What Means
THIS
Labour Unrest?

BY

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WHAT MEANS THIS LABOUR UNREST?

One might imagine that the "gentlemen of the press," who stand, as it were, on the hill tops surveying and recording the activities of the world, would form some clear conception of what is going on around them, would gain knowledge and understanding of the strong silent forces which remould institutions and shape social and industrial progress. Our expectations, apparently, are too high. The average journalist sees and hears little except what is loud and noisy and obvious. He records the outward and visible manifestations of a movement which indeed no one in his senses can miss; of the motive force, of what one may call the soul of a movement, he knows little or nothing. If at this moment a hundred elements were at work making for violent revolution which should presently find voice in the roar of cannon in London streets, the chances are that the matter in the daily journals would be dismissed in half-a-dozen lines written in sheer blind-kitten ignorance of its inner meaning and significance. But some day an amazed and dumbfounded press would inform us that the mob in a fit of mad inexplicable fury had set fire to the Mansion House; and, as if that were not enough, we should have to suffer scores of ponderous editorials, each more foolish than the other, and all woefully wide of the mark.

The Labour upheaval, with its fierce strikes, has brought a crop of sorry journalistic stuff. Editorials and letters have appeared by the hundred, superficial, inaccurate, vindictive. Once more the wise editor standing with telescope on the height sweeps the land from Dan to Beersheba, and discovers nothing but the wanton wickedness of the workers. His articles indicate nothing, except his own plentiful lack of insight and vision.

The apparently universal revolt of labour, the widespread refusal to work, has alarmed large numbers of privileged people, as well as those who write to confirm their prejudices. What does it mean? Has anarchy broken out in the Trade Union ranks? Have the leaders been disowned? Has the Parliamentary Labour Party been abandoned? Is the country in the grip of syndicalism? Are we on the eve of a general propaganda for direct action and for the overthrow of capitalism by means of the general strike? What *does* it all mean? Thus angrily or plaintively the rich, but the wise editors are dumb, or speak with a hundred conflicting tongues that make confusion worse confounded.

What is the cause of this industrial unrest? "Crazy fanaticism or diseased vanity," says *The Times*. What is the remedy? "A whiff of grape shot," shrieks the *Morning Post*. "Wrest from the hands of strikers the weapon of the strike," adds the *Newcastle Chronicle*. Editorial wisdom carries us no further than this, and, at this point, we may well part company with editorial wisdom.

It is impossible even to approximately realise the significance of the industrial unrest, unless we can appreciate the worker's point of view. As a rule the director cannot or will not do this. He will tell you of the worry and anxiety of carrying on a huge business concern, of the keenness of modern competition, of the increase of working expenses, of the growth of rates and taxes, and the

menace of municipal Socialism, of the pressure of shareholders to secure higher dividends, and of the unreliability of certain of his workmen.

Of what does the intelligent workman speak? He complains of the difficulty of keeping a home together on 20/- a week. He speaks of the excessive hours and speeding-up which makes overdrafts on his physical strength. He speaks of the increasing precariousness of his employment, of his increasing liability to be out of work. He speaks of little tyrannies, petty and pin-pricking in themselves, yet none the less irritating, and entirely indicative of the complete divorce between capital and labour.

The credit or discredit for industrial disputes is frequently laid at the door of the Labour and Socialist movement. Socialist and Trade Union "agitators" are often charged with fomenting discontent among workers who otherwise would be happy and contented with their lot. The charge, as formulated by our opponents, is not very convincing. If economic arrangements were just, all the Socialist teaching in the world would have little effect. Socialism and Trade Unionism gain influence and power because the organisers of these movements clearly and forcibly express what masses of workpeople dimly feel. That is the essence of all real leadership.

The average workman is not a Socialist. Our economic formulæ and ultimate theories are somewhat beyond him, and seem to him to have little bearing on his immediate needs. All the same, he has been strongly influenced by Socialist thought. The Socialist has made his hunger and unemployment and destitution more vivid and hateful to him; Socialist meetings and pamphlets have made more real to the worker all the glaring contrasts between wealth and want, all the cruel implications of social poverty.

