## On Mandates and Soviets

By H. N. BRAILSFORD in London Herald.

The powerfully reasoned letter, on "Direct Action" by Mr. Vernon Hartshorn in the "Observer" raises fundamental issues which call for clear and decided thinking. Mr. Hartshorn starts from the orthodox democratic position, but he argues that the triple alliance, or any other section of the labor movement, has a perfect right to defeat the policy of the government by striking, because in certain matters it is acting without a "mandate" from the country. The government has behind it the imman-e majority of a parliament recently elected on something like a democratic franchise. It is doing, or is about to do, ceratin things to which we violently object, and its policy, as the by elections show, is not at all popular. The plain man has recovered from the first intoxication of victory. He is, or can be, induced to be uneasy about conscription. Nor does he, if one can bring him to think about it, like the Russian adventure. I imagine that one could frame questions for a referendum if that were possible, which would result in a heavy vote against the government. Take the conscription issue, for example. The position is, I take it, that conscription has been prolonged till the end of March; it will be dropped then, if Mr. Churchill can raise among the unemployed the immense professional army which he requires. If one could put these two questions:

(1) Do you think that after cutting down the German army to 700,000 men we need, or could have, a paid army of 900,000?

(2) Do you think that after forcing the Germans to abolish conscription, we ought in any circumstances to adopt it ourselves? I imagine that the answer to both would be an overwhelming "No."

**The Blockade of Medicines.**

Again, if some of the facts about our intervention in Russia could be made known, they would certainly excite a general movement of revolt and disgust. The trouble is that only the readers of the Daily Herald, the "Manchester Guardian," and the "Daily News" are allowed to know these facts. I should like to take a referendum, for example, on the issue of the blockade of Russia and Hungary. With typhus raging in winter and cholera in summer, we exclude all medicines and drugs from Russia, and even forbid the Danish Red Cross to send a consignment? Our refusal to allow Red Cross stores to reach the soviet army (not to mention the civil population) is surely a plain violation of the Geneva convention—as barbarous in its way as the occasional escapades of the German submarine commanders (always denied and disavowed) in sinking our hospital ships. The "country" is not behind such a policy as that. Again, if we could point out clearly to the plain man, that for all the talk about the league of nations, and in spite of this solemn covenant, which pledges us all to mediate and arbitrate before we fight, we have made war on Russia and again on Hungary (a little state which started no terror, attacked no neighbor, and asked only to be let alone), without a thought of arbitration or mediation or even of negotiation, he would not vote for the Churchill policy. The simple fact is that under the covenant of this league one may make war indefinitely on any government one dislikes by the simple expedient of refusing to "recognize" it. Henceforward, any genuinely socialist government will always be outlawed in this way, and excluded from the benefits of the league. Certainly one could get a working-class, perhaps also a liberal, vote against this policy.

**How to Get Mandates.**

Mr. Hartshorn is a shrewd tactician, who puts his case on the basis which invites the least dissent. But, after all, can anyone recall a government which escaped the charge of acting without a mandate, or even against its mandate? That is a commonplace of politics, and as venerable as the British constitution itself. Is it not time to ask whether our complaint is really one that lies merely against this government? May it not lie against "democracy" itself as we practice it? Mr. Hartshorn half suggests this when he points out that no trade union would allow its representatives in vital matters to act without a direct "mandate," and in the last resort it would make sure by taking a ballot of its member. That is true, and the moral is, I think, that industrial experience has thrown up a much better model of "democracy" than our parlimentary institutions, which even now enjoy a wholly undeserved prestige. The "soviet" is still an experimental institution, which has varied a good deal in Russia, shows some fresh features in Hungary, and may be modified by experience and the needs of each country. One of the chief virtues of the soviet as an institution is precisely that it provides a means by which the whole government is, all its actions is constantly under the direct control of the electorate. This government has got its blank cheque for five years. We can't stop it, nor can we even put pressure on our local member who support it, save by the futile device of sending him letters and resolution. Five years hence (or less) Mr. George will find another good election cheering issue, and go on it to the country for another blank cheque. If we had any form of the soviet system each constituency would have its elected standing council, always ready to debate each issue as it came up. The council would have chosen the M. P., to whom it would send detailed instructions from time to time. It could "recall" him at any moment. If he went wrong, and put another man in his place. On the council itself each member, responsible to a definite body of people who know each other and act readily together (the miners from one pit, the spinners from one factory, the teachers etc.), is also liable to recall and subject to instructions. If we feel strongly about anything, be it conscription or Russia, here is an elastic instrument of government by which we can insure that our will at least whatever our numbers are, will have the proportionate effect which it deserves. If we want a governing machine which really will be sensitive to public opinion, and can be applied to each issue of the day rather often than once in five years, our model is not parliament but the soviet.

