings, that Fimmen and Henderson, and even Vandervelde, have condemned the policy of force against Germany. And thus the members will perhaps be induced to believe that the Amsterdam international does accomplish something. The feeling among the masses in other countries is similar. Everywhere one traces the connection between ones own misery and the continuation of the imperialist military system. When the Amsterdam International issues a great proclamation against war and the danger of war, it fulfils the dearest wish of all the millions who still belong to it.

But this congress has its dangers as well: for the danger of war is a product of capitalism. To secure peace under the present conditions of power means to open war against the governing bourgeoisie. At their congress in Rome, the Amsterdamers passed a resolution demanding the general strike in case of war. As Radek rightly said at the Hague, such a general strike would be a social revolution. But the Amsterdamers do not want this. And how can one find a way to wash the fur without wetting it? The recipe has been thought out as follows: the peace idea is insulated from the social conditions, separated from the class war, and converted into a thing in itself. This conjuring trick is rendered possible by inviting all bourgeois pacifist societies, and by leaving out the Third International.

On this basis peace propaganda was no longer dangerous. Fraternal relations were entered into with bourgeois pacifists, with Buisson and Quidde and besides these with all the pacifist tendencies of the present-day bourgeoisie, which reach from Keynes to President Harding, and to the Lloyd George of Genoa. It may safely be said that at the present time a decisive part of the ruling capitalists want to avoid a new war more than anything in the world, and are anxious to postpone the collapse by a so-called pacifist solution. It is not by accident that Poincaré-la-guerre is transformed into Poincaré-la-paix, the keeper of the peace of the Orient. In the same manner Vandervelde-la-guerre, the man of Versailles 1919, has become Vandervelde-la-paix, the man of the Hague 1922. What a strange peace congress! In the president's chair, sitting comfortably with his pipe in his mouth, is Mr. J. H. Thomas of London, a pillar of British war policy. And below in the hall there are Henderson and Wels, Renaudel and Vandervelde, all defenders of their mother country in the past and in the future! A disastrous discord was certainly struck by the delegation of the Russian trade unions, Radek, Lozovsky, and Rothstein, who held up a mirror reflecting the true countenance of the congress. But this had been prepared for, and care had been taken that the necessary Georgians, Mensheviks, etc. were present to grind out the old anti-Bolshevist tunes.

The Hague congress is a double wedding: First between the 2. and 2½ internationals. This was symbolically expressed from the platform when Fritz Adler declared himself at one with Fimmen. Secondly between reform socialism and the bourgeoisie. In both cases the marriage legitimized a relation which had already existed for a long time. The proletariat has nothing to expect from these weddings and their results.

Against the Separation of the Rhineland.

Declaration of the Communist Party of Rhenish Westphalia.

The communists, as representatives of the class conscious, revolutionary Rhenish-Westphalian proletariat, raise the most emphatic protest against the plans of French imperialism, as declared by Poincaré, and having for their object the military occupation of the Ruhr district, as well as against the plans expressed by Loucheur for the separation of the Rhine country from Germany.

From the very beginning the communists designated the treaty of Versailles as an unbearable forced peace, and have exerted every effort for its revision and annulment.

The Communist Party once more proclaims that it utterly condemns the movement for separation, for such a development of affairs would not be in the interests of either the Rhenish-Westphalian or the German working people. The assertions of the separatists, that the political and economic situation of the working class would be better in an independent Rhenish republic, are dangerous frauds. Such a republic, under the protectorate of Entente capital, would employ precisely the same capitalist methods of exploitation against the working people as are now employed by the German ruling class. The position of the workers in the Saar district, where capital proceeds against the working class with the same brutality and ruthlessness as everywhere else, and where about 4,000 proletarians are out of work, is the best proof of this. The complete deprivation of political rights suffered by the working masses of the Saar district under the protectorate of the League of Nations, this willing tool of international capital, shows plainly enough what the workers of Rhenish-Westphalia would have to hope from a "Rhenish Free State".

The working class can only fight for its emancipation on international lines, and a separation between Rhenish workers and the German working class would only hinder and weaken the fight. Only the closest relations with the revolutionary German proletariat can give the Rhineland the possibility of replacing capitalist rule by socialist proletarian rule.

While adopting this attitude against the treaty of Versailles, against the occupation of the Saar district, and against the separation of the Rhineland, the communists at the same time protest emphatically against any utilization of the nationalist methods of the Entente victors by the German bourgeoisie.