Quite recently, the I.L.P. undertook a month's special campaign in favour of a minimum wage of 30/- a week,

and organised some 800 meetings on this question. At every meeting the evils of the sweating system were laid bare; the moral and physical hurt that comes to the workman and his family from underpayment. The bare and dreary existence of the 18/- a week labourer was contrasted with the luxurious idleness of many rich people whose profitless lives are a degradation and a shame. To make the labourer ashamed of his poverty and subjection is good and necessary work; to unite him with his workmates in a Trade Union and a Labour Party, to set his steps in the path leading to betterment and freedom, to open the door to a sweeter physical and intellectual life is the urgent duty of all Socialists, and to this extent we gladly accept our share of responsibility and blame for the labour unrest.

One sometimes hears rather unprofitable and inconclusive discussion as to whether the poor are worse off or better off than previously. The workers may or may not be deeper in poverty than they used to be—it would seem to depend on the periods compared. But one thing is certain, they are quicker to resent their poverty than they used to be. Their gnawing hunger and tawdry rags are no longer accepted as the dispensation of a just Providence. To many privileged people this growing tendency on the part of the workers to resist wrong is a rank offence. But what do they expect? If social conditions were to remain unchallenged, no working-class school should have been opened, no cheap books should have been printed, no working-class meetings should have been permitted, and every man or woman who showed any reforming impulse should have been hanged immediately. Even so, it is more than doubtful if the result in the long run would have satisfied the employers or the rich generally.

The worker is dissatisfied. Perhaps he could not write an essay on the causes of his discontent, or argue out his case very logically, but he does feel in a general way

that he is not getting fair play or justice, that his life is altogether too hard and cramped, that he is treated too much as a chattel and beast of burden. He looks back over long years of unremitting and unrequited toil; if he looks forward, it is to years of sunless labour and cheerless gloom ending mayhap in a pauper's grave. The labourer who is expected to maintain himself and his family on 16/10 or 17/10 in return for 65 or 70 hours' labour has no right to be satisfied. Education, even an entirely inadequate education, has helped to create in him certain new wants which, though neither extravagant nor expensive, are beyond the reach of his purse. In short, the worker begins to think, and this process is at the root of the Labour unrest and will mark the beginning of many changes.

Those who accuse the workers of rash and evil rebellion, those who open newspaper subscription lists to reward "loyalists" who refused to stand out with their fellows, should first of all make some enquiry into the facts. Trade Unionism has been a great and beneficent power. It has done much to redeem the workers from the spirit of thraldom and bondage. It has had to fight every inch of the way for legal recognition; it has been assailed by conspiracy laws and vigorous persecution. Its pioneers were faithful to the cause of federated labour even in face of fines, imprisonment, mutilation, transportation, and death. In the darkest days of the factory system, it was mainly the Labour organisations which slowly rescued men, women, and children from a condition of absolute slavery. In his *Short History of our own Times*, Mr. Justin McCarthy pays a deserved tribute to the sterling qualities of those early fighters who did much to prepare a path for the present-day Labour movement. "Some of these associations," he says, "had supported great industrial strikes in which the judgment and sympathies of all the classes that usually led were against them. The

capitalist, and all who share his immediate interests; the employers, the rich of every kind, the aristocratic, the self-appointed public instructors had all been against them, and they had nevertheless gone deliberately and stubbornly their own way. Sometimes they, or the cause they represented, had prevailed; often they and it had been defeated, but they had never acknowledged a defeat in principle, and they had kept on their own course undismayed."

Toward the end of the eighties the Trade Union movement had so far consolidated itself that it was able to win victory after victory. Labour at that time in certain branches of industry was better organised than capital. Between 1888 and 1890 the Miners' Federation increased wages for members embraced by their districts by 40 per cent. The London Gasworkers, with an organisation three months old, obtained a reduction in hours of 20 per week, accompanied by a slight increase in wages. Organised London Coal-porters advanced their wages from 24/- to 32/- per week. In 1889, 16,000 London Dockers, after a month's battle, won their historic "tanner," with 8d. an hour for overtime. These triumphs naturally led to a great extension of Trades Unionism.

