

"The Word" Library—No. 3.

JOHN MACLEAN

By

GUY A. ALDRED

With an Introduction by
JAMES MAXTON, M.P.

*and Maclean's Speech from
the Dock at Edinburgh, 1918*

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JOHN MACLEAN
at Edinburgh before his trial,
May 9, 1918.



Foreword.

This fragment of appreciation was published first in 1932, by the Bakunin Press, at Bakunin House, Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow. It was subtitled: "MARTYR OF THE CLASS STRUGGLE." The title-page further described the purpose of the work: "THE MAN, HIS WORK, AND HIS WORTH." From this edition we omit these descriptions because the name, John Maclean, tells the entire story.

Over 10,000 copies of the first edition were distributed. James Maxton reviewed the pamphlet in *The New Leader* for September 2, 1932. He defined Maclean's position in the movement with great clearness. No apology is made, therefore, for reprinting this review as an introduction to the present edition.

In *The Spur*, Vol. V., No. 1, June, 1918, I published an article headed "John Maclean and Representation." At that time I was suffering imprisonment for resisting military service, and the essay was smuggled out of prison by a friendly prison warder, who was horrified at the idea of a man suffering imprisonment, either for his political opinion or for refusing military service. This warder was a tower of strength to me during one of the worst periods of imprisonment it was possible to suffer in contemporary Britain, with her "reformed" prisons.

The essay dealt with John Maclean's second sentence of penal servitude, when he was sentenced to 5 years. It treated also of the announcement that John Maclean was the prospective Socialist parliamentary candidate for Gorbals. The history of the S.D.F. and B.S.P. was outlined, and Maclean asked, since he had broken with the ordinary Labour parliamentarians, not to become again a parliamentarian. He was saluted as a prisoner in our cause, whatever differences might arise should his future prove parliamentary. Maclean's future was tragedy and suffering, not comedy and glory. I thought of reprinting the essay as an appendix but have decided against the idea.

John Maclean addressed the huge demonstration against war and conscription on Glasgow Green on January 30th, 1916. He spoke on the same platform as James Maxton, not then M.P. for Bridgeton, Harry Hopkins, and myself. Pictures were taken of that meeting by the *Bulletin* and are published in this pamphlet. Within a few days, John Maclean's martyrdom had begun. The significance of that martyrdom is explained in the essay I published in *The Council* (No. 8), November, 1932, and now reproduce as an introduction.

As I write I have before me John Maclean's account of the Scottish Labour College Conference, held in the St. Andrew's Halls, Glasgow, on Saturday, May 29th, 1920. Maclean complains



John Maclean

bitterly of his treatment by the movement and by the Labour College during his two terms in Peterhead. There is no need to re-tell the story of Maclean's neglect and dismissal here. He felt that treatment badly because he was essentially a teacher and student of economics and liked the class-room. It was his medium of service to the cause much more than general propaganda.

John Maclean rose to the supreme height of Socialist protest and challenge during the Great War. His name stood for Anti-War, Anti-Conscription, and Anti-Militarism in Scotland. It epitomised the class struggle. From the dock, he dominated history. No better service can be rendered to the Socialist cause than to recall the story of his life and struggle to-day, during the second Great War, together with the immortal memories of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg.

In the introductory summary I have criticised the *Evening Times* for upholding the prosecution of John Maclean. Acknowledgements must be made, however, to the editor of that journal for his courtesy in securing a photograph of Maclean at Edinburgh and lending same to me, knowing the purpose for which it was wanted. The copyright of this picture belongs to Newspaper Illustrations Ltd.

For the High Court block, which is a *Bulletin* picture, I am indebted to Tom Anderson of the Proletarian School. The block that appeared in the first edition has been lost. Tom Anderson also lent me the block of the tombstone. Maclean's Speech from the Dock is circulated by him in a separate pamphlet.

Glasgow, January 29, 1940.

GUY A. ALDRED.



INTRODUCTORY

By JAMES MAXTON, M.P.

(Reprinted from *The New Leader*, September 2, 1932)

THE STORY OF A REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST

There has just come into my hands to-day a booklet by Guy Aldred entitled "John Maclean, Martyr of the Class Struggle. The Man, His Work, and His Worth." It is sold at the low price of threepence, and I hope it will be widely read by members of the Independent Labour Party, particularly at this juncture when we are setting out on a new phase of our Socialist struggle. It is worthy of our serious study, both because of the man who is the subject of the book and the man who is the author.

John Maclean was not well known in the British Labour Movement. His work was mainly carried on in the West of Scotland and throughout Scotland his name was a household word among the working classes. Among the Social Democratic Parties on the Continent his name and work were well known, but in England, except in the few places where there was a well-established branch of the Social Democratic Party, his great worth as a Socialist was never recognised.

TWO LONE FIGHTERS.

Aldred is in somewhat similar position. He has been very much a lone figure, doing his work through a small organisation which has never been able to give him the national platform and the audience which his Socialist courage and intellectual grasp of essential things in the workers' fight deserved.

When I first knew him he called himself an Anarchist. In recent years he has worked under the title "Anti-Parliamentary Communist," but all the time he has worked explaining to the people the operations of Capitalism, how it must necessarily produce poverty and degradation, not merely material degradation but mental and moral degradation in all who did not consciously revolt against it.

John Maclean and he were never in the same Party. I never have been in the same Party as either Maclean or Aldred, although frequently appearing on platforms with them when particular fights on special issues made such alliances the obviously right course to take.

They were always reliable men in an important respect, which marks them out from the present Communist Party spokesmen.



John Maclean

When a common platform was agreed upon to secure unity of working-class outlook on a particular issue, one could go on to the platform with the full confidence that they would deal with that issue, and struggle to get a united workers' mind on the subject. One was sure that they would not prostitute the occasion to vulgar personal abuse of those who appeared on the platform with them.

COMMUNIST INTEGRITY.

They had not the cowardly fear of the Communist of to-day, who descends to personal abuse of his ally because he is afraid that the workers will doubt his Communist integrity. It always seems to me that that frame of mind indicates that he has doubts about his own integrity.

Neither Aldred or Maclean had any doubts about their own Socialist integrity and were not afraid to associate with others for particular purposes, although they never dreamt for a moment of subordinating their Socialist faith to the dictates of organisations other than those to which they belonged.

This small book of Aldred's brings out in clear relief the great Socialist courage of Maclean, his tremendous grasp of the Marxian teaching, and his power to apply it to the day-to-day problems of working-class life both in domestic and world affairs.

I knew Maclean very intimately. I knew him as a fellow-student, as a fellow teacher, and as a Socialist agitator. He gave me my earliest insight into the work of Marx. For ten years we taught together in an evening continuation school in Pollokshaws, the town in which we were both born. We passed hundreds of young working lads through our hands at that time, and our work in that institution came to an abrupt end in the early days of the war when the jail doors opened to receive us both.

From that time onwards till his death, Maclean was at constant war with the Authorities. He had two sentences of penal servitude, and two or three shorter periods of imprisonment. Every case was on a definite revolutionary charge and in the dock Maclean defended himself, never attempted to minimise or explain away what he had said.

FROM THE DOCK.

Aldred quotes the following resounding extract from one speech from the dock:—

"I wish no harm to any human being, but I, as one man, am going to exercise my freedom of speech.

"No human being on the face of the earth, no Government is going to take from me my right to speak, my right to protest against wrong, my right to do everything that is for the benefit of mankind. I am not here as the accused; I am here as the accuser of Capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot.



This is the Glasgow "Bulletin" picture of one of the platforms at the January 30, 1916, meeting. The speaker is James Maxton (now M.P. for Bridgeton). The other speakers waiting their turn are—Guy Aldred, Harry Hopkins (A.E.U.) and John MacLean. Note MacLean's attitude.



John Maclean

"The Lord Advocate pointed out here that I probably was a more dangerous enemy than you had got to face in the Germans.

"The working class when they rise for their own, are more dangerous to capitalists than even the German enemies at your gates.

"I am a Socialist and have been fighting, and will fight, for an absolute reconstruction of society. I am proud of my conduct. I have squared my conscience with my intellect."

I endeavoured myself to write a life of Maclean. Indeed I completed most of it, and have the manuscript still by me. For purely personal reasons arising out of the close friendship between Maclean and myself I was unable to write the concluding chapters in a way that would satisfy me, and the work remains unfinished.

I am glad that Aldred has issued this short life, as I believe it to contain the inspiration which, communicated to hundreds of young Socialists to-day, will give them the fighting vigour necessary to carry our Movement to early success.



Author's Introductory Summary

JOHN MACLEAN'S STRUGGLE.

In order to understand with full appreciation John Maclean's struggle, we must be able to picture in detail the circumstances against which he reacted. John Maclean's first arrest was in February, 1916. He was released finally from prison in October, 1922. Between these dates many interesting events, illustrative of Capitalism's development, occurred.

When Maclean was arrested in February, 1916, Karl Liebknecht was the hero of British Capitalism as opposed to Hindenburg. When Maclean spoke from the dock, at Edinburgh, on his great trial, in May, 1918, Karl Liebknecht was still the hero of British Capitalism. But when Maclean was released in November, 1918, the British Capitalist class was looking to Hindenburg to suppress Liebknecht. The changed attitude of the Capitalist class made prophetic the sentence in Maclean's great speech:—

"The working-class, when they rise for their own, are more dangerous to capitalists than even the German enemies at your gates."

