

THE NEW SPUR

BECAUSE THE WORKERS NEED A SPUR MORE THAN EVER

If They are to conquer Bread, Freedom, and Roses.

Edited and Published by Guy A. Aldred, at his office, 145 Queen St, Glasgow, C1. Subscription voluntary because of the terrible poverty prevailing. As many copies are circulated free, comrades who can are invited to make donations to the publishing and printing deficit fund. Printed in France by the editor's Anti-Parliamentary Comrades at their own press, because the Bakunin Press no longer exists, and because no printing press in Britain would undertake the risk of printing.

The Pioneers of Anti- Parliamentarism :

MARINUS VAN DER LUBBE

CLASS-FIGHTER or PROVOCATEUR? by the Deed Why the Sacrifice?

from a Manifesto of the Dutch Van der Lubbe Committee

Marinus Van Der Lubbe : a young worker of Leyden (Holland).

Through experience, reading and discussing with other workers he became revolutionary : a Council of Action Communist.

Among others of the unemployed he made his acquaintance with the police baton and class justice casts him into prison. Immediately he is free he pursues his propagande. « Workers, arise against your exploiters ; your very life depend upon it. The workers revolution is the only issue. » And above all : « Act for yourselves. The party chiefs, the high priests of the unions and syndicates cannot make the revolution for you nor do they wish it. They are accomplices used by the capitalists to keep you quiet and peaceful. »

He goes to Germany ; there, class contrasts are still more marked. The big capitalists organise the terror by means of bands of fascists, because the crisis leaves them no other safety than the reduction of the workers' scale of existence to its lowest level. And, at the same time, they wish, by means of a powerful propaganda to solder together all the elements of the German people in order to make them a formidable weapon in the war of extermination which is in preparation against groups of enemy capitalists.

There, in Germany, the working class is the most numerous of all : millions of workers heaped up in industrial centres. Millions of others without work, cast into the street to sink into abject poverty.

They have literally nothing more to lose ; are they not going to get a move on ?

It is true that in 1918, when they were in arms, they did not seek to destroy their class enemy ;

they were content to see their chiefs who promised them peace, order and bread, seize hold of power ; they allowed their weapons, their only guarantee for the future, to be taken from them. They remained with arms crossed when bands of officers, gathered together by Noske, assassinated the Spartakist workers ; there was only a murmur when, in 1920, Severing's Reichswehr shot down the workers of the Ruhr. They have not yet settled their account with the German Communist Party which rendered the massacre possible by making terms with the executioners.

And the best weapon that they had formed themselves, (the workers' revolutionary councils), they replaced by a purely theatrical one : parliamentary and corporation organisation ; the result of listening to beautiful but deceptive speeches from Moscow.

The alliance between the old German and the new Russian capitalism, the clandestine supply of arms to the Reichswehr by the bureaucrats of Moscow against the German workers are all facts which have never been refuted and seem to have taught them nothing. For 15 years the workers have allowed themselves to be duped by social-democratic and Bolshevik leaders who in their bid for nationalism and reform leave conditions worse than before.

All this Van Der Lubbe knew.

— And now the strengthening claws of Fascism hold the worker by the throat. Now, it appears clearly that the Second and Third Internationals were only shields of cardboard. Now, the workers must stir themselves, act by themselves, fight by themselves.



But deception and trickery are as prevalent as ever !

The social-democrats hold in their nets millions of workers who trust in them, helped by phrases like these : *For Democracy ! For Socialism ! Elect us !*

In reality the things they are after are important posts, honours, privileges and power for themselves in order better, in collaboration with the bourgeoisie, to keep the worker in submission and maintain exploitation.

The Moscow chiefs of the C. P. of Germany hold millions of workers in their net with other phrases : *For a Workers' Country ! For the Unity of German People versus Versailles ! For Bread and Work ! Elect us !*

What they really want is power, honours, property for themselves and the new Russian capitalists, the continuation of exploitation thus to obtain goods and machinery for the German bourgeoisie.

