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## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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REPORT ON REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATIONS  
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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(Circulated by the Home Secretary)

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## S U M M A R Y

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It may again be recorded that there are no indications of any active revolutionary movement in this country during the next few weeks, although there is a good deal of underground scheming on the part of a small minority. It is proposed to issue information on this subject in the form of a special report within the next few days. There are even signs of reaction in the labour movement against the policy of Direct Action, and at Horwich the Locomotive Engineers have passed a rather striking resolution against it. If a Government could by incantation reduce the cost of living and by the wave of a wand exhibit houses in the course of erection, the possibility of revolution would disappear for a long time.

The campaign in favour of nationalisation is far from having been triumphant: its leaders are discouraged and now appear to be fixing their hopes upon the ballot box.

The recent disclosures of profiteering in wool have produced a remarkable outburst of resentment among working men: it is imperative that some effort should be made to explain the action of the Government which seems now generally to be believed to have been in league with profiteers.

The extremists are making a bold move towards wresting the power from the constitutional leaders of labour. They are projecting a "Rank and File Convention" with a programme of which the abolition of Parliament and the substitution of Soviets are among the milder resolutions. The Convention is to sit during the

Trade/

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# Trade Union Congress.

Owing to suggestions emanating from the "Daily Herald" the men in the "Z" Reserve are restless, fearing that they will be called up.

Mr. Lansbury is reported to be on his way from Copenhagen to Russia.

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NATIONALISATION OF THE MINES.

The almost feverish campaign in favour of nationalisation has not met with the success anticipated by the leaders. The campaign will end on February 8th and during the last two weeks a very large number of meetings will be held. In South Wales my correspondent reports that the audiences at the nationalisation meetings have been remarkably small; in Llanbradach, for instance, on January 22nd only 250 people, some of whom were small tradesmen, were counted, although the miners in the local pits number 3,000. An active anti-nationalisation campaign is being conducted in South Wales. In Durham the miners appear to be apathetic, but in other parts of the county there have been large and enthusiastic audiences. There is no indication that the general public, apart from the working class, has been converted, and there are even signs that the leaders are beginning to doubt whether direct action to enforce their demands would be successful. Messrs. Hartshorn and Hodges have announced that the Labour Party will move an amendment on the occasion of the King's speech at the opening of Parliament. Mr. Smillie, who is reported still to be unwell, is believed to base his hopes of success on a Labour Government, for his faith in direct action is waning. He is depressed by the attitude of the Railwaymen and the Transport Workers, who appear to be against a general strike on the question of nationalisation, on the ground that a strike would mar their own prospects.

It is reported from Leeds that there is friction between the leaders of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain and those of the Yorkshire Miners' Association, who showed their coldness by absenting themselves from the meetings addressed by Mr. Hodges in Yorkshire last week. Mr. Herbert Smith

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and his lieutenants are said to be opposed to direct action and to be working against it secretly, though they do not dare to show their hand publicly in view of the possibility of friction with their rank and file.

#### THE RANK AND FILE CONVENTION.

The National Administrative Council of the Shop Stewards' Movement, to whose activities reference was made in the last two reports, is issuing 4,000 copies of the draft agenda for the Convention to Trade Union delegates. The covering letter is signed by Sidney Horner (South Wales Reform Committee), George Peet (Shop Stewards), F. Messer (Scottish Workers), and T. Kime (London Shop Stewards). The "Convention Secretary" is "Nurse" M.F. Hebbes, who writes from Miss Sylvia Pankhurst's crèche, 438, Old Ford Road. The Convention is to be held throughout the sitting of the Trade Union Congress in February, in order to register the opinion of British Labour on intervention in Russia and other questions.

The agenda, beginning with an expression of solidarity with the Soviet Government in Russia, urges delegates to support a general strike to stop intervention; to demand independence for Ireland and the withdrawal of troops; to demand the independence of India and Egypt, the overthrow of the entire Capitalistic structure and the establishment of a Communist Government, and the rejection of nationalisation for a scheme of control by the workers. This comprehensive scheme is not enough: Parliament is to be abolished and Soviets immediately established; Trade Unions in their present form are also to go.