The transformation and transmutation of Karl Liebknecht shows how accurate was Maclean's judgement, proclaimed as a challenge to inane society in an atmosphere of appalling be-wigged mediocrity.

The Glasgow *Evening Times*, whose editorial columns justified the prosecution of Maclean, in its issue for May 15, 1916, discussing the arrest of Karl Liebknecht for his speech at the Berlin May Day Demonstration, under the heading: "*Germany's New Plot*" declared:—

"Apart from the little band led by the gallant Liebknecht, about to be tried for his fidelity to his principles, Socialism in Germany and Austria had already sunk so low that to seek and find a deeper level of degradation seemed hardly possible."

On June 2, 1916, the same paper, in its London correspondence, published this splendid testimonial to Liebknecht's character:—

"That sturdy and honest rebel, Liebknecht, is adding daily to the number of his sympathisers in the Reichstag. . . . The Social Democrats are now rallying to the side of the courageous Liebknecht."

The same *Evening Times*, in its issue for November 14th, 1918, stated:—

"That stormy figure of Germany's political life, Herr Liebknecht, is demanding a Socialist Republic."

This is exactly what the "gallant Liebknecht," the "sturdy and honest rebel" of 1916, was demanding!

Under the heading, "*Drifting Down*," the London correspondent of the *Evening Times*, in the issue for December 11, 1918, wrote:—

"Certainly the results of the revolution, from which we expected so much, have so far been purely negative, and are like to remain so



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long as Liebknecht, who out-Lenin's Lenin, has a revolver on hip . . . Meanwhile will it be too much to hope that Hindenburg will prove as masterful and dominant in a situation like this as he certainly has in the war?"

In vindication of John Maclean's great speech, the British Capitalist class released the tortured Socialist prophet from the jail, and turned to Hindenburg as its final hope. Hindenburg paved the way for Hitler. Karl Liebknecht and John Maclean are symbols of the workers' struggle throughout the world. Those who believe in Maclean are charged now with cowardice and indifference for not joining in a capitalist war against Hitlerism. The message of our sacred dead sweeps across the frontiers, bringing nearer the dawn of social brotherhood and the world's common-welfare. During the present black-out, their names lighten the darkness.

The war, which sped John Maclean to jail, torture, and premature death, witnessing to his class loyalty, caused the Glasgow Town Councillors (May 11, 1917) to vote increases in salaries for the higher-paid officials on the ground of "war-time" conditions. We select the following tit-bits:—

The Town Clerk, salary £40 per week, advanced to £50.

The City Registrar, aged 66 years, with £17 per week, went up to £20.

Increases of £2 per week were obtained by the City Assessor, with £20 per week, and the Chief Collector, with £12 per week.

And, of course, in each case, groups of assistants followed.

These "patriots" approved of the persecution of Maclean.

Other "patriots" received less certain remuneration from their pronounced "patriotism." On the day that the Town Council Committee voted these increases the then Councillor Emanuel Shinwell was charged with assault and breach of the peace, at the Glasgow Central Police Court. Shinwell had presided at a Civil Liberties Conference in the Charing Cross Halls, at which Ramsay MacDonald was present. It was a delegate meeting. The meeting had been invaded by a gang of hooligans, called the Patriotic Federation, headed by F. Logan and Neil Jamieson. These worthies held open-air meetings, inviting the public to attend, and *to assist them to hand over to the police any delegates or organisers who resisted their invasion.* The police authorities, and MacIntyre, the Procurator-Fiscal, approved of this hooliganism, for they both arrested and prosecuted Shinwell, the chairman of the conference.

Logan admitted that he went to the Charing Cross Halls to create a disturbance.

Here is an extract from his cross-examination:—

Q.—Was it said that Ramsay MacDonald would be in the canal before he left Glasgow?

A.—Yes, by the general public outside the hall.



Author's Introductory Summary

Q.—By the general public you had invited to be present?

A.—Yes.

Q.—You thought that threat a reasonable and natural result of your agitation, of all that you had said and done?

A.—Yes, not only here, but in the trenches, they say that Ramsay MacDonald should be put against the wall and shot.

Q.—Do you approve of that?

A.—Yes. The man is a traitor to his country.

We invite any person who shared this opinion of Ramsay MacDonald to consider what became of the cheap-war hooligans, and contrast it against the gilded glory and tawdry fame of MacDonald. They were the cheap economic cannon-fodder, the “unknown warriors,” necessary *not to the impeding, but to the advancement*, of MacDonald. And whilst they advanced MacDonald, John Maclean was being martyred unto death. *He was reality challenging.*

MacDonald and his friends counted on that advancement. Whilst soldiers bled on the one side, and resisting Socialists were tortured on the other, the politicians, anxious to perpetuate exploitation, calculated their mock war-fare to produce the rise of MacDonald, *in order to save the system.* The denunciation of MacDonald was political play-acting to keep the proletarian children quiet.

In the *Socialist Review*, edited by J. Bruce Glasier, for August-September, 1915 (Vol. 12, No. 76), p. 616, the editor publishes a paragraph headed “*To the Tower Heroics.*” This is a reference to the *John Bull* poster that is reproduced in the *Commune* for March, 1928. Bruce Glasier pens this remarkable comment:—

“Anyway, we hope no sympathy will be wasted on Mr. Ramsay MacDonald because he has been selected by Mr. Robespierre Bottomley as one of the procession of notabilities who upon his decree are to ‘be taken to the Tower and shot at dawn,’ or for that matter at lunch-hour or sunset. Remembering as we do that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, David Lloyd George, and General Botha were nominated by the Jingo Jacobins fifteen years ago for the same tragic fate, but emerged from their doom, one to become Prime Minister of Great Britain, the other to become the most popular Cabinet Minister of the Crown, and the third to become both the Prime Minister of South Africa and the most be-lauded hero in the Empire—remembering, we say, the glorious resurrection of these, the arch-traitors of their day, we tremble to think of the offices and honours which are about to bestrew the path of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald once the war is over.”

Quite so! And everything has happened to plan. But no one trembled “*to think of the offices and honours which*” would “*bestrew the path of*” John Maclean! No one saw him in the running for such honours. Fundamentally, he was Socialist and *not* parliamentarian. Fundamentally, MacDonald was parliamentarinn and not Socialist. Hence MacDonald’s selection. But what of the honours that will bestrew the path of the parliamentary extremists of to-day, whose personalities are being featured more and more in the bourgeois press?

John Maclean

The fact that patriotic and stupid hooligans, and a silly press-made public, might upset the meetings of the parliamentary "extremists" does not mean that they are the hope of the working-class. Neil Jamieson, who led the raid on the MacDonald-Shinwell meeting at the Chafing Cross Halls, declared that MacDonald was "*a dangerous man and the leader of dangerous people.*" He added that MacDonald "since the beginning of the war" had "*hindered consistently the national effort.*" What MacDonald actually did was to nullify the power of the war opposition.

Questioned by the Stipendiary, Neilson, Jamieson said:—

Q.—Your advice was, if the organisers of the meeting resisted your entry, your followers were to hand the organisers over to the police.

A.—Yes.

Q.—And these are patriotic principles?

A.—I think so, your honour.

Jamieson and Logan were merely clowns with appetites. Procurator-Fiscal McIntyre, of the Central Police Court, was another clown. He described the May Day, 1918, procession: "*You recollect the day of the disgraceful procession of non-fighters?*" But it was a ruling-class myth and imposition, to pretend that MacDonald was "*a dangerous man.*" It obscured the fact that John Maclean was the dangerous man. The pretence was the safety-valve against revolutionary explosion. *The ruling-class are employing still parliamentary safety-valves.*

The Glasgow *Forward*, for October 20, 1923, carried one of Maclean's last announcements:—

SCOTTISH WORKERS' REPUBLICAN PARTY.

OUTDOOR MEETINGS,

On SUNDAY, 21st OCTOBER.

Glasgow Green, at 2.30 p.m.—"*Let Glasgow Flourish by the Preaching of the Revolutionary Word.*"

CENTRAL ECONOMIC CLASS,

Ardgowan Picture House (Kingston),
at 2.30 p.m.

Economics—J. MACLEAN, M.A.

Industrial History—P. MARSHALL.

Economics—and the preaching of the revolutionary word! This was John Maclean incarnate: the purpose and symbol of the man. This made him the tragic figure of class-struggle, the zealous assertor of fundamentals during the night of terror. His life was an uncompromising challenge: and all knew that the future had no honours for him or for his children. It had only honour—and reverence: growing proletarian regard.

JOHN MACLEAN

I. Introductory

A message is never understood until the messenger has died. The explanation is quite simple. So long as the messenger is with us his life must be devoted to the proclamation of his message. There is always something unfinished about his work. We expect and so cannot judge. Living, his life withholds something not yet expressed, something about to be expressed. But death ends our expectations. We proceed then to judgment. The work is finished. It has to be valued and placed. It is a definite contribution to human struggle. The messenger has passed. Only the message remains.

It is then that the messenger becomes a myth, his work a legend. The facts of his career become symbolic, and his struggle an epic to be compared with like epics of other times and climes. In this way is history written and magistracy repudiated. Each generation relegates its law and authority to a court of eternal censure: its heretics and blasphemers to supreme authority. Thus the last become first and the first last.