But above all they want power over the workers so that they may lead them on to the battlefields to fight for the interests of the bourgeoisie, allied with Russia.

In this atmosphere of deception, trickery and falsehood, Marinus Van Der Lubbe — with his clothing steeped in benzine — set fire to these gentlemen's Palace of Intrigue !

For 15 years the workers have been sold and betrayed in this shop : now it will be a fire-signal for class comrades. Break the dictatorship of the chiefs who deliver you defenceless to the enemy and fight for your own power under your own leadership.

«He is the instrument of a Bolshevik plot.» Such was the absurd lie of the Nazis.

«He is a Nazi provocateur» was the lie of the high priests of the Second and Third Internationals. At first, many workers believed these gentlemen.

But what an odd sort of provocateur!

No paper was found upon him to indicate the guilt of the C. P. of Germany or the social-democratic chiefs. He made no declaration which justified the police arresting anyone. And the material which should have constituted a perfect proof consisted of only a few firelighters, a little benzine, and the clothing of Van Der Lubbe himself.

What an odd provocateur! One who openly declared: «I have acted quite alone; I have nothing to do with these parties.» And stood by that declaration.

Briefly, the accusations do not square with the facts; they cannot do so because they are vulgar falsehoods!

Why did the red journalists of the Second and Third International mess themselves up in such contradictions?

Because they feared the petty bourgeoisie would take fright and abandon them. Those of the Second were afraid that in the eyes of the influential bourgeois they may no longer serve as acolytes and intermediaries.

Those of the Third, in the country of Hitler, the ally, mortally dreaded anything which might provoke a diplomatic rupture with the Stalin «Homeland»!

And on both sides these phrasemongers, swaggers, compromisers, muddlers and chiefs feared this blow directed against parliamentarism as one equally directed against themselves. By an infallible instinct they recognised in Marinus Van Der Lubbe the man from an enemy world. Out from the millions of servile prostrate electoral cattle a single worker arose to administer a humiliating slap upon their Judas faces.

This was Marinus Van Der Lubbe. Such was the significance of his act and that is why they sought to smirch his honour as a revolutionist!

They certainly had their reasons for acting so! But you, Socialist or Communist comrades, who parody these words of theirs: «But he was a Nazi provocateur,» have you never been struck with the unanimity with which they quote each other?

Prior to the Reichstag Fire, the Moscow Communists consistently insulted the Social Democrats with epithets of «Liar», «Traitor», «Renegade», and «Social-Facist». After the Reichstag fire they united on but one thing: a common antagonism to Van Der Lubbe and a hatred of his deed. This common hatred required no negotiations. The deed itself caused one feeling to possess both sections of the parliamentary reformists: this Van Der Lubbe could be nothing but a provocateur since his desire was to inspire the workers with the idea of abolishing all this jobbery of parliament. Their reaction was spontaneous. How could they hope to gain a seat in the Chamber, how could they hope to represent the people if the Chamber was abolished? And mark this, fellow workers; all that these people want to do, whether they are Social Democrats or Communists, is to represent you, is to lead you, but never to fight with you in your struggle for emancipation, never to be free with you. Always they have the bureaucratic idea of power and never the revolutionary idea of freedom. Ought you not to demand from these would-be leaders, in reality self-seeking liars and traitors, proofs of their accusations against Van Der Lubbe?

During the trial the organs of the Third International in the different countries published articles: «Save Dimitroff, Popoff, and Taneff.» They agreed that Van Der Lubbe ought not to be saved. They concentrated on his assassination. They inspired the workers to sacrifice him.

The blood of Van Der Lubbe is on their hands.

Remember Him!

(Translated from the Dutch Antiparliamentarist Communist paper "Spartacus", 19th jan. 1934).

After a period of more than ten months of suffering in the Nazi-imprisonment, our young and great comrade Marinus Van Der Lubbe has been executed in the court yard of the prison of Leipzig. This all three days before his 25th birthday.

In the gray dawn of that winter morning, nearly a year after his deed, a fiery call for real struggle against damned capitalism, his dear head fell down and his great and noble heart stopped to beat.

