IF I WERE A LABOUR LEADER

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CHAPTER I

MY UNION CARD

THE General Strike has fired me with the ambition to be a labour leader, and I propose to indulge that fancy at least until I have written the last page of this little book. Nothing, in my experience, has impressed me so deeply as the sight of two or three million good, honest, decent men walking deliberately into trouble, poverty and distress with a smile on their faces and a spirit in their hearts comparable only to that of the millions who faced another sort of sacrifice in a similarly lamentable undertaking in connection with the Great War.

Everyone can understand the man who lays down his tools and declines to work until he gets fair terms. In that case he is fighting for himself, facing risks he can understand and is suffering in a cause the exact object of which is to him plain and defined. In that case, also, he has invariably had something to say about the matter before undertaking the voluntary sacrifice of a strike. But I confess that until May 3, I was unable to believe in the possibility of millions of men obeying a call from a body with which they were not directly connected, and, at a moment's notice, with enthusiastic spontaneity, throwing away their incomes and facing all the privations that a strike means to a striker.

Even in the case of wars between nations it takes time to arouse a people to anything like solidarity. We ourselves in the Great War were not ready for conscription until the struggle had

raged for nearly a couple of years. The great strike, therefore, has brought home to me the wonderful qualities of the British working man and, still further and of far more importance, the awful responsibilities that rest upon the shoulders of the leaders of British labour. They have behind them a force such as no Cæsar, no Frederick the Great, no Napoleon, ever enjoyed, which gives them opportunities for promoting human good on a scale commensurate only with this unprecedented and unequalled agglomeration of human voting power.

I am attempting the task of writing a book for the working man, a hard one for many reasons. Apart from the ordinary difficulties of writing any book, there is in addition the practical certainty that many will dispute my authority to write for the working man at all. To begin with, I am considered a wealthy man, and from the Socialist point of view that is a crime of the first magnitude. It leads to the second difficulty, the virtual impossibility which many will experience of believing in my good intentions. The man whose possessions are small has been taught for so long to regard men like me as his natural enemies that he will in many cases find it hard to rid his mind of the obsession that I am actuated by self-interest only, wanting to keep for myself that which of right should belong to him. Then there is the difficulty inherent in all propaganda, if not, indeed, in all argument with other people, that "they react," as Bernard Shaw says, in dealing

with the same point, " against propaganda, and all that any writer can wisely do is to put them in a position to make their own choice." The mention of Bernard Shaw reminds me that his much advertised book to be entitled *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism* has not yet appeared, but may I not plead that, if Bernard Shaw can be accepted as a safe guide to Capitalism, I should in justice be allowed to appear for a time in the role of a guide to Socialism—with which, to its disadvantage, trade unionism has now become so closely associated. Another difficulty facing the writer who would produce a book for the working man is that of its price, for conditions in the book market to-day are such that a cheap volume is almost an impossibility. I am overcoming this objection so far as I am able by adopting the somewhat unorthodox course of publishing the book myself in order that it may be sold at the lowest price compatible with commercial safety.

I propose to do my best to talk the language of the labour leader. I shall follow the example of the cleverest if not the most honest of our newspapers, the *Daily Herald*, and take liberties with the names of leading men, leaving out " Misters " and imitating that friendly familiarity which talks of the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill, M.P., as " Winston." I shall not attempt to equal either the literary ability or the independence of truth which mark the brilliant " Gadfly." I shall use the word " Us " to mean the workers, and

use it, I shall claim, with every bit as much justification as many of those who are accepted as the present leaders of labour. All of which brings me to this question: "What are the qualifications of the ideal labour leader?" If it were possible to write a specification beforehand and manufacture the perfect leader, what sort of a creature would be produced? At present, labour leaders can be divided into two distinct classes. There is, first of all, the Trade Union official, a working man who, with ripe experience of the practical daily task of the worker, is elected to represent his fellows in the councils of the Union and to carry on the regular organization of a group of men banded together in their common interest. That sort of labour leader does at least know all about one side of the job, and if he is a very wise man and his powers of observation and balance are highly developed, he may in time get to know a good deal about the second side as well. He has, in fact, an undoubted right to talk of the workers as "Us," to stand on the platform and tell the world what the workers want. He speaks from knowledge and he speaks with authority, and it is men of this stamp who have led the workers out of chaos into the remarkably organized conditions with which we are familiar to-day. Then there is the second type of labour leader. He comes sometimes from the university, sometimes from abroad, sometimes he is a mere bookworm on his own account, but he is called an intellectual. He draws his inspiration from

the Fabian Society and from Karl Marx and he shoves his way on to the platform, talks of " We " and " Us " and presumes to lead the working man with as much confidence as if he were a genuine Trade Unionist. He is always gifted with great powers of speech, he can spin words into high sounding phrases which may or may not have any practical meaning when analysed. But he has undoubtedly succeeded in the last twenty-five years in fastening himself on to the working class and in establishing some sort of a right to be known as a leader among them. He keeps them busy night after night searching about in a theoretical heaven often strangely reminiscent of the other place, one which seems, to me at least, to overlook entirely the mundane consideration that we are human beings with stomachs to feed and bodies to clothe. At all events, it will be generally agreed that labour has two classes of leader, the *pukka* Trade Unionist and the intellectual Socialist, and that this wonderful body of splendid human beings, who threw away their their incomes on May 3, did it at the bidding of a leadership which is a mixture of these two factors.

I venture to ask why it is that no business man has ever attempted to lead labour. Leverhulme, in a single short lifetime, washed the bodies of the whole of the human race. He brought about a tremendous revolution, because we human beings don't enjoy washing. Soap and water are like tomatoes, they are an acquired taste, and Lever-

hulme transformed the whole of human opinion in relation to them. Or Henry Ford! Take his case. He has caused about fifty times as many men, women and children to move about in motor cars as the British labour movement brought to a standstill in the General Strike. Why is it that no Leverhulme or Ford has ever attempted to lead labour? Or why is it that the ordinary business man settles down at the start just as the ordinary working man does, to the notion that there are two camps, that there is a fight to be conducted, that the other man is wrong? I want, if I can, to approach the question from an entirely different point of view and I think the General Strike helps me. I do not want to consider those three million strikers as an army fighting somebody else. That conception, to me, is just as silly, useless and futile as the conception of the Junker, who can only think of the German nation as existing to fight some other nation. I want to think of that great human force called "labour" as a power that can be used for constructive purposes, to make the world a better and a happier place, as a power not against anybody but for the benefit of the whole. In this frame of mind I approach the fascinating task, thinking myself for the moment a leader of labour, constructing a policy, framing a code, formulating a set of principles and rules which, forgetting the muddle and the mess and the misery in which we now find ourselves, I can offer to a new world. The Great War took the last bit of character out of militarism and the

General Strike, as I believe, has exploded the theories of the militarists in the industrial sphere.

I have some qualifications for the position of a labour leader and, discarding all modesty, brushing aside a natural sense of decency—the times are too serious for these things—I make bold to stake out a claim. Firstly, judged by the standards of most of my readers, I suppose I am very wealthy. That, I claim, is a qualification for labour leadership. It may be a little novel, but it is none the less a qualification. It is tangible evidence of an ability to do things as well as to talk about them. Secondly, I am an hereditary baronet and, strange as it may seem, I put that forward as one of my qualifications. I do it with all the greater delight because it will excite the scorn and raise the ire of the long haired revolutionary type of labour leader, at whose door I lay the chief responsibility for arresting the progress that, apart from him, the human race would long ago have made. The baronet business does even now help me a little, although I am not yet a labour leader. The bourgeoisie and the capitalists have to call me "Sir Ernest", but my more intimate labour friends—and I have many of them—have for a long time admitted me sufficiently into their inner circle as to treat me to the intimacy common among themselves and to address me as "Ernest".

In applying for the position of labour leader I can claim a life-long interest in industrial questions. I know the works of Sidney Webb almost by heart, which perhaps explains my poor opinion of

them, and I am the only living man that I have yet discovered who has read very much of Karl Marx. I have given some evidence of sincerity as a student of industrial and economic questions by making a very full and free confession* of my income and my business position, and have issued a challenge, which has never yet been accepted by anybody, asking these intellectual labour leaders to drop for a while the hackneyed and wearying claptrap of political phraseology, and to tell me what can be done about the facts and figures that I have set out for their information. I have another qualification for labour leadership, in that I possess no Parliamentary ambitions. I shall argue later, as the reader will discover, that the attempt to mix up industrial and political questions is at the root of our recent troubles. I am not a politician. I vote Liberal when there is a Liberal candidate to vote for, but I should be sorry to be known as a Liberal if some of the specimens of the faith now extant are really to be regarded as Liberals at all. But then, I am not really interested in present-day politics. I am interested in industry. I want to see people better fed, housed and clothed, and those are matters in which labour leaders can help and politicians cannot. I want now to settle down to the practical work of making the world a decent place to live in and I propose to start in this little island of ours which has always been and, please God, always will be, the model for the world in all things worth having.

* *The Confessions of a Capitalist.* E. J. P. Benn.

Whatever may be thought of my other qualifications, this further one, I feel, will be accepted. I claim the right as a student and a worker to put my point of view to my fellow-workers. There is a movement, now almost confined to the gas industry, for the appointment of working men directors. That movement will have to spread. Why should we not have another movement for the appointment of business men as leaders of labour? The idea is surely worth consideration.

My last point, and in some ways a real difficulty, is that I have to confess that I have no Union card. When the Shop Steward or the Father of the Chapel asks me for my ticket, I cannot produce it. I am therefore proposing to found a new Union, the Union of Good Intentions. It may take some time to secure for my Union the necessary affiliation to the Trades Union Congress, but for the moment it is the only card that I can offer.

CHAPTER II

THE GENERAL STRIKE

AFTER a hard week's work struggling to clear up the muddle in my business caused by the Strike and to disentangle all the threads that have been twisted by a fortnight's stoppage, I had the privilege of meeting Colonel House, the friend of President Wilson, to welcome him on his arrival in England.

House has the wonderful gift of seeing things in a very large way. He is a little man with a very big mind. Those who have read his *Intimate Papers* know with what extraordinary facility he pieces together the problems of whole peoples and continents, and how clearly he is able to see the big underlying movements that most of us smaller people, engrossed in the detail of a smaller daily life, altogether miss. Colonel House's first remark to me was simple, direct and definite—" The General Strike," he said, " has put England once again right on top of the list of the nations of the world. The whole world is lost in admiration of England and the English." Such a statement coming from such a quarter is worth repeating, and worth noting, and worth thinking about. For my part I do not doubt that Colonel House is right. If we can only divest our minds of the details of the strike itself and think in the " Colonel House " way, we see the truth of this extraordinary, delightful statement.

Let us go back a bit and get our perspective right. The nineteenth century was occupied by us in teach-

ing the whole world how to do things, in founding modern trade and commerce, and in lifting the complete human race from a condition bordering upon barbarism to the condition represented by modern civilization. What England meant to the world for the hundred years from 1800 to 1900, can only be appreciated by a close examination of the point of view of distant lands. For the last twenty-five years we have been busy losing that reputation. Politics have got the upper hand with us, and the world in general, and America in particular has taken the view that we are down and out and finished. The letters of Walter Page will leave no doubt in the mind of anyone on this point. Then latterly we have had this threat of a General Strike which the rest of the world sees very clearly—although we do not—as revolution. General Strikes anywhere else but here mean bloodshed, barricades and changes of Government, if not of constitution. So that when the General Strike was called in England the whole world jumped to the conclusion that the period of decadence had run its course, and that we were finished. The head-lines in the American newspapers in the first few days of the strike, make quite clear the conclusions which America drew—as it has proved—too early. The dreaded " revolution " lasted nine days; we had little or no bloodshed; not a single shot was fired; no excitement worthy of the name occurred; we all behaved like gentlemen and gentlewomen; strikers and police constables amused themselves by

playing in rival teams at cricket ; we looked things over, we got things right and inside a fortnight we were back at work. No such exhibition has ever been given to the world, no such triumph is possible in any other place in the world and the effect upon the whole world has been electrical and salutary. Colonel House is perfectly right in saying that the Strike has put us back at the top of the list of nations.

The reactions of the Strike both at home and abroad in labour camps and in business circles, cannot—it seems to me—be anything but good. I am not for one moment minimizing the awful cost of it all, the distress and poverty and bankruptcy that it has spread all around, and the actual physical set-back given by it to the current business of the moment, but Marshall's dictum is still true—" . . . those effects of an economic cause, which are not easily traced, are frequently more important than, and in the opposite direction to, those which lie on the surface and attract the eye of the casual observer." Workers and employers are all too busy at the moment clearing up the strike mess, to see very clearly or to bother very much about the real thing that has happened. The General Strike has been talked of by the wild men for many years, but it has only been practical politics in this country since Robert Smillie, as President of the Miners' Federation, talked of it seriously and positively in 1919. Since then we have had the Council of Action, and in 1925 the Government actually surrendered to the threat of

a General Strike, and handed over a subsidy to the coal industry.

It may be said that for seven or eight years past, the business of the country has been in the position of an active, vigorous man or woman having been informed by the doctor of the presence of a malignant growth ; we all know what that sort of knowledge does to the individual. The threat of the General Strike has done the same thing to British industry—and now it has gone. Colonel House is right, even more right than perhaps he thinks.

Commerce is a long-winded affair. Business, even little bits of business, always have a long history ; that is one of the things that we are now discovering to our cost. You cannot blow a whistle and stop work, and blow another whistle and start work—things are not done in that way. There are seven ages in the life of man and there are seventy ages in the life of a business transaction spread over three main periods. There is the period of planning, the period of financing, and the period of marketing, and for a long time past a large proportion of our trade has failed to materialise because at some point in the course of these lengthy processes the necessary confidence has been shaken by the awful threat of the General Strike.

A. G. Gardiner, in *John Bull*, expressed as only " A. G. G." can, the feelings of all sane people when he said : " Thank God it's over. That, whatever view we take and whatever share we have had in

the recent conflict, will be the universal feeling. It has been a hideous nightmare. Like all war, it has been cruel and savage and silly, ruthless in the suffering it has inflicted, indiscriminate in the penalties it has imposed, wasteful beyond all calculation, profitless to everybody except the hooligan. In little more than a week it delivered a more staggering blow to the interests of this country than any similar episode in our history. If ever a nation cut its own throat before the eyes of the world in broad daylight we have done it.

"The priests of barbaric religion who leap on their altars and mutilate themselves in a frenzy of fanaticism do not offer a more pitiable spectacle than we have offered. Now that we have come to our senses let us consider what it was all about, who was to blame and what we have to do to make the recurrence of such a disaster impossible."

We shall be foolish if we do too much of the "Thank God" business and fail to learn our lesson thoroughly and well, for the General Strike was a wonderful lesson to all of us. There are three main things to be said about it, three things with which all those who, like me, are pacifists in industrial questions as well as in national questions, will agree. First, it was useless and futile. Second, it was illegal, and third, it was revolutionary.

Take first the uselessness and futility of it. When the railwaymen, or the transport workers or the miners, or any other branch of the great army of labour goes on strike, it always, or almost

always, has behind it an ill-defined but none the less potent mass of public sympathy. There is always the feeling that the men on strike are striving to do better for themselves, that that is an excusable and generally a worthy object, and the great heart of the people as a whole is always hoping that the men may win. Strikes are not won by the firebrands who talk about them. They do not succeed because of the military machine that is behind them. They succeed because public opinion thinks they should succeed. That is the position with the ordinary industrial strike. When public opinion thinks that a strike is called without good reason, and that the strikers are asking for more than can be given, the strike fails. There has never been any exception to this rule. Trade Unionists, conscious of the strength which has always been given to them in these circumstances, failed to recognize that the public would act quite differently in this matter of a general strike. The industrial dispute between the grasping employer and his underpaid workers is one proposition. A battle in which the whole of organized labour is ranged against the Government of the nation is quite another. The first sort of strike is aimed definitely and directly against a particular body of employers. The second sort has an altogether different objective. While, therefore, at the start at least, the public was not able to define the real issues with that exactitude and precision now possible, it did, with that wonderful inherent ability to sense the differ-

ence between right and wrong which has always characterized the British people, recognize that the General Strike was something to be squashed and not a cause that should excite their sympathy. The British Fascisti might organize against miners or transport workers, but the nation never would. It was inconceivable that the great public would range itself in any active way against a normal, honest, industrial dispute, but it was never doubted from the first moment that the nation would rise against the General Strike.

The extraordinary thing is that nobody seemed to see this obvious result until it happened, and the strikers marched out with all that wonderful discipline and order characteristic of the Trade Union movement, absolutely blind to what they were doing. The public saw the real nature of the strike within a few hours from its beginning. The strikers themselves saw the same thing within a few days, and that is what brought it to an end. The futility of the whole business is now evident in another way. The stoppage of an individual service can cause frightful dislocation, if only because there is no systematic effort to replace that service, but the stoppage of all services causes after a time less dislocation, because of the general determination to find substitutes. So much for the silly uselessness of the whole business.

What about its illegality? We Trade Unionists pride ourselves on being law-abiding citizens. We realize to the full the quality of British law. We know that there are many bad laws that we

mean to get altered. There are also other laws that we want to get on to the Statute Book. We should therefore be the last to do anything that was illegal or to do anything to weaken the spirit and strength and quality of law as we in England understand them. The General Strike has been so hedged around with irrelevant discussion for years past, that we failed to give sufficient consideration to the legal side of it. Thinking it over afterwards we know quite well and see quite clearly that the right to strike is a bit of British law which we should preserve very carefully in our own interests. The right to strike is a British privilege given to British workers by a British Parliament and is the result of centuries of struggle on the part of British reformers who produced a freedom in these islands considerably in advance of any other sort of freedom to be found elsewhere. We know now, thinking it over, that every form of government the world has ever known except democracy has always denied, and still denies, the right to strike. At this very moment it is impossible to strike in Italy. It is equally illegal to strike in Russia, and if a strike be organized in any less benighted country than these two, it is done with all sorts of risks to the strikers themselves which are absent in the case of a British strike. The Trades Disputes Act has given the striker a social status under government that is unequalled in any other country and was unknown until 1906. We know, however, thinking it over after our recent experi-

ences, that the right to strike was given to us by the public opinion of the people as a whole, acting through Parliament for a specific purpose. The facts are not in dispute. There is an economic inequality between the employer with a bank balance and the worker dependent upon a weekly wage. Parliament has done something to mitigate this inequality by legalizing combinations of workmen and putting the force of law behind them when they care to exercise their united strength in an economic dispute with an employer. The very name of the Trades Disputes Act leaves no shadow of a doubt that the legal protection given to the striker is designed to help him in a trade dispute. We need not argue that point, because the lawyers on and off the Bench, including the Socialist Slesser, have made it clear enough, and we all know that if it were not clear, Parliament would not hesitate to put the misunderstanding right. It comes to this—if we workers want to keep the most sacred and precious thing we have, the legal right to strike against economic oppression on the part of an employer, we must see that we do not abuse that right in trying to use it for purposes for which it was never intended.