November, a month rich in suffering for the pioneers and hosts of labor, reminds us of these truths. Thomas Hood, in one of his many witty burlesques, has defined its drabness and death. But we see it as a martyr month, a month as red as March or May, those months that symbolise struggle and vitality, the passing of winter, the dawn of content. We say nothing about the other months. We have no word to utter in dispraise of October, sacred to the memory of Francisco Ferrer. But as all causes—if indeed there be more than one cause, which we question—have their saint days, and as all humans, according to mood or temperament, tend to honour one more than others, and so help to honor and remember all—we confess to loving the drab days of November.

Not that we would write of the Chicago martyrs. Nor of the great long dead once all-too-human heroes who bore their witness some November day. Our memory is more recent. Our saint is very local. His contemporaries are our contemporaries. His enemies are our enemies. Not by some trick of symbolism or long distant understanding. But by reality of struggle and contemporary existence. There is no need to reconstruct. The message is con-



John Maclean

temporary. The messenger is separated from us neither by clime nor time. His name is a very common one—John Maclean.

Scholars, as stupid as they are famous, and famed because of their very impertinent stupidity, tell us that there were many Jesuses in the Jewish portion of the Roman Empire. Some time hence, we may suppose, other scholars will look back to our time, especially those who dwell in other lands, and learnedly dilate upon the fact that there were many John Macleans. Yet all Scotland, and all Labor, knows that there was and is only one — John Maclean, man and agitator, a martyr of the class struggle. Scholarship is only learned where struggle is wisdom and understanding.

John Maclean was a man, not a legend. But he matters not merely on account of his manhood, but because his manhood embodied the message. About his personality and worth, and the legend into which his name must grow, our class propaganda centres. The workers' message dominated and consumed him until that message became his personality. Apart from his class, he was nothing, because his class, its sorrows, its struggles, had become his life and being.

This is our excuse for detailing the facts of Maclean's career.



II. To The Struggle's Beginnings

John Maclean was born in Pollokshaws, on August 24, 1879. We know not what spells the three Fairy Godmothers were weaving at the moment of his birth. But, to judge from the character and conclusion of his career, they certainly bestowed upon him anxious interest in human welfare, simplicity, uncompromising dourness, and years but a little beyond the normal dying age of the rebel sans-culotte.

The three Fairy Godmothers left him, after carefully blowing out their candles. So silently did they steal away, treading the air so lightly as the discovery meant the undoing of their spell; neither mother, nor father, nor nurse, nor doctor knew of their hovering presence. It is supposed that, on that August day in 1879, the three Fates left Pollokshaws in state and never returned again, as the Pollokshaws had contributed all it could be expected to contribute to the glory of man, this side of the Social Revolution in Britain.

Maclean's father was one, Daniel Maclean, a potter to trade, who was born in Mull, in 1845. In the year 1867 he married Anne M'Phee at Nitshill. She was born at Corpach, opposite Fort William, in the year 1846. She died in 1914. The enquirer should note all those years. They are full of historical significance and supply a natural setting to Maclean's growth in wisdom and understanding: they reveal the man in the historical unfolding of his purpose and personality.

John Maclean was the sixth child. There was one more child born, Elizabeth, who survived him. Like the brothers and sisters of Jesus, the brethren of Maclean disappear from view. They are of no essential moment in the incarnation of struggle towards the at-one-ment of humanity. Whether the parents of John Maclean were wise or unwise to have seven children is an intriguing point. The Pope might stumble at the character of the sixth and grow lax in his Garden of Eden multiplying antagonism to the Birth Controllers. The Eugenists and Generation Controllers might weigh Maclean's revolutionary prowess as a bias in favor of Birth Control or his Rationalism as a redeeming feature on the other side. Between Papacy, founded on Pagan Imperialism, and Rationalism, strenuous for Bourgeois Secularism of Profit, the pro and con would be an amazing if not amusing discussion. We accept the fact of his existence and honor his memory.



John Maclean

Daniel Maclean died in the year 1888, when the world of Labor was recovering sadly from the shock of the Chicago Martyrs. It is said that he was a good rebel, a Freethinker, and a keen debater. But John was too young to be influenced greatly either by his father's qualities or his thought.

With the passing of his father, John Maclean found it not merely necessary but imperative to turn "errand boy" after school hours. He studied at Pollok Academy under Dr. Small and Mr. M'Nab. At night he ran the messages of the butcher, grocer, tinker, tailor, and candlestick maker. In a phrase, he went errands for all and sundry. On Saturday, he worked as a caddie on the golf-course, and earned 3s. for the afternoon's work. During the school holidays, he worked as a laborer—boys being employed in that capacity at that time—at the Thornliebank Print Works. He now developed the notion of becoming a school teacher. Accordingly, ten years after his father's death, we find him studying at the University and also teaching, to obtain the fees necessary to expend in securing his degree. At this time he was a pupil teacher at Polmadie School. He took University classes at 8 a.m.; then followed his ordinary school work; and the day was concluded with more classes at night. His summer holidays were spent working on a farm. John Maclean earned his education and his teacher's status by the sweat of his brow.

His experience of poverty and struggle converted John Maclean to Socialism. In 1901 he joined the Social Democratic Federation. From this time onwards he devoted himself to the propagation of Socialism. To our mind, his Socialism remained immature until the Great War tested its vigor. Only then did it discover its radical integrity. But if Maclean's Socialist conception did not fully reveal itself until the war demanded the revelation, his economic classes became a feature of Socialist agitation in Glasgow and the surrounding districts in Lanarkshire.

In due course, somehow pursuing his scholastic and Socialist paths at the one time, a remarkable enough feat, Maclean obtained his M.A. degree and became a fully certificated teacher at Strathbungo School. Here the fact that he was a Socialist seems, not unnaturally, to have occasioned complaint. Consequently he was transferred to a more suitable atmosphere at Kinning Park School. At this school he became a favorite teacher with the pupils. It is clear that his Socialism was something real in his life, for these pupils were the ragged children of the social gutter. Swedenborg, the author of so much wisdom amidst his superstition, says beautifully, in his *Heavenly Doctrine*: "A man may know, think, and understand much, but when meditating alone by himself he casts away what does not agree with his love That only which has



To the Struggle's Beginnings

entered a man's love remains in his spirit." Socialism had entered Maclean's love. It was the very fibre of his being. And so the poor children of Kinning Park loved him. He often shared his income with them, and they called him "Daddy Maclean."

Maclean's Socialist activity brought him into contact with Agnes Wood, of Hawick, who also was active in the Socialist movement. They were married on December 30, 1909. There were two children of this union—Jean, born on May 19, 1911, and Nan, born on April 17, 1913.

When war broke out in August, 1914, John Maclean's Socialism matured on the instant. He not so much stuck to the Red Flag as unfurled it in proud defiance. He became Glasgow's symbol of Socialism as opposed to Capitalism. Working men were coerced into that carnage because they lacked the courage and the vision to answer truthfully the capitalist recruiting threat: "What did you do in the great war?" Socialists, they repudiated and betrayed their Socialism to serve the cause of mammon and moloch. And so their Socialism died. And so their memory perished. They sank into the great herd, and travelled through hell for hell's sake, only to die, to be no more. They listened to a cunningly devised fable, believed in a vain delusion, and perished accordingly. John Maclean had the vision that would not permit him to do so. And so not merely his day and generation, but all future time and every succeeding generation will remember what John Maclean did in the great war. He remained a Socialist. He completed a fifteen years' service of, and apprenticeship to, the Socialist cause by declining to hide his light under a bushel. He shouted his gospel from the house-tops that all mankind might hearken unto the message. He opposed Socialism to war, working-class emancipation to glorified murder.

John Maclean had been transferred from Kinning Park School to Rutland Crescent School, and from there to Lorne Street School, Govan. He was dismissed from here in November, 1915, for leading a Partick "No Rent" deputation to the City Chambers. Officially, he was "suspended"; but the suspension was for the duration of the war and ever afterwards: the legal one year and a day. Like a public hanging, the suspension was permanent unto death.

The same day as he was dismissed from the School Board he was sentenced to five days' imprisonment, or to pay £5 fine, for a breach of the Defence of the Realm Act. He was allowed a week in which to pay the fine, and occupied this interval by participating in the Great Clydeside Rent Strike. The Govan strikers carried him shoulder-high through Glasgow to the Sheriff Court and threatened a general strike. And so Maclean entered Duke Street



John Maclean

Prison for five days on principle, and the Asquith Government passed the Rent Restriction Act.

Maclean played an active part in the Clyde Shop Steward Delegate Meeting, "addressed," as he said, "by Lloyd George and traitor Arthur Henderson in the St. Andrew's Hall on Christmas Day, 1915."

In February, 1916, Maclean was arrested and conveyed to Edinburgh Castle as a prisoner of war. The Government then determined to legalise its conduct after the event by charging him with sedition. He was allowed bail somewhat belatedly. On April 12, 1916, he was sentenced to three years' penal servitude at Edinburgh High Court. But the February, 1917, Revolution in Russia forced the agitation for his release. In response to that agitation, and as a gesture to the Russian Provisional Government, Maclean was transferred from Peterhead Convict Prison to Perth Penitentiary. He was released specially from here in June, 1917.

III. On The Threshold

As others had labored for his freedom, so Maclean now labored for others. He worked hard to secure the release from London prisons of Peter Petroff, a Russian Social Democrat, whom he greatly admired personally, and Chicherin, who was afterwards Soviet Foreign Minister. Petroff also enjoyed some official position for a time under the Soviet, but subsequently fell into obscurity and suffered exile.