In the first place the same spokesmen of the bourgeois capitalist parties, and especially the leaders of heavy industry, have approved of the use of every, even the most brutal, means of suppression and subjugation employed by German imperialism under the Kaiser against conquered peoples, and have expressly supported and aided these methods; secondly, these same leaders of the bourgeois parties will immediately support the separation of the Rhine country from the "German fatherland", if a workers' government, a proletarian government, comes into power in Germany. Their money bags and their profits have always been of more importance for these individuals, than their patriotism of mere phrases. In the third place, the leaders of German heavy industry are on the way to bringing about an "understanding" with French capital, naturally at the expense of the German and French workers, and there is no doubt whatever that both sides will splendidly manage to rake in the profits for their mutual pockets. While the working people of Germany, England, and France are sinking deeper and deeper into misery, while want increases from day to day, the capitalist class, in all countries, is still successfully accumulating enormous profits and wealth, and maintaining its class rule by this means.

This rule of the capitalists of all countries can only be broken by the common class-war of the proletariat of all countries, a class-war to be especially directed against nationalist incitements to antagonism between the peoples of different countries. Capitalist exploiters have always well understood how to confuse the workers by nationalist phrases, and thus to weaken their fighting will. Think of the nationalist swindle with which you were kept on the battlefields of Europe for 4 years. Away therefore with all nationalist phrases!

The revolutionary proletariat of Rhenish-Westphalia, in this, as in all other questions expressly refuses, to work in

common with German capitalists and their bourgeois spokesmen. But the German working class appeals earnestly and fraternally to the exploited working class of France, England, Belgium, and Italy, to aid it in its struggle against the treaty of Versailles, against the imperialist designs of Entente capital, and especially against the intended occupation of the Ruhr district.

The united fighting front of the working class of Germany and of the Entente countries must close its ranks firmer than before. Only by the common exertions of the exploited of all countries, can the workers of Rhenish Westphalia be freed from the pressure of the Versailles treaty and its consequences.

The hour will and must come when the world proletariat, under the leadership of the determined fighters of the Communist International, will put an end to capitalist exploitation and thus at the same time to all nationalist oppression.

District organizer of the G.C.P., Middle Rhine.

Cologne, 8th December 1922.

Eugen Eppstein.

District organizer of the G.C.P., Rhineland, South Westphalia.

Düsseldorf, 8th December 1922.

Willi Schönbeck.

District organizer of the G.C.P., Rhineland, North Westphalia.

Essen, 8th December 1922.

Albert Stolzenburg.

Impressions of the General Election in England

By M. Phillips Price.

Dec. 20th, 22.

Over a hundred years ago Rousseau said about the classic land of parliamentary democracy, that its citizens were free once every seven years during the few minutes, when they were recording their votes for the nominees of one or other of the two political caucuses. I do not know whether it was for this reason or for any other, but it was certainly true for a long time that in England a general election came rather to be associated with something akin to a horse-race or to some other national sport, which has always been a popular institution in England. This remark does not, of course, apply to Scotland, where, it seems, the austere influence of the Presbyterian Church has caused the inhabitants to treat election days, as if they were second editions of Sunday. But throughout all the south of the British Isles a general election was concerned more with personalities than with politics, more with the private life and individual character of the parliamentary candidates than with the political programs of the parties, to which they belonged.

And yet no one could help observing that in the general election, which has just taken place, a new element was introduced into the contest. Up till now the parliamentary stage has been monopolized by the two great historic parties of England, the Liberals and the Conservatives, or, as they were known a hundred years ago, the Whigs and the Tories. Originally they represented very distinct political principles, because they were the popular mouth-pieces of two great economic interests, which at that time dominated the life of England. They were these of the agrarian aristocracy and those of the mercantile capitalists and traders. But as time went on, the economic interests of these two classes began to merge on many important questions and this was especially the case, wherever these two parties and the interests, which they represent, were faced with the new element in political life in England today, namely organized Labor.

I well remember elections in England in the days before the war. In the town, for which I was Labor candidate in this recent election, it was usual for the Liberal candidate to get in for one election by the lavish expenditure of money and by the promises of orders for the factories, so that the workers would be kept in employment. After he had been in for a term of years and had secured for himself the title of "Sir" or had perhaps bought for himself a seat in the House of Lords, it would be generally regarded that it was time for the Conservatives to have a go, and so the candidate of this party would get in and remain in, till he had gotten a judgeship or some other public emolument.