But the employers began to pull themselves together. They organised into employers' federations, with all the power of vast wealth and a servile press. They organised into monopolies and trusts, and each fresh concentration of capital made the masters better able to resist increases or even to force reductions. Still the Unions continued to grow in numerical and financial strength until in 1900—the year before the Taff Vale Judgment—there were 1,277 Trade Unions with a membership of nearly 2,000,000 and a reserve fund of £5,000,000. The employers jealous and afraid of this increasing power called to their aid the Law Courts. A series of legal judgments given on the status and powers of Trade Unions shook to its foundations the structure reared in 1871-76. But all previous determina-

tions were capped by the judgment given on July 21, 1901, when the House of Lords, reversing the decision of the Court of Appeal, laid it down in the case of the Taff Vale Railway Company *v.* the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants that a Trade Union could be sued in its corporate capacity for the acts of individual officers and thereby threw the funds of the Unions open to attack from every capitalist quarter, especially in view of earlier decisions which in effect rendered peaceful picketing and persuasion an illegal act punishable by law. The Taff Vale Judgment remained in force for five years, and was only repealed by the return of a Labour Party to Parliament in 1906. According to Board of Trade figures the wages of the workpeople fell continuously during the five years this Judge-made law held good, and only began to rise with its reversal. Here are the official figures giving the net effect of the changes in wages :—

	Rising Wages.	Falling Wages.
	£	£
1901	— ...	78,587
1902	— ...	72,595
1903	— ...	38,327
1904	— ...	39,230
1905	— ...	2,169
1906	57,897 ...	—
1907	200,912 ...	—
1908	— ...	59,171
1909	— ...	68,922
1910	14,534 ...	—

It will be seen first of all that during the past ten years wages have only risen in three years and have fallen in seven years. It will also be seen that during the years when the Taff Vale Judgment remained in force the wages paid to Labour fell by nearly £230,000 a week. Despite

the rise in 1906-7 the workers received in 1910 £83,000 less per week in wages than ten years previously—a rich reward for "loyalty."

But if the figures in regard to money wages are not exhilarating, what shall be said of the shrinkage in real wages as represented by the rise in the cost of living. In many districts working-class rents have risen, and this is especially true of overcrowded parts. One-tenth of the family income is regarded by many authorities as a reasonable proportion to be paid in rent, but many rack-rented families pay as much as one-third of the weekly income to the landlord; the smaller the wage the larger the proportionate slice taken in this way.

Moreover, there has been an all-round rise in the prices of the ordinary necessaries of life. It is estimated that 18/- ten or fifteen years ago had as high a purchasing power as a sovereign at the present time. Economists argue that this is largely due to the increased production of gold. "While certain kinds of business have been stimulated by rising prices, and, though profits have been large, the distribution of wealth has been changed to the detriment of the wage-earner," writes Mr. Walter T. Layton. "When prices were falling the real value of wages increased very rapidly—but in the last fifteen years the rise in prices, combined with a comparatively small increase in money wages, has caused an actual fall in the real value of wages. The result shows how little the working-classes have to gain from an increase in the output of gold. The prosperity of the poor consists in the abundance of goods; not in the abundance of gold."

Comparing the average prices for the five years 1905-9, we find that in England there has been an increase in wholesale prices of 19 per cent. and in retail prices of 11 per cent. These are grave and ominous facts and, taken in conjunction with the statistics of money wages already given, it is not difficult to trace their connection

with the present widespread discontent and unrest. The grossly underpaid workman finds himself thrust deeper into the social abyss. The purchasing power of his miserably insufficient wage has been steadily curtailed. The hunger of his children has become very acute. Was it very wonderful that he parted company for the moment with his "loyalty" in order to try and bring more fire and food into his home? There was something heroic in the valour with which he risked livelihood and faced starvation in order to make a supreme effort to better the lot of himself, his children, and his fellow-workman. Let the loyalist blackleg have his *Daily Mail* silver by all means, thirty pieces if possible; but will he ever look his workmates straight in the face again?