To come to the constitutional issue. Ramsay MacDonald, who knows better, but who has handled this business with about as much skill as can be expected from most politicians, continues to insist in Parliament that the strike was an industrial dispute. Day by day during its issue the *British Worker* kept on saying the same

thing, but you can't make black into white by merely saying so. The Kaiser said he had God on his side, but it didn't turn out to be true in the end. It is important that we Trade Unionists should leave no doubt in our own minds or in the minds of the general public on this question, because if we fail to make it clear at this juncture, and if we allow the Parliamentary electors to remain under the impression that we are going to try the general strike again, then we might as well shut up shop as Trade Unionists and get on with something else.

The strike should bring home to every man and woman in the land what is meant by the British constitution. We Britishers are so used to liberty and Parliamentary government, that we are inclined to take these things for granted and forget that they represent a precious heritage which requires guarding and keeping and constantly defending from damage and abuse.

Politically, the Britisher is in a better position than any other citizen of any other state in the world. There is nowhere—not even in America—anything so perfect in theory as British liberty. There is no system of government which is so truly democratic, or which so faithfully represents the will of the people as the British system of government. We have been building up British liberty for 700 years. In the year 1215 " the Keystone of English Liberty " was laid, when the principle that the King must keep the law was forced upon King John. From that date to the present time

we have never ceased in the work of perfecting the British democratic system. Only quite recently the franchise has been extended, and we are on the point of further extension so that every man and woman of 21 will have equal share and lot in the responsibility of government.

It should never be forgotten that we are concerned with more than our own personal or even our own national interests in this fundamental matter. We have always led the whole world in matters of government, and as we have won each bit of liberty for ourselves so other nations have profited from our example. Our Parliament is known the world over as the Mother of Parliaments. If, therefore, we do anything to damage or discredit the democratic system, we do it to the world and not to ourselves alone.

How does the British constitution work?

Eight times since 1900 we have had a General Election. Eight times in that short period has every voter had the opportunity to ballot for the Government.

The British political genius is so highly developed, that in 1910 we had two General Elections, and in 1922, 1923 and 1924, we held them annually. The Parliamentary machine is so sensitive to the will of the majority of the people, that it is very seldom that a Parliament lasts its full legal term. Parliament when elected is supreme. It has power over our lives and our property. There is no limit to its authority. It does not, of course, follow from this that we always

get a good government, because even the majority sometimes go wrong, and history alone can judge how far public opinion at any given time was right or wrong. All that even British democracy can give us is majority government.

Now the General Council of the T.U.C. did not like the way the Government handled the coal negotiations, but there was nothing peculiar about that. Many other people did not like the Government method. But the T.U.C. adopted quite a new form of protest and called a General Strike, and in that way opened up the greatest of all constitutional issues.

If the General Strike is a legitimate weapon, how often is it to be used and on what question ? For instance, the Free Traders claim that the standard of life of the people is in jeopardy because of the protective policy of the Government. The Labour Party is supposed to be a Free Trade party. Will a General Strike be called to stop the Government adding to the cost of goods by import duties ? Where, in fact, will it end ? I want to avoid any controversial statement in this simple argument. It may be that the miners were right, or the owners right, or the Government right, or wrong. It does not matter. I can perhaps say these things better because I am not an admirer of the present Government. Almost the only thing it has done of which I wholly approve was its immediate acceptance of the challenge to British liberty of the General Strike. But good or bad, it is governing by virtue of the British constitution, and I

must obey it and support and uphold it against a General Strike. If I fail to do that and allow the General Strike to succeed I lose my electoral power over Government and my proud heritage as a free British citizen "goes west." The Labour Party is just as much interested to defeat the General Strike as any other political party.

The Labour Party is the official opposition in Parliament and the opposition has always had the special duty of guarding the constitutional liberties of the people.

At the next election, whenever it comes, Labour will appeal to the voters to give it sufficient support to form a government. But that appeal will lose most of its force unless this General Strike blunder is frankly and honestly and freely repudiated. Without such a disavowal, the Labour appeal will amount to this:

> "Give us a majority and we will govern, but if you don't give us a majority we will still govern by the weapon of the General Strike."

To such a proposition the free electors of this country can only give one answer. The General Strike is, therefore, the most deadly blow ever directed to the Labour Party itself.

These are not new opinions expressed for the first time on new points that have arisen since the strike. William Brace, ex-President of the South Wales Miners' Federation, speaking at the Labour Party Conference in 1919, said: "To attempt to use the power of the strike to hold up the nation, and thereby smash constitutional government, is not

only an abuse of the functions of Trade Unions, but it is full speed ahead to revolution and anarchy. To suggest the use of industrial action for political purposes is to retard, and not to advance, the workers' programme of reform."

The best short statement of the constitutional issue that I have seen was given by Dr. Norwood in a sermon at Harrow. He said: "The basis of our commonwealth is that every boy and girl should have access to education, every man and woman should have a vote, which they can cast in secret without fear or favour, and the assembly which they so elect holds sovereign power in our land. In this way, so far as they can be secured in imperfect human affairs, are secured the great principles of equality and justice, which are basic Christian principles and must lie at the foundation of any state that seeks to be Christian. But these principles are utterly set at nought if one party in the state, when beaten at the polls and in a minority in Parliament, seeks to settle the issue by the exercise of violence in another field. No country can exist on these terms for long; one side or the other must prevail, and if the party of violence wins, then, whatever its profession may be, it brings in oligarchy, the rule of the few, and the basis of the state ceases to be either equality or justice."

The General Strike first came into practical politics in a really serious way at the Labour Party Conference referred to above. I quote the following from an article written by me in *Ways*

and Means, July 5, 1919, as evidence that these views are not new and ill-considered:

"The discussion initiated by Mr. Smillie at the Labour Party conference on Direct Action has at least had the effect of increasing the public knowledge of the points of this question. It has brought out very clearly the two schools of thought in the ranks of Labour statesmen—those who look upon the organization of labour as a purely industrial matter, and those who hope through organized workers to achieve political ends. Having regard to the unsettled state of the world atmosphere, it is, perhaps, not surprising, but it is certainly very dangerous, that this question should be raised in so very definite a form at this juncture. With the whole world torn to pieces by factions, with systems of government everywhere in the melting pot, it is essential to the life of our country that we should cling in the most determined way to the democratic institutions won for us by our fathers through the centuries, and it is therefore to be regretted that Mr. Smillie and those who think with him should choose this moment to press their impossible claim for government by Trade Unions.

"There is need for very clear thinking on this question and it behoves everyone to endeavour to understand the system of government under which we live, and the threat to it which is contained in the policy known as direct action. Mr. Smillie's case sounds very simple, and there are many who, without thinking, might be inclined to regard his

suggestions as legitimate. He says that the miners want nationalization, and if Parliament will not give it to them they will secure it by means of a strike. A strike is recognized as a legitimate method whereby labour organizations can make their demands effective, and, unless the true nature of this latest demand is clearly understood, many who have every sympathy with the Trade Union movement might be carried away by the eloquence of the direct action party. The fact is, of course, that while the strike may be a legitimate weapon against employers it is not permissible to use it against Parliament. Parliament must, in all circumstances, be supreme, and whatever Parliament decides can never be the subject of a legitimate strike. If Mr. Smillie does not like the decisions of Parliament he has his remedy in the ballot box, and if he fails to make that remedy effective it is evident he represents the minority, which, in a democratic country, must submit to the will of the majority.

" There is, however, a distinct justification for the agitation for direct action which needs to be stated in order that it may be removed. In the last few years Parliament has, through Government departments and controllers, so far exceeded all the reasonable limits properly assigned to Parliamentary functions that it is almost a natural corollary that industrial organizations should retaliate by endeavouring to usurp Parliamentary functions. The introduction of the official into commerce and industry breaks up the well-

established border line between these matters and politics, and if that border line is broken, then it is difficult to complain when either side trespasses upon the preserves of the other. It should be the aim of all right thinking people to get the division between politics and industry as distinct and definite as it was in the years before the war. Political rights in the industrial field should be strictly limited to the ability of Parliament to say that certain things should not be done. We very badly want a few clear thinkers of the much-despised Manchester School who could assert the right of industry to enjoy complete liberty inside definite rules and regulations laid down by the superior political authority. If that were done it would be very much easier to say to people like Mr. Smillie that they on their part must concern themselves with industrial questions and not presume to dictate upon questions which are properly within the province of Imperial Parliament. While, therefore, we must as good citizens fight with all our might and strength against the policy of direct action, which, as everybody knows is a polite way of saying Bolshevism, we must also redouble our efforts to get the machinery of government working properly within its own sphere and granting to industry that liberty which is so essential to progress and prosperity."

All too little has been said about the cost of the General Strike. Winston, that picturesque public danger, who can now add to his Dardanelles laurels the triumphs of journalism on

the Northcliffian scale, has done no particular good by advertising £750,000 as the cost of the strike to the nation. The figure is, of course, absurd. What he means is that £750,000 was spent on tin hats for special constables and other fancy notions such as we might expect from him and Jix. The cost of the General Strike cannot, in my judgment, be less than two, if not three, hundred millions. Everyone can give the details of some loss of a few pounds, losses that can never be reckoned up, such little things as this, for instance. There are probably 5,000 Britishers spread about the world earning their livings as newspaper correspondents. Now during the period of the strike the bootleggers in New York did not give up bootlegging; the Bulgars did not suspend their habit of picnicing in Macedonia; the divorce courts the world over provided us with the usual sensational literary material. And all this never reached the British public. I am not sure that the British public lost very much, but I am sure that the 5,000 newspaper correspondents must be added to the total of those who lost a fortnight's income. That is a far-fetched example, purposely far-fetched to emphasize the unending ramifications of the General Strike. The half-finished work everywhere which had to be begun all over again cannot, as I have said, be put into figures, but if a Government office ever opened on reparation lines and the world was asked to lodge its claims for losses incurred on account of the strike, the T.U.C.

would have a bill reminding us of that which was presented to the Germans. But from our point of view the most serious item in the bill humanity has got to pay for the folly of the T.U.C. General Council is the cost of it all to the cause of Labour. It has depleted the bank balances of Trade Unions, and that is the least part of the damage it has done. Millions of men will walk out once and they will walk back once, but they won't do it again. Even a striker likes a run for his money. The T.U.C. General Council, by methods that will be analysed and discussed later, got into its hands powers such as have never been given to any similar body in history. Powers of that magnitude involve responsibilities, and if the strike was to be called off within a week, Trade Unionists will want to know why it need ever have been called at all. If men are ever given again the power to do what the T.U.C. General Council did on May 3, then they will also have to be given a sense of responsibility and a mental calibre large enough to stand up to those responsibilities. I am not suggesting that the General Council is composed of either fools or knaves. They, poor fellows, have been led by the nose like the rest of us, and it is up to them and to us to study closely the way in which the trick was done and to make quite sure, as Cramp said, that it is never done again. The General Council should at least make a note of one or two simple little things. Britons are not Russians; they are not even Italians. Good Trade Unionists though they may be, they retain,

every man amongst them, an element of British independence. Britons are, almost to a man, democrats, and they like to feel that they are governing themselves. It is very nice to have leaders who can tell us in such wonderful speeches what it is we want, but we now propose to tell them that when we want a strike we will say so ourselves and we will say it through the democratic machinery of our own branches and our own Unions.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE STRIKE CAME

AN effect is seldom the result of a single cause and so there were many causes that led up to the General Strike and various reasons which helped it to start in the wonderful way it did. So far as the strikers themselves were concerned, the poor beggars who from a sense of loyalty threw a fortnights' wages into the gutter, it can be stated without any fear of contradiction that 95 per cent of them walked out to support the miners and for no other reason. I talked to many pickets and other Union men and never failed to get the case of the miners stated as the justification for the the strike. Whatever blame attaches to anyone, nothing but honour can remain with the wage earner who, regardless of his own immediate interest and often with starvation staring him in the face, deliberately encounters all that a strike means in the hope that he is helping some fellow worker in the mines. The blame does not belong to him. It belongs to those who led this business and, if the striker has failed, as he has failed, to help the miner, it is none the less to his credit that what he did was done with that intention.

The real cause of the General Strike is only to be found when we examine the relationship of Trade Unionism to Socialism and to politics generally. The blame rests on those who for years have been preaching political action, many of them knowing full well that they were aiming at the destruction of the British constitution and not saying so, others

not having the brains to know what they were doing and others, again, boldly proclaiming that they were out to found a new system of government. All these people, whether on the right or the left it does not matter, who have advocated direct or political action, have their share of blame for the General Strike. This is the side of the matter that I hope will be discussed and debated in every Trade Union branch and in every little shop where two or three Trade Unionists are found together. We must settle once and for all the relationship between Trade Unionism and political action. I do not doubt that a full and frank discussion will not only clear the air, but will clear the politicians out of the Trade Unions, bring us back to a division between industrial questions and political questions and give us the opportunity for effective work in both spheres.

There is a joke in the whole business, a hideous, ghastly joke that we shall all see one day. These gentlemen whose idea is that at a moment's notice a small committee may order millions of us to walk out and to walk in, without any pretence at consulting us, without giving the least opportunity for expressions of opinion by individual Unions, to say nothing of ballots, have no use for Trade Unions at all. Some of them are honest enough to tell us that there will be no Trade Unions in the Socialist State. They are aiming at a government that will have far more drastic powers over the individual than any British Government ever dreamed of. There is no liberty

in a system that works as the T.U.C. worked in May. The rest of us, in any such system (and it doesn't matter for this purpose whether it is organized by Lenin in Moscow or by Sidney Webb in Grosvenor Road) are only wanted, can only serve the state, can only play our part, by producing children to be bent and bossed and ordered about in this sort of way. Of course, even if Saklatvala were Chairman of the General Council, he would still have to deal with Britishers, who are after all something different from either Indians or Slavs. But the principle at the back of the thing is exactly the same. The triumvirate at Moscow, in pursuance of its great mission, ordered 36,000 unemployed out of Leningrad, and they were never heard of again. You cannot quite do that in England. The General Council has shown that it can get a couple of million free British citizens to down tools at the blow of its whistle, and it has shown it once and only once, and will never be able to show it again. But the biggest joke, and it reflects very little credit on us Trade Unionists, is the way in which these gentlemen, who are not Trade Unionists, who have no use for Trade Unionism and who will smash and abolish the Trade Unions if ever their precious notions were put into practice, are able to fatten on Trade Union funds and fool us into financing their suicidal propaganda. When we have had time to talk over the General Strike and when four or five million British Trade Unionists really understand what is at the back of it all, we shall have more

money in Trade Union coffers for benefits, more strength to organize and to carry on the necessary industrial developments and the politicians will have to rely on other sources for finance to develop their new systems of slavery.

The people who derived the most satisfaction from the sufferings of the strike were, of course, the Communists, about whom I shall have more to say later. Nobody can deny the honesty of these people, neither can their logic be disputed. They go the whole hog. They do at least know what they want and they know also that they cannot get it until they have reduced us to a state of want and misery. Any strike for any purpose has, therefore, the support of the Communists. Anything which produces poverty, anything which tends to promote dissatisfaction, is always welcomed by them. Lenin made it clear, and his successors have followed his instructions, that it was the duty of the good Communist to be in any row that was going, whatever the cause of it, and to make it, if possible, a worse row than before. How is it that this type of person can fasten himself on to the genuine British labour movement? The British working man is not a revolutionary; the average Trade Unionist is not desirous of promoting poverty, want and distress. There is no general desire to set up the guillotine or the barricades, and yet the advocates of these things are able somehow or other to associate themselves with a movement so clean, honest and obviously good as the Trade Union

movement. My explanation is a simple one. There seems to be something in the human breast that likes a fight, and the British labour movement has always been fighting or thinks it has always been fighting. There has grown up among us a muddle-headed general impression that fighting is the thing. It is nothing but a manifestation of the military spirit in the industrial sphere. It is extraordinary how those who are pacifists, when it is a question of King and Country, develop the wildest forms of militarism, worse than any brass hats or red tabs, when industrial matters are concerned. I am going to be bold enough, in my temporary rôle of a labour leader, to suggest that this fighting idea has been overdone. It is, of course, true in a sense that we have to fight for everything. It is certainly true that the history of Trade Unionism is the history of a fight for wages and conditions. Nevertheless, we are now in the twentieth century. We know more about things than they did when Trade Unions were first started. We are dealing with a more educated people. We can grasp big ideas and see farther than our grandparents. It is about time that we did ourselves the justice to recognize that the fighting notion, in connection with Trade Unionism, is wearing a little thin and has received altogether too much emphasis.

That fine courage that enabled genuine labour leaders to recognize error and to call off the General Strike was not an exceptional quality developed for a few minutes in the breasts of the

four or five good men who did it. It was symptomatic of the quality of the whole movement they led. That quality can now be turned to further account. We are old enough, strong enough and wise enough to recognize that we have advanced since the days when Trade Unionism was represented by the Luddites and was occupied in smashing up machinery. I believe that we have advanced to the point when we can as a body give up militarism. I claim that the time has come when it is no longer necessary for a labour leader making a speech to degrade himself by filling up his audience with spleen and envy and malice and with long tirades about conditions which have reference to things that were true of previous generations, but that are not true to-day. It is, for instance, an insult to our intelligence to tell us, as we are told at almost every meeting, that the Trade Unions have secured for the working man everything that the working man has ever got. That sort of general claim is still good in the mouths of persons like Winston. It is good war talk. It is on a par with the stuff that led the Germans to the slaughter in the Great War, but it is not true.

If the Trade Unions have won for us everything we have, where do science and machinery come in? What have steamships and railways been doing for the last half-century? How about the development of markets by telegraphs and telephones?—to mention only a few of the things that

have been going on side by side with Trade Union organization. I am surely not minimizing the wonderful work of the Trade Union movement when I remember that other things have also happened. The factory put a decent coat on the backs of each one of millions of men, who, without the factory, would be without the coats. The Trade Union has done something and has still got a great deal more to do, to see that the few hundred men who work the factory supplying the millions, get their fair share of the benefits, whatever they be. But surely, with all our education and with all our experience, we have reached the stage where we can recognize that there are other forces at work and that it is rubbish to claim for the Trade Union movement that which it has never done. This is not the place to develop an argument that must from its nature be very complicated. I only introduce the point to plead that we shall be fair, for Trade Unionism cannot do justice to itself unless it is fair.