Mrs. Petroff was interned in Aylesbury Prison, and made to consort with German women—compelled, as part of the prison discipline, to take the same baths immediately following them—suffering from venereal disease (*vide* House of Commons questions, July 9, 1917).

In return for his activities in this direction Maclean was appointed, in January, 1918, Russian Consul for Scotland. Since the Soviet Government was not recognised at the Court of St. James, but only at Scotland Yard, this honour was a propaganda gesture that landed Maclean into further conflict with the authorities. It was a post of menace and struggle.

Maclean established the Consulate at 12 Portland Street, Glasgow. The postal authorities refused to deliver letters addressed to him here or to the Consulate. The letters, in each case, were returned to the senders, with the intimation that the Consulate was not "recognised by H.M. Government."

Nothing daunted, Maclean persisted in using his Portland Street address, and opened here, in February, a fund to relieve the dependents of Russians deported to Russia since the Revolution. He acted as hon. treasurer and endeavored to persuade the shop stewards to take the matter up.

But Russia did not exhaust John Maclean's Socialism. On Saturday, March 16, 1918, in the S.C.W.S. Hall, Clarence Street, Glasgow, he presided over a Conference of Trade Unions, Trade Councils, Co-operative Societies, and other working-class organisations, for the purpose of considering a draft constitution and curriculum for the proposed Labor College. 271 branches and executives of the various societies were represented by 417 delegates.

On Friday afternoon, March 22, two detectives raided "the Russian Consulate" and arrested Louis Shammes. They took him



John Maclean

to the Southern Police Station, where they read out an order from Sir George Cave, ordering his deportation to Russia. He was removed to Barlinnie Prison to await deportation.

On Monday forenoon, April 15, 1918, two detectives again appeared at the Consulate and arrested Maclean on a charge of sedition. And so Maclean was cast into prison, as a prelude to the most famous of all his trials.

The pleading diet was held in Glasgow exactly a fortnight later. The trial was fixed for May 9, at Edinburgh. Maclean rested on the threshold of lasting fame and the persecuting attorneys knew it not. None so blind as hypocrites.

IV. The Great Trial

John Maclean was prosecuted more than once, as this biography retails. But his great trial took place at the High Court of Justiciary, Edinburgh, on May 9, 1918. To report that is to report all his trials in substance at least. One day the Courts will be famous because Maclean stood in their dock, as a certain prison cell is famous in Vienna because John Most once occupied it. No one will think of the ghostly array of counsel and legal officialdom that once thronged its corridors. Who cares for the monks that were contemporary with Luther, or the Inquisition officials who harassed Galileo?

The indictment was under the Defence of the Realm Regulations. There were eleven charges in the indictment, which accused Maclean of addressing audiences in Gorbals, Shettleston, Cambuslang, Lochgelly and Harthill, and making statements which were likely to prejudice the recruiting, training, discipline of His Majesty's Forces, and to cause mutiny, sedition, and disaffection among the civilian population, and to impede, delay, or restrict the production of war material, etc., contrary to the Defence of the Realm Acts. In substance, the charges reduced themselves to the first charge, with various ramifications and embellishments: *an incitement to the workers to strike the first blow for Revolution, on May 1, 1918.*

The embellishments consisted, largely, of Maclean's lively and picturesque description of the General Strike developing into the Social Revolution, and of the fate that would befall the Glasgow Municipal Chambers, Post Office, banks, newspaper offices, police offices, etc., and the *élite* of the Glasgow Magistracy and Town Council.

In Germany, a like indictment was framed, during the war years, against Karl Liebknecht. And posterity will honor Maclean equally with Karl Liebknecht for the very terms of the indictment intended to sound so fearful and alarming and make the accused excommunicate.

As we read these charges, we recall those tourist advertisements: "Why go to Italy when Cornwall calls? Why go to Switzerland when you can enjoy the magnificent Highland scenery of Scotland?" Men go to the "Holy Land" and visit the places where Jesus once stood or preached. But here we have mentioned



John Maclean

Gorbals, Shettleston, Cambuslang, Lochgelly, as places where the truth, the word bold and clear, was proclaimed.

Here are places sacred to the service of humanity, every whit as much as those distant spots of long ago. Yet we wonder how many of the dull, age-worshipping folk who come and go realise this fact! They need distance of space and time, need the long arm of death to direct their vision, before they perceive the infidel profaning the holy land. And then their own dull prosaicism has robbed the very land of its worth, its standing message, its vital truth. Poor prosy infidels among whom a real man dwelt and went his way without their knowing the worth of him!

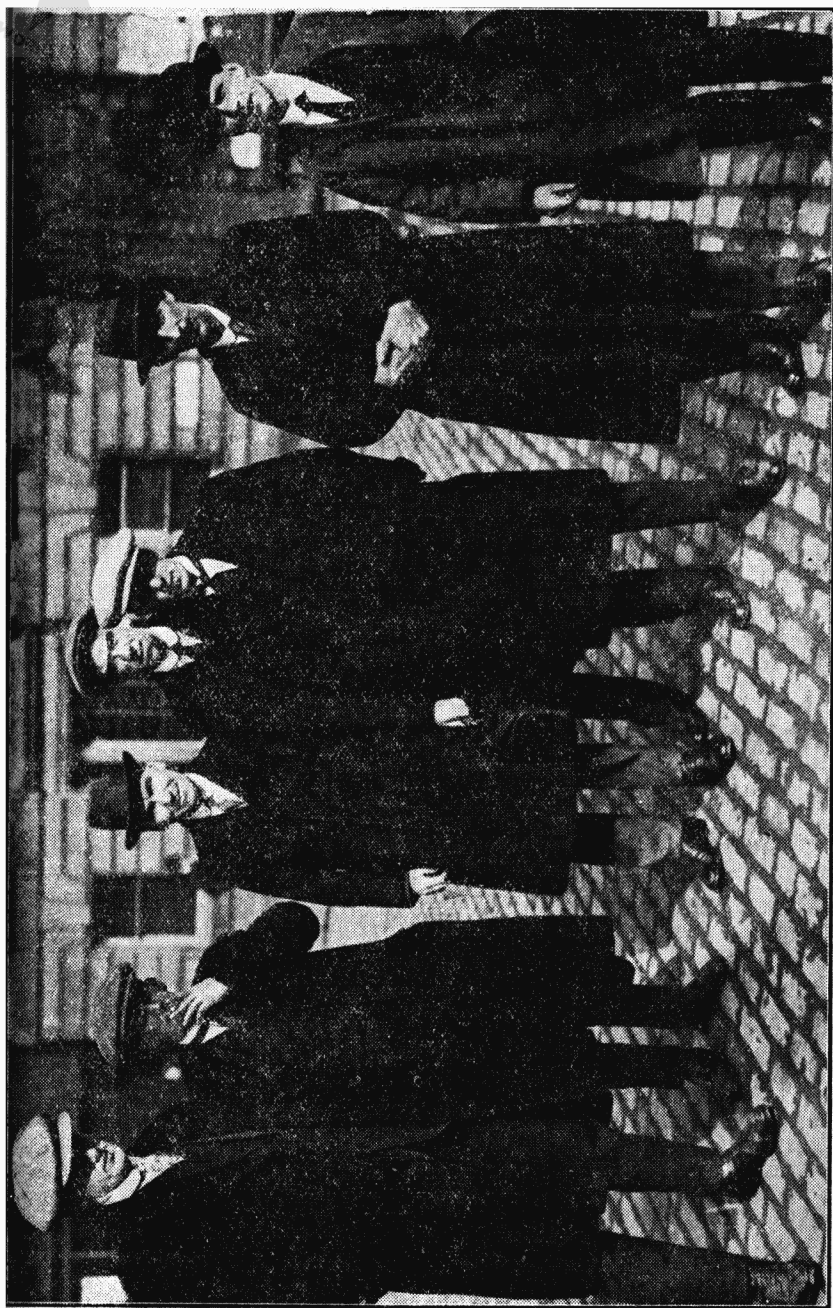
The first speech mentioned in this indictment was made on January 20, 1918, and the last on April 4 of that year. The excerpts from them were calls to down tools and oppose proletarian revolution to war, and supersede "the present House of Commons . . . by a Soviet."

A terrible idea in the twentieth century, during its first score years! But will it be so when the last score years come to comment on what has been with its record of what it is?

Maclean conducted his own case. He refused to plead. When the Lord Justice General intimated that he could object to any particular jurymen, he replied: "I would object to the whole of them."

That sentence will live and men will make it a text for a commentary on the folly of judicial proceedings. The entire criminal code will be exposed as a vulgar imposition and barbarity. Mankind will review the crimes of authority and see crime, learned and well clothed, down the ages condemning folly and virtue. Those who have studied the history of trials for heresy, blasphemy, and witchcraft will know quite well that juries and judges will one day rank with duellists and slave-owners in records of human progress. They will signify not greatness but pettiness, not wisdom but ignorance, not dignity but arrogance. Children will play at magistracy as at a barbarous game, even as girls devote themselves to harmless duelling, and women fashion their hats on the actual helmets of previous war-days. The real jurist-philosopher will draw his deduction, and convention itself will endorse Maclean's declaration. Thus the dock of to-day becomes the judgment-giving seat of to-morrow.