But, say some, the workpeople are so unreasonable; they forget that the country has to pass through periods of industrial crisis, and that in those years wages must necessarily fall. No, I imagine the workpeople have borne the brunt of too many trade depressions to forget. They begin to understand, also, that the wages of millions of super-sweated, sweated, or semi-sweated men and women are a potent contributory cause of trade stagnation since they deny to these victims of industry any effective purchasing power. The markets are glutted with food and clothing, whilst many go hungry and half-naked for lack of the commodities they cannot buy.

The poor are expected to make sacrifices in the lean years. Heaven knows they make sacrifices enough. And one would have greater respect for those who preach this comfortable doctrine if they were themselves the embodiment of abstinence and self-denial. When the poor go short of food, what do the rich go short of? The income-tax returns throw no light on the sacrifices of the rich, for the gross assessments show a continuous increase, apparently little affected by the cycles of trade. Those who are assessed for income-tax, numbering just over a

million, take over £1,000,000,000 a year from the national income. Here are the assessments in round figures :—

	£
1899-1900	791,000,000
1900-1901	833,000,000
1901-1902	866,000,000
1902-1903	879,000,000
1903-1904	902,000,000
1904-1905	912,000,000
1905-1906	925,000,000
1906-1907	943,000,000
1907-1908	980,000,000
1908-1909	1,009,000,000

The ten years which left the workers worse off at the end than the beginning added nearly £220,000,000 to the incomes of the rich. The contrasts between wealth and poverty were never more glaring and terrible, and those who are already planning how the next strike can best be broken, and what new penal and restrictive legislation is needed to prevent picketing, would be much better occupied in trying to remedy the harsh inequalities of a social system which allows one-third of the national wealth to be appropriated by one-thirtieth of the population.

I have already referred to the increasing concentration of capital, but this is an important factor in the situation and must be considered if we are to understand the significance and character of recent strikes. Amalgamation is the key-note of modern industry. In many branches of trade, competition is being gradually abolished, not by the Socialists but by the industrial captains themselves. In cotton thread and fine cotton spinning, in bleaching and dyeing and calico-printing, in railways and shipping and mines, in shipbuilding and engineering and iron and steel, in tobacco, salt, wall-paper, chemicals, brewing and cement, vast amalgamations have been carried into effect during

the past twenty years. The following extract from the Economist typifies what is happening in many industries :

> A process of consolidation has been going on in the Engineering trades of the United Kingdom of late years, which has resulted in the concentration of a large volume of business in the hands of a few great companies. These consolidations have been evolved mostly from the alliance of shipbuilding with steel-producing companies, and in some cases the accretions have been so comprehensive as to include the possession of collieries and iron-ore mines, thus comprising in the one undertaking the whole of the functions from the production of the raw materials to the completion of a battleship with its armament. These developments have for the most part been carried out gradually by the acquisition of one business after another, and have, fortunately, been unaccompanied by the undue inflation of capital and other undesirable features which have been prominent in connection with "combines" formed in certain other trades.

The capital invested in limited companies is now well over £2,000,000,000, and from 3,000 to 4,000 new companies are formed every year. As these industrial trusts get larger and better organised they give to the shareholding class, who in the effective sense number hardly more than a quarter of a million, increased power over the workers, both as producers and consumers. Trusts can do much to advance prices and fleece the nation. They play their part in the rising cost of living. They also help to destroy all human touch between capital and labour. Capital becomes more and more a blind money-making tyranny, with hardly a thought save for dividend and gain. Organised and entrenched, capital is better able to repel the attacks of a Trade Union army fighting for improved conditions. During the past ten or fifteen years the strength and solidarity of organised capital reared a wall of interests on which the organised wage-earners made little impression. Take as an instance the industrial battles fought in the five years, 1901-5. In 1,021 cases victory rested with the employers as against 493 victories recorded for the men. In certain industries the ramparts of the

enemy seemed so impregnable that some Trade Union leaders began to grow timid and afraid, and seemed ready to capitulate almost on any terms. These developments could not go on without serious consequences; one of these consequences revealed itself in the most remarkable labour upheaval this country has ever seen.