We, who were all the long time in our thoughts with him, we can hardly touch with our feelings the bitterness of the cup of suffering which he has emptied.

It is not the death (in the first instance) that makes Marinus Van Der Lubbe to one of the greatest proletarian martyrs. No, because the death didn't terrify him. His full devotion to his principles, his sincere deeds to his conviction placed him above terror of the death. But, that what made the last days of his youthful life yet more unthinkable difficult, is the perverse slander of the international «workers» press, from left till right, which soiled him with Nazi-dirt by his last march to the scaffold.

The despots should not have missed the chance, having the classic examples, triumphant to hold this dirtiness in front of him, with the purpose to break his iron will.

And look at his posture, his much discussed and mocked at posture! Meanwhile, being tortured, hunger-striking, and «medicines» doing their work, was his body's resistance ruined. Look then, look at his simplicity, his modesty, the absence of any pose, or romanticism. His worry about the others, who vexed him, who mocked at, and provoked him, not to charge them, have a look at that! It has to be clear even to an ox, that there in Leipzig a great human being is exterminated, whose life for the mankind in general, and for the proletariat in particular, had higher value, than all the so called official highnesses of the world.

But the German bourgeois, whose seems to be of a special quality, doesn't do anything. Their Weimarrepublic, the abort of Social-democracy, has not been baptised in the blood of the tyrans, but in the blood of the heroes of liberty. For this deformity, surrendered the social-democracy its last rest of principles and sacrificed the best, the purest and the noblest of the German proletariat. And the Moscow communists surrendered once more again in 1933 the workers masses and offered humiliated to God Capital the life of Marinus Van Der Lubbe as an expiatory sacrifice only for the maintenance of that piece of after born civil republic. For this is the meaning of the campaign of the leaders against Marinus Van Der Lubbe: palliation of own treason, and muddling the view of the workers, that it would not permeate in the role of the Third International during 1933, and to understand that it is the one as that of the social-democracy in 1919.

But Marinus, who observed these facts very sharp, endeavoured, truly of a very genial manner, to call the attention of the masses upon.

That many proletarians after the first impulse have been brought in confusion, through the influence of the great lies-campaign of the Munzenberg concern can be regretted, but it says nothing.

The class-conscious fighters in Germany undoubtedly have understood the deed of Marinus, and they will elucidate it, helped by the bitter experience to their backward comrades. By this hard work of elucidation at present, they will not more be disturbed by the demagogue leaders running between their feet. The class conditions are drawn excessively sharp and visible.

And so will grow the many hundreds of new Van Der Lubbe's on the ruins of the ruler's third state (dritte Reich) and we swear by the death of every drop of blood, every hour, we will sacrifice it for the voluntary gave his young life, for the mankind, for Communism.

Van der Lubbe: Flashlights and Echoes

According to outlook, Bresci was either the assassinator or the executioner of King Humbert of Italy. Bresci was accused of being an agent in the pay of the Bourbons of the former kingdom of the Two Sicilies, just as Van Der Lubbe was accused of being a spy in the pay of the Nazis. The accusation against Bresci was made by an Italian philosopher and historian of real worth, who himself nobly resisted Fascism. Malatesta replied to the charge and proved by irrefutable dates its falsehood. Yet a year after Malatesta had vindicated Bresci, an Italian Communist Party review «Stato Operaio», served up the accusation afresh to its readers. Everyone will understand the contempt that every true revolutionist feels for apologists of this description, whose victim Van Der Lubbe became in his turn.

It is true that these slanderers of Bresci were the disciples of Stalin. Duly trained, these henchmen have proven that they know how to throw their quota of filth in the face, and also at the back, of the fervent proletarian idealist who gave no credence to the solemn promises of the showmen of the ballot-box. But Stalin and his disciples only follow Lenin. Whatever his merits,

the pure Lenin did not disdain to use similarly abject means to rid himself of those whose approach did not coincide with his.