On this occasion however, this particular constituency, the city of Gloucester, presented a very different spectacle. The city is divided into two parts; one is industrial and contains a large population of workers, living by work in the docks, on the river and canal transport services, in a big railway and carriage works in timber yards and on the railway lines; the other part is a residential one round the cathedral, where live the big bourgeoisie who have connections with the landowning aristocracy of the county, the petty bourgeoisie and small shopkeepers and their personal attendants, immediately dependant upon them for a livelihood. The big bourgeoisie had enormous influence upon the

casual and unskilled laborers of this quarter of the city through their control over the administrative apparatus of the local government. They were able to give work on the municipal undertakings to those who promised to vote for the Liberal or Conservative. As Labor has not got its nominees on the municipal executive, the unskilled laborer is afraid that if the Labor candidate gets in, he will lose his work. But in addition to this the ecclesiastical authorities in an old town, like Gloucester, have great influence on the course of a political campaign and this influence was put unconditionally at the disposal of the big bourgeoisie. They are the controllers of large charitable funds, which were left by religiously-minded persons many hundreds of years ago, and these funds are now used to dole out blankets at Christmas and coals during the winter to all those, who will agree to support and work for the Liberal or Conservative candidates at the general election.

In fact the whole of the economic apparatus of the local authority, of the Church and of the big bourgeoisie was put in the scale against any party, which would dare to challenge the existing order of society and to preach the principles of Socialism. And this was the situation, which I found when I arrived in Gloucester two weeks before the general election last month.

It provided comment on the real nature of British parliamentary democracy, which is, in fact, nothing else than the instrument for enabling the big bourgeoisie to remain in possession of their economic power.

It is characteristic of the change which has come over England since the war that the nomination for the first time of a Labor candidate in a provincial centre, like Gloucester, to challenge the century-old supremacy of the two classical parties, should have led to an election campaign, unprecedented in the history of the city and to the failure of the Labor candidate to get elected by the narrow margin of 51 votes on a total poll of over 21,000! And what happened in Gloucester is, I think, fairly characteristic for what happened on an average throughout the rest of England. Organised and skilled labor rallied to the candidate, who uncompromisingly stood for Socialist principles, who demanded nationalisation of the key industries of the country, who demanded immediate recognition of Soviet Russia, who defended the principles of the Russian Revolution and who demanded that a clean sweep be made with the Versailles Treaty and the policy of indemnities. Nor is it difficult to see why this is so. One in six of the organized workers were unemployed and were living on doles amounting to twenty shillings a week, on which they had to keep their wives and families. Many of them had been from eighteen months to two years unemployed and were beginning to get demoralised and to lose their skill, which they had acquired after years of training. The exsoldiers also were to a large extent tramping the streets looking for work, and among them there was a feeling of disillusionment and a feeling that the promises, which had been made to them, were never intended for fulfillment. A general feeling of unhappiness and depression pervaded them and it was one of the most interesting symptoms of the state of England today to see those, who four years ago would have howled down any candidate, who had even suggested that the military intervention against the Russian Soviet Republic was a crime, or that the Versailles Treaty was not the last word of wisdom, now wholeheartedly declaring their support of the Labor candidate. For instance on the polling day in Gloucester a number of ex-Service men came out and walked the streets with their war medals on their breasts and with placards, on which were written; "Vote for the Labor candidate, who will see to it that you are never used again as capitalist canon-fodder".

All references to Soviet Russia at meetings in the working class quarters of the city met with much sympathetic applause, especially when it was pointed out that the policy of the British government in sabotaging the granting of trading credits to Russia at the instance of Tsarists bondholders, was partly responsible for the unemployment from which they were suffering. They even began to feel instinctively the break-down of the capitalist system and to understand something of the need for production for use and not for profit, which lies at the bottom of Socialism. And this too in a city, where Socialistic theory has never been heard of until a few years ago and then only from the mouths of itinerant preachers. For the English working man is entirely ignorant of economic theories and can only be made to speculate, if he is given a practical problem connected with everyday life. The subtle propaganda of the British bourgeois press, which has been brought to such a pitch of perfection by the oldest and most cunning capitalist class in the world, and which aims at diverting the attention of the working class from essential issues to superficialities, is largely responsible for this. Nevertheless the extraordinary rally of organized Labor to the Labor candidates, that took place throughout all England was the best proof that many of these traditions of British labor

are becoming things of the past. In Gloucester, in fact, on election day the whole of the slum areas in the neighbourhood of the cathedral were decked out in red flags and banners and processions of women and children paraded the streets singing Socialist songs. Such a thing was absolutely unknown in the days before the war.