The labour strikes and struggles of 1911 will be memorable for a number of reasons. They represented a determined rising of the worst-paid workers. They revealed a gratifying measure of working-class solidarity. They widened the area of battle and brought into action on a larger scale than ever before the powerful weapon of the sympathetic strike. They made the entire nation realise how much its food and welfare are committed to the care of hundreds of thousands of unconsidered men and women working under bad conditions. They forced to the front the question of a living wage, and made the labour problem in all its aspects the one absorbing topic of conversation.

Capital was manifestly alarmed by the vigour and novelty of the attack, and substantial gains were won. Many thousands of Manchester labourers earning 17/- and 18/- a week battled successfully for their pound a week minimum. In East London some thousands of women engaged in food and tin factories added over £10,000 a year to their wages. London fish porters, after a few hours' strike, increased their wages from 1/- to 2/- an hour.

Great victories were, of course, scored by the transport workers. The lightermen in London, for instance, have reduced their hours by two per day and advanced their wages by 25 per cent. But, indeed, the dockers and transport workers have improved their position throughout the country. The Liverpool workers have gained a 20 per cent. advance in wages; in Hull and Glasgow 10 per cent. has been won, whilst the workers in towns like Leith

Grangemouth, Dundee, Dublin, Cork, and Belfast have all been made to realise the advantage of federated action.

Let me revert back to the all-wise editors and leader-writers who denounce the insensate folly of strikes and strikers. I would commend to their notice the concessions secured by seamen, firemen, dockers, lightermen, stevedores, carmen, labourers, and women workers. Strikes, say the wise editors, are a brutal weapon inflicting damage on the strikers themselves, ruin on thousands of non-combatants, and inconvenience and upset on the general community. Much of all this may be admitted. Strikes are by no means an ideal method for the adjustment of disputes. Appealing mainly to force, they do not necessarily settle the rights and wrongs of a quarrel. Victory, too frequently, rests with the big battalions rather than with right and justice. Wealth and poverty do not enter a strike on equal terms, for hunger is the best strike-breaker and blackleg.

But what are over-driven and underpaid workpeople to do? Are they to stand passively beside the pool of public opinion waiting for some mystic moving of the waters? Unless they make some united and dramatic protest, their complaints for most part remain unconsidered and unredressed.

What, then, of the Parliamentary Labour Party, we are asked? Are these great national strikes a revolt against Parliamentarianism? Has five years' experience of a Labour Party brought disappointment and disillusionment? Have the workers determined to work out their salvation by direct action in the industrial field?

When the Labour Party first came into being, quite wild and extravagant hopes were formed as to what could be accomplished by 30 or 40 men in a Parliament of 670 members. Trade Union activities were slackened down. The most trivial matters which previously the Union would have taken up and dealt with were forwarded to the Labour

Party with a request for intervention. The energies of some Unions were put almost entirely into parliamentary and political channels. Perhaps this was more or less necessary at the birth of a new party, but reaction was inevitable. For Trade Unions at the present stage of development to become purely political would seriously weaken these organisations, without giving additional strength and power to the Labour Party. Industrial and political power must go hand in hand—the one the complement of the other. Two million organised wage-earners must not attempt to relieve themselves of their responsibilities by trying to shift them on to the shoulders of a small group of Labour men in Parliament. As a matter of fact, the hands of the Party in Parliament are greatly strengthened by these direct and far-reaching evidences of industrial unrest. When the poor are quiescent under their load of sorrow and wrong, the rich are inclined to say: "The workers are perfectly happy and contented; they have no hardships except the imaginary ones manufactured for them by demagogic politicians." Industrial action cannot possibly supersede political action. The rebuilding of a juster state, the remoulding of law, the extension of social legislation and legal protection for the workers must be done on the floor of Parliament. But industrial action can speed up political action, whose pulse is ever inclined to beat weak and slow. A militant Trade Union movement, guided by sensible but thoroughly alert leaders—a movement in hot rebellion against subjection and prepared to strike when working-class wrongs justified that course—would provide a magnificent driving force in Parliament, and, backed up by a growing Labour Party, would result in substantial economic gains.