Evidence relating to the statements said to have been made by Maclean in the Stockwell Street Hall on January 20 and 27 was given by three special constables. These witnesses testified as follows:—



JOHN MACLEAN and others at Edinburgh, Parliament Square, before the great Trial, May, 9, 1918.



John Maclean

1st "Special": "Took a full note" both meetings.

2nd "Special": "Took no notes" of first meeting, and "a few notes" of second meeting, but "forgot" to send in his report.

3rd "Special": "Took no notes" of first meeting, but went home and wrote his notes from memory. He took no notes of second meeting, but "might have taken a word or two on a slip of paper," and went home and immediately started on his report.

Notwithstanding the different circumstances under which each "recorder" took "his notes," the evidence was exactly the same. They were able to swear that they each heard Maclean utter the identically same statement! No collusion! Just a providential gift of memory!

Evidence was given as to statements made by Maclean at a meeting held in a football field at Shettleston. A police witness pointed out that he did not consider it wise to take notes at the meeting itself owing to the attitude of the crowd, but instead went to the police office, in company with other two officers and made notes there. The other five witnesses for the Crown also took "nothing but mental notes."

But they had an exact report of what Maclean said! Naturally!

The Police Superintendent of the county gave evidence with regard to a meeting addressed by Maclean in Fife. Maclean raised some interesting points in his cross-examination. This witness received his notes from a press reporter who was present at Maclean's meeting in the interest of the press and of the police. The Superintendent admitted that he paid little attention to what Maclean said, but "remembered exactly" the report supplied to him. The report contained only a few words of the speech.

A mining inspector in the service of the Fife Coal Company spoke as to a meeting addressed by Maclean at Crossgates, Fife. He considered the speech a dangerous one, and made a report of it to his employers. He took no notes.

Maclean—You said it was a dangerous speech. Dangerous to whom? To the Fife Coal Company?

Witness—I am a servant of the Fife Coal Company, and I was an official, and it was my duty to report to them.

A slater examined by Mr. Blackburn for the Crown stated that he attended a meeting at Crossgates, addressed by Maclean. He took no notes but remembered a few things said. The speech was a bit strong on revolution and was likely to unsettle the audience. Cross-examined by Maclean, he stated that the effect of the speech would not last long and there was little harm done. Fife was a canny place, and a revolution would take some working up there.



The Great Trial

A compositor special constable who attended a meeting in the Stockwell Street hall on 13th March said in answer to Mr. Blackburn that he went for the purpose of taking notes of anything seditious that might be said by the speakers at the meeting.

Maclean—You were instructed not to take notes openly?

Witness—Yes.

Maclean—Why?

Witness—I don't know. No reason was given.

Maclean—You were not afraid to take notes openly?

Witness—I was not afraid, but I did not think it was judicious.

This evidence reminds us of the evidence in the famous case of William Winterbotham, tried in 1793 for preaching a seditious sermon. This is reported fully in our life of *Richard Carlile*, and needs no repetition here. The comparison makes it clear that the official trade of “informing” employs the same art and craft down the ages, and is proof against all change or variations that extensions of suffrage and reform may seek to impose. Exploitive society requires authority and authority relies on corruption and falsehood.

The Lord Advocate made a speech which later helped him to his judgeship, just as Sergeant Rook earned a judgeship in 1793 for prosecuting Winterbotham. The two speeches are identical in tone and purport, despite the gulf of years and the political changes that have left the basic social exploitation untouched. Strangely enough, the Lord Advocate's speech also reminds us of a later Home Secretary's (Jix) “anti-red” crusading!

He told the jury that it was “inappropriate” to talk about Socialism, the unpreventable. But Society could never afford at any time the deliberate and persistent attempt, through discussion of social questions, to create sedition and mutiny. He did not pretend, any more than any of them would pretend, to see into the dark recesses of the human heart. He did not know—they would never know—none of us this side of time would ever know what precisely were the motives that tempted Maclean. The range of the motive was wide, but just because they could not know what it was they must judge Maclean by what he did. They must protect themselves against him.

Have not the entire range of prosecuting attorneys, throughout the ages, spoken thus? Can Maclean ask any higher eulogy of his posterity than to be judged by what he did? Can prosecuting attorneys seek greater censure?

The Crown called twenty-eight witnesses in all. Maclean called none. He immediately addressed the jury.

It had been said that the prosecution could not fathom his motives. They were clean and genuine, and he was only proceeding along the lines upon which he had proceeded for many years. He had squared his conduct with his intellect, and was proud of it. If everyone had done so the war would not have taken place. He had nothing to retract, nothing to be ashamed of. It was his business to see that war stopped. His people were the workers everywhere, and it was not the workers who instigated war or had economic interests to serve as a consequence of war. He stood loyal to the class in which he was born. He was no traitor but a patriot so far as that class was concerned. He was loyal to the class which created the world's wealth. He wanted the workers to get the world and retain the world. No Government was going to take from him his right to exercise his freedom of speech to this end. He was there, not as the accused, but as the accuser, of capitalism, dripping with blood from head to foot.

For the full period of his active life he had been a teacher of economics to the working class, and his contention had been always that capitalism was an infamous, bloody, and evil system, rotten to its foundations, and must give place to a new society. His language was regarded as extravagant, but the events of the past four years had proved his contention.

"Thou shalt not steal! Thou shalt not kill!" He realised that Justice and Freedom could be obtained only when Society was placed on a sound economic basis. That basis was wanting to-day. Hence the bloodshed we were having.

The learned gentlemen for the prosecution had said that revolution inside Germany was good, whilst revolution inside Britain was bad. He could square it if he could. Maclean could not square it.

The conditions of Germany, economically, were the conditions of Britain, and there was only a very slight difference between the political superstructure of the two countries at the most. And we workers were not concerned with the political superstructure but with the economic foundation.

It would be a very bad thing for the world if a revolution were carried through to success in Germany, and no similar effort made in this country. The workers' enemy was the same in all countries, and if the German workers overthrew their autocratic government, it was our duty to see that they were not enslaved at the dictates of the capitalists of other parts of the world.

The only factor in society that could make a clean sweep of war was the working class; and the class interests of those on top would compel them to resist the change. Hence the moral need for the reconstruction of society on the basis of world brotherhood



The Great Trial

or co-operation by the united action of the workers of all countries for the smashing of capitalism.

The speech contained striking passages, such as the following, which, tho' repeating some of this third-person summary, deserved to be remembered as spoken:—

"I wish no harm to any human being, but I, as one man, am going to exercise my freedom of speech. No human being on the face of the earth, no government is going to take from me my right to speak, my right to protest against wrong, my right to do everything that is for the benefit of mankind. I am not here, then, as the accused; I am here as the accuser of capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot.

"The Lord Advocate pointed out here that I probably was a more dangerous enemy that you had got to face than the Germans. The working class, when they rise for their own, are more dangerous to capitalists than even the German enemies at your gates.

"I am glad that you have made this statement at this, the most historic trial that has ever been held in Scotland, when the working class and the capitalist class meet face to face.

"I am a Socialist, and have been fighting, and will fight for an absolute reconstruction of society. I am proud of my conduct. I have squared my conscience with my intellect."

So challenged from the dock a great speech. And why not? Does not history reveal to us the dock as the imperishable pulpit? Has any divine ever preached a nobler sermon than Robert Emmett or John Brown, calmly awaiting the summons to eternal rest—and memory?

Then followed the usual scene—one that has been enacted time and again in the struggle between epochs. The contrast between the principal characters is a commonplace of the great drama of human struggle towards emancipation. Nothing ever brings out more bravely the ignorance of those who deem themselves learned and great.

Authority and orthodoxy, in the person of the Lord Justice General, charged the jury. Complacent interest instructed complacent interest. The jury did not retire, but intimidated through their foreman a verdict of guilty on all the charges. Vain creatures of time! Most mortal mortals, warring against eternal verity! The Lord Justice General, posing for the last time in this case as the agent of Justice, asked Maclean if he had anything to say. Maclean views all the court and all that it stands for. He has said enough for one day. Time will vindicate him.

And so the Lord Justice General, poor imitator of former judges, grave apostle of class futility, speaks to Maclean of his patient trial and grave offence. He dwells on the prisoner's education and intelligence. And he sentences him to five years' penal servitude. A terrible and vindictive sentence? Yes! But now **it is all over.**



John Maclean

Only the moral remains—and the moral makes Maclean, and not the judge, the figure of destiny.

Maclean heard the sentence unmoved. Turning to his comrades, he cried: "Keep it going, boys; keep it going."

Looking backward—looking forward, as mankind for ever marches on, liberty and struggle repeat the words of John Maclean: "Keep it going." That is our slogan and his epitaph. He kept it going. He was the giant, surrounded on his trials by the stupid pigmies of passing authority and oppression.

V. Honoring the Great : Contrasts

Maclean had risen to the occasion. He had done what witnesses, counsel, jury, judges, wigs and flourishes could not do. He had brought greatness into court with him, and the silent aftermath official littledom irked to secure its revenge. The spirit of May had blessed John with its genius—the glorious genius of protest and freedom, of discardment and revaluation, the spirit of life revived and overflowing. His trial was the classic expression of class trial in itself. He standardised for all time the smallness of bench and jury-box. He dramatised, for all future generations, the expansiveness, the height and depth of the genuine man in the dock. And now the studied, secret unforgiveness. The Lilliputians had their enemy at their mercy. Their petty vengeance earned them their daily bread.