Before the war, a young militant syndicalist, Ivan Syssoer, made that experience. When Syssoer was incarcerated in a Czarist prison, Lenin accused him of being a provocateur. In vain, Syssoer wrote letters of protest from this prison, and afterwards from the place to which he was transported in Siberia, calling upon the «future apostle» to prove his charges. He obtained no reply. Suffering from tuberculosis, he died in exile and it was only after his death that a party tribunal was obliged to recognise the falseness and foulness of the accusations!

W. Duesberg, an ordinary journalist, not without talent, followed the trial carefully as special correspondent for the «Tribune de Geneve». In that paper for Friday, April 14th, 1933, he published an interview with Van Der Lubbe, and a study of him as a man. He termed him «a conscious revolutionary», and says:

had imagined him to be quite different. I approached him. I admit without curiosity; I left him dissatisfied, and with regret. All this week he has been brought from his cell at Moabit to the Reichstag, by Gate 4, into a little room on the first floor, next to the great ruined assembly hall, which, six weeks after the disaster, still suggests some immense hangar when squadrons of flaming aeroplanes have crashed.

Mr. Vogt, commissioned to go to Berlin by the Empire Tribunal at Leipzig, as *juge d'instruction*, allowed Duesberg to interview Van Der Lubbe, during an interval in the taking of evidence. Duesberg describes him as well built, 25 years of age, and fully 5 feet 11 inches in height. With his wide open eyes, deep sunk in their sockets, his prominent cheek bones and flat nose, he reminded Duesberg of the proverbial Cossack. Duesberg describes his attitude at this time:

« He speaks in a low voice, a little choked and very soft when he hesitates.

« He is a controversialist of talent, very often replying to questions by other questions. He speaks a kind of "little-nigger" German, often unintelligible, and in any case only when he judges that the interpreter, Dr. Meyer-Collings, has not conveyed his thought properly. When he speaks Dutch, as he usually does, he manages to deliver regular speeches.

« Van der Lubbe is no ordinary criminal. He confesses; nay, he is proud of what he has done, as of an achievement. He speaks of it as an author would speak of his latest book or a runner of his latest record. Van Der Lubbe affirms that he did the deed alone; he persists in refusing to point out his accomplices. The purpose of the examination, which would have been over by now, is to name him their names.»

« He proceeds to deal with the question of the fire. He mentions the examination of the Reichstag and the arrest of Dimitroff, and adds:

« It is stated to me, "How was the Reichstag fired?" He says, "The assembly hall blazed with showers of sparks were observed in the courtyard opposite the hall. But the fact that Van Der Lubbe's rage was confined to that hall. But, it will be again stated, there were eleven fires, which could not have been lit by one man!"

« Fire — what is a fire? Twenty fires in the assembly hall would be nothing surprising when these fires are one metre apart. The whole hall was of wood. From a cupboard Van Der Lubbe took table-napkins and table-cloths, one of which was six metres long (between 19 and 20 feet), and used them to spread the fire. But with what did he start the fire? With cans of petrol? None have been found. The fire was started with "kohlenanzunder" (firelighters), an inflammable product which the Berlin servant girls use to light the fire in the morning. A box costs only 25 pfennigs. Four to six boxes, in my opinion, would be sufficient to set the assembly hall on fire, and Van Der Lubbe could easily have hid them in his pockets while sneaking into the Reichstag. *This is my opinion, not that of the juge d'instruction, who believes that Van Der Lubbe had accomplices, for whom he is looking.*»

Duesberg reports his conversation:

I asked Van Der Lubbe, « Why did you do it? »

« The New World is coming, but not quick enough. The Old World is passing away; one must push what is going.»

« You wished to act by your example? »

Van Der Lubbe nodded.

« But you have only managed to wrong yourself as well as your party! »

Van Der Lubbe thought for a moment, then he said: « There are things that it seems nobody can understand, neither the Social Democrats nor the Communists. It is the result that matters...»