These Communist colleagues of ours, who in my judgment, are the root cause of the recent trouble, do set us Trade Unionists an example. They push and we don't. We must admit, we cannot help admitting, that we have allowed them to gain a power and an influence amongst us out of all proportion to their numerical strength. We all know how it has been done. It is one of the facts of human affairs that a crowd is a very manageable thing. Shakespeare taught us that. There are very few easier jobs than to capture a

body of men if you try. The Communists have tried and they have very nearly but not quite succeeded. It doesn't matter what the meeting is, what its objects or who composes it, but it is very seldom that the best men get on the platform. That is true not only of Trade Unions but of all other bodies of men. If any reader doubt it, let him go to the first meeting open to him and let him make a speech, and he will find that before the end of the meeting he has been placed on a committee and started on the road to the presidency of the association, whatever it may be. The Communists, the Red Flag merchants, the malcontents, the militarists have got the upper hand with us because of our own laziness. Let us be men enough to recognize it. I am no alarmist. I have very little sympathy with all the rubbish talked about Moscow. I never believed in the Russian cavalry and I don't believe a tenth of what I hear about Moscow financing British labour politics. Without the least excitement, without a particle of partisan feeling, the coolest and calmest and most disinterested observer cannot fail to be impressed by the skilful way in which Moscow has taken hold of little bits of ordinary human weakness and used them for its own ends. Lenin made it clear that it was the duty of all comrades to get into every possible meeting and to preach the gospel of Communism constantly. He, genius that he was, instructed his adherents to take advantage of the apathy of other members who do not attend meetings or take the trouble

to vote, and by their unremitting and assiduous attention to every detail of Trade Union organization to work for the capture of the whole machine. In paragraph 2 of the official conditions for affiliation to the Communist International we read:

"Every organization which desires affiliation to the C. I. must regularly and systematically remove from all more or less responsible posts in the Labour movement (party organizations, editorial offices, trade unions, Parliamentary groups, co-operative societies, municipal administrations) the reformist and centre elements, and replace them by approved communists."

This is no new idea developed by Lenin to promote Communism. It is merely the adaptation and use of that ordinary human weakness to which I have referred. Take paragraph 9 of the same document:

"Every party which wishes to belong to the C.I. must develop a systematic and persistent communist activity within the trade unions, works' committees, co-operative societies, and other mass organizations of workmen."

The Communists are not working below stairs. There is nothing underhand in their method. They advertise all that they do. We all know about them and it is entirely our own fault if we allow them to succeed. Dr. A. Shadwell, in his pamphlet on the Communist movement, quotes a letter that was actually addressed to the Editor of *The Times* by the National Minority Movement, in the following terms:

" We are working to transform the Trade Unions from purely pacific organizations into mass organizations for revolutionary activity. This can be done by steady and persistent propaganda inside the Unions themselves, and results justify our claims. At the recent Minority Movement Congress there were 270 delegates, representing 200,000 revolutionary Trade Unionists; and, further, we have secured a notable victory in the election of Comrade Cook as Secretary of the Miners' Federation. We shall receive opposition from the present reactionary leaders of Labour, and with the inculcation of the Unions with Communist propaganda and the establishment of revolutionary nuclei we shall gradually be able to weed out those leaders who are enemies of the proletariat, and then we shall be in a position to throw out a final challenge to the forces of capitalism, and the class war, instead of being a slogan, will be a fact."

We Trade Unionists know all about it. When it is a question of a Works Committee or a Shop Steward, who, do we find, are the most active men in the movement? The only point I wish to make is that if we allow our movement to be collared by extremists, we have no one to blame but ourselves. The fact is, while we pretend to object to the employer-boss, we calmly allow ourselves to be ordered about by another sort of boss who, and here is the extraordinary paradox of the whole business, has aims and objects directly opposed to those of the Trade Union

movement. Our objects are surely to secure better living conditions; these people want worse living conditions. Walton Newbold, the ex-Communist M.P. for Motherwell, when I debated with him at the Kingsway Hall in 1923 in the presence of the whole of the Communist Party of London, gloried in the thought that conditions would get worse and worse. By our apathy, by failing to attend our meetings, by failing to vote for our officers and to ballot when called upon to do so, we have allowed our movement to get into the hands of people who are out of sympathy with us, have different aims from ours, and will suppress us if ever they succeed in their propaganda. It is a wicked libel to suggest that the British Trade Union movement is communistic, but it is unfortunately true that we have allowed ourselves to become a lot of sheep in the hands of these people. One of the effects of the General Strike should be to bring that to an end.

There was another reason, a broad general reason, which had something to do with the strike. It is a muddle-headed reason, typical of the muddle-headedness so prevalent in our ranks. The fascination of power tempted us. We have heard so much for so long about direct action and all its glories that we thought we would try it, and that is all we cared about it. But now we have had our lesson. We can thank the parasites on our Trade Unions for dealing us the heaviest blow that we have ever had. We shall be all the better for it if we now set about the work of

cleaning up Trade Unionism and getting it back to practical business as a great, kindly, healthful, constructive force, working for the benefit of the people as a whole.

If the General Strike puts the Socialists and the Communists in their places it will have been amply worth while, notwithstanding all its costs. If it enables some of us to see clearly the dividing lines the world will be better for it. We need it stated in the most emphatic terms that Trade Unionism is a constructive force designed to build up industry for the benefit of all the people. Socialism, on the other hand, depends upon bad trade. Unless trade is bad, Socialists' claims for their new systems make no appeal. Communists have a vested interest in hunger and want, disease and distress, things that Trade Unionism can do much to cure. There is a world of difference between the three ideas.

CHAPTER IV

CARRY ON

IF I were the General Secretary of a Trade Union faced with the situation as it is to-day, my men dribbling back to work after the General Strike; going back slowly, some of them because they don't care to go back and be reminded of the hopes with which they came out, others because employers are making it as difficult as possible to get back; I should issue the order "Carry on," using the words with all the meaning that attached to them in another connection not so very long ago.

I should ask them to defer for a while the discussion of the strike, to take time to think it over, to jump to no hurried conclusions and meanwhile to alter nothing, but just to "Carry on." I would not suggest the alteration or the modification of a single rule or practice, I would just get back, as quickly as possible, to a pre-strike position and take time to think things over.

It is true that in some cases employers have been able to impose new conditions, as in the printing trade where chapels in working hours have been abolished. But that is only a passing phase. If I succeed in getting my way and if Trade Unionism decides to be a helpful, constructive, productive force, as I believe it will, then I can see my Lords Burnham and Riddell, and even Viscount Hambleden, coming together on a deputation to George Isaacs and G. F. Larcey

to ask them to arrange daily chapels at time and-a-half.

The attitude of the best class of employer towards the strike and its effects and consequences has been expressed nowhere better than in a letter from Sir Edwin Stockton to *The Times* of 18 May:

"It is possible that British history has been better taught in the schools than we imagined. The significant rally in support of our constitutional institutions and democratic ideals will not easily be forgotten by those who had the privilege of witnessing it and benefiting by it.

"It is this undoubted fact which induces me to express the earnest hope that now that the sounds of conflict are becoming fainter, the country will interest itself in an effort to permeate the trade unions with the right spirit which should govern their activities, but which for the last few years has become obscured by the influences of extremists who, in very few cases, have any up-to-date knowledge of their reputed craft and who are trying to produce imaginary political milleniums based on entire disregard of economics.

"To my mind, we want something of the spirit which pervades trade unions in the United States —keenness in work, resourcefulness and enterprise in suggestions for improving the machinery of work, energy in output, which will rightly demand and receive its due reward, pride of craftmanship, better feeling between the employed and employers, a full realization that industry is

governed by economics and not by politics, and an appreciation of the truth that happiness, contentment, well-being, and prosperity are more likely to be achieved by levelling up than by levelling down. The restricting influence exercised on industrial life in this country by trade unionism is due, in my opinion, to the lack of ideals and imagination. Such a new spirit in trade unionism need not effect either political aims or ambitions, for the two things can be treated separately, as they ought to be treated.

"There will probably be many who, as the result of this strike, will be wondering whether the unions to which they belong are conducted on either the right lines or the most intelligent lines. One can sympathize with, and understand, this doubt and mistrust. Surely it is quite time that the workers of the country asked themselves whether their organizations are working on the best methods, and they certainly never have had a better opportunity for such examination.

"Trade unionism will, I hope, continue to flourish, but it will only do so if the saner and more intelligent men take the matter in hand on the lines I have suggested, and refuse to allow a minority of extremists to imperil its very existence."

Nothing is easier than to rail at employers and nothing is more necessary sometimes, but, to be fair, a letter like that, coming from a man who might reasonably be expected to be smarting under broken contracts and cursing trade unions,

is some evidence of the existence of decency and good feeling.

So having got my people back to work, I should start out in the spirit of Bacon believing that there is " a new unexplored Kingdom of Knowledge within the reach and grasp of man, if he will be humble enough and patient enough and truthful enough to occupy it."

I should bank on Colonel House and his remarkable view that England was again at the head of the nations of the world, thanks to the General Strike. I should ask my people to make a note of the fact that a strike engineered by intellectuals who boast of their internationalism had brought British quality so vividly into the limelight, as to give new life to the very nationalism to which the General Strikemongers object so strongly. And I should rub it in by pointing out that Colonel House did not base his opinion on the abilities of special constables or even on the newspaper genius of Winston, but mainly and chiefly upon the conduct of the strikers themselves and more especially upon the manly courage, a courage only possible to Britishers, which ended the Strike.

In the calmer and more philosophic frame of mind for which I am pleading, I should call the attention of my members to the fact that " Trade Unionism represents neither a fixed nor a constant proposition. It is a movement actuated by human desires and circumscribed by economic possibilities. Neither its officials, its protagonists, nor its opponents understand it, except, perhaps, to the

extent that they understand human nature and are able to estimate the probable trend and expression of human desire. No one is yet able to say what Trade Unionism will do to-day, or what it is likely to do under circumstances which, though not existing to-day, may easily arise to-morrow."*

In this spirit I should set out to secure a new charter for Trade Unionism; a charter granted not by the King, not even by Parliament, but by the people as a whole; a charter founded upon good feeling and a universal sense of right, and given freely and spontaneously to the Trade Unions as powerful agencies for the general good of humanity.

There is a lot we can learn from America, and all too little effort has been made to tap that fruitful source of knowledge and help. We Trade Unionists have been far too fond of hugging failure; success, for some extraordinary reason, seems to make no appeal to us. Hence our affection for Russia and our ignorance of America. Samuel Gompers, from some points of view the greatest labour leader the world has ever known, secured for his people prosperity and comfort far beyond the wildest dreams of us trouble-seeking Britishers. Here was his policy:

"There is not a wrong against which we fail to protest or seek to remedy; there is not a right to which any of our fellows are entitled which is not our duty, mission, work and struggle to maintain.

* *Trade Unions, Their Past, Present and Future.* W. A. Appleton.

So long as there shall remain a wrong unrighted, or a right denied, there will be ample work for the labour movement to do. The aim of our unions is to improve the standard of life ; to foster education, and instil character, manhood and an independent spirit among our people ; to bring about a recognition of the interdependence of man upon his fellow men. We aim to establish a normal workday, to take the children from the factory and workshop ; to give them the opportunity of the home, the school and the playground. In a word, our unions strive to lighten toil, educate the workers, make their homes more cheerful and in every way contribute the earnest effort to make their life better worth living. . . . The trade union movement, true to its history, its traditions and its aspirations, has done, is doing, and will undoubtedly do more to humanize the human family than all other agencies combined."

But Samuel Gompers would have nothing to do with Socialism and little to do with politics. " I want to tell you Socialists," he said in one of his addresses to the American Federation of Labour, " that I have studied your philosophy ; read your works upon economics, and not the meanest of them ; studied your standard works, both in English and German—have not only read but studied them. I have heard your orators and watched the work of your movement the world over. I have kept close watch upon your doctrines for thirty years ; have been closely associated with many of you and know how you think and what

you propose. I know, too, what you have up your sleeve. And I want to say that I am entirely at variance with your philosophy. I declare it to you, I am not only at variance with your doctrines, but with your philosophy. Economically you are unsound ; socially you are wrong ; industrially you are an impossibility."

For forty years American labour has maintained that attitude, with results that are well enough known to-day. As an English labour leader I should be bold enough to suggest that it is about time we took the same line.

" To raise the wages, shorten hours, is my last, and to that last I'll stick," said Joseph Arch, and, had English Trade Unionism followed his advice, the New York newspapers would be sending deputations here to find out about our high wages and the *Daily Mail* would have saved its money.

We must rid Trade Unionism of politics ; we must chuck out the Socialists. We don't, of course, mind a man being a Socialist or a spiritualist or even a poet, but we will gently but firmly point out that we are concerned with other questions. We have found all the money for the 97 varieties of Socialism for too long, and now, having a Socialist strike to pay for, we must conserve our funds for our own purposes. These are days of new political combinations, the old parties and the old policies are all in the melting pot and there never was a better opportunity for the Socialists to join somebody else. They can go to the Young Tories who proclaim themselves as fond of

Socialism and who give evidence of good faith by spending more public money than the Socialists ever did—good money taken out of industry that ought to be, for the most part, in the pockets of the working classes. Or they could go to Lloyd George. He wants a party badly enough and he is said to be worth a million. They could have that, instead of our hard earned money, and a little Welsh poetic eloquence into the bargain, which, mixed up with the melancholy chaos of thought and terminology of Socialism, would give a new interest to politics and cheer up Westminster quite a bit. But whatever happens we must rid the Trade Union movement of Socialism and get it back to constructive industrial work.

This argument should not encounter much opposition in our ranks when it is remembered that genuine Trade Unionism will disappear if ever Socialism prevails. A combination of free men for mutual protection and support is an impossibility except under a genuine democratic system of government.

My next task as a leader of labour would be to ask my members to consider their present political position, a position, it should never be forgotten, which has been developed by the Socialists. Are we getting what we want? Are we making the best use of our power? Or are we merely spending our money for the satisfaction of putting a lot of intellectuals, professors, journalists and disgruntled aristocrats into parliamentary seats? In 1924 we wasted 5,400,000 votes to put up the most in-

effective and incompetent opposition ever known in Parliamentary history.

I grant that those five million votes were not all Trade Union votes, because most Trade Unionists have too much respect for parliamentary institutions to vote for their abolition. But we know that there are five million trade union votes, and the question is, are we making the best use of them?

Samuel Gompers would have taken those votes into the political market and would have got for Labour long ago all the legislation it wanted.

Trade Union pressure on candidates of any political party would produce more legislation in a single session than Ramsay Macdonald can offer in a life-time. All these possibilities have been thrown away by the direct action mentality. However that may be, I plead that in the new post-strike atmosphere the matter should be discussed and considered afresh, and, if necessary, a new start made.

English politics, in recent years, have reached the lowest ebb and we Trade Unionists ought to ask ourselves " why ? " We ought to study the whole question from the beginning.

The English Parliamentary system is arranged on a geographical basis and members of parliament are supposed to represent constituencies. But of later years the tendency has been for members to regard themselves as representative of particular classes or particular interests. The Labour Party has its full share of responsibility for this modern development, but it is doubtful

whether Trade Unionists have received much benefit from it. We ought to ask ourselves whether Trade Unionists, as such, or employers, as such, have any right in Parliament at all. We ought to make sure that we are not contributing to a state of affairs in which Parliament will consist of groups of conflicting interests and cease to represent the nation as a whole. The inquiry will be all the more useful, if we remember how little good we get out of the existing state of affairs.

Thus issuing my order "Carry on," I should remind my members that our task to-day is nothing less than to save Trade Unionism itself. When those millions of fine men walked out on 3 May, they did so because they were Trade Unionists, proud, and justly proud, of their solidarity. They put the Charge of the Light Brigade in the shade—"Theirs not to reason why," and out they came almost to a man. It wasn't the "dictatorship of the proletariat" that brought them out, it was simple British loyalty to a simple British institution. We gave the world a demonstration which has opened its eyes and the world is now asking, What will British Trade Unionism do? Our task is to turn this magnificent force to constructive purposes for the benefit of ourselves and of our people as a whole. If we could announce to the world to-day that out motto is "Service" and we proceeded to prove it, we could transform the surface of the earth, and poverty would fly like chaff before the wind. America would take a back seat.

CHAPTER V

A FAIR DEAL ALL ROUND

It is a marvel to me that industry as at present constituted functions at all. If we really lived up to or down to the politics of industry, things would simply stand still and nothing would happen. The Socialists tell us that the system is all wrong, that we are robbed of our rights, that we should produce some other way, and that we must destroy the existing order. How can any human being put his heart into his work with such thoughts in his head? Some of us manage to do it, but it is an unnatural and uncomfortable existence. The truth is, of course, that very few of us workers really believe these wordy wiseacres, but we accept them because we imagine them to be useful in so far as they put the fear of God into the minds of the employers and thus perhaps tend to help us when it comes to an argument about wages. But it is a rotten position. Many a factory is managed by men who believe in Capitalism and worked by men who believe it to be all wrong, and it follows that no such factory can possibly be a real success. If production is achieved, if wages are found, if profits are made under such conditions, does it not follow that far better results could be obtained for all parties if the whole concern were of one mind on the underlying principles governing it all?

Imagine a game of cricket played to the rules of football, or the Archbishop of Canterbury calling the odds on the course for the Grand

National, and you get the sort of picture that industry presents to the student who thinks seriously about the present situation. It would be almost as sensible to expect to get music out of a violin with a hacksaw as to expect a factory to function properly with a profiteer at one end and a communist at the other. The party deriving the greatest benefit from such a combination is the profiteer, because he fattens on scarcity, but the consumer and the working man both suffer.

Trade Unionists must therefore found their policy upon the simple and obvious theory that the function of industry is to deliver the goods. Our brains have become so befogged with the verbiage of the Socialists that we have almost forgotten the meaning and the purpose of work. We look at this question upside-down. We regard work as an end in itself—as something which the worker must have for his own benefit. We think only of ourselves; we have almost forgotten the job which we do and completely forgotten the consumer, for whom we do it. We see so much of the boss that we forget that he is not our real boss at all, but merely a link binding us to the consumer who really controls the whole situation. We must get back to a totally different point of view and keep our minds fixed upon the purpose of our work and the consumer for whom it is all done. We must start with the fact that we work to serve others, the others being for the most part workers like ourselves; we must recognize that if others had no wants there would be no work for

us to do, and, further, that we are only entitled to ask for the satisfaction of our wants to the same extent that we satisfy the wants of others. Such a point of view leads us to all sorts of interesting and old-fashioned notions, that are none the less true because we have for the time being forgotten them. If each of us, in doing a piece of work, would ask ourselves whether we are giving satisfaction, whether we are giving good value, whether we are creating in the minds of the consumer a desire for more, then the unemployment problem would disappear.

These questions must be asked not only by the working man but by all the parties to industry, the manufacturer, the merchant, the wholesaler and the retailer. All of us in fact have absorbed too much of the mentality of Socialism, and the tendency all round is to produce scarcity and high prices, and thus to limit markets by destroying the goodwill of the customer. For the mentality that allows us to ask how long we can take over a job and how much we can squeeze out of it for ourselves is a socialistic mentality, and its prevalence in all classes to-day is holding back the world and perpetuating poverty. It creates at the other end of the scale—in the breast of the consumer—a feeling of irritation and dissatisfaction, a determination to do without us, as far as possible. It kills trade, reduces demand and creates unemployment.