Maclean reached Perth Prison about 8.30 p.m. of the day of his trial. He addressed a letter to his wife the next day. He had had a talk with the prison doctor, and the following arrangement, sanctioned by the Prison Commissioners, was agreed upon:—

- (1) Maclean's meals were to be made outside the prison by his friends.
- (2) These meals were to be brought to the prison gates and handed to Maclean personally, in the presence of a warder or some prison official.
- (3) Maclean was not to speak to the person handing in the food.
- (4) Failing persons supplying meals, the Perth Co-operative or some similar organisation was to supply the meals, and the prison authorities undertook to bear the expense.
- (5) In the interval the prison authorities were to supply certain meals to Maclean's taste.

The *Forward*, whose editor was to enter an incompetent, spineless, and careerist Labor Ministry, extolled this arrangement. But we consider the third item a damnable and monstrous iniquity.

The Secretary of the Perth I.L.P. promptly visited the prison with a view to making the necessary arrangements for supplying the outside food. He had a long interview with the Governor and the doctor. He also interviewed John Maclean, who declined the arrangement and declared himself on hunger strike.

Announcing Maclean's decision in its issue for May 18, 1918, the *Forward* said: "... John Maclean himself, who *now* refuses



John Maclean

to take outside food and *declares* himself on hunger strike." This phrase could have been turned more happily. The mode of expression betrays, to our mind, calculated unfriendliness towards Maclean.

In response to the anxious enquiries of Mrs. Maclean, the authorities assured her that John was in the best of health. But when, at last, she was allowed to interview him, he described to her how he had tried to resist the forcible feeding by mouth tube and two warders held him down; and these men never left him after that, night or day, until he was forced to give in. Mrs. Maclean added:—

"I was shocked beyond measure by these statements and by the evidence of their truth supplied by his aged and haggard appearance."

Mrs. Maclean's letter was published in the *Herald* for November 9, 1918.

The effect this letter had on the Clydeside compelled George Barnes, on behalf of the Government, to write a letter to Maclean's friends. Barnes declared that Maclean was not being fed forcibly; he was being fed *artificially*! And our old friend, George Lansbury, the Crimson Christian, maybe, commented: "*A nice distinction, which only a Cabinet Minister can appreciate!*"

Well put! But George has become a Cabinet Minister since and has learned how to make nice distinctions also. Metaphysics is the art of Government, and nice distinctions embody the fantastic unrealities in which reformist politicians trade for their reward of bread and butter.

Who were Maclean's persecutors? Had they ideals? What visions influenced them in this persecution of Maclean, this fear and dread of him?

In April, 1918, when Maclean was arrested, the Postmaster-General was asking branch postmasters, on behalf of the Government that was persecuting Maclean, to exhibit "as prominently as possible" a pictorial representation of Harry Lauder's great atrocity story, with the following letter press explanation:—

"The Germans had captured six men of the Black Watch.

"They stripped them naked, and made them stand at attention through the cold night, and at dawn said, 'You swine! Get back to your trenches.

"Then as the helpless, frozen and naked men stumbled over No Man's Land, they were mown down with machine guns."

This effort was headed "Harry Lauder's Story." This man received honor and dignity, applause and hard cash, fortune and fame, from the British State propaganda authorities, from the press, from the fools of men and women who went to church and



Honoring the Great: Contrasts

chapel, imagined themselves Christians, and from sheer cowardice of mediocrity waded in their fellows' blood.

The good Christian people and most Christian Government that honored Lauder with wealth, applause, distinctions, and freedom for his barbarism and mendacity, honored Maclean with jail and forcible feeding, aged and tortured him. The greatest man of his country, in the twentieth century of the executed carpenter's era, wore but the halo of sorrow whilst the crown of laurels was handed out, in humanity's name, to a cowardly, mercenary, despicable clown. Warders must live! So must Christian chaplains! And all the fraternity of Christian bureaucrats, middlemen, statesmen, small divines, and other pompous little folk! Thus men worshipped a dead crucifix, paid tribute to clay idols, and perpetuate in their ignorance, the bloody agony of the living passion!

Oh yes! Whilst Maclean suffered for humanity, the conspirators of murder were nothing if not busy. After the 1929 Labor Government was formed, the press published a picture of George Lansbury and Baden Powell in company. It was in connection with some Boy Scout affair, and the special honoring of Baden Powell. Perhaps the purpose was to show that the Boy Scouts were an anti-militarist organisation. But whilst John Maclean perished in prison—for he did perish, his great mind was preyed on and wasted to make the murderer's holiday—Baden Powell strutted.

Maclean had been convicted sixteen days. It was the fourteenth day of his hunger strike, when what the Lord Mayor of London described as "*a tribute of respect and courtesy from the Republic of France to the junior arm of the Imperial Forces of the Crown*" was paid at the London Guildhall by the Vicomte de la Panouse on behalf of the French Government! The Vicomte presented a number of medals to British Boy Scouts and Cadet Corps—to establish their anti-militarist nature, naturally!

The then Sir Robert Baden Powell, referring to the work performed by the French Boy Scouts in the neighbourhood of the fighting line, read what was supposed to be a letter found on the body of a dead German. The text read:—

"A traitor has just been shot—a little French lad belonging to one of those gymnastic societies which wear tricolour ribbons (the Eclaireurs, or Boy Scouts), a poor young fellow who in his infatuation wanted to be a hero. The German column was passing along a wooded defile, and he was caught and asked whether the French were about. He refused to give information. Fifty yards further on there was fire from the cover of a wood. The prisoner was asked in French if he had known that the enemy was in the forest, and he did not deny it. He went with a firm step to a telegraph post and stood up against it, with the green vineyard at his back, and received the volley of the firing party, with a proud smile on his face. Infatuated wretch. It was a pity to see such wasted courage."



John Maclean

Baden Powell knew that this story was a lie. It was published, first, as a part of the Christian Hate propaganda in October, 1914, by the British Publicity experts. And it was "scotched" at the time by J. A. Hobson, in the *Manchester Guardian* for October 6, 1914:—

"Now on Thursday last in a selection of German soldiers' letters was a passage the quotation of which naturally evoked the passionate indignation of millions of English readers. It described how 'A traitor has been shot, a little French lad (*ein Franzlosling*) belonging to one of those gymnastic societies which wear tricolour ribbons (*i.e.*, the *Eclaireurs* or Boy Scouts), a poor young fellow who in his infatuation wanted to be a hero.' He was shot for refusing on inquiry to disclose the proximity of some French soldiers.

"Now the word 'Franzlosling' does not mean 'a little French lad.' It is, I am informed exclusively applied to German subjects with French proclivities. In Alsace and Lorraine there exist societies of these 'Franzlinge' who wear the French colours. They are not boys but grown men. This young fellow was doubtless one of them. According to the cruel laws of war he would in any country be treated as a 'traitor'."

And George Lansbury, who welcomed Maclean on his release from prison in 1918, could honor Baden Powell, the militarist liar, and utter no word of lasting praise to the memory of John Maclean, the Socialist.

It is a strange world as well as a sad one; and men worship strange gods and choose sad company. But when the strange sad world of caesarism is dead, in a commonwealth that once was Britain, our children's children shall honor the memory of the man we despised and rejected: John Maclean!

The man whose merit dwarfed Lauder and Baden Powell and declined tribute to the god of this world was too great to be understood by a Labor Cabinet Minister. Maclean's greatness was no shadow worth. It was gutter value and priceless beyond rubies, as all gutter values must be.

VI. Last Years of Solidarity

In November, 1918, following on his second release from penal servitude and his Free Pardon, John Maclean endeavored to bring about a united workers' movement for the overthrow of capitalism in Britain. This was a great year of seeming solidarity of demonstration, and maintained the enthusiasm that took possession of the radical section of the Socialist movement about the time of the conscription campaign in 1916.

1918 was really a wonderful year of Socialist fellowship and seeming united action. It was the swan song of Socialist fellowship allied to the old parliamentary movement. Socialist fellowship will be reborn; but in the spirit of revolution and terms of the final tussle between the workers and capitalism.

On May Day, 1918, Maclean was confined in Duke Street Prison, Glasgow, pending his trial. His sojourn there lends dignity to the dreary walls of that drab bastille. The writer never passes that dreary prison without recalling how thought and integrity were encastled there once upon a time and dull hireling officialdom stood on guard and restless, thoughtless mediocrity paraded its ways of interest without. Within the walls of Duke Street John Maclean spent his May Day, 1918, a living spirit entombed and in travail, witnessing for and to the great cause that the day symbolised.

May Day, 1918, was Labor's greatest May Day in Glasgow. It was Wednesday, May 1, and not the first Sunday to which it subsequently degenerated. It was the genuine May Day.

For weeks before the capitalist press and interests had employed every nefarious pawn upon the board to make the demonstration "a frost." They spoke of disloyalty to "our brothers in France"—sentiment stirred to the dregs; they threatened wholesale dismissals—the economic weapon; they offered to see that those who did *not* respond to this May Day call were *not* combed out for military service—a safety-first device; officially and unofficially, they clamored against Wednesday, May 1, 1918, being a day of demonstration. The day dawned: Labor in Glasgow, 100,000 strong, took the day off, marched in procession, bands, banners, bannerettes, red ribbons, revolutionary song: eighty lorries to the Green found a place in the demonstration; twenty-two platforms on Glasgow Green; a galaxy of orators; Socialist literature being distributed by the ton!