This "Convention" aims directly at the recognised Trade Union leaders, and it will be interesting to see what amount of support it will be able to evoke. The movement will be carefully watched.

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THE GROWTH OF AND REVOLUTIONARY ELEMENT IN TRADES UNIONISM

The membership figures of trade unions for the year 1918 show an increase of 19% as compared with 1917. There are reported to be 1220 British unions with a membership of 6,624,000 as compared with one of 5,547,000 at the end of 1917. The women members have increased by one-third and now number about 1,250,000; the number of agricultural labourers has more than doubled. General labour has more than trebled since the beginning of the war.

A prominent Trades Union leader places the proportion of revolutionary trades unionists at 10% of the total membership. He states that during last year, feeling has been moving from right to left; he considers that the high water mark of revolutionary feeling was reached about July last.

A HEALTHY REACTION AGAINST DIRECT ACTION.

It is satisfactory to be able to record any sign of revolt on the part of Labour against direct action for political ends. At a large special meeting of the Horwich branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engine Drivers and Firemen on January 18th, the following resolution was passed by a large majority:

"That this meeting of Locomotive Drivers and Firemen strongly condemns the action of our Trade Union leaders in calling together a special Conference of the Trade Union Congress for purely political purposes, seeing that the old world has passed away and that the nation is still in chaos, while we welcome new ideas, we must act in a constitutional manner, seeing that all political parties during the Great War combined together to overthrow a powerful enemy; that instead of asking the members through their branches if they are prepared to strike along with other Trade Unions to enforce the Government to nationalise the mines, to withdraw our troops from Russia and to abolish Conscription, we think their time would be better spent in trying to reconstruct the country back in a state of real prosperity by all classes working together, instead of harassing the Government as much as they can by bringing direct action into these questions. It would amount to civil war. We are also not prepared to strike for anything; that should be done through the ballot box."

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Such expressions of opinion in an important Union are apt to be infectious.

#### THE LABOUR PARTY AND ACCESS TO POWER

Although the Labour Party continues to gain adherents, there is some dissension in its own ranks, caused principally by the Independent Labour Party. One of the strongest arguments in favour of a Labour Government as a stabilising influence is that its access to power would put an end to the present unhealthy attitude of deference with which Labour men are treated both outside and inside the House of Commons. The ordinary Labour man would be less suspicious if those who disagreed with him took off their gloves and fought him. He has never failed to appreciate an antagonist who uses towards him the pointed language to which he is accustomed from his mates.

It is not to be assumed that the Independent Labour Party itself is united. At a private meeting on January 23rd, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald said that his party is striving for a conference with the Left elements in Germany and Austria, in order to agree upon a formula. Paragraphs in the "Forward" and the "Socialist" show clearly the rift in the party ranks. In the "Forward" of January 17th, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald deploras the adherence of the Scottish Conference to the Third (Moscow) International, which he thinks may set back the influence of the party. He mentions that in the Spen Valley election Independent Labour Party speakers were kept off the platform for fear of antagonising the electors, who apparently are prejudiced against them as a whole on account of the extravagances of a few. On the other hand, the "Socialist" of January 10th contains an article jeering at Mr. Ramsay Macdonald and Mr. Arthur Henderson about the incident of the Scottish members having joined the Moscow International.

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THE POLICE STRIKERS

Although they now realise that their cause is lost, the strikers are still making spasmodic efforts to obtain the support of labour. The ex-policemen Zollner and Wilson are conducting a campaign in Wales. According to the "Daily Herald", the Poplar Borough Council decided on January 22nd, at the instance of Alderman John Scurr, to withhold the Council's contribution to the Metropolitan Police Rate - £23,067 - until the police strikers are reinstated.