**"What Is Democracy?"**

This whole question of "What is Democracy?" raises bigger issues than one can attempt to tackle in a short article. In Berlin I found the majority socialists appealing for support against the more advanced parties on the strength of their motto, "Through Democracy to Socialism." Put in that way, the motto is a challenge. It ought to be reversed. Can one have political democracy without socialism? Till I had fought an election myself as a labor candidate I never fully realized the countless ways in which every employer—one might almost say every member of the propertied class—can and does make opinion and govern by the use of his indirect moneyed power. It is enough to look at the function of the newspaper. Day by day, week by week, year by year, the capitalist press makes the thinking of this country. The printing machine weaves the mind of this country as literally as one may weave wool. The effect of the selected news, the ascendency of the suggested point of view, the unofficial censorship of perversive bias, outweigh the benefit to the workers of every lowering of the franchise. In this world, as it is, there can be no democracy, and because there can be for the masses no thought that is independent of this direction and manipulation from above. The majesty of "democracy" is not today a thing that need deter us in a clear case from "direct action" for a political end—be it to save socialism abroad or to thwart militarism at home. But if we value this weapon we must think out the means by which it can be controlled and exercised by the whole conscious body of the workers.

## RECONSTRUCTION WORK IN LETTERMAN HOSPITAL

One of the methods used in the reconstruction of wounded at this big San Francisco hospital is massaging of the limbs and body. The photograph shows nurses doing the massaging. This is one of the best-equipped government hospitals in the United States and is located at the Presidio.

## In Italy

J. RAMSY MACDONALD, in the Glasgow Forward.

Long journeys on the continent are as expensive as a prince's ransom. Places in trains are not only dear, but there are none to be had. But a prince who was traveling in the Paris-Rome express became ill, or found other attractions, or for other reason could not go, and we, directed deftly by Providence to the right place at the right moment, found his kingdom just coming into the market, and without more ado we made it ours. Thus we got to Rome.

We had gone to bed in the plains, but with the dim outline of hills approaching; we got up in a country which was a rumble-tumble of minor eminences—a sort of disorderly progeny playing at the feet of their mighty, austere parents, who stood behind. The weather-beaten houses with Venetian shutters, the camel-like churches with long necks and hunched-up backs, the olives and the mulberries, all told us we were in Italy, and the homely and pleasant splashes of the international broom gave that gentle touch to the old and familiar which made the new all the fresher and more special.

That night we found Rome blazing in light and deafened by tram gongs; lictors and vestal virgins had gone, and we were afraid to look very specially for them, lest we should find ourselves in the company of suspicious characters. So we again went to bed. Next morning we plunged into the mazes of Italian socialism and the international, and for two days wended our way through them, sustained by hospitality and good humor such as is difficult to find outside of Italy. The Italian is a fiery furnace whose heart is really a genial domestic hearth, but which flares up and sets the house on fire if one is rash enough to put a blower on. There are many foolish people putting the blowers on in Italy at the present moment.

The state of the country is bad. Whoever tries to change Italian lire into the money of France or Switzerland is made painfully aware of the deterioration of Italian credit. Food is still scarce, and is, of course, dear; coal is almost as rare as gold; some insignificant bits of clothing which I had to purchase cost me almost as much as would have adorned me from top to toe before the war. Wages have gone up and hours have gone down, but that has no influence on the minds of the people.