The sidewalk, en route, was lined with sympathisers, who raised approving cries.



John Maclean

At the Green there was a great display, and every platform commanded a crowd, with the sympathy, and not the envy of every other platform. Solidarity and struggle were in the air. Sectarianism was relegated to obscurity notwithstanding criticism and counter-criticism.

At the conclusion of the demonstration a great crowd went away up to Duke Street Prison and cried "John Maclean" three times, in the hope that the words would be heard by the comrade awaiting trial.

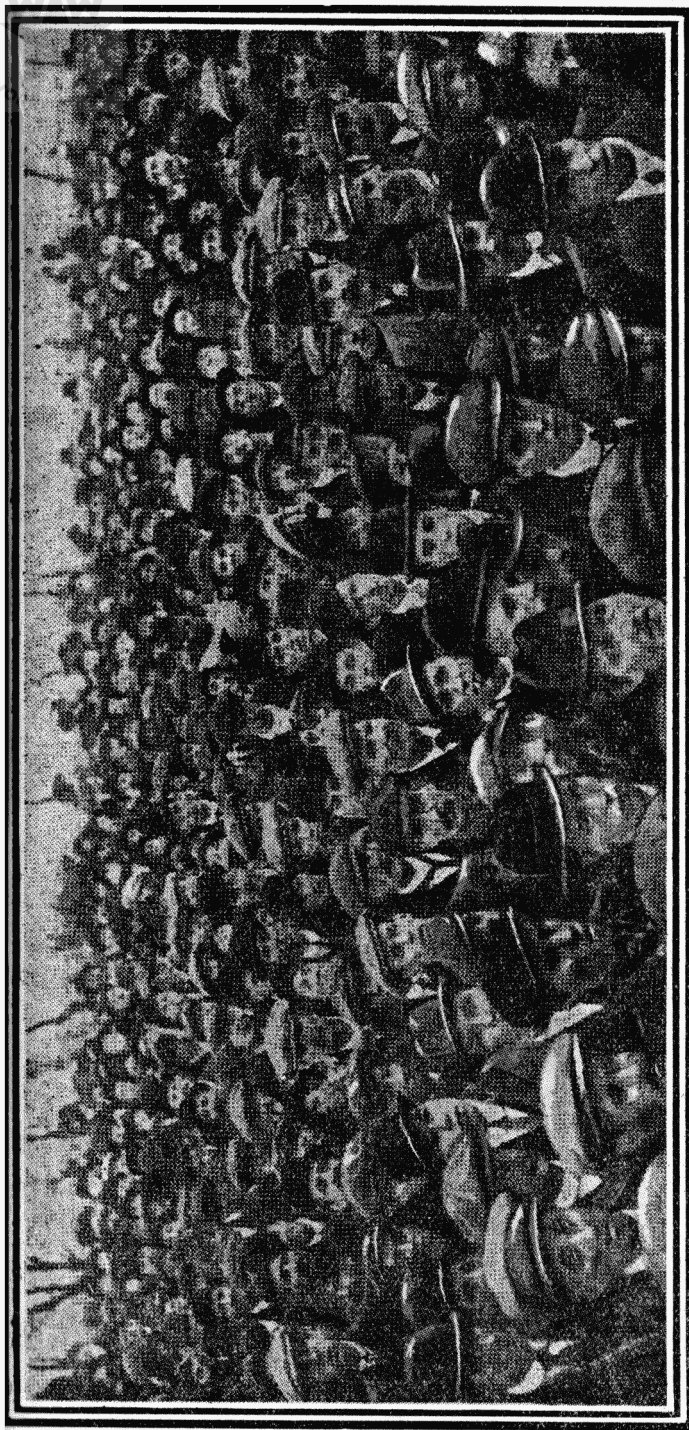
Whether John Maclean heard that cry of solidarity or not in physical fact we do not know. But he certainly sensed it in spirit and struggled to make it the harmony of his life's endeavor.

Solidarity was in the air—for the duration of the war only, alas! In this same merry month of May we have Willie Gallacher delivering a lecture on "The Workers' War Aims" under the auspices of the Drongan I.L.P. Later he spoke on "Capitalism and Patriotism" under the auspices of the Anniesland I.L.P. His address was deemed rousing and fearless; he was questioned severely; and at the conclusion of his meeting the "Red Flag" was sung with enthusiasm. Again we have another anti-militarist lecture delivered by Gallacher under the auspices of the Tollcross and Shettleston I.L.P.

In pursuit of a similar anti-militarist unity, John Maclean was the principal speaker at the St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, in the spring of 1919. He protested against the exaction of indemnities, as the influx of commodities merely endangered the workers' standard of existence in Britain.

The capitalist newspapers all denied this economic menace at the time. But Maclean, of course, was a thousand times right. Time is with truth. And time has not only shown John Maclean to have been right, but has compelled these capitalist sheets to recant. They have added to the cant of patriotism the recant of patriotism. John Maclean is dead. But his enemies repeat his truisms as their own and count the performance wisdom. In death, his struggle is vindicated.

From anti-militarist protest to solidarity with the strike prisoners was to pass from one phase to another of the same struggle. On Sunday, June 8, 1919, Maclean was the chief speaker on Glasgow Green to protest against the continued imprisonment of Gallacher, Murray, and M'Cartney for their General Strike activity. These prisoners were released from Duke Street Prison exactly one month later, Thursday, July 8, 1919. They had served their sentences in the Calton Jail, Edinburgh, and were brought to Glasgow the



MASS MEETING OF ANTI-CONSCRIPTIONISTS HELD ON GLASGOW GREEN YESTERDAY.

The above heading is from "The Bulletin." The letterpress beneath the block read:—"A snapshot of the crowd at the open-air meeting held on the Glasgow Green yesterday and addressed by anti-conscriptionist speakers, one of whom is figured on the right. The place was the base of the Nelson Monument, chosen no doubt with a certain ironical intent, seeing that Nelson won Trafalgar with the help of pressed men."—"Bulletin," Photos.)

A contemporary capitalist picture of huge meeting against war, addressed by John MacLean a few days before his first arrest in 1916, that led to his Peterhead sentences and sufferings.



John Maclean

previous day for liberation. A reception was given to Willie Gallacher in the Clark Town Hall, Paisley, on the night of his release, under the auspices of the local Trades' and Labor Council. John Maclean was again the principal speaker, and heartily endorsed Gallacher's regret at leaving Shinwell behind in the prison. One man plays many parts and destinies are strange things. Maclean little knew the role that Shinwell was to play in the Labor Governments of 1924 and 1929.

On December 25, 1920, Maclean convened a conference of "All Revolutionary Left Wing Marxist Groups" in the S.L.P. Hall, 50 Renfrew Street, Glasgow. The purpose of this conference was to link up unattached groups and individuals with the Socialist Labor Party, which he viewed, wrongly in the present writer's opinion, as the most decidedly Marxian organisation in Scotland. The S.L.P. has not merely disappeared since then, but its propaganda has proven to be only a tributary and contributory propaganda to the main idea of Socialist thought. Daniel De Leon's conception of the political and industrial plane were useful landmarks of Socialist agitation. But they involved too much capitalist Reformism to define the revolutionary struggle.


At this conference Maclean proclaimed the idea of a Scottish Workers' Republican Party. He insisted on the need for Socialists in Scotland, without neglecting their Internationalism, and even in pursuit of it, recognising the purely Scottish needs of working-class organisation in Scotland. He wanted a Scottish Workers' Republic en route to a British Workers' Republic, and en route to a workers' commonwealth of the world. He considered his work to be in Scotland.

Maclean announced his definite antagonism to the Communist Party and considered its conception of unity fatal to the idea of genuine working-class solidarity of thought and action.

Two days before Maclean had tried to lead an unemployed deputation to the Municipal Chambers. But the approach had been barred by the police.

He rallied a meeting of the unemployed on Monday, December 27, in the City Hall, Glasgow, and once more came into conflict with the Communist Party.

The Communist Party sneered at Maclean for attempting to organise a Scottish Communist Party or a Scottish Workers' Republican Party. Yet on January 6, 1921, they advertised a meeting in the International Hall, Main Street, Gorbals, as being under the auspices of the *Scottish* Communist Labor Party, South Side Branch. Maclean never forgave what he deemed this act of treachery.



Last Years of Solidarity

In this year, 1921, he returned again to the idea of a United Workers' movement towards revolutionary struggle. The upshot of his activity was greater isolation and the creation of the Scottish Workers' Republican movement.

But Maclean rejoiced in his isolation. Always he felt the need to incite to action; always his incitement to revolution brought him to the jail. Always he returned to the struggle more grim than ever. Death was necessary to silence his protest and conclude his heroism. Even death has not completed its appointed task. His name and aspirations are destined to become the rallying points around which the new Socialist movement of final struggle in Britain will be built. We are destined to enter the promised land that he visioned from afar during these closing years of pseudo-Socialist solidarity in capitalist wartime and its armistice aftermath.



