

# The Choice of J. H. Thomas.

# Workers' Dreadnought

FOR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM.

Founded and Edited by  
SYLVIA PANKHURST

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## THE WAGE SYSTEM.

By Peter Kropotkin.

In their plans for the reconstruction of society, the Collectivists commit, in our opinion, a double error. Whilst speaking of the abolition of the rule of capital, they wish, nevertheless, to maintain two institutions which form the very basis of that rule; namely, representative government and the wage system.

sentation, of the representation of minorities, and other Parliamentary Utopias.

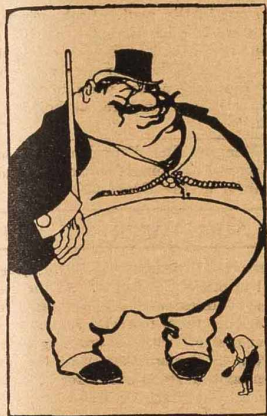
In a word, they are trying to discover the undiscoverable; that is to say, a method of delegation which shall represent the myriad varied interests of the nation; but they are being forced to recognise that they are upon a false track, and confidence in delegation is passing away.

It is only the Social Democrats and Collectivists who are not losing this confidence, who are attempting to maintain so-called national representation; and this is what we cannot understand.

If our Anarchist principles do not suit them, if they think them inapplicable, they ought, at least, as it seems to us, to try to discover what other system of organisation could well correspond to a society without capitalists or landlords. But to take the middle-class system—a system already in its decadence, a vicious system, if ever there was one—and to proclaim this system (with a few innocent corrections, such as the imperative mandate, or the Referendum, the uselessness of which has been demonstrated already) good for a society that has passed through the Social Revolution, is, what seems to us, absolutely incomprehensible, unless under the name of Social Revolution they understand something very different from Revolution, some petty botching of existing middle class rule.

### Proudhon's Materialist System.

If, later, Proudhon took up this same idea, that again is easy to understand. What was he seeking in his Mutualist system, if not to render Capital less offensive, despite the maintenance of private property, which he detested to the bottom of his heart, but which he believed



WHY?

As for representative government, it remains absolutely incomprehensible to us, how intelligent men (and they are not wanting amongst the Collectivists) can continue to be the partisans of National and Municipal Parliaments, after all the lessons on this subject bestowed on us by history, whether in England or in France, in Germany, Switzerland, or the United States.

### The Failure of Parliament.

Whilst Parliamentary rule is to be seen everywhere falling to pieces; whilst its principles in themselves—and no longer merely their applications—are being criticised in every direction, how can intelligent men, calling themselves Revolutionary Socialists, seek to maintain a system already condemned to death?

Representative government is a system which was elaborated by the middle class to make head against royalty and, at the same time, to maintain and augment their domination of the workers. It is the characteristic form of the middle-class rule. But even its most ardent admirers have never seriously contended that a Parliament or a Municipal body does actually represent a nation or a city; the more intelligent are aware that this is impossible. By upholding Parliamentary rule, the middle class have been simply seeking to oppose a dam betwixt themselves and royalty, or betwixt themselves and the territorial aristocracy, without giving liberty to the people.

It is moreover plain that, as the people become conscious of their interests, and as the variety of those interests increases, the system becomes unworkable. And this is why the democracies of all countries are seeking for different palliatives and cannot find them. They are trying the Referendum, and discovering that it is worthless; they prate of proportional repre-

### Why Labour Notes?

The same with regard to the wage system. After having proclaimed the abolition of private property and the possession in common of the instruments of production, how can they sanction the maintenance of the wage system under any form? And yet that is what the Collectivists are doing when they praise the efficiency of labour notes.

That the English Socialists of the early part of this century should invent labour notes is incomprehensible. They were simply trying to



WHY NOT?

necessary to guarantee the individual against the State? Further, if economists, belonging more or less to the middle class, also admit their labour notes, it is not surprising.

### To Save Private Property.

It matters little to them whether the worker be paid in labour notes or in coin stamped with the effigy of king or Republic. They want to save, in the coming overthrow, private property in inhabited houses, the soil, the mills; or, at least, in inhabited houses and the capital necessary for the production of manufactures. And to maintain this property, labour notes will answer very well.