« Why did you choose Germany for the scene of your action? »

« Because Germany is the heart of Europe. »

Duesberg describes Van Der Lubbe's attitude towards his official questioners at this time:

« Van Der Lubbe argues keenly, thinking over every word, with great care for shades of meaning and synonyms, continually interrupting his questioners. »

It may be asked how was it that Van Der Lubbe displayed none of this liveliness at the trial. It is true that, when he spoke, he spoke to the point and maintained the one consistent attitude. But he was generally dull and lifeless. It was not merely mental disgust at the comedy. There was something wrong with him physically. *Informations Allemandes* a monthly bulletin for Germans in France, reproduced the opinion of a medical authority, published in the journal *Das Neue Tagebuch*, under date October 28th, 1933. The writer held that Van Der Lubbe during his trial manifested all the symptoms of a patient drugged with scopolamin. He describes the action of the poison in question:

« If a man, healthy in body and mind is given a daily dose consisting of a quarter to half a milligram of scopolamin he will be reduced to a state of complete absent-mindedness and stupor. His brain being paralysed makes him incapable of uttering an opinion; he doubles up helplessly; laughs stupidly for no reason whatever; the simplest reflexes are inoperative as he replies to question with a *yes* or *no*. »

The specialist underlines all the symptoms of this condition presented by Van Der Lubbe during his trial. Although knowing a little German he had to make use of an interpreter; his sight was so dulled that he could not read any printed matter; a continual running from the nose which he failed to observe, and made it necessary for the police in attendance to apply a handkerchief to his nose time to time. All this left the specialist in no doubt of the conviction, approximating certitude, that the case of Van Der Lubbe was one of poisoning by scopolamin. This formal and precise accusation dispenses with comment.

But what of the trial? The innocence of Torgler and the three Bulgarians was apparent from the beginning. The first to proclaim it, and to confirm it unceasingly in the midst of unspeakable sufferings, was Van Der Lubbe. When finally brought to trial, in a state of extreme bodily weakness, Van Der Lubbe, none the less heroically maintained the statements that he had made always. By foul practices the criminal Nazi terrorists had reduced this man to a shadow of himself, but their poisons of the Borgias could not make them masters of his resistance. He was incapacitated. He lacked full consciousness. And yet he maintained a brave reserve of superhuman energy, sufficient to defeat his class enemies, and their indictment of the innocent. When he was able, when the poison suspended its operations for a moment, he vehemently proclaimed that he had acted alone and claimed the complete responsibility for the act. A tattered soul in complete bodily collapses, preyed upon by cruelty! And Truth took its course. Neither the « Communist » version of the fire nor the Nazi one received confirmation. Today only Van Der Lubbe's version is admissible. None of the items invented after the deed by either side will bear serious examination.

Branded, besmirched, trampled upon, defamed by a dull pack of cowards, Van Der Lubbe was the only heroic figure in the dock on the day when the accused were given, at last, the opportunity of speaking. Dimitrov spoke first. He repudiated, quite rightly, his own lawyer, Teichert, and commented unfavourably upon Sack's defence of Torgler. In very bad taste, he claims to give Torgler a lesson. And then he has the utter baseness to request the condemnation of Van Der Lubbe.

From the standpoint of a thinking revolutionist, Dimitrov's speech was a painful episode. Popov and Tanev followed Dimitrov. They protested quite rightly their complete innocence. Van Der Lubbe then informed the court, through the medium of his interpreter, that he renounced his right to speak and that he had nothing to add to that which he had already said. The hatred directed against him had not disarmed his prowess of class integrity, and the worst tortures failed to drag from him a word more than he had said at the beginning. He limited himself to confirming his stand, while maintaining a noble and admirable bearing. Finally Torgler was called upon to speak.

After having paid a tribute to his advocate, Torgler defends himself on the ground of never having had "a romantic conception of the revolution". He described the February situation, and spoke with bourgeois disdain of the Dutch starving, Van Der Lubbe. He demonstrated the difference between himself, the deputy, respectful of the social hierarchies, and the idle wanderer over the roads, in the following passage of contempt:

« If an individual with the appearance of Van Der Lubbe had come to me to propose the burning of the Reichstag I should have dismissed him as a true provocateur. I insist on repeating formally that I am innocent and therefore solicit my acquittal. »

Can anyone imagine John MacLean, or Karl Liebknecht, or Rosa Luxemburg, speaking from the dock in such terms?