On the other hand the big bourgeoisie and the landowning aristocracy of the countryside with their retainers presented a solid phalanx, supporting the Conservative party. This of course was natural and nothing else could be expected. The decisive factor in the election was the petit bourgeoisie and its immediate dependents among the unskilled and unorganized workers. These people have suffered no less than organized labor from unemployment, wage cuts and from the general disillusionment of the years, following upon the war. But this has not up till now had the effect of drawing them over to Labor. They have had for many years the poison of chauvinist propaganda pumped into them by the Northcliffe press. They have been taught to look upon the troubles of England, as being due to a deep-seated conspiracy, concocted by the Russian Bolsheviks in alliance with the German Kaiser! Such is the depth of political degradation, to which some of the petit bourgeoisie has sunk, that the writer in one of his meetings at Gloucester was actually asked whether it was true that he had acted during the war as the liaison officer between Lenin and the Kaiser!!! To reach these people and to clear their minds of the Northcliffe poison requires time and the few weeks of the election were too short to achieve this. The petit bourgeoisie and its dependants, like shop-assistants and small craftsmen, are not organized in any union and so can only be got at by house to house visiting. This is what the Conservatives and Liberals have done for years past, ever since this class was given votes in the middle of last century, and they accompany their visits with the usual doles from the charitable organisations of the Church or with promises of work from the municipality. But the Labor Party and Communists can only fight these insidious influences by steady propaganda and, when this is done between now and the next election, there is no doubt that it will be possible to neutralise the petit bourgeoisie and to secure the active support of the unorganized workers that are dependant for their livelihood upon this class. As it is at present, they are the cause of the great conservative victory in England today, but the enormous rise of the votes given to Labor and the doubling of the Labor members of parliament in the new House of Commons is the best proof that the foundations of the new British government are built on sand.

IN THE R. I. L. U.

The Development of the Profintern

By A. Lozovsky.

The fore-runner of the Profintern was the International Trade Union Council, founded on July 15, 1920 in Moscow. Essentially, the International Council was a committee for the propagation of the ideas of the revolutionary trade union movement. It possessed no definite program and no clearly defined tactics. Its object was to unite the revolutionary trade unions under the slogan of the overthrow of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The platform of the Council was so broad that place was found on it for the leaders of the Italian CGL on the one hand, and for a number of anarcho-syndicalist organizations on the other. The necessity for creating a crystallizing centre made itself felt, and one was created.

Between July 15, 1920 and July 1921 there proceeded the assembling of forces. The first year passed in conflicts between revolutionary ideas and reformism. The Amsterdam International, headed by the trade unions of the Entente countries, drunk with victory, was at the height of its power. To many comrades it appeared perfectly hopeless to attempt an attack on the reformist stronghold, against this mighty reformist organization. But the call of the International Council, appealing to the revolutionary trade unions to unite, found an echo in every quarter of the globe, and in July 1921 it appeared that there were many more revolutionary elements in the trade union movements of the world than had been anticipated.

The first congress of the revolutionary trade unions, in Moscow, created a theoretical and strategic foundation for the new international alliance. The propaganda committee was transformed into the Red International of Labour Unions, with clearly defined ideals. The ground was prepared for further work. This clearness and definiteness led to the withdrawal from the international of a number of labor organizations which

did not care for the too clearly outlined program and the too revolutionary tactics. The reformist Italian CGL, preferring to steer a middle course between the two internationals, deserted the new organization, which was also attacked by those anarcho-syndicalist groups who do not see the necessity of an International.

The time between the first congress and the second congress now taking place has been occupied by a desperate struggle on two fronts: against Amsterdam and against the anarcho-syndicalist organizations. The 16 months of struggle have yielded definite results. Syndicalism itself broke up into several groups, one part siding for the Russian revolution, another siding against it, and against the dictatorship of the proletariat and the alliance of the Profintern with the Comintern.

If we consider the results of this conflict of ideas, we may claim that the Profintern has won the struggle. There is not a single anarcho-syndicalist organization in the world adopting an attitude entirely against the Profintern. And there are large organizations like the French, in which 9/10ths are on our side. Thus the clear definition of our ideals, while causing a good deal of commotion, has at the same time rendered possible a successful development of our work.

The second conference now being held strengthens the ideal and organizational connection with the Comintern, and creates a firm basis for common work between communists and syndicalists. The 2nd congress is adopting a number of practical measures for the struggle against capitalism and reformism.

One point especially distinguishing our second congress is its practical organizational character. Decisions have already been come to on the most important fundamental questions. The question of the relations between the Comintern and the Profintern is still a matter of debate, but only for an inconsiderable minority of the congress. The great majority of those participating in the congress are clear as to their attitude on this question.