The real boss of industry is the buyer—your wife or mine, or the nigger woman who goes to the

bazaar with her basket on her arm and a couple of rupees in her purse. An old economic law, almost forgotten to-day, tells us that "the buyer settles the price."

We Trade Unionists are exactly like other branches of the industrial army, the trade associationists, the combine-mongers and all the other over-organized idiots. We settle a wages rate, we get another 1d. an hour and we think we are making progress. But we forget that if the nigger woman stops at home with her rupees and manages somehow without our stuff, or tries to make it herself, we go out of work in the end. We talk a lot among ourselves about profits and we think that when we raise wages, we reduce profits, but that is not always, nor even generally, true. Ruskin was all wrong on this matter and that is why we want a business man as a labour leader to put us right on questions of this sort. The truth is that by raising wages we promote scarcity and limit markets, and often put increased profits in the pockets of the bosses. If on the other hand we can devise, with our practical knowledge of the workings of the job, ways of developing increased production, we can raise not only money wages but real wages by lowering prices, and so do good at both ends. We want to develop a larger view and to realize the many sides to the problems that concern us in our Trade Unions.

If a body of workers raise wages, and production remains stationary, the workers in question benefit

at the expense of the rest of the community. If on the other hand production is increased and wages remain stationary, everybody benefits except the particular body of workers. We Trade Unionists are now big enough and strong enough and numerous enough to tackle the problem from both sides and see that our actions are so regulated as to promote the maximum of good for all.

But to put the question on the lowest plane and to consider only our own interests, it pays us better to have a prosperous consumer, because each one of us is more of a consumer than a worker. If we work eight hours we are consumers for sixteen, for there are 24 hours in the day. Even the eight hours that we sleep could be better spent on an inexpensive spring mattress than on price-inflated but otherwise lumpy flock. So that, as single individuals, our interests are one-third worker and two-thirds consumer; but the man with a wife and three children is even more interested in production, his family being made up of one part worker to fourteen parts consumer.

There is another way in which we can look at this matter, a way not often mentioned at Trade Union meetings. Every bit of work finished leads directly to more work. A finished house wants furniture, and furniture, when delivered, wears out and wants replacing. A new suit of clothes appearing in a street will send all the other people living in the street to the tailor's shop at the first opportunity. A single pair of Russian boots

walking down the Strand will put Russian boots on the legs of half the women of the world in three months. I know the Socialist arguments about purchasing power and effective demand, currency, credits and the rest, but as I suggest later most of these are sophisticated clap-trap which can be classified as "bloody book-keeping". I am dealing with big simple human facts and asking big men with simple kindly honest hearts and minds to live and act in a simple and straightforward and practical way.

I propose that we leave curves and graphs and logarithms and formulas and definitions to those who like them, and that we occupy ourselves with the honest work of delivering the goods and thus increasing the real wealth of the whole world. I am not for a moment suggesting that graphs and formulas are not useful in their way, but I do suggest quite seriously that their function is to tell us what has happened in the past and that they are almost useless as a basis on which to build a prophecy of the future.

As a labour leader anxious to give a fair deal all round, I should endeavour to re-establish the spirit of the Friendly Associated Cotton Spinners, who in 1796 wrote at the beginning of their trade union rules :—

"We humbly conceive that every unprejudiced mind admires and applauds those actions which flow from a desire to promote the good of others ; and the highest and most exquisite pleasures arise from a consciousness of having acted in

conformity to the dictates of kind and good affections."

We must settle down seriously as Trade Unionists and not as revolutionaries to the practical considerations of these questions of output and economy.

CHAPTER VI

NOT A PENNY OFF WAGES, NOT A MINUTE ON HOURS

ONE of the driving forces behind the strike was a widespread belief, held by Trade Unionists everywhere, that an attempt was to be made either now or in the near future, to bring about a general reduction in wages. This belief may have been strengthened by a certain logic of justice, for the Unions are of course conscious that many existing wage rates have been secured on the strength of a cost-of-living index figure which has since dropped considerably. When the cost of living was mounting, the Unions made the mistake of preaching the doctrine that wages must go up as costs go up, with the logical corollary that they must come down as prices decline. Leaving all that aside, many a Trade Unionist was induced to feel a personal interest in the General Strike by the spread of the notion that if the miner suffered a reduction, his own turn would come next. I do not think it is too much to say that numbers would not have responded in anything like the way they did to the call of the General Council but for this threat of a general attack on wages. Is it not possible in these circumstances that we Trade Unionists, freed from all our political entanglements and accepted by the nation as genuine agents for the promotion of industrial prosperity, might secure a backing of public opinion for a definite policy, which laid

it down that there should not be a penny off wages nor a minute on hours ?

The acceptance of such a principle, costly as it might at first appear, would be a real economy inasmuch as it would give to the nation the full confidence of the working man. Whatever may be the cost of living or whatever the value of money, the man who is earning 51s. to-day is not likely to be content with 49s. later on. Such an alteration would appear to be a step backwards, and therefore could, and should be, rendered unnecessary.

The notion that wages should rise and fall with the rise and fall of prices has its origin in that deep-seated stupidity, so common among us and so bitterly resented by those who are its victims, that there is some proper limit to the earnings of a manual labourer. This idea has been responsible for more industrial trouble than any idea which ever entered the brain of man. It has robbed us of the benefits of piece-work, both the employer and the labourer knowing that, as soon as piece-work produced more than a standard figure, the rate would be cut. So long as society clings to the view that it would be improper for a railway porter or a builder's labourer to move more than a shade away from the poverty line, the porter and labourer will continue to be the enemies of society. On the other hand, if society would agree that the labourer can have anything that he can earn, or that he would get his full share of any benefit that he was

prepared to bring to society, then a working basis would be established, and society would reap the advantage of the goodwill of the labourer.

Of course, we shall be told that there are economic considerations. Old-fashioned people will hold up old-fashioned hands in old-fashioned horror, and will point out that industry will be ruined, and tell us all the old stories that have been told upon the introduction of any reform and at the inception of every advance. Coal owners will explain with emphasis and conviction that the price of coal can never go down so long as the wages remain at their present high level; that we shall lose our export trade; that industry will be handicapped, and so on and so forth. My reply is that I do not believe it. If employers depend for their existence upon the maintenance of a standard of wages even remotely approaching that which prevailed before the war, then the benefit of employers to society is, to put it mildly, a very doubtful one.

Taking for a moment the old-fashioned commercial view of the cost of production and looking upon labour as one looks upon material or rent, just as one of the factors which go to make up producing costs, why should labour and labour alone be the only fixed item among these costs? Employers do not cry out about economic ruin, or the damage to industry, when raw materials suddenly jump up in price; they quickly accommodate themselves to the new figure and carry on as before. They either add the extra cost to the

price of production or, more frequently, they find a way of using less of the expensive material, or invent a substitute. Why cannot the same view apply with regard to labour? High wages will not be more difficult to deal with than high prices of materials. The brain power of Trade Unionists as well as of manufacturers should be directed not to the reduction of the wage rate, but to economies in man-power, the improvement of machinery, the elimination of unnecessary processes, the better planning of works, and all the other progressive developments which are essential to the life of any industry.

We must, it seems, sort ourselves out. We are either industrial progressives or industrial conservatives. We either believe in going forward or going backwards, for there can be no standing still.

Many manufacturers, as well as many labour leaders, fail to realize that the working man of to-day is a very different man from the working man of a generation ago. Forty years of popular education may not have done all that was hoped of it, but it has produced many millions of people who can read and write, and who are, almost every one of them, actuated by a desire to progress. These people are not to be bossed, and ordered, and disposed of in the same way as was the working man of the 'seventies. One would imagine that this is sufficiently evident, but it still needs a great deal of driving to get it into the heads of many of the employing class.

Employers, taken as a whole, have not advanced at the same rate as the workers, and what is really wanted to-day is a better class of employer. Our fathers were able to justify their position as the leaders of industry, although they were not able to satisfy the needs of the workers of their time. But if modern employers are to make good to-day their claim to be the leaders of industry, they must show their ability to satisfy the present-day workers.

Conditions and methods such as prevailed in 1914 could not possibly keep any industry going in the year 1926. We have to face the need for many times the output of those days, a need that will never be met by all the labour we possess, working all the hours that are sent, whatever be the wages. It can only be met by the application of brain power, science, and machinery, together with a complete abandonment of the stranglehold of Socialism.

These are matters which merit the whole-hearted attention of both employers and employed. It is perfectly immaterial whether the labourer is rated at forty or fifty shillings ; without better methods both trade and employment will go and he will get neither. With better methods, coupled with the will to work, he can earn higher wages than are ever talked of to-day.

Henry Ford has paid, in Britain, £1 a day to people who do nothing but sweep up floors, and has produced the cheapest motor-car yet known. Ford is getting a little threadbare as an

illustration, but the point is as good as ever. The trouble to-day is not the rate of wages, or the number of hours, or any of the things over which we commonly dispute. Employers should know perfectly well that the fundamental problem is how to get an hour's work into an hour.

This brings us back to the point from which we started—should wages be lowered? Should the working man be left with a feeling that there is a conspiracy to rob him of something, which he thinks he has gained during and since the war? Is it worth the saving of a few shillings a week in order to keep the workman in a disgruntled condition of mind? Would it not be far better to enter into a bond with all workers that no attempt would be made by anybody to reduce anybody else's earnings? Could we not, in that way, make the workman feel that here at last is evidence of real progress, and engender in his mind a desire to make more? If only we could arrange a truce in the battle of wages in order to concentrate all our efforts on output, there would be a very considerable reduction in prices, and that reduction would be largely due to the willing help of the workman. If, at the end of the year, he found himself with his present wage and lowered prices, he would assuredly be better off, and if prices were not then made the excuse for a reduction in wages, he would be led, by his own experience, to abandon the fallacy of the restriction of output—the principal problem of importance existing to-day.

In the higher type of Trade Unionism that will develop out of the clearing-up now in progress, there will be far more serious and responsible discussion than there has been in the past on the relationship of wages to production. It is too commonly supposed that ca' canny, limitation, demarcation and other devices for spreading work over and spinning it out, are the exclusive property of the working man. Nothing of the kind is true. No weakness is more common with human beings generally than to "go slow". The professions are, on the whole, every bit as guilty in this matter as the Trade Unions. The solicitor who will not work without a barrister, or the family doctor who plays into the hands of the specialist, are simply following Trade Union practice at its worst.

It is up to us Trade Unionists to debate these questions among ourselves and see how far, by the application of our present methods, we are doing the good we want to do. We may find that we have been pushed into all sorts of excesses, restrictive rules and regulations by the wild men, whose real object is to destroy industry; whereas we Trade Unionists only want rules and regulations to promote the well-being of industry and to put it in a position to satisfy our demands. If we will take the view and make it plain to the country that we are the guardians of the public as well as of our own interests in these questions, there is no limit to the service that we could render. We know, or we ought to know, that wages, output

and service are all wrapped up together. We know that very much higher wages than are common to-day in some trades could be secured without difficulty if the maximum output were given.

We should establish in every one of our Unions a competent research department, staffed by business people possessing experience of markets, people who want to get on with the job and not to found new systems of society. This research department should advise us from time to time as to the maximum wage that could be given in the circumstances. In accepting the responsibility of settling our policy on such questions, we should require all the statemanship of which labour is capable. The wage question must be lifted from a mere struggle between a few hundred men and a few dozen employers into a scientific process that shall aim at giving the maximum wage for the maximum service. It is by no means so simple as it appears. Take the following illustration, in which outrageous figures are purposely given to emphasize the point. If a bricklayer's wages were fixed by the Union at £1,000 a week, there would be employment for three or four bricklayers building palaces for Rothschilds, and wages would be settled on what would seem to be an equitable basis having regard to all the circumstances of that particular case. If, on the other hand, bricklayers' wages were fixed at a shilling an hour, there would be employment for hundreds of thousands of bricklayers, building houses for the working

classes. The market would rapidly become glutted and over-production would lead to unemployment. The task of the bricklayers' Union is to find the figure which will give the maximum wage for the largest output capable of being absorbed by the market at any given moment. The research department of the Union, in pursuance of its objects, will seek for new ways of economising bricklayers' labour so that the minimum number of bricklayers may produce the maximum number of houses, and thus each bricklayer will receive a very much higher return than is possible on his present method. After all the experience of the last 25 years Trade Unions know enough about the problem to realize the folly of the theory that economy of labour creates unemployment. That fallacy arises from the Socialist habit of looking at one side of the account and one side only. When we realize, as we are now beginning to realize, that continuous employment can only be secured if continuous satisfaction be given to the consumer and that the greater the satisfaction the greater the amount of employment, we are beginning to get near to a solution of this age-long and perplexing problem.

This question is so important, so vital, so fundamental, that no apology is needed for examining it thoroughly. Suppose we take another simple illustration, again using simple figures put forward only to bring out the nature

of the problem and the true forces that govern it, figures which Joseph Chamberlain would have called platform figures.

Let us assume that a chair costs £3, the cost being made up of: Materials, £1; rent, rates, taxes, carriage, machinery, selling costs and profit, £1; and labour, £1; total, £3 for one chair. Let us further assume, again exaggerating to make the picture obvious, that this chair at £3 is produced with labour going slow, with output limited, under agreements with three or four Trade Unions, each insisting upon having a small share in the work and each keeping the other waiting for its little bit, remembering (and it is important to remember) that most of these restrictions arise quite naturally among the men themselves, who have been misled into thinking that by "spreading over" they are making work for their pals and are preventing unemployment. Without, however, going into details which we Trade Unionists understand so well, we have a chair produced under these conditions at £3. Now let us double the workmen's output. It is, of course, utterly impossible to double the output of the vast majority of workers, but I suggest it in this case for the sake of simplifying the illustration. If the truth were that 5 per cent could be added to output, the problem is just the same, because even so little as 5 per cent is a governing consideration with any of the world's markets. If, then, the workers engaged in the

production of the chair were to double their output, they would require in the same period of time twice as much material, and materials would therefore cost £2. The rents, rates and taxes and all the rest of the second £1, known to accountants as "fixed" or "overhead" charges, would remain at £1 and labour, on the doubling assumption, would also get £1. The total cost of two chairs would be £4, or £2 per chair. And here we reach the crux of the matter. It is a solid fact that the market for chairs at £2 is five times as large as the market for chairs at £3. There are five times as many people willing to buy a £2 chair as there are people willing to buy a £3 chair. That is nothing to do with capitalism, it is no part of any "system", it is no conspiracy by profiteers, it is not a trick to cheat the workers, but a simple, common human fact that, generally speaking, people are willing to make a sacrifice to have the advantage of sitting on a chair, but that, by a normal, natural process, they will set a limit upon the sacrifice they will make for this particular advantage. The belief that the producer can fix the price of an article is one of the commonest of modern errors. The producer may write a label and put it upon the article, but it is the consumer who really fixes the price. If the chair is labelled £3, one consumer comes to buy and the other four stop at home. If the chair is labelled £2, five consumers promptly walk into the shop.

Let me put down these two sums in tabular form:

Materials..	£1
Overhead charges	1
Labour	1
Total cost of one chair ..	£3

Double output:

Materials..	£2
Overhead charges	1
Labour	1
Total cost of two chairs ..	£4
Total cost of one chair ..	£2

Seeing that five chairs at £2 are wanted instead of one at £3, the effect is that there is at once created two-and-a-half times the amount of work and two-and-a-half times the amount of wages. I am fully aware that I shall be told that I ignore the questions of effective demand and currency and credit, and Oswald Mosley will no doubt inform me that if only I would nationalize the banks I could still keep the price of the chair at £3, still keep the output down to half and still sell the five chairs. If that be so, why not reduce the output still further? Why, indeed, give any output at all? However, I must not be tempted in this connection into a dissertation on banking and currency.

The trade of the future is charged with the duty

of providing the world with the best of everything. There is no end to its opportunities and no limit to its possibilities. For instance, the work of giving every man, woman, and child in these islands the opportunity for a warm bath every day, expressed in terms of trade, represents an order for about one hundred million pounds' worth of goods. If similar advantages could be extended to the Western Hemisphere alone, to say nothing of the whole globe, it would mean in terms of trade unending employment to the masters and men engaged with the manufacture of baths and hot water apparatus. But the hot bath is by no means the height of ambition as present-day ideas run! Everybody, moreover, would like a more frequent change of linen, more furniture, more variety of food, more amusements, more recreation, more books, more light and heat, more of every imaginable amenity of life. And the satisfaction of these needs represents enough work to keep us all engaged, with the assistance of the best machinery, for generations to come. And then, before these requirements are one-tenth filled, many new needs will have arisen. In fact, demand will always keep ahead of supply if only the right ideas are kept uppermost in mind.

Such questions as output and wages and credit are much more difficult in detail than in bulk. We all insist, and after all we can hardly be blamed for it, on looking at these questions from our own particular points of view, but it is useful and, indeed to the modern Trade Unionist it becomes

a duty, to look at these things in a broader and a bigger way, to try and get our perspective right and to realize, so far as we are able, the relationship of our actions and our problems to the actions and the problems of the world.

Production and wages, looked at as a world problem, can be stated in the following very simple way:

The world is suffering from a shortage of wealth and a surplus of labour, with the result that wealth or capital, being short and scarce, gets a high return for its services, and man power or labour, being abundant, gets, as every surplus always gets, a low return for its services. I do not think that this proposition, stated in a simple way in relation to the world, is capable of refutation, or will be disputed by the most cantankerous and argumentative of the intellectuals. In these circumstances, is it not an extraordinary reflection upon our intelligence as civilized beings in the twentieth century that we are all engaged in restricting the output and the creation of wealth? I am not now talking only to Trade Unionists. They have their share of responsibility, but they are by no means the only criminals in this really criminal matter. Trade associations, combines, nations, are all at work on the same foolish lines. All interference by rules, regulations and other restrictive devices, by tariff barriers and legislative obstacles, makes it difficult to give the maximum return. Keeping in mind the world aspect of the problem, let us try to imagine what would happen

if the whole of human policy were reversed to-morrow morning, if trade were free and if everyone gave his capabilities to an effort to produce. I venture to assert that were that miracle possible, six months would be sufficient to alter the face of the earth, to bring about a bigger revolution than has ever been conceived in the brain of the wildest revolutionary. The world would be so full of wealth that the present position would be entirely reversed. By next Christmas we should have a surplus of wealth and a shortage of labour. Capital would be so plentiful that rates of interest would shrink to mere fractions of their present dimensions, and labour would be so scarce that all the dirty work, all the degrading work and menial work which now disfigures human activity, would have, perforce, to be done by the slave machinery, who is, historically, the successor of the wage slave.

Leverhulme's six-hour day, for which he was so roundly abused by some employers, was a groping in this direction, and H. G. Wells has got very near to this conception, but has made the mistake of fumbling about in the mists of the Socialist camp when he ought to have been running with the millionaires.