Torgler continued. He thought to blast Lubbe by casting the epithet « vagabond » at him. He forgot that the pioneers of the Russian Revolution sabotaged by politicians of his kidney, were also vagabonds. He forgot the ex-vagabond Gorky, of whom the Bolsheviki are not moderately proud.

Finally, Torgler, the leader of the Communist section in the Reichstag, utters these words:

« I have absolutely nothing to do with the criminal burning of the Reichstag. »

« Criminal »! Does not the genuine revolutionist see the cruel smile of the judges, surprised to find a helper where they had seen only an opponent. Marinus, dear comrade, your accusers before the Fascist court were the « Communists », Dimitrov and Torgler. Torgler denounced you as « criminal » whilst Dimitrov demanded your sentence. Torgler, the man to whom Van Der Lubbe handed over his letters in order that Torgler might establish his own innocence more completely!

Did not Lenin pay tribute to the Russian terrorists? Have not the Bolsheviki exploited the fame of Max Hoelz and even Sacco and Vanzetti? Could one foresee that the avowed leader of five million Bolsheviki would declare before a Fascist Court that the act committed by Van Der Lubbe against the Reichstag was criminal?

With this picture of Torgler, Dimitrov, and Van Der Lubbe in the dock, before our mind, we turn to another picture — the self-debasement of Romain Rolland. The creator of « Jean Christophe » had nothing but calumnies for Van Der Lubbe and nothing but prayers for the safety of Torgler. His admiration for Dimitrov was intense. Rolland speaks of an epic "in which the heroic figure of Dimitrov who, whatever happens, will stand out in a colossal relief in the future because of his great energy and soul."

Of Torgler he writes:

« Ernst Torgler — the most incapable of committing a stupid act of useless and theatrical terrorism like the firing of the Reichstag spluttering in its flames, the Erostratism of a *minus habens* pushed by the base provocation of those who manipulated this Neronian stage-setting. »

This appeal was addressed to the workers. And so Rolland had to use incomprehensible language! He assails the helpless worker, Van Der Lubbe, with a vulgar infamy and hides his

assassin's dagger within the folds of his literary drapery. If only we could bring to life, « Jean Christophe » the fiery child of his imagination against whom this man of genius dares to blaspheme! It has been truly observed that, if Jesus did not exist it would require a Jesus to create him. Alas! Romain Rolland, creator of « Jean Christophe » is the slanderer of his hero in the flesh. Van Der Lubbe! It had been Judas Iscariot who imagined Jesus the Christ. Romain Rolland is but a swine in the outward appearance of an angel. He has made himself loathsome in the hour of crisis with his miserable by-play of theatrical effects.

Romain Rolland, the pacifist whose conscience took flight; Barbusse, the literary man of straw; Bergery, the would-be dictator, and one of the most notorious « slanderers » in the London investigation: All endorsed the « Brown Book ». This was published before the trial at Leipzig concluded in all countries by the Third International. For reasons of diplomacy, the Third International functions in this matter as the Relief Committee for the Victims of German Fascism. This is merely a magnificent smokescreen. The notorious *Brown Book* issued by this Committee stated:

« Van Der Lubbe will confess whatever his masters order him. He will testify against Torgler whatever his masters prescribe. He will testify against Dimitrov whatever is desired. He will accuse all those whom his Nazi friends wish to destroy, he will exculpate all those whom his Nazi friends wish to save. »

Our quotation is from page 112 of the French edition. This infamous work is being circulated still in *six langues*. It is being circulated in Britain. For the first time in the blood-stained annals of human judgements, a man was condemned for acts which it was asserted that he was destined to commit afterwards! This book was published in order to give up to the Nazi a man, who in spite of tortures, declined to give up anyone but himself!