One morning I noticed a new bill on the walls, and made it out to be a strongly worded attack upon the profiteers. During the day small crowds stood round it, reading it and discussing it. Wherever I passed a copy of the bill, it had its readers, and they seemed to be drawn from various classes. The unsettlement of the Italian mind is great, and those who know Italy best are least inclined to express views upon what is to happen.

Undoubtedly the only party in the state is the socialist party; the rest are collections of miscellaneous elements, bound by fear and interest, together with a nationalist section which is frankly predatory and would put in a claim for the moon if any transport existed between them and it. But, whilst events tend to divide and disrupt and discourage these groups, the socialists go on from strength to strength.

The Italian party is a party of the left. Up to 1912 it was dominated by the right, but the Tripoli war winnowed the chaff from the wheat. Those who supported that war were expelled, and the pruning strengthened the tree. Then the party suspected it was being dominated by Freemasons, and at the conference at Ancona in 1914 it gave its members the choice of ceasing to be Freemasons or ceasing to be members. That year, when we were entering the war, the Italian party was steadily adding to its strength. It had 1,800 branches at home and abroad, and 60,000 paying members. Its elected members controlled four provinces out of 69, 400 communes out of 8,000, and it had 50 members of parliament out of 500.

Throughout the war the party has taken up practically the same stand as we did. It exposed the true character of the conflict; it saw that the war would end with a peace of violence and imperial conquest; it strove to secure an international democratic movement, so as to take advantage of the peace when it came. Thus with the Swiss party, it organized the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences.

It has also had to endure the same flood of slander as we have had, but the Italian working classes are less credulous of capitalists tales than are ours, and are less moved by the trained chorus of capitalist newspapers. Still, nearly every one of the members of the committees whom we met had been in jail. The Italian socialist movement retains the honored tradition of being led by men who have been in prison, and who are therefore respected.

But the persecution and the calling of men to the colors had a damaging effect upon the party as a whole. Its branches fell to 700, its membership to 30,000, and the greater number of socialist mayors were turned out of office by edict of the government, and some of them prosecuted. Now the tide has turned. The men who are demobilized are full of discontent, and are crowding to socialist meetings. The membership (on a doubled subscription) is now 45,000 (2,000 being in Trieste and 1,500 in Gorizia); by the end of the year it is expected to reach 80,000, included in 2,000 branches.

At the same time there is a great revival of trade union activity. Before the war the General Confederation of Labor had 300,000 members; now it has 800,000. In Italy, as in Great Britain, the sections who professed the most heroic creeds became the most windy imperialists, and now the old Italian syndicalist movement is for the time being moribund, after being temporarily swallowed up in jingoism.

At the present moment there is the most complete understanding between the administrative committee of the socialist party and the executive of the trade unions, and they are watching the trend of events and preparing for whatever action may be necessary. It is admitted on all sides that the new impetus in Italy came from the Russian revolution, and all sections are united in the most bitter opposition to the allied attempt to destroy that revolution.

The Italian workman declines to go into any nicety on this matter. He looks upon it as a whole. He knows his governing classes too well to be taken in by their professions. He grasps quite definitely that if the present Russian government goes it is liberty and socialism that go—not only in Russia, but in Hungary, and perhaps throughout Europe. He is not a bolshevist, but to him bolshevism is a mere stage in revolutionary evolution, as jacobinism was in France, and he has too much sound political instinct to become a tool for the destruction of the revolution. Therefore, the demand of "hands off Russia" is the one thing he cares about. To him it is the shibboleth test of socialist rectitude.

In the same direct way he considers the international. He asks you, in a tone of surprised intelligence, if you should even think of disagreeing with him: "How can we co-operate with people like Scheidemann, Vandervelde, Branting, Albert Thomas, who have violated the principles of the international and have prevented the working classes from democratic thought and action during the war?"