I have been tempted to trespass into the realms of speculation, a digression which is understandable when dealing with such a fascinating subject as " Not a penny off, not a minute on ". A. J. Cook is absolutely right and yet utterly wrong. If he would put the proper value on a miner's

labour, he would conceive of the miner not as one of a couple of million members of a proletariat doomed to submit to his dictation, but as a human being full of brains, energy, ambition and resource. He would have spent the last few years in telling most of his fellows to get out into trades where their services were wanted to develop other sources of human satisfaction. The mines would then be run with something like half the labour that at present encumbers them, labour drawing higher wages than ever entered Cook's head.

It is really time that we Trade Unionists went to America for a few ideas. America has gone a very long way upon the road that we ourselves will have to travel, and she has gone that distance by leaving us and all our ideas alone and behind, by declining to have anything whatever to do with international Socialists and holding her superior head up, looking upon Europe and her perpetual wars as a relic of barbarism. Here are a few extracts from a report presented by the President to the delegates and general membership, at a recent convention of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America, one of the most progressive and aggressive Trade Unions in the world, earning wages higher than any corresponding wages in the world, with a membership of motor owners and a general standard of citizenship and economics that should arouse our envy.

"The convening of this, the thirtieth convention of the International Printing Pressmen and

Assistants' Union of North America, marks the highest standard that it has ever attained in every respect. The standard attained, however, has not been accomplished as the result of purely incidental routine operation, but we are privileged to record our unprecedented success after many serious adversities have been encountered and completely eliminated.

"Numerically all records have been eclipsed; financially all records have been shattered and our collateral and cash assets establish us the fourth richest trades-union in the world. Our standing in the communities of America is greater than it has ever been; and there prevails a kindness, a spirit of appreciation of our existence and the necessity of our existence, among the employing printers, publishers and the public in general such as we have never enjoyed before.

"The thirtieth convention of our organization has every reason to jollify in the successes that have come to the membership of the International Union and this convention should, in harmony with the spirit of initiative, outline further plans for future development looking to the enlargement of our scope of activities and the making of our organization more responsive to the requirements not only of the membership that constitutes the organization but of the industry upon which we are dependent for our economic existence; and in this connection it is good to be able to know that there is a keener understanding of the obligations that we owe to industry than has ever previously

existed. Working men and women, as well as employers, appreciate more readily the existence of community interest in industrial activities today than ever in the history of the Republic of the United States and the Dominion of Canada. One marvels at the slowness in the approach and the acceptance of this logical and unescapable conclusion. There has always been a community of interests for the reason that all units engaged in our business are dependent upon the industry, but the unfortunate fact is that in the past, and to some extent now, the spirit of selfishness has predominated and because of it men have been slow in recognizing the interests of others and still slower in appreciating the value of co-operation in the furtherance of industrial operation.

"It is an old statement to which the writer makes reference, and that is, that you cannot take from the industry something that you have not assisted in putting into it, and which does not actually exist in the business. For this reason it is important that we recognize certain fundamentals, as for example:

"First: The ownership of property is a principle unescapable.

"Second: Savings accruing from thrift should be compensated by adequate interest in order that thrift might be encouraged and industry maintained in a healthy state.

"Third: Replacements, covering depreciation of business and enlargement of business, are things essential to the well-being of the employees as well

as the employers, and must be taken into consideration.

"The foregoing are three things upon which there can be no great division of opinion as between men of industry, whether they are called employers or employees, and obviously the first draft upon the profits of business should be used to safeguard the principles as aforenoted and with that established there should be no great difference in the equitable division of that which is left, by and through the process of conciliation and arbitration, predicated upon the facts. With these principles operative compensation adjustments to all units of the industry should be subject to the reverses as well as the successes of the business."

Some years ago a well-known novelist enunciated a very simple theory for the achievement of the millenium, whereby labour was to secure not only the control, but the ownership of industry and everything else. Starting upon the assumption that labour is the only thing that matters, he argued that a process whereby prices were continually pushed up and wages were raised in proportion would gradually squeeze out, first, the middle classes, and then the capitalists. Not a few of our present day labour leaders still cling to the idea that such a scheme is feasible and workable, and many are to be heard openly boasting that the continual increase of both prices and wages is a move in the direction of the state of affairs which they are so anxious to bring about. The bulk of our industrial workers, who are not

affected by revolutionary theory, and not particularly concerned with the political aspects of industrial development, follow the crowd and support demands for higher wages simply because they hope in this way to improve their personal position. Their motives are personal and pecuniary, differing in no way from those of the capitalist or the profiteer. These people cannot understand why prices should always rise at a greater rate than wages. When they have successfully demanded an extra five shillings a week, and then find that it costs them seven or eight shillings more to live, they not unnaturally feel angered.

We have succeeded between us, for we are all to some extent responsible, in creating a mental condition of muddle-headed bewilderment, which leads us to think that there is something wrong with the conditions of our employment, and induces in most a feeling of injustice, having the effect of sapping our energies, reducing our vitality, undermining the interest in our work, and lowering our output. This state of mind is deliberately fostered by the revolutionary Socialist who knows well the deadly effect of the go-slow policy upon the social fabric. But it must not be assumed that the majority of the manual workers are seriously affected by the revolutionary Socialists, as other factors are equally potent in producing this unsatisfactory way of looking at things. Government interference should be put at the head of the list. When we workers are glutted in every column of every newspaper with

millions and millions of figures, our minds are stuffed full of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, and this in itself produces a feeling of insignificance and unimportance, if not of discontent, when we think of the odd few sovereigns that constitute our personal budgets.

The following little calculation is intended to show how such things have actually worked in recent years. We start with a worker who in the bad old days was working fifty-four hours at 6d. an hour, and we presume that he produces one article per hour, the labour cost of which would thus be sixpence. The next process in our little table reduces the worker's hours to forty-four, without altering his money, and assumes that he works at the same rate as before, producing forty-four articles for £1 7s., the labour cost per unit being thereby increased to 7½d. At this stage the war comes along, and by processes familiar to all, we assume that the worker's wage is doubled and made 1s. an hour, but that he still goes on working as well as before, putting in a forty-four hour week for 54s., and producing forty-four articles. The labour cost of each of these articles goes in this way up to 1s. 3d. In the last step of our calculation we imagine that the working man, for one or other of various reasons, has lost interest in his job,has followed the fashion of the day, and has refrained from putting forward the effort which was usual in the old days. In this way we calculate that instead of producing forty-four articles, his output is limited to thirty;

the labour cost of each article then becomes 1s. 9½d. The figures may be tabulated as follows :

Hours	*Wages*	*Articles Produced*	*Labour Cost per Article*
	£ s. d.		s. d.
54	1 7 0	54	0 6
44	1 7 0	44	0 7½
44	2 14 0	44	1 3
44	2 14 0	30	1 9½

If this calculation represents anything like the actual state of affairs, the net result is that the workman is receiving twice the money wages, while the labour cost of the article he produces is three-and-a-quarter times as much as before. But labour cost is by no means the only factor in production. If thirty articles are produced with the same machinery, the same rent, rates, taxes, and all the other expenses associated with a factory that was previously used to make 54 articles, the overhead charges of each article have been proportionately increased. The material which the worker uses has also been subjected to a similar process in the factory where it is produced. And so we must assume that material has multiplied its nominal value three or four times. To this must be added items like transport, packing, retail expenses, selling expenses and the rest, all of which have been going up in the same sort of way. If the argument were carried to its logical conclusion, it would not be difficult to show that a doubling

of wages all round, added to a 30 per cent reduction in output, means in effect five or six times the old costs of production. If space permitted, it would be possible to set out a table working all these figures from the other point of view and to show that the least little bit of speeding-up in the matter of production means a great deal more to prices than would appear on the surface. If we could all get back to the rate of output that was our standard before the war, we could retain our present money wages and enjoy the advantage of very much lower prices than exist to-day. If on the other hand, we could increase our rate of output, as we undoubtedly could, having regard to the better equipment we possess, we could lower prices almost indefinitely.

If all these questions are properly studied and understood, there is in most cases no reason for a penny off wages or a minute on hours.

CHAPTER VII

BLOODY BOOK-KEEPING

THE problems of currency, banking and credit and their relation to production are so technical, so abstruse and so highly complicated that it is practically impossible for the great mass of the people ever to know very much about them. It is beyond the comprehension of the ordinary man or woman how it comes about that a postal order for 2s. 6d. purchased in London can be made to satisfy the needs of some seller of commodities in Aberdeen. When, therefore, it comes to bills of lading and bills of exchange and all the complications of international banking, it follows that these questions, being the life-long study of experts, are outside the range of the man whose mind and interest are occupied with other problems. The Socialist, with his new systems and his facilities as a phrasemonger, has led us to think that we all of us ought to take some share in the control of these things. We Trade Unionists have up to now accepted that point of view without question, and as we are no longer going to accept any points of view without question, it is just as well to ask ourselves how much there is in this particular item of the Socialist programme. It is strange that the Socialists have never suggested that you and I, the ordinary people of the world, ought to know all about medicine and surgery, or ought to be experts in electricity and chemistry, for these things are every bit as simple as banking and currency, and if we can understand the one, and

take it as a mere item in a long and complicated programme, why not include the others? For myself, I long ago came to the conclusion that the only way to get a grasp of the money problem was to convince myself that money did not exist, that in fact there was no such thing. That, of course, is outrageously stupid as a general statement, but not quite so outrageously stupid as most of the things said about money by persons who are young enough to know everything, like Oswald Mosley. A right understanding of the principles underlying money matters is, however, of very great importance to us Trade Unionists.

We have been engaged ever since Trade Unions were thought of in trying to raise wages, and we have achieved a considerable amount of success. The level of wages to-day, stated in terms of money, is about three times as high as the level when Trade Unionism first began to be an effective force. But are we three times better off? Personally, I doubt it. A little more study than we have hitherto given to this question may lead us to think that we have spent too much effort in the endeavour to fill our pockets with slips of paper prettily printed in brown and green and bearing some legend about His Majesty's Treasury and ten shillings.

This question is more important to-day than it was when 10s. was a bit of golden metal, and we did put something having an intrinsic value into our pockets on a Friday night. I had an experience in the course of the war, for repeating

which I make no apology here, because it illustrates very clearly the point that I want to make. A friend of mine, a manufacturer in a small way of business and getting on in life, had, by 1914, built up his concern to the point where he was making an income of about £500 a year. Then came the war, and the Socialistic-minded politicians got to work with all their committees, controls, priorities, regional and divisional arrangements and other intellectual devices. A couple of years of this kind of thing, with which most of us are by now sufficiently familiar, were enough to turn the profit of my friend's business from £500 a year into £5,000 a year. It was not his fault. Indeed, he had little to do with it. His business was controlled, his office was filled with Government officials in and out of uniform, and his balance sheet showed that he had a profit of £5,000 a year. Just imagine what this meant to the hard-working, middle-class, decent little fellow who had spent 55 years of his life in an endeavour to do what he believed to be right, dreaming all the time of the wealth he hoped to make and which never came, and struggling on from year to year buoyed up with the thought that one day he might become a really big business man. There he was with a balance sheet signed by professional accountants certifying that his profit for the year was £5,000. It was at that point that I visited him. I found him worried, scratching his head and thinking things over. He had told his wife and his daughters of this wonderful £5,000 a year, and

they had spent the previous evening with him indulging in visions of motor cars and other delights, ambitions they had entertained for years but never thought to see within their reach. On the morning when I called, however, my friend was worried. This is the gist of what he told me.

" Here's my account, signed by my accountants, and they say my profit is £5,000. I have this morning a letter from my banker telling me I must reduce my overdraft. The rate collector has just called to say that last quarter's rates are not paid. It's Thursday, and I don't know where my wages are coming from to-morrow and then, what with income tax, super tax, munitions levy, excess profits duty, corporations profits tax and I don't know how many more of them, I really don't know where I stand. However, my accountants know their business and there's their signature and there's the £5,000, but really, Benn, if you ask me, it's all bloody book-keeping."

I don't apologize for giving this story in this way. The incident occurred some years ago, but it has furnished me ever since with the best definition of capital and all that it means that I have yet discovered. So far as we Trade Unionists are concerned, I think it would be useful if we remembered that story and adopted the point of view it gives us. The broad facts of the matter are not in dispute. If we produce the goods, they have to be moved about, distributed and exchanged. Those operations have been rendered

possible by the creation and development of a crowd of people who keep a lot of books and who check up our production with the production of the Chinese and all the rest of the peoples of the earth. For purposes of convenience we talk of production in terms of pounds, shillings and pence, but the pounds, the shillings and the pence and the books in which they are written and the whole system of banking, credit and currency are nothing more than " bloody book-keeping ", essential to keep us going but useless and meaningless apart from our production.

Of course, I know that this is not the whole of the story. These book-keepers are able, as of by-product of the great system on which we depend, to make little manœuvres of their own, and here and there to make a few millions of their own. The millions they make do not really concern us Trade Unionists, because they make it out of one another. The only danger in which we stand from the whole banking system is that Oswald Mosley and Co. may get hold of it and, by printing, as only the Government can print, a lot more slips of paper in green and brown, rob you and me of the value attaching to the other slips that at present exist in our individual pockets. So far as all the fortunes of which we hear, made on the Stock Exchanges and by gambling in futures and the rest of it are concerned, they really don't, for the most part, matter to us, and we are making fools of ourselves by allowing the Socialists to develop them into great political

questions. We Trade Unionists are not gamblers, but some of us now and again like to put half-a-dollar on a horse. When we do that, whether it be right or wrong I will not argue here, we do not touch in any way the question of production or the vital problem of the wealth of the community. We merely transfer a tally from the pocket of one fool to the pocket of another. That leaves the loser less able to enjoy himself, and the winner in a rather better position, but it does not add an ounce to production or detract an atom from wealth. So far as the community is concerned, it leaves things exactly where they were. The same is literally and absolutely true when some larger gambler foresees, or thinks he forsees, a General Strike, and sells railway stocks at a high price and then, when the strike comes, buys them back at a low figure. Odd bits of purchasing power—all of them, however impressive the total figures, being the merest fractions when considered in relation to the sales and purchases of the community as a whole—are transferred from one pocket to another and that is all that happens.

We Trade Unionists would be very glad, and I should be the first to press for it, if these bits of wealth that are not appreciated, whether by the man who puts two-and-six on a horse or the man who makes £1,000 on the Stock Exchange, were to be transferred to the pockets of poorer persons who would make better use of the money. Don't, however, let us fool ourselves into thinking that any such operations would make the world

richer. All that it would do would be to ruin the few odd Trade Unionists engaged in making luxuries, throw them out of work and cause a run on the limited production of articles in more general demand, putting up prices and perhaps increasing wages, but no more wealth would appear.

We must find a way of getting this question of production into a right perspective. We must be quite sure that we do not confuse money and goods, that we do not deceive ourselves into thinking we can better our positions with money as such. The housing problem as it exists to-day illustrates very clearly the danger of confusion of thought in these matters. We have an output of houses that is practically, fixed. Last January I had a controversy in the correspondence columns of *The Times* with Mr. Brown and Mr. Boot, of the London Master Builders' Association, on this very question, and I quote the following extracts from two of my letters.

" My charge is that the building trade is a ring which is holding the nation homeless to serve its own selfish ends. The patience of the public in face of this scandal is amazing, and unless the people are aroused to an understanding of the matter we are doomed to suffer slums in perpetuity.

" We have had too much politics and too little arithmetic in this housing question. The Ministry of Labour tells me that the number of bricklayers insured with them in July, 1923, 1924, and 1925 were 56,260, 56,530, and 64,260 respectively.

For the same dates the numbers of plasterers were 15,760, 15,860 and 17,400. Masons and others follow much the same proportions. The official *Labour Gazette* says :

> ' The number of insured skilled workpeople in building trades has varied only slightly between 1922 and 1925.'

Mr. Brown will no doubt correct me if I am wrong in thinking that bricklayers and plasterers are pivotal men in his industry, and if it would be unfair to assume that the productive capacity of the building trade can be gauged roughly by the numbers of such men. It seems to me that the amount of building done in 1924 must have been the same as in 1923, and that 1925 was 12½ per cent. better. Nothing else can have happened ; the supply cannot exceed the capacity of these men to produce. The price of houses has gone up and down as political pressure has been more or less, but the supply remains almost stationary.

" The master builders have made agreements with these bricklayers and plasterers and others confirming and strengthening their monopoly, and thus completing the ring that puts a definite limit to the number of houses which can be produced. For Mr. Brown to talk of giving ' all the necessary assistance to the Government ' or to offer to provide ' 1,000 houses ' if ' terms and conditions ' are arranged is the most utter rubbish. The limited number of bricklayers with whom he has made agreements will lay just as many bricks as they have always laid, no less and no more, and

the number of houses which they can supply will not vary, whatever Governments may do.

"Dr. Addison doubled the price, Mr. Bonar Law halved it, and Mr. Neville Chamberlain has added £70 per cottage, but none of them has made any real difference to the actual building done."

"I plead for more arithmetic and less politics in this building discussion and Mr. Boot gives me some figures. He says that 160,000 houses were built last year. We have ten million families to house, so that Mr. Boot is apparently prepared to provide one house per family every 62½ years. That is the capacity of his builders' ring. As population increases the period will expand, and the real capacity to produce houses is probably not more than one per family per century. If we allow that position to remain, two or three things follow:

(1) The majority of the slum dwellers must be content to know that their grandchildren may perhaps have somewhere better to live.

(2) The Addison boxes and the present breeze block makeshifts must suffice to their owners and occupiers for a century.

(3) All hope of a raising of the general standard of living so far as houses are concerned must be abandoned."

Here we get the problem of production in a very simple form. We can raise wages indefinitely without adding a single brick to the output of the building industry, and the builders are faced with a problem that they have not so far shown much

inclination to tackle. They have, as good Trade Unionists, two alternatives. Either they can raise the total wages paid for building by letting more men into their trade at the existing rates or they can raise the wages of the limited number now in the business by economizing labour and increasing output. Unless they do one or other of these things, the rest of us will never get any houses, and all the housing talk of the politicians becomes utter nonsense.

Wealth and poverty are not questions of money. They concern things. We have far too long been wasting our time in the counting house concerning ourselves with pounds and shillings and neglecting the problems of the machine shop and the man. Arrangements that merely increase prices destroy wealth. On the other hand arrangements keeping prices low or making them lower invariably increase real wealth. Any number of illustrations can be given. When straw hats were 2s. 6d., the first ray of spring sunshine filled the streets with them. For two years past I do not remember seeing more than one per cent. of straws, however fiercely the sun shone, the explanation being that by chasing after money we have made the price four times the figure the consumer considers reasonable.

Some little time ago, the Editor of the *Star* asked me whether I thought the motor-car could become as common here among working men as it is in America. If not, why not? And if so, how could it be arranged? I reprint my reply, which

appeared in the *Star* of 19 November, 1925.