It was concerning this man that *l'Humanité*, the French Communist Party organ, stated that he had made a pact with Hitler, whereby he received 50,000 marks from the oil king. Deterding! Up to the very last day the « Communists » organs throughout the world printed prominently on their front pages, sometimes of special edition: « The provocateur Van Der Lubbe is condemned to death. » Even when he was under the knife of the guillotine, the abject accusation followed him! Whilst the public conscience everywhere was stimulated in favour of the innocent « Communist ». No public protest was raised for Van Der Lubbe; a few echoless voices, in fear by their solitude, cried out alone! And they were denounced as the voices of counter-revolutionaries!

Now is the appropriate time for these voices to make themselves heard, and to reveal to the proletariat the underlying facts of the Van Der Lubbe affair:

1. The lies of the Brown Book and of the Relief Committee for the Victims of German Fascism.
2. The lies of the Sub-Commission of London or the Vermeylen lies.
3. The order of the Third International to treat Van Der Lubbe as a provocateur (Bergery revelation).
4. The true figure of Van Der Lubbe.

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The Glasgow United Front (Conclusion)

The second leaflet contained the following extract from *Forward*, for May 7th, 1921, page 6, reporting the May Day Demonstration of that year:

« Organised labour in Glasgow provided a magnificent spectacle on May Day. The procession reached colossal dimensions, while the mass of humanity which gathered in the Green was estimated by the Press at 100,000... »

« ... Much bitter comment was caused by a large white placard bearing the words:

« JESUS CHRIST WAS SOLD BY JUDAS FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER. THE WORKING CLASSES ARE BEING SOLD BY THE LABOUR PARTY FOR 400 POUNDS A YEAR. »

The card was borne aloft by John McGovern, who kept shouting — « The Labour Party is the last defence of Capitalism. The Labour Party is the enemy of the workers. »

« We may well ask, « what about Judas now? » This was the man who said he was going to expose corruption and graft in Glasgow. Why has he suddenly dropped his exposure? » « Who paid the 300 Pds for his Insurance Book? Why was he wangled into membership of National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, on June 7th, 1930? »

« Why was he chosen as Labour Candidate? »

« Workers! Don't participate in this wangle. Don't vote for a wage cutting Labour Government. »

« Support the Communist Party and a policy of working class struggle. »

The concluding injunction was in thick type: « Vote for Saklatvala. » The imprint explained that the leaflet was printed by Kirkwood & Company, 127, Stockwell St., Glasgow CI, and « published G.W. Middleton, 1107, Gallowgate, East, Election Agent. »

The *Daily Worker*, as a C.P. organ in its issue for June 20th, 1930, summarised and explained the leaflet as follows:

« McGovern, the Labour candidate, has changed his creed many times; first he was in the I.L.P., then in the S.L.P., and then became an Anarchist. »

« ANARCHIST IN PAST. »

« While an Anarchist he appeared a few years ago with a poster bearing the words: ... (here follows Judas reference). »

« Recently he raised the question of municipal graft but he soon dropped it and acquired a valuable insurance book. Now he has been chosen Labour candidate. »

« The Trade Council, which is supporting him, received a complaint from the Insurance Workers' Union stating that he is a non-unionist. This caused general consternation in the Council Executive, and a membership card of the N.U.A.W. was hurriedly wangled for him by June 7th in order to make his endorsement possible. »

« It is obvious that this endorsement was granted to keep McGovern quiet. »

We do not know whether this statement is correct or not. It is obvious however that if the C.P. accusation was correct in 1930, the party has no right supporting him in 1933. On the other hand, if the charge is not correct then the party was guilty of slander in 1930 for its own political ends and so merits no proletarian respect in 1933. The alliance dishonours either McGovern or the C.P.

« An Anarchist of the Guy Aldred variety », as a phrase of abuse, is in the same category as a reference to Saklatvala or any other C.P. as a « Communist of the Stalin variety. » Except that there is nothing disgraceful in being an Anarchist of the former complexion whereas to be a Communist of the Stalin variety and to stand, for a reward of hiring wages, for the exile of Trotsky and Rakovsky is a thing of shame.