What resources has the Profintern at its disposal? At present we are numerically weaker than the Amsterdam International. But the power of an organization does not depend upon its numerical strength. The Amsterdam International is only a conservative power, an obstacle on the road to revolution. It is the embodiment of the inertia of the working class. The Profintern, on the other hand, is the embodiment of everything revolutionary in the trade union movement the world over. Another source of power is that we have followers within the Amsterdam International. This strengthens us and weakens the Amsterdam International.

The delegates of the congress do not shut their eyes to the difficulties in front of us. And these difficulties are great, for there are several millions of workers whose minds are still paralysed by reformism. The giant organizations of the workers in many countries, are still in the hands of agents of the bourgeoisie. To drive the reformists out of the labor organizations would mean to lop off the branch to which bourgeois society is today still hanging. We do not know how many years we require to do this. But there is no doubt whatever that our powers are increasing from day to day, and that the Amsterdam International is weakening. Our opponents are also well aware of this, and therefore hate the revolutionary trade union movement in general and the Profintern in particular.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

To the Miners of Great Britain

December 20th. 1922.

Fellow Workers!

Your Delegate Conference meets at a time when all of our members are living under the most appalling conditions within living memory.

You have had fifteen months in which to test the Agreement you signed at the close of the Lock-Out in 1921. The Coal Owners have shown themselves to be the most callous and brutal Employers British Capitalism has yet produced. In their impudent Manifesto issued last week, their only answer to your cry of despair is

"You Were Worse Off in 1888"
(*Minowners' Manifesto.*)

Mr. Bonar Law "The Tranquillizer" has turned you down, and told you that nothing can be done. Think of your humiliation! Your Federation, once the strongest and most powerful in the

world, has to beg of the Government, not for luxuries, but for a crust of bread. When you signed the 1921 Agreement, your Secretary, Mr. Frank Hodges, said in support of the Agreement

"I venture to say it is the greatest wage producing principle that has ever been introduced into this country."

Has your experience born this out? No!

Mr. Hodges has admitted that many Mining Areas were the "famine areas", of Britain. At one time 12 of your 13 districts were down on the minimum of 20% above 1914 rates, when the Board of Trade showed that the cost of living was 80%, 85%, and 90% above 1914.

The more coal you have produced the worse has been your lot. The standard profits have either been paid, or they are accumulating against you, to be paid off by you in the future,—an ever increasing burden on your industry.

Stephan Walsh was Right

when he said at the Special Delegate Conference on June 10th 1921.

"Never in the history of any industry on earth before now has an attempt been made to fix a standard rate of profits upon the aggregate wages of workpeople."

No Trade Revival.

The Press is saying that there is soon to be a trade revival, and if you strike for a living wage you will retard this revival in trade.

The Press has been saying for the last two years that trade was going to revive.

The Press that is against any subsidy for miners, is on the other hand, agreed that the miners' low wages should be the means of subsidizing the capitalists in other industries.

When you ask for a living wage they will tell you that the industry cannot afford it. This proves the failure of private enterprise. Are you and your wives and children for ever to pay for the incompetence and failure of private enterprise?

You must be bold. You must again raise the agitation for the adoption of the Sankey Report and the Nationalization of the Mines.

Miners of Great Britain. You have been the victors in many long and bitter struggles. The Communist Party is confident that you will again lead the way, and that the Miners will be the first Union to stop the workers' retreat. At this National Conference you must give a lead to all your districts. As an immediate practical program the Communist Party proposes that your Conference shall adopt, work and fight for the following demands:—

1. Terminate the present Agreement, and demand an increase in wages of 80% above 1914 rates. Remember the Board of Trade latest figures shew that the cost of living is still 80% above 1914.

2. Demand the Cancellation of the accumulated arrears of standard profits, which amount to millions of pounds. These are a burden which Stephen Walsh vigorously protested against at your Conference in June 1921.

3. Call upon the Labor Party to join you in an agitation to enforce the operation of the Sankey Report, and the Nationalization of the Mines.

4. Call upon the General Council of the Trade Union Congress to join you in an agitation against the attempts to lengthen your hours.

The Seven Hour Day must Be Maintained.

Remember in every statement of the Coal Owners, in every speech of their representatives in or out of Parliament, they are insisting that if you want higher wages you must work longer hours.

Remember you still have 70,000 unemployed. The Owners' statement of diminishing output is false. Your output for the week ending October 21st. was the highest for three years, 5,355,400 tons as compared with 4,236,600 tons three years ago. Yet in spite of these facts the owners dare to talk of lengthening your working hours.

Miners! Private enterprise cannot give you a living wage. Miners! Let your New Year slogans be:

**A Living Wage for Miners.
No Lengthening of Hours.
Nationalization of the Mines.**

*The Executive Committee of the Communist
Party of Great Britain.*