The *Morning Post* and other journals have been discussing the question of syndicalism in relation to the recent strikes. In reality there was no connection between the one and the other. The average workman in Great Britain

has never thought about syndicalism, has not indeed the remotest idea of what it means. In one or two European countries where this movement has some slight hold (though recently it has been losing ground) syndicalism is understood to stand for a revolutionary and anti-parliamentary policy having for its object the overthrow of capitalism and the destruction of the State by means of the General Strike.

I am not quite clear as to how this can be managed, or how, assuming that capitalism can thus be levelled to the ground, the rebuilding will be accomplished. In any case the British strikers fought, not to destroy capitalism, but to get a shilling or two more in wages. In its extreme aspect the General Strike seems to me to represent the application of crude melodrama to the solution of present-day problems. Syndicalism, at most, could only be a weapon of destruction; never an instrument of social reconstruction.

Of our social system with all its shames and hideous contrasts, we may say with Hamlet "'Tis an unweeded garden; things rank and gross in nature possess it merely." The garden must be delved and planned and cultivated, its weeds uprooted, its disorder arrested—how else can it blossom with fragrant and gladsome flowers, with quiet walks and restful arbours, and great overhanging trees with their welcome shade. But can this work be done by the mad stampede of a million feet?

Let it be clearly understood that Socialism has nothing in common with violence and anarchy; these are its foes, not its friends. By wise legislation limiting privilege and greed and extending human liberty and right, by a just system of land tenure, by the extension of the collectivist idea, Socialists seek to evolve order out of chaos, peace out of war, justice out of class-tyranny. Syndicalism and the General Strike must assuredly fail as a means of ushering in social justice; they would stand for no more than the

last despairing effort of a blind Samson, driven desperate by oppression, and prepared to wreak his vengeance on his enemies even if he perish with them in one red ruin.

I notice also that preparations are already being made to meet the next strike by a better organisation of the military forces. Acting under instructions from the Home Office—has Mr. Winston Churchill added to his other onerous duties that of Commander-in-Chief of the British Army?—a number of military officers from the Staff College are at present making a survey of London. We are told that the suggestion came from "a famous military organiser and commander," and that ten officers are preparing for the eventuality of a future strike. Whatever excuse be offered for these proceedings—the maintenance of the food supply and means of locomotion in London—they will certainly do nothing to secure industrial peace.

The uphappy and unfortunate experiences of the Home Secretary and the Liberal Government in regard to the use of troops during the railway strike might have taught them a lesson and acted as a warning. Contrary to precedent, the soldiers would seem to have been sent anywhere without the consent and even against the wish of local authorities. The King's soldiers were apparently placed at the disposal of the various Railway Companies, and were moved hither and thither at their request, or according to the inspiration of various majors and generals. At a recent meeting of the Manchester Watch Committee the following message was read from the Lord Mayor: "The Lord Mayor desires to say that the presence of the military in Manchester was entirely due to the action of the military authorities who, he was officially informed, were charged with the duty of protecting the railways."

The Labour Party has been strongly censured both in the Liberal and Tory Press for its attack on the Government in regard to the wanton employment of troops during the Railway trouble. The Coroner's inquest on the men

shot at Llanelly seems to me to justify everything the Labour Members said. It would appear that a train was held up outside Llanelly station and some stones thrown. The Riot Act was read, a bugle blown, and after waiting for sixty seconds the order was given to fire. Two young men, John Henry John, 21, a tinplate worker and a member of the Llanelly Oriental Stars Football Club, and Leonard Worsell, 20, labourer, were shot and killed. It was not shown that either of them had anything to do with the disturbance, and indeed when the shots were fired they were standing in their garden at 6, High Street, Llanelly.