The *Daily Record*, in its leading article for June 26th, 1930, drew special attention to the « Judas » leaflet as evidence of the fact that Mr. McGovern « had been a bitter and unsparing critic of the Labor Party. » Its news columns boasted:

« MR. MCGOVERN AS "JUDAS". »

« Mr. McGovern could not be in doubt as to the opinion of himself held by the Communists, for wherever his name appeared the Soviets added — "Judas." In some cases there were very libellous suggestions. »

A week before (June 19th), the same journal reported that the previous day the supporters of

Saklatvala toured the division in a motor lorry with flaming red drapings on both sides, decorated with posters praising « Communist Russia. »

A young man, perched on the canopy of the lorry, blew lustily on a bugle, while his companions at the rear passed comments on the speakers and candidates. They passed McGovern and hailed him with the shout: « McGovern, the traitor. »

The Communist Party opposition to McGovern did not arise from any opposition to parliamentarism. The *Glasgow Herald*, for June 18th, reported Saklatvala's meetings in the constituency. Under the headings « Why a Parliament? » « The Communists' Réply, » this journal reported Saklatvala's answer to a questioner:

« Asked by a questioner why they should bother about a parliament, the candidate stated that it was for the simple reason that Parliament was a powerful weapon in the hands of the enemies of the working class, and it was used by them against the working class. Therefore, he added, they must go on and expose its real character and open the eyes of the workers. »

The Catholic paper, the *Glasgow Observer* in its issue for June 21st, declared that John McGovern « is not a man of the Wheatley type and we trust that he will have no Irish votes ». It advised its readers to vote for the Tory and Orange candidates therefore. Explaining why McGovern did not deserve Catholic support, it stated:

« In another instance the present Labour candidate for Shettleston opposed a Catholic priest who stood in that area for the Parish Council and supported an opposing candidate, the priest being defeated. The Irish electorate in Shettleston are strong labour supporters, but with most of them their faith comes first, and they cannot be expected to vote for a candidate who has made it his business to secure the defeat of a priest in a Parish Council election. The candidature of the priest was no personal matter. It was to serve Catholic interests and those who supported his defeat have no claim on Catholic votes. »

« Protestant been chosen as a Labour candidate in a by-election, or an atheist for that matter, it would have been possible for Catholics to support the Labour candidate on political grounds, but not the McGovern type is one for whom Catholics can vote. »

« We have done this in the past. We have done it because more than 100 McGovern votes were cast for him. And we serve that cause as we hope to do. »

But neither the Catholic nor the Protestant opposition « downed » McGovern. The poll was declared shortly before noon on the afternoon of June 27th. Only sixtynine of the electorate had voted, and the figures were as follows:

J. McGovern (Lab.)	10,699.
W. P. Templeton (Con.)	10,303.
J. M. M'Nicol (Nat.)	2,527.
S. Saklatvala (Com.)	1,459.

McGovern's majority over his Conservative runner-up, who had received both Orange and Catholic votes, was 396. Saklatvala lost his deposit.

Immediately the poll was declared, McGovern denounced the Communist attacks and stated that the result had shown Saklatvala just how far he could go with such tactics. In contradistinction to the attitude he had adopted at the time of his nomination, McGovern repudiated the Labour Party official section, and stated:

« The result shows clearly that I have every reason to go to St. Stephens supporting the policy of Mr. Maxton and the other leftwingers. One may not overlook the fact that when I come back to the constituency after adopting that attitude, I will receive even greater support than I have got today. This will be a message of hope to the left-wing group of the House of Commons, to which I intend to belong — that Shettleston is determined to have the Government face up to its responsibilities. »

John McGovern took his seat in the House of Commons on Monday, June 30th. His sponsors were James Maxton and Campbell Stephen. The Labour Government Front Bench watched his introduction with stony calm. He was cold-shouldered deliberately by the Premier but was in no way abashed by the want of official enthusiasm. He had to pass within half-a-yard of Ramsay MacDonald, who pretended not to know that he was passing. The official silence was responsible for the Tory joke that the Labour Party in Parliament was divided into two groups — the Government and the McGovernments.