PROFITEERING

The feeling aroused by the disclosures of profits made in the woollen industry has overshadowed all other questions. Speaking at Ashton-under-Lyne, Mr. Clynes said that the press disclosures of profits were doing more to sow the seeds of revolution than any speeches delivered on labour platforms. It is imperative that the Government case should be explained without delay, since there is a widespread belief among working men that the Government will condone the acts of profiteers as long as it has had a share of the spoil. In every part of the Kingdom one finds the opinion that while prosecutions for petty little over-charges are being brought against small retailers the big Trusts are allowed to go unpunished.

FEELING AMONG EX-SERVICE MEN

The "Daily Herald" is creating mischief amongst men of the "Z" Reserve. On January 24th it published a paragraph advising an agitation against the Class "Z" Reserve being called up for military purposes, if not "it will be too late and back to the slaughter will go the Class "Z" Reservist." My Leeds correspondent reports that there will be serious trouble in his neighbourhood if men of this Reserve are  
re-called/

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re-called to the Colours.

On January 23rd Albert Inkpin, the revolutionary secretary of the British Socialist Party, addressing a meeting of some 500 people in Walworth Road, said that if they were called up the men should respond, get their rifles and return home with them.

#### A GROUP OF AGITATORS IN ROTHERHAM

Fred Hedley, a naval deserter, has arrived in Rotherham and has announced that he is going to stay there with his followers, whom he terms the "Red Guard" until the revolution. He has addressed meetings of from 200 - 400 people and is usually accompanied by a revolutionary named Bown, the editor of the local "Worker."

Hedley denounced in violent language the police who endeavoured to keep order at his meetings; reports of his speeches, of which extracts are given below, have been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions for consideration.

#### January 16th

"During the war I was on a British Submarine Chaser. We deliberately - by instructions - sank some of our own submarines - our own, mark you - not Germans. What was this done for? Simply to keep up the hatred between the British and German working men. The poor devils who went to the bottom did not know, and the Capitalist Press would simply add one more vessel lost through enemy action."

#### January 17th

"We are here to organise the Red Army, and if the Government can get the White Army up against us, then by God they will find I can use a machine gun, or load a 12 pounder, or stoke a boiler in a battleship. The working classes want to do the same here as they have done in Russia. They have got the Boss on the run there. We should have to fight the Police and the Army: we should be up against the Government and the Welsh Magician, but we can raise an army. I can use a machine gun if it is necessary."

#### January 19th

"You have heard reports of raids on different towns on the East Coast such as Scarborough, Hartlepool and other places. That was done by British battleships, not Germans. You know of cases where our own people have been mown down. Yes, mown down deliberately by some of our own countrymen."

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THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CLUB

This Club, a successor to the old Communist Club, is in grave financial difficulties. Very few shares have been taken up by the members, who "want a first-class Club but object to paying for it." Unless some money is forthcoming the mortgagee is likely to foreclose.

MR. GEORGE LANSBURY

Mr. Lansbury has been visiting M. Litvinoff in Copenhagen, and he has now left for Stockholm en route for Helsingfors. He is said to have obtained from Litvinoff permission to make a long stay in Russia. In an interview he stated that his party is strongly opposed to making the Border States a bulwark against Bolshevism.

MR. JOHN McLEAN

It has long been obvious to the ordinary observer that John McLean is insane; his colleagues have now come to the same conclusion as a result of his constant references to "spies" being present at public and private meetings: The decisive point was his severance from the Labour College at Glasgow and his abuse of his former colleagues.

SINN FEIN IN GREAT BRITAIN

Irishmen in London are devoting much attention to the forthcoming Albert Hall meeting, which they regard with mixed feelings owing to the possibilities of a small audience and of opposition. Arrangements have been made to distribute handbills advocating the meeting at every Roman Catholic Church within a 25 mile radius of London. A large number of priests have been circularised, as have the principals of all the Convents and Colleges in the London area. Concerts are being held to raise the  
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necessary money; £50 deposit has been paid and a further sum of £100 is being raised by branches of the Gaelic Leagues and the Irish Self-Determination League. It is announced that the chief speakers will be Arthur Griffith, William O'Brien, Countess Markievicz and Eoin McNeill.

Complaints are frequent that much of the money subscribed in London, as in Liverpool, to the Irish National Loan is not going further than the collectors' pockets.