"I do not find it easy to give a short and simple answer to the question.

"An Englishman being as good as the American —I suppose we can allow that—it would seem as if he could have anything which the American has. Motor-cars don't grow on trees, they are not dependent on climate, natural resources enter to a very small extent into their make-up, and in theory they can be manufactured as easily here as there. Yet we find one motor-car to every eight living souls in America, enough to take the whole population out on Sunday afternoons if children under five sit on the knees of their elders.

"Candidly, I do not think that the present generation of English working men will possess motor-cars. They have gone too far in the wrong direction. When I returned from America last week, the first paper that was put into my hand on arrival at my home station was printed in red, and began, 'Do you want to abolish property?', going on to invite me to attend a mass meeting of the local Labour Party. It would appear from that, that the working man, in so far as he is represented by the Labour Party, is not thinking along the lines of the motor-car: he wants to get rid of it.

"Economic law, interpreting as it always does the opinion of its victims, is producing conditions here which make motors unthinkable, while turning the saner views of the Americans into carburettors and rubber tyres. The committee-ridden creature

whom we call a working man, pinning his faith to rule and regulation, and filling his mind with politics, will and must, in my opinion, live and die without a motor. Automobiles are not made by Lady Cynthia Mosley or Mr. Maynard Keynes.

"But there is no reason why the rising generation of workers should not have as many motors as the Americans if they care to set about in the same way to get them.

"I should like to drop the 'working' tag to the working man and talk only of the man, as he regards himself in America. I know of one boy who will have a motor-car all right. He is an Englishman with the American spirit. He is the fifteen-year-old son of a working gardener; he is high up in a secondary school where he went with a scholarship; in the evenings he gives his father a hand; at week-ends he is a first-class caddy. This summer he went to Belgium with part of his savings, and generally he is out to get on in the world.

"I know a typical American postman who owns a better car than mine; but then his wife runs a small estate agency and he does commercial travelling on commission in his spare time. The 'class' obsession so dear to the English working man kills the motoring notion, whereas the American citizen, who, while blacking boots, remembers that he is as good as the President and may be in the White House himself one day, tumbles into a motor-car as to the manner born.

"It's not a question of money—that's only book-

keeping—it's a question of outlook. If we are doomed for ever to the present English view that everything must be done by the other fellow, then motors are out of the question. If, on the other hand, we cared to adopt the American way of looking at things, if we would realize that production is the whole secret, if each man would feel in American fashion that it was 'up to him,' then we might have motors and houses and telephones, to mention three of the most commonplace possessions of the worker on the other side of the Atlantic. In that process many of our so-called workers would disappear.

"I stayed at the country house of an American banker, and my hostess made my bed while she showed me my room. There are practically no domestic servants in America, they are all busy making motor-cars. The American tram is driven and conducted by one man who has a slot machine at his elbow; they can't spare two men; there are too many houses to build. One policeman regulates the traffic at the busiest cross-roads, using a mechanical contrivance to tell you to 'stop' or 'go.'

"There's no man power to waste among those 110 million busy, active, productive and happy people. Neither have they any time for politics: they just do the job and deliver the goods. And that's the difference."

Our approach to the problem of poverty and wealth—the problem that has occupied the minds of men for centuries—does little credit to our

intelligence. By " our " I mean all of us, because we all seem, from Communists to Tories, to be to some extent afflicted with the same weakness. We see on the one hand a man who is rich and on the other one who is poor, and we jump to the conclusion that the two phenomena are related; that the riches of the one are wholly or in part responsible for the poverty of the other, and that our duty is as good citizens to take some of the wealth of the former and place it at the disposal of the latter.

I think it may be that this kind of idea, interpreted in many various ways, is at the back of most of the political effort of the moment. The Communist would knife the rich man.

Winston is more polite and merely bleeds him, but the fundamental notion is the same in both cases.

But as political action in the realm of economics generally produces the opposite effect to that desired, and as in recent years we have had the maximum of political effort, it does not surprise me to find that the more the Government does to relieve unemployment the worse the disease becomes.

Surely we have now had enough experience in practical economics to enable us to make a new start on new lines and bring about a state of affairs in which there shall be " wealth for all ". Cannot we approach the problem some such way as this ?

" Here is a rich man. He has some brains, but not too many ; he is on the whole, a very ordinary

creature : there are many more just as good, but he is rich. Let us imitate him. Let us teach the people to do as he does ; let us adopt his methods and all become rich like him."

That, in a sentence, is the attitude of America. The poorest immigrant to the United States declines point blank to have anything to do with all the political blessings in which we find so much delight. I have talked of doles and pensions to American unemployed and been laughed to scorn.

The American working man, with his high wages and higher output, with his motor and silk shirt, thinks that we are down and out, and that there is no hope for us ; and it looks that way from the other side of the Atlantic. The Americans think about work and wealth in a totally different way from us, and for my part I believe that they are right and we are wrong.

They know that the purpose of work is to serve the other fellow, and that failure to do that brings the work to an end. They do not content themselves with arguing about wages and conditions.

Good wages and good conditions come to them as the natural and inevitable sequel of good work and good service. " Service," strange to say, is the most hackneyed word in that land supposed to think of nothing but dollars.

Of course there is " wealth for all " if we will go the right way to get it. We need to give up psycho-analysis and re-learn our arithmetic. We must each of us understand that it will not be done by the other fellow, but that it is up to us.

If Europe were restored to prosperity tomorrow; if Russia were to become normal; if all the exchanges were perfectly stable; even if pacts abolished war and all the things the statesmen offer us were secured, we should still have unemployed. Foreign trade can never be more than a small percentage of the whole. The ugly truth is that we will not employ ourselves on the terms we demand of one another.

It is not a question of wages, it is a question of work and service. The right point of view will give us the right results. The most powerful things in the world are ideas, and in industrial economics ours are mostly wrong. That is the trouble.

Bernard Shaw has been good enough to attempt a definition of capitalism which illustrates perfectly how far we may go astray if we rely in practical matters on philosophers and poets. He says that under capitalism everybody must behave " quite selfishly ". This is surely the most superficial view. I suppose that the working man is not " selfish " when he asks more pay for less work, nor is Shaw selfish when he fixes the terms for his literary products. But if a capitalist sells a pair of boots he must, so Shaw tells us, " behave quite selfishly ".

How simple it all seems when Shaw says it. But if he would look a little deeper, if he would be honest with his own intellectual powers, he would notice that it really does not matter under capitalism how selfish the working man, or he himself, or the bootmaker may be. They are all

of them powerless to satisfy their selfishness until they have given satisfaction to some other fellow. All my selfishness would not bring Shaw's dramatic royalties into my pocket, and all Shaw's unselfishness cannot stop them going into his, at any rate in the first instance. That is where we have gone so woefully wrong and where the Americans are dead right. Under capitalism the public of its own free will, expressed through myriads of independent individuals, insists on having Shaw, selfish or unselfish. If we would all be as good and sound and practical capitalists as Shaw, and put our best effort forward, as he does, to give the other fellow what he wants, we may not all become as wealthy as Shaw, but there will be sufficient wealth for all, and some to spare besides.

CHAPTER VIII

OUR ATTITUDE TO EMPLOYERS

ACCEPTING my responsibility as a labour leader, I should want my members to undertake afresh the study of the proper attitude of a Trade Union towards employers. We are carrying on to-day just as we did twenty years ago and we still incline to the general view that the employer is the enemy and that he must be fought. Even when we have beaten him we still want to fight. The attitude of the French to Germany is meek and mild compared with the point of view insisted upon by many with regard to employers as a class.

But surely times have changed and we must change with them. Our Trade Union offices ought to contain a card index of employers, properly classified and divided into sheep and goats with perhaps a third division for those who are sheep at times and goats at others. Our present methods force the good employers, so far as any employer can be good, to fight the battle of the bad ones.

This massing of all employers into one group and all workers into another has developed, as it were, into a race in armaments, a policy which we do not fail to criticize in international affairs but whose vicious nature we fail to recognize in our own industrial sphere. We used to be told that the manufacture and preparation of massive engines of war was the surest way to guarantee peace. The argument has lost most of its force since 1914–18, and the same line of reasoning in

industrial organization has not been strengthened by the General Strike.

Over-organization on both sides has produced a series of new problems which we must make it our business to study and solve. Where, for instance, does the Trade Union movement stand in the matter of national wages agreements ? The miners are fighting for an old principle, while, at the same time, the engineers are carrying on a battle for its abolition. This inconsistency has not unnaturally spread to the ranks of the employers who are supporting the national idea for engineering and the district system for coal mining. Neither party will be able in the future to boast of any principle in the matter and both will be liable to be regarded by the public as mere opportunists.

It would seem to be necessary to re-open the discussion on organization generally, and I believe it will be found to our advantage to develop sectional organizations for particular industries, which can help to promote those industries and secure far better results for the workers. But I am on firmer ground when I suggest that employers should be classified as good and bad and treated accordingly. Can we not take a leaf out of the book of the Chancellor of the Exchequer who has on the one hand to extract from a quarter to a half of their earnings from employers' pockets and, on the other, to make such arrangements as shall promote ever-increasing earnings, on which he can make ever-increasing drafts ?

If, when we have a grievance against a bad employer, we call out the workers from the shop of his rival with whom we have no quarrel, we create a strong combination against us and play into the hands of the enemy. I admit that there are two ways of looking at this question, just as there are two ways of looking at Trade Unionism. If we are a political force having for our object the smashing up of society and the substitution of something else, that has never been defined and nobody can explain, then by all means bring out all the men possible on all possible occasions. If, on the other hand, the object of Trade Unionism is to promote industrial prosperity for the general benefit of all, we really ought to adopt more business-like methods. The classification of employers will need a great deal of skill. A man must not be classified as bad because we don't like the look of his face or because his manners leave something to be desired. During the recent strike I witnessed an incident that may be useful as showing how difficult it is to judge of these matters. Bouverie Street was full of a crowd of newspaper workers waiting the result of negotiations between their leaders and the proprietors, which were in progress at the offices of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. One of these proprietors (I am ignorant of his identity and I would prefer to remain so) was idiot enough to select that particular occasion to park the most luxurious Rolls Royce I have ever seen right in the middle of the crowd. Imagine the effect upon

the mind of some poor devil standing in the rain, losing his week's wages in what he believed to be a sacred cause, having to gaze for a solid hour on a motor which cost as much as he could hope to earn in ten years! It was simply asking for trouble, it deserved trouble. But such was the discipline of the strikers that no trouble occurred. I do not doubt, however, that the matter will be discussed in many printers' chapels and at branch meetings, nor do I doubt that the story will improve in the telling. Such stupidity on the part of an employer does much to promote discontent; but the modern Trade Unionist must look farther and deeper before he decides to classify an employer as either good or bad or doubtful. The owner of the Rolls Royce in question may well be, for all I know, a model and an example to all other newspaper proprietors in the only matters that concern us, wages, hours and conditions.

There are of course, many distinct types of employer. There is the old fashioned Tory, bred in a county family who still talks in terms of upper classes and lower orders. The "God bless the Squire" variety, with the military mind and the pompous manner, still exists. He can't stand all these modern notions, because "Damn it, where are the domestic servants coming from?" This type is getting rarer and, as a Trade Union leader, I would not scruple to use all my powers to put it in the bankruptcy court. Then there is the common profiteer, whose business methods consist in manœuvring people into positions where they

have to pay more than an article is worth, or, if he is buying, where they have to receive less than the proper value. That type of gentleman is always squeezable and I should have no hesitation in advising my members to make use of him, so long as he existed, to share his ill-gotten gains with his workers. But I should not overlook the fact that the profiteer is the inevitable product of unnatural conditions and I should use my union powers to promote that freedom of trade and liberty of markets in which no real profiteer can exist.

It is commonly supposed to be difficult to see ourselves as others see us, but an operation requiring even greater perception is to see ourselves as we were and compare that vision with what we are.

Employers taken as a whole are a very different set of men from those whom we knew in pre-war days, and the Trade Unions have no small share of credit for the change. The present day employer has perforce learned more in the last twelve years than he learned in the whole of his previous experience or his father ever dreamed to be within the realms of knowledge. His social position has undergone complete and total change. He is no longer an autocrat among men; he is not able, as he was, to say to this man, "Go, and he goeth, and to that man come, and he cometh." He is on the one hand reduced to a position of equality, if not in some cases of inferiority, of social power as compared with the men whom he employs. But, if he takes the right point of view, he can

conceive that he is elevated from the miserable position of a petty autocrat into a real leader of men.

He is, in fact, beginning to understand what employing means. He has been trained too long in the school that called him an employer while it never devoted any thought to the art or science of employing. In the past an employer would set up as a maker of commodities, and his every thought, his every act, his every calculation would be made in terms of commodities; so much so that he came as a matter of course to look upon his labour as he looked upon his material or his machinery or his premises. The modern employer approaches the problem from a different angle; he realizes that he is a leader of men, and that the purpose of his enterprise is to find employment for others, as well as to produce commodities for sale. Many thousands of employers are to-day busily at work endeavouring to discover how they may adjust the relations between themselves and their employees in such a way as to conform to the new conception of social equality, or in such a way as to satisfy the more enlightened requirements of a much more enlightened generation of workers. But there are still far too few of them.

The fighting spirit as between employers and employed is wearing out on both sides, and we Trade Unionists should be the first to rejoice. Better education on both sides is leading to a general realization of the fact that the best interests of these two parties are in fact identical,

and that the only way to promote those interests is along the road of co-operation. It is, it seems to me, for us Trade Unionists to decide whether we will throw away all that we have won in these respects just to please the revolutionaries and the socialists ; whether, in fact, we despair of the work of improving the present system, with its assurance of ever better conditions, however slow the progress may be, and throw in our lot with Moscow and a fresh start. The genuine Trade Unionist has no doubt as to his answer. He must now have the courage of his convictions, get back to Trade Unionism and tell the Socialists so.

CHAPTER IX

OUR DEVELOPMENT WORK

A GOOD deal of nonsense is talked about the control of industry by people who have not yet learned to control themselves, but it is in the nature of things that, as education advances, as the application of science to industry proceeds, and as social barriers disappear, the workers will assume an ever increasing responsibility for the work of supplying human needs. That responsibility, however, will come from the natural pressure of knowledge and will never be achieved by wild force inflamed by ignorance.

It therefore behoves Trade Unionists to take much more interest than has been their habit in all those current problems with which the industrial machine is concerned. Trade Unions that want to secure for the workers their proper share of the product of industry would do well to inquire how far that share is being diminished by a system of taxation which diverts their money into the pockets of bureaucrats. In raising this question I know that I am spoiling my chances of securing a position as a Labour Leader at the moment, but I am quite prepared to wait.

All the statistics which Chiozza Money and others prepared with such care before the War, and on which a large part of the labour case rests, are already out of date and no longer true. Those diagrams that showed us how the national income went for the most part into the pockets of the rich are no longer accurate. The new Trade Union

research department will have to make new graphs to show how much each industry contributes to the State. It will inquire whether it is necessary that some industries should pay more in taxes than they do in wages. It will want to know whether each working class family is really getting good value for the £3 per family per week that is taken out of the national wealth and spent by the bureaucrats.

We may even find century-old quotations from the *Life and Times of Stein* reprinted as Trade Union leaflets.

"As to our continuing to be ruled by bureaucrats, salaried, book-learned, without interests and without property—that will last while it lasts! These four words express the spirit of our soulless government machine and of others like it; *salaried*, that means a tendency to maintain and increase the number of the salaried; *book-learned*, that is, living in the world of words not of realities; *without interests*, for they are not connected with any of the classes of citizens that make up the State, but are a caste by themselves, the caste of writers; *without property*, that means that all the movements of property leave them unaffected, whether it is rain or sunshine, whether taxes rise or fall, whether old traditional rights are abolished or maintained, whether all the peasants are transformed in virtue of a theory into hired labourers, and for serfdom to the landlord there is substituted serfdom to the Jews and the money-lenders. All this does not concern them, while they draw their

salary out of the Treasury and sit writing, writing, writing, unknown, unnoticed, unhonoured, in quiet office with a good lock to it, and bring up their children after them to be equally expert writing machines.

"One machinery, the military one, I saw fall in 1806, on the 14th of October, and I should not wonder if the writing machinery has its 14th of October too!"

There is, however, much more than taxation for our research departments to consider.

The subject of the relation of science to industry furnishes an excellent example of the need for Trade Union research work. One of the few useful Government offices is known as the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and is charged with the duty of rendering such assistance as may be possible to industry.

During the short period of its existence this Department has been inundated with requests for help and guidance on scientific problems arising in connection with various trades, but the Trade Unions as a whole have taken very little interest in its operations. It issues annual reports which are full of interest for the student of industrial development. Progress has been so rapid that there are already many research bodies with all of which labour ought to be associated. We have, however, been far too busy promoting revolution to bother with anything so really useful.

As the first of the great industries to move in this direction, we may take cotton as an example

of the rest. A provisional committee of research and education for the cotton industry was formed by the trade, and out of it has arisen a cotton research association. The cotton industry appears to have awakened to the fact that it is being carried on to-day almost as it was fifty years ago, and that no improvements in machinery worth the name have been introduced since the days of Arkwright, and, worst of all, that neither masters nor operatives have between them any very great knowledge of the scientific properties of cotton or of the prospects of its increased cultivation or manufacture.

What applies to cotton applies to almost every one of our trades. No industry can hope to prosper for long which is not supplied with a continual stream of new knowledge. Scientific research, as conducted by these trade associations, will be very different from the spasmodic research hitherto conducted in a small way by various enterprising manufacturers. To get the best out of research, it needs to be conducted on a large scale. It is not suggested that there should be any interference with the manufacturer who keeps his own laboratory for the purpose of improving his information with regard to the details of his own business. But it is a fact that, in addition to all that can be done in this way, there is need for the considered attention of the best scientific brains to the main problems of every trade. Every industry pays enormous sums of money for its fire insurance. One or two trades have been so impressed with the total amount spent in this way that they have

thought it well to establish their own special insurance offices. Fire insurance is universally recognized as one of the necessary expenses of business, as manufacturers require to be assured that, if they are overtaken by a serious fire, they will be in a position to repair the damage. It is estimated that a sum far less than that spent upon fire insurance would provide each trade with an insurance far more necessary to it—an insurance against the risk that American laboratories or Japanese universities or German technical skill will one day rob the trade of everything it possesses. All this work, however, lacks that force and vigour which would be given to it, were Trade Unions to take a constructive view of their functions and lend their support.