If the labour note can be exchanged for jewels and carriages, the owner of house property will willingly accept it as rent. And as long as the inhabited house, the field and the mill belong to individual owners, so long will it be requisite to pay them in some way before they allow you to work in their mills, or to lodge in their houses. And it will also be requisite to pay wages to the worker, either in gold or in paper money, or in labour notes exchangeable for all sorts of commodities.

But how can this new form of wages, the labour note, be sanctioned by those who admit that houses, fields, mills are no longer private property—that they belong to the Commune or the nation?

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reconcile Capital and Labour. They repudiated all idea of laying violent hands upon the property of the capitalists. They were so little of revolutionaries that they declared themselves ready to submit even to Imperial rule, if that rule would favour their co-operative societies. They remained middle class men at the bottom, if charitable ones; and this is why (Engels has said so in his Preface to the Communist Manifesto of 1848) the Socialists of that period were to be found amongst the middle class, whilst the advanced workmen were Communists.

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## THE CHOICE OF J. H. THOMAS. THE KING OR THE WORKERS?

J. H. Thomas declares that if the members of his Union decide that he shall not be, at the same time, one of the King's Privy Councillors, and an official of the National Union of Railwaymen, he will resign the position given to him by the workers, in order to retain the position given to him by the King.

J. H. Thomas puts the King's interest before the Workers' interest; that is clear, fellow-worker.

Do you consider, fellow-worker, that Thomas can faithfully serve both the workers and the King?

Read the oath he was forced to take when he became a Privy Councillor. Let every worker read that oath and understand its meaning. Show it to every worker in your shop: make a point of that; get all your friends to read it.

Here it is:—

### The Privy Councillor's Oath.

"I do swear by Almighty God to be a true and faithful Servant unto the King's Majesty, as one of His Majesty's Privy Council. I will not know or understand of any manner of thing to be attempted against His Majesty's Person, Honour, Crown, or Dignity Royal but I will let and withstand the same to the uttermost of my Power, and either cause it to be revealed to His Majesty Himself, or to such of His Privy Council as shall advertise His Majesty of the same, I will, in all things to be moved, treated, and debated in Council, faithfully and truly declare my Mind and Opinion, according to my Heart and Conscience, and will keep secret all matter committed and revealed unto me, or that shall be treated secretly in Council. And if any of the said Treaties or Counsels shall touch any of the Counsellors, I will not reveal it unto him, but will keep the same until such time as, by the Consent of His Majesty, or of the Council, Publication shall be made thereof. I will to my uttermost bear Faith and Allegiance unto the King's Majesty, and will assist and defend all Jurisdictions, Pre-eminences, and Authorities, granted to His Majesty, and annexed to the Crown by Acts of Parliament, or otherwise, against all Foreign Princes' Persons, Prelates, States or Potentates. And generally in all things I will do as a faithful and true Servant ought to do to His Majesty.—So help me God."

Observe, fellow-worker, that Thomas is compelled by that oath to confide to the King, any private business that may belong to the workers; but the private business of the King he must not confide to anyone. The King includes the Government, legally and actually in this country to-day, unless there is a conflict between King and Parliament, in which case Thomas is pledged to the King.

If the King is opposing a Labour Government, Thomas has promised to stand by the King.

If the Government sends troops against the strikers, Thomas is pledged not to tell the danger threatening the workers. He must keep the secret that the troops are coming. He must help the troops against the strikers, because they are the soldiers of the King and his Government, for Thomas is a King's Privy Councillor and has sworn to uphold the King's authority and that of his Government, and he has sworn to maintain the Honour and Dignity of the Crown.

Thomas is not a Socialist: he has said so: Privy Councillors cannot be Socialists.

Thomas is not even much of a democrat or he would not object to letting the majority of his Union decide whether their officials should, or should not, be King's officials.

In spite of all this, we fancy, fellow-worker, that the N.U.R. will let Thomas keep a job in the Union and be a Privy Councillor besides.

This is just one more proof of the urgent need for building up a Revolutionary Industrial Union of workers pledged to overthrow Capitalism in favour of Communism.

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