It is reported that there is an active Sinn Fein organisation in Yorkshire, which has its centre in Sheffield. A Catholic priest in that city has formed committees and is holding secret meetings in Rotherham, Dalton, Maltby and Dinnington and is said to be a dangerous agitator.

A branch of the Irish Self-Determination League has been formed in Normanton and two additional branches are in process of formation at Bradford.

In Liverpool efforts are being made to enrol the more respectable Irish element by means of musical clubs.

The Irish Labour Party in Glasgow is making considerable headway; it is reported to be taking over the military side of Sinn Fein and to have arranged to carry out the training of the Sinn Fein volunteers. It has agreed to grant financial and moral support to the International Union of Ex-Service Men as "a militant organisation for the overthrow of militarism and capitalism."

A new branch has been formed to cover the parishes of St. Joseph, St. Columbia and St. Alwyn.

#### IRELAND

Last week there was a slight decrease in Sinn Fein outrages, especially in the Dublin Metropolitan area. The slight/



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slight decrease can be entirely attributed to Sinn Fein being fully occupied with the elections. A police barrack was attacked at Drombane (Co. Tipperary) by a large band of armed men. This is now the seventh barrack upon which a large scale attack has been made in the past few weeks.

The motor permit strike pickets have been active in the provinces. On two occasions parties of ladies and gentlemen have been held up on their way to dances and forced to leave their vehicles which were destroyed or injured.

The result of the municipal elections in Dublin and the provinces, excluding Ulster, leaves Sinn Fein with a majority over any other <sup>one</sup> party, but it remains to be seen whether labour, which received the next highest number of votes, will join forces with Sinn Fein and thus form a working majority. On the whole it is probable that Sinn Fein did not receive as many votes as they expected. In Ulster the Unionists secured roughly half the total number of seats obtainable.

At Cork City demobilised soldiers resented the presence of a Sinn Fein picket at one of the polling stations in Grattan Street and quickly dispersed them with their fists. Shortly afterwards another party of Sinn Feiners armed with revolvers appeared on the scene. A fight ensued and the Sinn Feiners were eventually driven off, but not before they had fired several shots at close range and inflicted a bullet wound on one ex-soldier.

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## APPENDIX

THE RUSSIAN CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

In view of the rôle which the Russian Co-operative Societies will shortly play in British and European politics and of the attitude of British Labour to the Russian question, some details of the organisation are of interest; they are taken in part from material supplied to the current issue of "The Co-operative News" by Mr. Frederick Rockell, joint secretary of the Russo-British Co-operative Information Bureau.

"In Russia, in all matters of trade and industry, the Co-operative movement has become supreme ..... Capitalistic trading has practically become non-existent in Russia. This is not altogether due to Bolshevik rule. The breakdown of capitalistic trading was already in progress before the Bolshevik Revolution put the Soviet system into power. Capitalist trade and industry in Russia were run very largely on a purely local basis. Thus, when the transport system broke down, and this breakdown had already occurred before the first revolution, the private traders had no organised national system capable of dealing with the difficult situation which had arisen.

"But co-operation at least had the rudiments of such an organisation. Scattered throughout Russia were a number of separate and distinct Wholesale Societies - called Unions in Russia - and at about the time when the Russo-British Co-operative Bureau came into existence, this call for greater unity resulted in turning the Moscow Union of Consumers' Societies into the All-Russian Union. The various local Russian Wholesale Societies became federated into one huge concern operating throughout Russia. Similarly in Siberia, there were a number of local or district Unions of butter-making co-operative societies outside the Union of Siberian Creamery Associations, and these were federated into the Union of Siberian Co-operative Unions - or the Zakupsbyt, which, in turn, is federated with the All-Russian Union.

"Credit societies for giving banking facilities to societies of peasant producers had long existed throughout Russia; the organisation

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which knit them together was the Moscow Narodny Bank.