Education is another kindred subject with which little progress can be made until our Unions get together and decide to tackle it. We spend to-day, in one way and another, something over £1,000,000 a week in education. Of this vast sum a proportion is expended on technical and trade education. There are many thousands of trade schools up and down the country. Every educational authority has arrangements of some sort for teaching the technique of the leading trades in its locality. Several of the modern universities have special departments of interest to particular trades. The Board of Education subsidizes many hundreds of technical classes and technical institutes, and yet there are comparatively few cases where any official connection exists between our Trade Unions

and our technical education. It is perfectly true that most of these educational facilities are arranged by committees upon which so-called experts are invited to sit. Thus the Education Committee of one of the counties may invite the opinion of one or two leading electrical engineers in establishing classes for education in electrical theory and practice. But apart from this haphazard connection there are, as I have said, very few of our Trade Unions taking any official interest in the boys and girls who are presently to form that trade. A notable exception is the School of Mines at Trefoys, which is maintained by the mine-owners and the miners. They have together consented to a levy upon every ton of coal produced in their district, and thus formed a fund out of which the School of Mines is carried on.

If our trades are to be fitted in the future to meet the competition of an educated and progressive world, they must obviously put their heads together and see that they are provided with a continuous supply of recruits specially fitted for the business of their lives. When that complete system of trade self-government, for which some of us have argued so earnestly, is established upon a proper footing, each trade union and each trade association will have powers to raise a levy for the purposes of education, and technical education will at last stand a chance of being of real service to our industries.

Purely scientific research as a subject which should be taken in hand by every trade is fairly

well understood, and the day is past when it is necessary to indulge in any very elaborate arguments to prove that our industries are in need of a closer acquaintance with science. Statistical research, however, is every bit as important, though this branch of co-operative action is not so well understood. When industrialists have got into the habit of working together and begin to see the advantages that arise from a close study of these interests of the whole as well as their individual interests, one of the most engrossing topics of discussion will be this matter of statistical research. Twenty-five years ago the average English business man regarded the chartered accountant as an up-to-date fad, who might be useful to the company promoter or to the Yankee, but one that he was far too busy to bother with. The chartered accountant was, in fact, classed, with the telephone and the typewriter, as a matter below the serious attention of the manufacturer, who was busy with what he then regarded as the more serious side of trade and industry. We have lived to see that folly disappear and the day arrive when even the smallest tradesman is not content unless his annual accounts are promptly produced and properly certified.

The advance in industry in the lifetime of the last two generations is in no small measure due to a greater appreciation of the value of accurate accountancy, but statistics go far beyond what is properly called accountancy. The modern business possesses not only a counting-house charged

with the function of recording completed transactions in £. s. d., but it possesses also various statistical systems which have nothing to do with the counting-house proper—stock records, costing systems, comparative figures, charts showing increases and decreases, every item of expenditure or revenue worked out in percentages, overhead charges reduced to a part of the cost of every article turned out, and so on. In fact, the present generation has advantages from an intimate knowledge, of the exact workings of individual businesses, which have been the principal cause of such increase of production and decrease of price as has occurred in recent years. The next move in this important evolutionary process is to extend the knowledge thus acquired from individual businesses to whole trades. This step is a natural one and, indeed, has already been taken to some extent in some of our more progressive industries. But labour has almost ignored the matter.

The bedstead trade was probably the first to understand the value of statistical research. The first bedstead combine was built upon a costing system, which was the result of the united wisdom of all its members. The immediate result of the introduction of that system was the rapid reduction in the cost of bedsteads. Most readers can well remember the old iron beds with solid sides and ends, and weighing some hundredweights. When the bedstead makers began to get out figures showing the amount of metal in each of their

patterns, their attention was turned to the waste of material in this respect. The result was the utilisation of angle-iron instead of solid bars, and much stronger beds, containing only a fraction of the metal, were eventually put upon the market. Printing is another trade in which a co-operative costing system has been introduced. The Master Printers' Association now publishes most detailed schedules from which any printer can ascertain what are his true costs, or at all events, what they should be. Statistical research does not, however, stop at the costing system. Dr. Ripper, late Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, has published a diagram which shows in a very graphic manner the advantages of statistical research by whole trades. He presupposes that an article, which is made by two firms, involves four processes and is put upon the market at a sovereign. Under the old system both firms were convinced that they were producing this article in the most economical way, because both were able to market it at the same price; but inquiry showed that the first firm had a very economical way of performing the first and third processes and a very extravagant way of doing the second and fourth processes, while the second firm had discovered quick ways of accomplishing the second and fourth, and were entirely out of date in their methods with regard to the first and third. The result of the inquiry was that each firm adopted the best two methods of the other two, and the article, instead of costing a sovereign, was promptly marketed at 12s. 6d.

The market expanded, more employment was created, and the world, in so far as it relied on this particular article, made a big advance.

This was a very simple case in which only two firms were involved and only four processes; but, as with most articles of commerce, there are large numbers of firms, and, perhaps, forty processes, the possibilities of economy by means of comparative statistics are very much larger than is generally realized. The National Pottery Council, the first of the Joint Standing Industrial Councils under the Whitley Report, adopted among its objects the preparation of statistics as to costs, markets, materials, stocks, wages, and average profits.

In touching upon this subject it is very necessary to emphasize, for the satisfaction of the timid, that the introduction of any such system of statistical research would not in any way interfere with the liberties of the secrets of individuals.

The chartered accountant could, of course, be trusted to treat the figures with professional secrecy, and he could publish from month to month the averages which he was thus able to work out. The result would be the discovery by a trade that the materials used in a given line averaged, say, 40 per cent. of the total cost. The manufacturer whose own figures showed 45 per cent. would know at once not only that he was 5 per cent. above the average, but, as the average was the result of his own figures and others, that somebody was doing even better than 40 per cent.

This would be the only stimulus required to make that manufacturer look into matters more closely, and general economy would be the result.

To statistical research we must look to provide the bulk of the economies out of which the increased wages, for which labour is rightly asking, must come. The war did something to teach us the value of statistics in business. Wherever Government controls were established the most elaborate methods of statistics and comparison were introduced, and traders became accustomed to supply information at the bidding of Government Departments—information that was secured for reasons totally different from those which will apply in the future. But the habit having been formed, and some of its advantages having been noted, it is surely possible for the Trade Unions themselves to arrange the preparation of proper statistics for their own benefit. I am not advocating statistics concocted by inexperienced intellectuals, but figures arranged by men who know their trades. The effect of statistical research upon the wages question must be most beneficial. It will, in many trades, entirely dispose of all the rubbish that is talked about profits. Syndicalist agitators have a way of selecting some firm that is more than usually successful, and perhaps paying a high rate of interest upon its capital, and holding up this firm as an example of the average profits of employers. Employers generally know how unfair this practice is and how systematically it is adopted. There are very few trades which, on the

average, produce more than an adequate return upon the capital invested in them, and the Trade Unionist of the future, when proper statistics are prepared, will have to change the basis of his argument, because figures to answer his principal charges will be available. Bigger wages are to be secured out of better methods and better knowledge than will ever come out of employers' profits.

It will be obvious to many who read this chapter that I am reviving some of the arguments which I used with no little effect when I was occupied in advancing the claims of the Whitley Report. The new Trade Unionism will, I believe, come back to that report and will come back with the added advantage of the experience of the last eight or nine years. Trade Unionists will, of course, have nothing to do with that use of the Whitley idea which develops into a conspiracy between employers and employed to rob the consumer.

The opposition to the Whitley Report comes from two parties who are the very last one would expect to find associated in anything. The Whitley Report recommends that Joint Standing Industrial Councils should be composed of equal numbers of representatives of employers' associations and trade unions, and that these Councils should form the basis of a complete system of self-government. The principle of the right of labour to participate in trade questions, which affect the welfare of a whole industry, is accepted by moderate opinion on both sides, but the reactionary type of employer, who still thinks of the world as

it was in 1914, is inclined to criticize. This man still fails to see that Labour has any interests in such subjects as raw materials or markets, and he fondly imagines that he will secure the co-operation of labour and the abolition of restriction of output, while keeping labour leaders in ignorance as to the state of trade generally. On the other hand we get the socialist who dreams of a world from which capital is abolished, and declines to have anything to do with Joint Standing Industrial Councils on the ground that they are an attempt to perpetuate and bolster up what he is pleased to call the capitalist system.

Needless to say, neither class must be allowed to prevail. I will not bother here to deal with the revolutionary whose aim is to abolish capital, but I may perchance catch the eye and ear of some employer who has so far failed to grasp the true inwardness of labour's present demand for a share in the control of industry. There is no suggestion here that labour should have any say in the control of the individual actions of an individual employer. The employer, who has all the risk, must be the final judge as to what he shall buy and what he shall sell and at what prices he will complete either transaction; but in our conception of industry we have got far beyond the point when it is regarded as a matter merely of buying or selling by an individual. We have reached the stage when we can see that the welfare of each industry is a matter of vital im-

portance to the nation. Also we now realize that all those engaged in that industry—capitalists, managers, workpeople, travellers, shopkeepers, clerks, and others—have a right to know that the industry as a whole is sound and prosperous and is likely to provide them with a means of living in return for the study and attention that they are prepared to give to it. If, for instance, as has happened in many trades, our export business has not received the attention it deserves ; if there are markets which have never been exploited and demands that have never been satisfied—then labour is entitled to look into these questions before it will give an answer to the request to do its best to increase production. If, on the other hand, materials are short, machinery non-existent, and capital unobtainable or credit scarce, and, in consequence, it is necessary to ask labour to go on to half-time, labour will not, in future, accept the mere statement of that position from an autocratic body of employers ; it will demand the right to go into the circumstances for itself and satisfy itself that things are really so. But apart altogether from the right of Labour to share in the discussion of what may be called general trade politics, there is every advantage to be gained from such partnership.

Next, and last, if the new conception of industry is accepted, if we get both parties to look upon their calling as a branch of national service, we find, for the first time, the opportunity of establishing between them that confidence, the absence

of which has been the cause of most of our industrial trouble in the past. It is only the small man that fears from any of these developments some damage to his own personal position. The larger conception knows that the individual interest is, after all, only part of a wider interest, and that the promotion of the latter is the true way to benefit the former. The idea of the control of industry by Joint Standing Industrial Councils is really nothing but a natural development following upon the rise within the last couple of generations of the trade associations and the trade unions.

We must all aim at the betterment and development of our trade for the benefit of all those engaged in it and for the nation as a whole; development trade by trade, one trade at a time the trade being the unit; each trade as a branch of national service; each trade as a vital part of the social organism; the abolition of jealousy and secrecy and all that is born of ignorance and small-mindedness; production as the source of all prosperity; waste of material, of method, of goods or of effort as a crime against the community. When these ideas begin to be generally understood and applied, we shall all be able to smile at the old days when we squabbled for the wages and profits, which were insignificant beside what is thus made possible. There is far more for everybody in each of our trades than has ever yet been got out of them, and, if Labour and Capital will join hands in this new voyage of discovery, the prospects of the future are indeed bright.

CHAPTER X

THE STRIKE WEAPON

"THE value of rights, in a free democracy, is strictly contingent on their subsequent development into duties. Unless this development takes place the rights which the citizen has won are a social danger, for they are apt to become a menace in his hand for exercising over others the tyranny from which he has escaped himself. It is only as rights and duties are viewed in relation to one another that either have their full significance. Duties, we may say, are developed rights; rights are the growing points of duties".*

It will not, I imagine, be necessary to argue with good Trade Unionists as to the value of the democratic system or to doubt our determination to maintain democracy as our ideal. We are certainly not prepared to depart from the democratic principle in the government of our own Unions, although we very nearly lost it without realizing what we were doing when we allowed the General Council of the T.U.C. to get as near as it did a month ago to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. If we treasure the democratic principle in relation to our own organizations, we are able to realize its importance in relation to the conduct of the affairs of the people. Being, then, good democrats, we give, without any qualification, to the State, composed of the whole body politic of self governing citizens, the undisputed and unlimited right to all labour and to all property.

* L. P. Jacks: *Responsibility and Culture.*

We arrive through democracy at an understanding of that perfect paradox, so well expressed in the *Book of Common Prayer*, when it says " Whose service is perfect freedom ". We get, through the democratic principle, the fullest possible benefits from both servitude and freedom. We are all perfectly free to do exactly what we like within our Union or within our nation, with the only qualification that we must frame our acts to conform to the will of the majority. If we want to act in some way which is not at present permitted, all we have to do—and it sounds very simple when stated in this way—is to convince a bare majority of our fellows that it is wise and proper to act in that way. Thus it is open to us under democracy to conscript all labour, to abolish all wealth, to transform the marriage system, or in fact to do any of the extraordinary things so eloquently recommended to us by those who would adopt other methods of conducting society. We are perfectly sure under democracy of a life that commends itself to the common sense—if they have any—of the bulk of our fellows. Naturally, there are limits to the powers of democracy. That is a truth very inadequately recognized. Our failure to understand these limits lands us in a good many troubles. The democratic principle, for instance, can make nothing. It cannot produce a single brick or a single loaf of bread. All it can do is to promote conditions in which the individual can produce the brick and the bread to the best advantage. The workings of the demo-

cratic principle have required centuries to develop to the state of perfection to which we have now attained. It is, of course, very difficult to give to the mass of the people sufficient understanding of the problems, with which we are confronted, to be sure that they will, in working the machinery of democracy, arrive at wise decisions with regard to them. That can only come in time. The people of the United States have taken advantage of the machinery of democracy to impose teetotalism upon that continent. Some of us think they are right; some of us think they are wrong. It is not the fault of the democratic system but rather a normal human weakness that time is required to be quite sure as to the wisdom or unwisdom of human desires, even when these are desires of the majority. One generation is therefore able to learn from the mistakes of the previous generation, but that it will do so, even democracy is not always able to ensure.

The last and final step in the perfection of the machinery of democracy was taken when the secret ballot was established, thus ensuring to the State the full, free, unbiassed and unfettered judgment of each of its individual citizens without pressure of any sort from outside influence. When we are ready to perfect the working of the democratic principle in connection with Trade Unions, we shall also have to adopt something in the nature of a secret ballot, which will vest our actions as Trade Unionists with a seriousness and an authority now often sadly lacking. In con-

sidering the use of the strike weapon in the new Trade Unionism which will arise out of the debacle of the General Strike, we shall first of all acknowledge to ourselves and to the world that we derive the right to strike from the State. Every man in a free country is, of course, perfectly free, providing he is willing to accept the consequences, to be idle or to work at his will, and none can gainsay the Trade Unionist who, having given the proper notice, decides that he will refrain from going to work for a day or two, or a week or two. But striking is something more than this.

The modern strike is not merely the withholding of labour. It is the exercise of powers and privileges derived directly from the Parliament of the people, powers and privileges that are specially safeguarded, carefully defined and vested with the fullest legal authority. The right to strike therefore, is the most precious and sacred thing that the Trade Union possesses, and, in the future, it will have to be treated with much more respect and a far greater sense of responsibility than has been the habit in the immediate past.

Apart altogether from the machinery of the strike, apart from the need for ensuring that the democratic principle is not infringed when a strike is called, it will also be necessary to lay down among ourselves far more definite rules and regulations as to the causes and occasions claiming to justify a strike at all.

For what purposes is it wise or permissible to bring the strike weapon into use? It is seldom

possible to get a clear issue in a political discussion. The workings of democracy in the Parliamentary sphere make this evident. Red herrings are drawn across the trail, side issues obscure main considerations and it often happens that conflicting theories are found working together for a cause in which neither is interested. The same difficulties arise with Trade Unions and strikes. The canvass of a body of strikers always discloses that various sections of them are actuated by different motives. Thus, in the recent General Strike, the bulk of the men who lost their wages were genuinely desirous of helping the miners, while the men who engineered the strike, represented by only a minority of the rank and file, were desirous of dealing a blow at the constitution of the country. These aims contradicted one another. Surely it is not too much to hope that we can so perfect the machinery of Trade Unionism that, while minorities may always be free to do their best to convert us to their views, majorities may always be sure that the devastating weapon of the strike will only be called into use when it has a majority will at the back of it. For how foolish, how illogical, how thoroughly impractical and destructive, is the present position! One section of us striking for wages which can only be secured out of a prosperous industry; the other section striking at the same time for a new political system which can only be established by the abolition of the system out of which the first section is demanding wages.

Trade Unionism will be as dead as mutton before the present generation is finished unless we get this issue clear and settled. The aims and objects of the industrial actionists are diametrically opposed to the aims and objects of the direct actionists, and it is unthinkable that an educated working class movement can march along under a banner labelled " Solidarity " when all the while it is composed of two factions which are mutually destructive. As a labour leader I should of course use all my strength and such eloquence as I possess in the interest of industrial action and industrial action only. I do not believe it would be difficult to get the rank and file on my side. The revolutionaries, who never were, are not and never will be real Trade Unionists at heart, will continue to burden us with sophisticated verbiage, but, surely, the working classes have now passed the stage when this sort of thing can count for much among them. If the issue were put fairly and squarely there can be little doubt as to the reply which they would give. The working man is not different from any other man. He knows that he wants to live decently. He wants to provide comfort for his dear ones, and he knows also that in so far as he succeeds in doing that he makes the world a better place. We have, therefore, to make up our minds what it is we want to do with industry, and having come to conclusions on the matter to follow the straight, honest and direct course, confident in the knowledge that Trade Unionism will succeed.

The problem can be stated in this way : A farmer with a young heifer is faced with the choice of two courses. He can turn her into a milch cow or he can treat her to produce a fat beast for the butcher, but he cannot do both. He can have milk or meat, one or the other, but he must decide, if he would succeed, which course he will pursue. Similarly, we can use Trade Unions in two ways.

We can use them to produce wages and prosperity, and, if that be our desire, the whole of our minds must be directed to the development of industry as an efficient service to mankind. Or, in the alternative, we can use Trade Unions to do the work of Moscow, to change the face of the earth, to destroy Parliament and to set up a General Council of the T.U.C. which, let us make no mistake, will be a very different body from the present one when it is set up, and thus start the human race out again on the weary task of developing a system under which the individual stands some sort of chance.

The two ideals are in diametrical opposition to each other. They cancel one another. Each defeats the other, and it is a reflection upon our intelligence, an insult to our common sense, a degradation of our self-respect that our organizations, our ballots and our memberships should at this moment be rendered ineffectual, abortive and useless by the maintenance within our ranks of conflicting ideas. To me the cunning, audacity and skill exercised by the revolutionaries to make the innocent Trade Unions finance their own

suicide, forms the most tragic human spectacle within my knowledge.

After recent experiences, there is some hope that the Communists may wield less power in the counsels of the labour movement, and that the mature wisdom of real comrades like George Barnes may receive more attention. Discussing the strike with a newspaper correspondent, and its effect upon Trade Union organization, Barnes gave us this masterly summary of the present position:

"In regard, however, to the unions, the results are specially serious and may well prove to be disastrous, unless trades unionists pull themselves together and put their house in order.