The evidence of Major Brownlow Stuart, who gave the order to fire, makes curious reading. Here are some questions and answers.

"Is it correct to say you have power to fire without getting instructions from the magistrate?"—"I have."

"Or directions?"—"Yes."

"Or requests?"—"Yes. It is my duty to take such steps when necessary."

Mr. Lewis Phillips cross-examined Major Stuart, and asked him : "What is the object of the Riot Act?"—"That is not a question for me to answer."

Mr. Phillips read the Riot Act to show that it called upon all people to depart to their habitations or lawful business, and pointed out that the people fired upon were actually in their own gardens.

Witness said he knew nothing of that. He could not say he heard the reading of the Act very distinctly.

"Was this shooting done entirely on your responsibility, or had you some prior instructions to fire?"—"I take the responsibility for ordering the fire on that occasion."

"You admit that the shooting of these people did not effect the object you had in view?"—"The train did not get through."

After this strange evidence the Coroner, after laying down the law in regard to "tumultuous assemblages," committed himself to this comfortable doctrine.

"It was immaterial whether these young men were rioters or had flung stones or not. They were in the direction from which the stones came, and as there was no evidence that they actually threw stones it was just unfortunate that they were present. He suggested that the proper verdict should be one of justifiable homicide."

An accommodating jury brought in a verdict of "justifiable homicide," but they destroyed their verdict by adding this rider :—

"We think it would have been better if other means than the order to fire had been adopted by Major Stuart for the purpose of dispersing the crowd."

It may be pointed out to this jury that if their rider be true, their verdict is untrue; if Major Stuart could better have adopted other means of dispersing the crowd, he should be made to stand his trial for murder. The whole incident reveals the grave dangers of employing military in industrial disputes.

In most cases the presence of the military inflames passion and precipitates the very evils which should be averted. When the guns of the soldiers are raised, the innocent, as at Llanelly, are quite as likely to get killed as any who are taking part in the disturbance.

What will be the effect of the strikes on the Trade Union movement? There will be, of course, increased organisation, especially in the ranks of what is called unskilled labour. The transport workers have themselves added 100,000 members to their Federation. There will be a consolidating and amalgamating of Unions. There will be a revival of Trade Union activity and enthusiasm. Increases in wages will be secured in many trades. And, in future, there will probably be many repetitions of those splendid manifestations which revealed thousands of work-

men risking everything, not to gain something for themselves, but to help their mates.

All this is wholly to the good. All this will provide fresh dynamic for the economic and political aims of labour. If the nation desires to avoid strikes in future, let it go the proper way to work. Labour disputes cannot be ended by the abolition of picketing, or by a perfected military organisation, or by newspaper sermons on the harm and inconvenience caused by strikes. A rich community which permits large numbers of its hard-working members to live constantly in squalour and destitution is bound to suffer inconvenience, and ought to suffer inconvenience. Such a community is always living near to the crater of a social volcano. The ignorance and starvation caused by unjust social conditions cannot rebuild, but they can at least madden and destroy.

The *Manchester Guardian*, which, during the strike, as on many other occasions, maintained almost in splendid isolation the best and highest traditions of British journalism, has insisted throughout that "What is incumbent on those who wish to obviate strikes is to remove the causes which make the misery of a strike preferable in the eyes of the workman who, after all, suffers from it directly, to the drudgery of continuous ill-paid work. Must not a scheme of permanent peace therefore contemplate the elevation of the worst-paid grades—step by step, no doubt, but still without undue delay—to the point at which, at least, the normal day's work brings in enough to maintain an average family in conditions of health? There is no reason in these days to think such an ideal impossible."

These words are a finger-post indicating at least the beginning of the better way. Working-class prosperity and freedom are the price of peace; but these are impossible of attainment until by the political and industrial unity of the workers we curb monopoly and class-ascendancy and make industry subservient to the well-being of all the people.

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