"Narodny Bank literally means 'People's Bank', but more properly translated 'Co-operative Bank'. Just as private trading broke down in Russia, so also did private banking collapse; especially after the revolution. The bulk of the population in Russia are peasants, and the majority of these are co-operators. They had no confidence in the private banks, and even the bourgeoisie began to draw out their money from the private banks and to place it for safe keeping with the Co-operative Bank.

"Distribution, production, and banking are all very much interwoven in the co-operative movement of Russia. The Centrosoyus, or Russian Wholesale, has vast productive undertakings. The Zakupsbyt is concerned with selling its members' produce as well as supplying them with goods. The Narodny Bank helps to finance not only the consumers' societies but also the agricultural producers; besides supplying them with seeds, manures, and agricultural implements.

"There has recently been established the 'Selskosoyus' or All-Russian Purchasing Union of Agricultural Co-operation. Then there is the Central Association of Flax Growers, the Northern Union of Co-operative Timber Associations, and the Union of Co-operative Tar Manufacturing Associations. Besides these, there are widespread co-operative organisations for dealing separately with eggs, potatoes, and grain, as well as the long-established butter-making co-operative organisations in Siberia.

"The Russo-British Bureau is not itself a trading organisation. It is an Information Bureau. Actual trade is outside its province. But the Wholesale Societies of England, Scotland, and Ireland are members of the Bureau, which is useful in serving as a sort of clearing house of views on trade from the respective points of view of Russian and British co-operation."

The following facts and figures were given by Mr. A.M. Azantcheyev, spokesman of the Russian delegation to the International Co-operative Congress in Paris in June, 1919.

"The exact figure of actual members of distributive co-operation on December 31st, 1918, stood at 10,269,757; at present it has increased to nearly 12,000,000. This refers to the number of heads of families only, and counting each family as consisting of five persons, we realise that about 60,000,000 persons, or about a third of the population of pre-war Russia, has entrusted to co-operation their provisioning with prime necessaries. I must add that about 80 per cent of the membership of the movement is formed of peasants.

"The above mentioned 12,000,000 persons are organised in approximately 25,000 individual co-operative distributive societies, of which 20 societies count

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over 10,000 members each, while the Moscow distributive store, 'Kooperatsia', counts over 210,000 actual members.

"In their turn, these distributive societies are organised into local unions, of which there are at present about 500, and these local unions are again united in the All-Russian Central Union of Consumers' Societies, 'The Centro-Soyuz'.

"The capital of our Central Union amounts to about 100,000,000 roubles, while our total turnover during 1918 reached 1,000,000,000 roubles.

"Co-operative industries, in other words industrial undertakings controlled by various co-operative organisations, are steadily growing in numbers and importance, from the point of view of the quantity of goods they are bringing to the market. The yearly output of the undertakings owned by the All-Russian Central Union of Consumers' Societies represents commodities valued at 150,000,000 roubles.

"The Russian co-operative organisations publish over 200 periodical publications, many of which are illustrated papers, and also over 10,000 books and over 5,000,000 copies of pamphlets and booklets per year."

#### THE MOSCOW NARODNY BANK

According to the recently issued "People's Year Book (the Co-operative Annual):

"The position of the Moscow Narodny Bank at the beginning of 1919 is shown by the approximate estimate of over 9,000 co-operative organisations owning 202,307 shares representing a total capital of 50,738,500 roubles; while the expansion of affairs is indicated by the increase of branches in 1917-18 from two to 36, by the increase of the deposit and current accounts from 33,000,000 roubles to 677,000,000 between January 1st, 1917, and August 1st, 1918, and the total of the balance sheet, which amounted to 1,283,000,000 roubles on November 1st, 1918, as compared with 83,000,000 roubles on January 1st, 1917. As between January 1st, 1917, and November 1st, 1918, the credit afforded by the bank to co-operative societies rose from 33,000,000 roubles to 174,000,000. It should also be stated that the value of articles supplied by the Goods Department of the Bank to co-operative societies amounted to 46,799,000 roubles for the period January-October in 1918 - a sum which may be compared with the volume of trading transactions in 1914 and 1916, when the year's figures stood at 897,400 and 15,378,300 roubles, respectively."