A well-informed socialist journalist put it to me this way: 'It is difficult to say what the Italian movement is driving at. It is unsettled; it has ceased to believe in parliamentary democracy; it is revolutionary, and it symbolizes Russia as the new order of proletariat power and all its enemies as the old order of imperialist capitalism. The ruling classes are very frightened. Anything might precipitate a serious crisis."

Of the fears of the ruling classes I had good evidence. We had a great meeting in Milan, thousands packing a hall about three-quarters as big as the St. Andrew's hall, but with every seat taken out, and there was one of the most memorable meetings I have ever addressed. When we left we found regiment after regiment drawn up in the streets, the soldiers standing with fixed bayonets, and in the center of the city by the cathedral, there was another great military display, with fire engines, water hoses, and I was told, machine guns.

On Sunday, I saw motor lorries full of armed soldiers careering swiftly along the streets, and I was told that this was part of the policy of intimidation. The foundations of Italian society are certainly not secure. The parliament must meet in a few weeks, and the view is general that if the opposition—particularly the socialists—wish to do so, they can bring down the government at once. Turati expressed that view quite definitely to me.

But the condition of the country is so bad and its financial position so evil that the socialists doubt if it is not best to let the cracks go deeper before they strike their blow. Many a time did I think, as the situation was being unfolded to me, of the strange madhouse fact that from the heights of their ignorance and vanity it was to this state, so tottering and broken that an opposition hesitates to assume the responsibiliti es of government that the four Paris gentlemen are giving problems of such political difficulties and material cost to solve.

At the end of the Corso, in Rome, and on the face of the capitol, rises a high, white monument to the glory of the House of Savoy, with a colossal gilt King Victor bestriding an enormous horse as the central figure. These heroic monuments are in ruins all over Rome. The pedestals of some of them have borne different statues as times and heroes changed and even the bodies of a few have borne the heads of different men. When I rose from my seat at the table of the cafe in the Piazza Venezia for the last time, and bade adieu to that delightful square, where one can lazily contemplate busy crowds and be soothed by the palace opposite, I looked up at the gilt figure set against the great background of blinding white marble and wondered whose head would be on that statue when my children come upon their pilgrimage to Rome.

## Appeal by Polish Communist Party

Furnished by our Eastern Correspondent.

(Following is an extract from an appeal made by the Polish Communist party. This appeal shows exactly where the class conscious working men and women stand in their affiliations. It also demonstrates how dangerous it is for the workers to be caried away by cries of national independence, without heeding its own class interests. We have seen how national independence worked in Finland; we see how it is working in Poland and in the Baltic privinces of Russia. There is only one way for the people to become independent, and that is to become independent as a class. Real self-determination by the working class. It will be remembered that the present reactionary government of Poland which represents a clique of capitalists, bankers, landowners, and priests, is being aided by the "great powers" in a crusade against the government of the working class, the Soviet government of Russia. For the price of expansion promised by those powers, Poland is being used in the same manner as the Czecho-Slovaks had been and are still being used in Russia and Hungary. And this is the "independence" that the powers have so generously bestowed upon Poland. In addition, the Polish troops have been engaged in the most brutal and beastly massacres of the Jews, before which the most frightful German atrocities fade into insignificance. And these are called upon to "save civilization from bolshevist terrorism." N. N.)

Translated the appeal reads as follows:

"The Russian workman and peasants have been the first to overthrow the rule of owners and exploiters. They have introduced all over Russia a new system—the socialist system. The Russian capitalist is not going to skin Russian workmen any more, because the people have taken away from the exploiters their means of exploitation and converted them into social ownership.

"Following the example of Russia the working class of the central powers entered the struggle.

"We are being told that the Polish people have already obtained everything they have been striving for. They point out to us that Poland has become independent. They endeavor to divert your attenion from your most essential interests, from the revolution. They incite you against the Germans, Ruthenians, Czechs, Russians and Jews. The Polish bourgeoisie has already begun a fight against the Ruthenians in eastern Galicia and against Lithuanian working men and peasants. In white Russia they are instigating ferocious and bloody massacres of the Jews. And all this is being done with the object to imbue the Polish working class with the spirit of hatred toward their brother workers of Germany, Russia, Bohemia and the Jewish working men.