"They have probably lost some millions sterling in strike pay alone. But they have lost power in far greater measure, because they have lost respect. They had made bargains, and had then broken them. And, it made their case no better in that, having been led to bargain-breaking by the Trade Union Council, they were then left by that body to go back to those with whom the bargains had been made, to express regret for their default, and promise to be of better behaviour for the future. Truly an anti-climax to the promised land of power which had lured them to their undoing. The 'one big union,' the 'united front,' and other foolish formulas of the last few years have crumpled up in a week's application, and left trade unions poor and discredited.

"There can be but one item on the asset side of the account of the strike, and it lies in the facts

being frankly recognized and boldly dealt with. Trade unionists should in future see to the efficiency of their unions for helpful co-operation in service as well as for the direct promotion of the interests of their members. They should put their trust in men like Mr. Naylor, the Secretary of the Compositors' Society—who warned them at the Scarborough Congress last year against the general strike—and replace the foolish phrasemongers by men of Mr. Naylor's stamp.

"They must insist on agreements made on their behalf being scrupulously kept, and, above all, they must realize that, inasmuch as their class forms the bulk of the community of which other classes are but special organs, a general strike is therefore a strike against themselves, and must inevitably and always fail. They will have a troublesome time to go through, their ranks will be thinned by understandable but ill-advised action on the part of some employers of labour, but they will soon recover lost ground if they have learnt the lessons which the strike must have taught them as well as everyone else."

What then is to be our policy for the future in governing the use of the strike weapon? First of all we should surely recognize that striking is war, and, being, as we are, a party of peace, we will need to make it much more clear than in recent years that we shall not make war until every effort for peace is exhausted. The only way, so far as I can see, to ensure that we Trade Unionists shall not be ruined by guerilla warfare, corres-

ponding in every way to the methods that still prevail among barbaric tribes, is to insist that the machinery of democracy shall be applied in its perfect form to this question of strikes. Leaders have for too long, while babbling of the poverty of the worker, treated his weekly wage with callous indifference when they saw some opportunity for self-advertisement by using the big stick of the strike. We will not, therefore, strike in future until each and every one of us is satisfied that every effort has been made to avert such disaster. We will not, of course, submit to compulsory arbitration. That has been tried and proved a failure. Compulsory arbitration is incompatible with that perfect individual liberty which is the very backbone of Trade Unionism. That does not mean that we dismiss arbitration as useless, or that we decline to recognize the value of inquiry and of impartial opinion. We have, by good fortune, the advantage of a vast amount of experiment in this matter—experience gathered from every part of the world. We are now in a position to harness arbitration with the right to strike in order to get the best results out of both ideas. We can devise a halfway-house. When a difference arises between employers and employed we shall first make use of all the existing machinery for negotiation, and if that machinery is not good enough we shall devise newer and better. If the difference cannot be settled by this means, we shall then proceed on League of Nations lines to the use of other methods. We shall require an

Act of Parliament if necessary to make the procedure leading up to a strike definite, logical and orderly. The Industrial Court or some such official institution should be required to hold an inquiry and to report on the difference over which a strike is threatened, and it should always be remembered that a strike concerns not only the employers and employed who fail to agree, but the community as well. We should therefore recognize the right of the community to know all about the subject of the dispute before the damage inseparable from a strike or a lock-out is inflicted upon it.

Obligations put upon Trade Unions in this way must naturally apply with equal force to employers' organizations.

When the Industrial Court has completed its inquiry and published its report, all parties will be in possession of both sides of the case and all available information will be open to everyone. At that stage, and not until that stage has been reached, will we Trade Unionists consider the use of the strike weapon. If we are not satisfied with the findings of the Industrial Court, if the report leaves us still convinced that our case is fair and that justice has not been done to us, then we will hold a ballot amongst ourselves, a secret ballot in which every member of the Union will, by rule, be required to vote. If the result of such a ballot favours a strike, we will give the necessary notice to terminate our contracts and withdraw our labour. Such procedure as I suggest would give

to the strike weapon the dignity and importance that should properly belong to it, and would absolutely prevent its irresponsible use. Unless something of the kind is done, we are in grave danger of losing the right to strike, with all the legal immunities now attaching to it.

The right to strike has disappeared in Italy, where it has been thrown away by Italian Trade Unionists simply and solely by reason of its irresponsible use. Whatever may be said of Mussolini and his methods, no sane man will deny that he owes his position to the folly of those who used the Trade Unions without that sense of responsibility which is essential to their success. The right to strike has gone in Russia, where the secret police, who learnt their business from successive generations of Tsars, are employed by the dictatorship, masquerading as " proletarian," to deport, murder and otherwise suppress not only strikers but Trade Unionists themselves.

There are other, if subsidiary, reasons why we should study this question of the strike, and strive to profit from the disastrous lesson of the last few weeks. We Trade Unionists are interested probably more than anybody else, in the question of contract.

English commerce has been built up on a system of which the foundation is contract. There was a time when no business was ever done without an agreement or quotation or contract which was considered by all parties to be absolutely binding and beyond revision. Every business man was

engaged in the execution of some contract. It was a recognized part of business procedure that a man should execute his contract, whatever the consequences, irrespective of whether he made a profit or loss. In the days of " The Merchant of Venice " a very serious view of the sanctity of the contract was taken by the public and the courts. In later days we have modified opinion by the introduction of legislation and of legal practice, which rendered contracts, that were immoral or against the public interests or in restraint of trade, illegal or of no effect; but even then we still retained a healthy respect for the contract which was very useful in the practical work of commerce. It is not always understood how dependent most of us were upon contracts, and the one great difference between business to-day and business twelve years ago is that now it is a hand-to-mouth affair, whereas then it was a matter of lengthy time contracts. This alteration makes a great deal of difference to prices, to employment, to wages, and to supplies. The manufacturer, who, prior to 1914, could place a contract for deliveries of his raw material at fixed prices for from three to five years, was in a position to render service to his customers and the public which is impossible to-day. He could guarantee deliveries, could fix prices, and, above all, could guarantee employment. Further, he could carry through a three-year transaction on a small margin of profit, knowing that he would have enough to meet his obligations.

It was in the middle of the last century that the

first weakening of the contract habit became noticeable. This took the form of a clause which it suddenly became fashionable to print upon estimate forms to the effect that the contractor was not responsible in the event of fire. Later on, somewhere in the nineties, another reservation became common, releasing the contractor from his bond in the event of strikes and lock-outs. This was followed at the beginning of the present century by a clause which provided for an alteration in the price if any alteration in the rate of wages took place. So, by degrees, contract for purchase or supply became a more complicated affair and became less and less binding upon the parties entering into it. Provision was made for an alteration in the price of materials and for "other causes beyond our control." The spirit of adventure was gradually eliminated from business practice, and the spirit of caution took its place. Then came the War with a host of legislation voiding and suspending contracts, and finally we see the establishment of Government Departments and the removal of the liberties upon which contracts depend, and business reduced to a hand-to-mouth, day-by-day condition of uncertainty. To-day contracts, at all events contracts for the future, are comparatively unknown. When the conditions of trade are subject to be altered at a moment's notice on the fiat of any one of the thousand public authorities, no one can make a contract, no one can quote a price, no one can commit himself beyond a few days or a few weeks.

But the revolution in our habits in connection with contracts is not only due to the Government. The labour situation has a very definite bearing on the matter. So long as the Trade Union movement was actuated, only by economic considerations, those who were in the habit of making contracts could estimate the possibilities of the labour market just as they gauged the possibilities of every other market. But the mixing up of Trade Unionism and politics has introduced a new uncertainty which reacts on this matter of contracts. Many of our Trade Unionists are not now so much concerned with mere wage advances as with their desire to unsettle public confidence, for the simple purpose of weakening the system upon which trade and industry is now carried on. Some of our agitators believe that by rendering the life of the employer intolerable they will hasten the day when they can introduce the Soviet system. Those, therefore, who in former days arranged by contract for the steady activity of our industrial forces are faced with the prospect of constantly recurring political strikes, and another difficulty is thus placed in their way. It seems to me that we must get back to the contract system, and to that end we must continually strive to remove from the industrial sphere all these outside influences which are working such havoc in the commerce and industry upon which we all depend. To achieve this would be a triumph for Trade Unionism.

The story of the triumph of Trade Unionism

in the past is one of amazing interest. Trade Unions were distrusted at the outset by the majority of the workers themselves, and Parliament only allowed their existence after a severe struggle. Now the Trade Union movement possesses the support of the whole of the working world and the respect and sympathy of the employers. Parliament has granted to Trade Unions the utmost liberty and welcomed its representatives as members of the House of Commons. Yet in spite of these facts and of the immense advantages which Trade Unions have secured for their members, they are threatened with destruction. Neither Parliament nor employers and employers' federations are the enemy. The enemy is within their own ranks. Those zealous but misguided young men in a hurry who are preaching the false and fatal doctrine that a Trade Union, whose members are but a fraction of the nation, has the right to enforce its political views upon the whole nation by means of the strike weapon ; those older members who by their apathy and indifference and by absenting themselves from branch meetings enable young hotheads to rule the roost ; and those members of the Unions who have conferred autocratic powers upon their executives by empowering them to order strikes without a ballot—these are the real enemies, the traitors within the gates.

CHAPTER XI

A NEW START

THE reader who has suffered me up to this point will by now be under no misapprehension. I should be a labour leader of a somewhat original kind. The difference between me and the saner among the existing leaders of labour would not be a real difference, it would only be a difference of method, for I cling to the idea that there are labour leaders who are sound on both economics and philosophy. But there is unfortunately no active labour leader, so far as I am aware, who has the courage to give consistent expression to his real feelings. All of them seem to think that it is necessary, if only by occasional phrase and gesture, to be polite to the revolutionary idea. Some of them present the most pathetic spectacle in public affairs, talking common sense on week-days and waving the Red Flag on Sundays, trying in this way to keep as it were a leg in each boat.

My leadership of labour would take a definite stand on what I regard as fundamentals, and would advocate a point of view directly opposed to the Socialist as well as the Communist. I should argue that society is constructed upon the only workable basis, that the system known as " Capitalism " is the only system that will provide the people with the means to be civilized, and that our work as Trade Unionists is to perfect the system, to remove its blemishes, to make it more efficient and not to talk nonsense about abolishing it.

" . . . . the idea of civilization as diseased is

getting a dangerous hold. The dangers are: (1) that the mind of society becomes unwholesomely inverted upon itself, like that of a valetudinarian who is constantly feeling his pulse and taking his temperature with a clinical thermometer; (2) that we come to rely upon remedies, upon legislative drugs, and so contract the social drug habit; (3) that we suffer ourselves to be exploited by quacks, who make a living out of our fears. While admitting that functional disorders of a grave kind exist, I cannot accept the theory of organic disease".*

My work as a labour leader would give me the opportunity to experiment, if not to succeed, in a cause that is very dear to me. I should like to be known as the peace man, the man who really did do something to root out the vice of hate. It is a big task, maybe a task doomed to failure, but a task none the less worth the effort. There are differences of opinion on the question of immortality. Some people believe in after life and others do not. But there can be no doubt whatever as to the immortality or the after life of an idea, a thought which puts upon those who have the courage to preach ideas a grave and heavy responsibility. The man who could succeed in establishing in the minds of the people a conviction of the uselessness of hate would indeed secure an immortality of a kind that would surely leave him indifferent to the more personal sort of after life so much discussed.

* L. P. Jacks: *Responsibility and Culture.*

I am a profound believer in the " other fellow ", a characteristic which perhaps explains my lack of interest in politics.

When I talk to him as an individual I generally find him full of good intentions, if not always full of good sense. Man, to me, is a well meaning creature, a fact which modern politicians seem unable to admit. They must have a villian in the piece, a Jew or a Jesuit, a slacker or a boss, a drunkard or a profiteer, a bomb-thrower or a child-slayer, a dirty foreigner or an all-wise Britisher. All these to me are the characters of fiction. I am getting old and I have still failed to meet them in the flesh. It is very difficult, indeed generally impossible, to hate the individual, and so the hatemongers, whether international or industrial, are driven to the mob mind and the class war.

Is there any real need in these enlightened days for smearing the sacred cause of labour with the claptrap of envy, malice and hatred, dug up, rotten and revolting, from the discredited history of a hundred years ago ? Does it do us any good, do we get any further that way ? Burke told us to " reflect seriously on the possible consequences of keeping in the hearts of your community a bank of discontent every hour accumulating, upon which every company of seditious men may draw at pleasure ". Burke was writing at a time when half the population lived in daily company with starvation. Those conditions have now passed and we labour people, so accustomed to base our

cause upon a grievance and having too little starvation with which to promote hate, have allowed the intellectuals to fasten a spurious grievance about a "system" upon us, and thus to maintain what has always seemed to us a necessary "bank of discontent".

Our present industrial policy is a weary mixture of 18th century history and Karl Marx philosophy, neither having any practical relation to present conditions, and both framed for the edification of uneducated, illiterate and mostly starving people. This sort of claptrap may still make an appeal to some of the miserable peoples of lands that are five or six centuries behind us, but it is quite useless and out of place when dealing with Britishers. In point of fact it is really hardly necessary to argue this way. The thing is happening, but labour leaders will not see it. Other people and public opinion are going right past them. The inflammatory half-truths that constitute many of the speeches made to labour to-day, had some justification at a time when half the population looked upon the working man as thriftless, drunken and ne'er-do-well and the other half looked upon the rest as only fit for the guillotine. But all that has gone. By common consent it is no longer possible for any one party to claim a monopoly of the desire to promote the greatest good of all. The more the class idea is talked about the less reality there is in it. I want therefore to give what Moscow would call a new orientation to labour policy. Moscow has to have

new economic policies every few months, but perhaps a change of policy every twenty-five years would be more in keeping with British ideas and traditions. It may be necessary a quarter of a century hence to make another change, but for the moment I am convinced that a constructive policy, based on the existing economic system, is the bounden duty of the British worker and his leaders. If labour leaders would get back to simple issues, wages and wealth production, would boldly disown the political excrescences of latter-day Trade Unionism, and would have the courage to stand up and defend the Capitalist System, they would be the leaders not of a minority as at present, but of the great solid majority of the wage earners of this country.

It is sometimes said that we want a Mussolini in England. That of course is nonsense. Mussolini and his methods would stand no more chance than the General Strike did or Moscow does. This is England, and what may suit Italians and Slavs does not suit Britishers. But there is a chance for some Englishman of courage and ability to learn a lesson from Mussolini, and to apply it for the benefit of the British labour movement. The Italian dictator has an economic policy that stands out against every other economic policy of the world on account of its extreme simplicity. He says, without any qualification or any attempt to elaborate, explain or modify, that " private property is right and work a duty to the nation ". Those two ideas, stated in as many sentences to

the sentimental Italian people, and coming from a man who gave evidence of meaning what he said, were sufficient to wipe the last vestiges of Socialism, and with it a decadent Trade Unionism, right out of the land. Italy to-day is working and is happy, although no man in his senses would venture to prophesy as to what may be the condition of Italy to-morrow. Of many conversations that I had with Italians only a few weeks ago those with Italian working men remain most vividly in my mind.

"The politicians dispute first on the right and then on the left and make such a business of discussion, that we do not know where we are. But Mussolini, he talks logic, and it is so simple that he makes everybody happy."

That was said by an Italian labourer and not a member of the Fascist Party. I deny that the Mussolini method or the Mussolini philosophy can ever be any good to England. The science of economics, however, is independent of national temperament. Supply and demand know nothing of language. Capital and income, profit and loss must remain, whatever the climate or whatever the race. We can well learn, in the economic sphere, from Mussolini, just as we can learn if we will from the ghastly tale of Socialist experiment in almost every country of Europe. Post-war Socialism in Germany has cost that unhappy country almost as much as the war itself.

Therefore it seems to me that if a leader of English labour, with all the intelligence, knowledge

and education of the English labouring classes to respond to his appeal, had the pluck to say: "We are going to work the Capitalist System", he would be applauded and would, indeed, lead us to prosperity.

Will it not be a reflection upon our political genius if something of this kind does not happen? Can it be that having lived through the last 25 years, having reaped the first few rich harvests of a system of popular education, having gone through Armageddon and having witnessed the destruction of half of the civilization of Europe, we should still have to rely upon the verbose vulgarity of a system of bad philosophy and false economics invented fifty years ago? If so, we have indeed learnt nothing, either from the war or from the General Strike.

If, therefore, I were the leader of English labour I would frame a new policy and issue a manifesto on something like the following lines:

The General Strike has cleared the air. We have now tested the value of Socialism as an aid to labour and we know that it is a fraud and a sham which can only ruin the genuine labour movement. For a quarter of a century we have allowed the so-called intellectual socialists to keep us struggling, groping for something practical in a chaos of thought and terminology. Almost every advance that the Trade Unions have secured in wages has been nullified or minimized by restricted production or rising prices due to the false spirit which socialism has spread throughout industry. There

can no longer be a shadow of doubt that socialism is a snare and a delusion. It has been tried in greater or less degree in every country in the world, and we now know from practical experience that the standard of living is lowest where there is most socialism, and highest where there is least.

We therefore declare that the labour movement exists to promote the well-being and efficiency of industry for the benefit of the people as a whole. We recognize that there are two sides to the question of work and that, unless the consumer is satisfied, the worker cannot secure satisfaction. The function of industry is to deliver the goods.

We are out to destroy class consciousness and to preach the doctrine of the people as a whole with complete political and social equality. We declare that there can be no such thing as economic equality.

We accept the theory of private property for three reasons:

(*a*) Property or capital is essential to industry and to civilization, and the more there is of it the better for all.

(*b*) The private individual is the only human agent that can preserve and care for property or capital, and thus enable it to function.

(*c*) We want a little ourselves.

But we shall continue to fight for the elimination of those ill-meaning persons who waste wealth on useless luxury.

We know that twenty-five years of socialism, working through all political parties, has brought

public expenditure to the outrageous total of £3 per week per family, and we will not be content until the process is reversed and the bulk of that money is brought into the pockets of the workers.

We intend to give the best work for the best pay. Industry is capable of producing far better results to all three parties working in co-operation, each recognizing the others' rights and each accepting its own responsibilities. We believe that we can double the return to the worker by a constructive policy and we declare that we are out to help and not to hinder.

We mean to secure a new status for labour, a real dignity for the worker, and we therefore repudiate the degrading policy of restriction, limitation and the waste and folly of idleness to order. Our motto is "produce the maximum because we need the maximum." Recognizing that three generations of wrong thinking have produced evils that will take time to cure, we will gradually make labour so productive that every one will be satisfied.

Our policy is to increase wages and shorten hours, and we will establish in every Trade Union a research department to discover how to secure maximum wages out of maximum output. We intend to get the highest wages for the greatest number by giving the maximum production for the good of everybody.

We retain the right to strike, but we recognize that it is a weapon which should only be used against the grasping employer who is not fair to

labour. We shall continue to use the strike weapon against this class so long as it exists, but we will not strike against the community.

Such a policy will secure not merely the disciplined loyalty of the individual worker but will win his heart. British industry and British labour will regain the leadership of the world, and poverty shall disappear within our time.