"The history of all former revolutions teaches us that the new social order, the rule of toil and juseice can be ushered in only as the result of an armed direct struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, not through the attempt to convince the bourgeoisie through parliamentary debates.

"If we would avoid new fetters being fastened on us, we must start our own revolution, we must overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie and transfer all power to the Soviet in the cities and villages of Poland, being guided by the deep conviction that these Soviets will become the centers of the struggle of large proletarian masses.

"Let then all countries remain without classes, and the wealthy without wealth.

"Working men and women! All the promises that the constituent assembly will help the working class are lies. The people have nothing good to expect from the assembly. The main object of the assembly is to suppress the working class. Supported by the rule of the assembly the Polish bourgeoisie will commence a crusade against working men's organizations, against the right to strike, against "idle" unemployed. The bourgeoise will undertake to extend working hours; legalize starvation wages and drive us into the country to perform hard labor for the big land owners. The constituent assembly will sanction exclusive laws against workmen and peasants. It will pass the budget of the nationalist government and will impose new taxes upon the poor. But what is most important, the assembly will introduce compulsory military service that will furnish the government with soldiers for the conducting of war against revolutionary Russia and peasant Ukraina."

—THINK IN INTEREST—SAVE—

## PARIS PLANS GREAT TRIBUTE TO LIVING AND DEAD HEROES

By HENRY WOOD
(United Press Correspondent.)

Paris.—(By Mail.)—France has just outlined the general nature of the victory celebrations that are to mark for France and the allies the close of the war.

They are to last for three days, and it is planned to make them more imposing than any triumphal entry that has been staged since the days of the victorious return to Rome of the legions of the Caesars. France's victory celebration, imposing as it may be, will, however, also be a trifle more democratic and a trifle more human.

The first day of the great celebration will be given over entirely to a tribute to the memory of the dead. In all probability the millions of dead whose memory will be revered will far exceed the actual number of living troops that will be able later to march under the arch of triumph and down the Champs Elysees in the grand final triumphal march.

For the commemoration of the dead, the great arch of triumph will be draped in countless thousands of yards of mourning. An all-night death watch will be maintained by picked troops, and on the morning of the beginning of the three days' celebrations, the widows, the orphans and the surviving relatives of the millions who perished during the war will be escorted to the Pantheon where there will be buried and deposited on behalf of France the ashes of dead soldiers gathered from the battlefieds of France, and mixed with the earth of the battlefields on which they fell and from which their remains were exhumed.

This national interment in France's temple of immortality will be symbolic of the interment of all the 1,700,000 French soldiers who gave up their lives in the great cause.

On the second day will come that long-waited-for event that for over four years was the far-away dream of every French poilu—the victorious return to Paris of the regiments and divisions from the front, their passage under the great arch of triumph, and their triumphal march down the Champs Elysees to the Palace de la Concorde, then the sweep down the great boulevards to the Palace de la Republique, with every inch of the way jammed with wives, daughters, mothers and sweethearts. The poilu has long dreamed that that moment would repay him for all the years and sufferings of the war.

On the last day of the celebrations, all of the French provinces will gather in the Tuileries gardens and welcome back to their arms their restored sisters of Alsace and Lorraine. Delegations from each of the French provinces, composed largely of women and girls, and wearing the native costume of their particular province, will participate in this festival.

France has no intention of barring her allies from the big celebration and detachments of allied troops will participate in the big triumphal march.

When the French poilus and the soldiers of the allies march through the arch of triumph the flags which Germany captured in 1870 will be given a place of honor in the procession. The peace treaty calls for the immediate return of all colors captured by the Prussians in the course of the 1870-71 fighting, and it is hoped in Paris that the regimental emblems will be on hand for the great celebration. For nearly 50 years these flags have been on exhibition in Berlin.

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