VII. America and the Irish Question

In 1919, Maclean became convinced of the possibility of a war between Britain and America. The idea of this war haunted him to the close of his career. In June, 1920, when he turned his attention to the Irish question, he co-related British Imperialist policy in Ireland to the threatened or threatening Anglo-American conflict. He deemed the "*Irish Tragedy*" "*Scotland's Disgrace*," and published a pamphlet to put a stop "to the bloody career of the present Coalition gang of unmitigated scoundrels" and "profound prevaricators." He saw Ireland as he saw certain islands in the Pacific, a pawn in the Anglo-American war of mammon.

When Maclean stood his trial for alleged sedition in May, 1921, he had just completed an essay analysing all the factors making for war. During his month's interval of freedom, August to September, 1921, he wrote a further essay, throwing more light on the subject. And when he put the prison gates behind him for ever, in October, 1922, he brought with him, from jail, newspaper clippings bearing on his theme, and noted on the very day of his release that America had convened an All-Pacific Trade Conference at Honolulu. His essays on this subject were published in the *Socialist*, the now-defunct Glasgow S.L.P. organ, that boomed during the war and moved to extinction after the armistice.

These essays are of no lasting literary moment, but their central idea is one to be considered. The grim prospect that Maclean visioned still menaces the workers of Britain and America. It is wise to review the grounds on which Maclean was persuaded, amidst his other activity, to hammer away at what some "Socialists" (*sic*) regarded as his foolish notion and unpretty conceit.

Maclean saw Britain and America coming to grips in a fight for the Pacific Ocean. When the Crown Prince of Japan visited Britain in 1921, Maclean saw a deeper significance in the visit, and a closer bearing on the relationship between Britain and Japan, than was indicated in the mere surface courtesies connected with that visit. He turned to the map of the western half of the Pacific Ocean, and noted the Allied mandates to Australia, New Zealand, and Japan: he noted the Hawahan Islands, stolen from the natives by the United States; the Philippine Islands, stolen by the United States from Spain, situate between Australia and China; *and the ring of islands, between the Hawahan and Philippine Islands, handed over to Japan.* On the edge of this ring of Japan-owned islands is the Guana Island, owned by the United States.



America and the Irish Question

This island gives America cable connection with the Hawaiian Islands, Japan, and the Philippines, as well as with Yap Island, well inside the Japanese ring. Maclean saw, in the handing over of Yap Island to Japan, the basis of trouble between Britain and America.

Yap was stolen from Germany and handed over to Japan, the commercial enemy of America. This was according to British policy, which was to encourage antagonism between America and Japan, so as to side with Japan without incurring the responsibility of declaring war with America. Australia refused to agree to an open treaty with Japan involving war with America. But this did not preclude a secret treaty between Britain and Japan alone. New Zealand interests favored naval supremacy in the Pacific and was opposed to what it deemed the possible future aggression of America.

In October, 1922, the United States convened at Honolulu a Pan-Pacific Union Conference—that is, a conference of the Governments of lands bordering the Pacific Ocean, and working for the advancement of Pacific States and communities and for a greater co-operation among and between the people of all races in the Pacific. This conference discussed the Pan-Pacific commercial problems of each country; transport, with special reference to cable and wireless facilities, especially for the press; trade routes; free ports and free zones; development and conservation of natural resources, fisheries, fuel, rice, and sugar; standardisation of trade and finance; and international relations in the Pacific area.

Australia was allied to the Pan-Pacific Union, but refused to send delegates to this Honolulu Conference. Bonar Law replied to this Pacific Trade Conference with a British Imperial Trade Conference. "Eat Empire Food" was the reply to America's Honolulu All-Pacific effort. It was the calculated commercial prelude to Anglo-American murder conflict.

America's reply to British antagonism was a Conference of the Central American Republics in Washington, in December, 1922. Here it was agreed that Mexico was a menace equally to America and to Britain. A League of American nations was projected, and its definite formation was urged at the Pan-American Congress at Santiago, Chili, in March, 1923.

Maclean noted all these facts. He saw the bully-beef trusts of Chicago trying to corner the world's food supplies; and the Standard Oil Trust trying to corner the world's oil supply; he saw the British capitalists trying to corner the world's food supply; and the Anglo-Persian Oil Company trying to corner the world's oil supply.



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He saw this conflict of opposing monopolies leading to war: and he demanded that the workers should see that there was no war. Here was the Socialist and Marxist bent on serving humanity, intent on struggle against strife, determined that the inhuman sacrifice to war should not be paid if one proletarian thinker could avert it.

Maclean betrayed tenacity in the pursuit of this American war idea in order to avert war. He was no less consistent in his sympathy with the oppressed at all times and in all directions. Always he united Marxist analysis with his capacity for Socialist understanding and love of freedom. His philosophy was alive: his life was struggle: his analysis vital. Thought, to him, meant action, even as the Word of God meant action to Mazzini. There are abundant evidences of this fact, all revealing the dynamic reality of the man.

Nowhere did he express this quality more completely than in his reaction to the Irish question. His conception of the American war menace made him realise that Britain must hold Ireland as a base of operations against America: and that America must seek Ireland as a base against Britain. It bears out Maclean's analysis that, after the establishment of the Irish Free State, the attitude of the United States towards Irish immigration changed—with the consent and approval of American Irishmen.

An excerpt from Maclean's *Ireland's Tragedy* summarises his viewpoint:—

"What, then, is Britain's real motive for its bull-dog grip on Erin's Isle? Ireland stands between Britain and the Atlantic Ocean, on which British ships must freely sail in case of war, to preserve the people's food supplies. If Ireland were an independent republic and formed an alliance with America, which Bottomley in *John Bull* now calls 'Britain's Next Enemy,' then in the event of a war . . . Irish ports would be the base of operations of the American fleet and Irish soil would be the base of operations of the American army. Britain might thus be bottled up by America and Ireland combined, as Britain bottled up Germany and starved her into surrender."

Maclean declared that it was hypocrisy for Scots to pretend to revere the memory of William Wallace and stand for the murder of James Connolly. He urged the unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland prior to the establishment of the Free State, and stood for an Irish Workers' Republic, after the setting up of the partition of Ireland and the founding of the southern dominion.

Maclean listed all the raids, arrests, sentences, proclamations, suppressions, outrages in Ireland for 1919-20. Into these we need not go. But he preserved, as typical of Castle conduct in Dublin, the letter sent by Major Erskine Childers, D.S.C., son of a former



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Chancellor of the Exchequer, on March 9, 1920, to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, General Headquarters, Dublin.

Childers wrote:—

"Sir,—I received the honour of a visit last night from a tank belonging to your command at the somewhat inconvenient hour of 1 a.m. I do not demur to this. War is war. But I suggest that it might be in the ultimate interest both of the visitors and the visited on these occasions if a code of etiquette or deportment were imposed upon the former. It would, perhaps, be unreasonable to complain of bayonets being flashed in the eyes of my small boy in his cot, and of similar means of impressing the household generally with a proper awe of the forces under your command. But it is a matter of legitimate complaint that a young subaltern (of by no means attractive appearance, if you will forgive me) should, on entering the house, stroll into my drawing room in my presence puffing a cigarette, and should continue to refresh himself in this manner after I had invited him to desist. The trifling scene which ensued was ended by the intervention of another officer of no less polished breeding who decreed an ingenious compromise under which the cigarette was to be thrown unextinguished upon the carpet. 'Upon the carpet,' was the express injunction delivered with studied insolence by this young carpet-knight.

"Thus I was to win my point about the consumption of the cigarette, and he was to save his dignity by burning a hole in my carpet.

"The point may seem trivial, but is it so? When armies are eventually withdrawn from occupied territory—and may I, without the least offence, express the hope that yours will be eventually withdrawn from ours?—it is of the most vital importance to the future relations of the nations concerned that an army should leave behind it a record for civility and humanity in the performance even of its most obnoxious duties. Surely none can be more obnoxious and more easily provocative of exasperation than these midnight raids upon civilians' houses, about 19,000 of which have taken place, I understand, in the last two years, often, as in my case, on false information, and often resulting in indignities and hardships infinitely worse than anything I experienced.

"Though I am no longer a member of the British Army, long service in it during the war, and the regard which I still retain for the best among its traditions, encourages me to address these remarks for your consideration.

"I have the honour to remain,

"Faithfully Yours,

(Sgnd.) "ERSKINE CHILDERS,

"late Major, R.A.F."

Childers subsequently was legally murdered by the Free State his struggles had helped to create.

VIII. Towards Sundown

In January, 1921, Maclean entered upon the last vital stage of his magnificent conflict with authority and oppression. The period was rounded with a dramatic exclamation of defiance. After that Maclean continued his struggle for a year because his spirit defied death and his audacity acknowledged no defeat. But circumstance, that foul imperious dictator, silenced his message and suffering had wrought havoc with the physique of the messenger. The prophet had lived beyond the strength of his bodily power because his mind had outstripped mediocrity. His superb defiance reached the limit of his endurance of body and his brave spirit dared the inevitable exhaustion of his physical powers. But he lived an epic.

The story of this period is full of dramatic incidence. And it sustains itself like some perfect plot. Even Ibsen could not conceive a more perfectly unfolded story of the fate of an enemy of society. But this was not play-acting. It was life. All the world may be a stage, but John Maclean was no mummer. The man never strutted. He lived—as only prophets and agitators lived, as only such have lived since the world was evolved by human misery, and agitation and pioneering defined human destiny. There is no chapter in the sacred literature of the world at once more wonderful and more simple than this remarkable period of John Maclean's life from January, 1921, to November, 1922.

John Maclean conserved and carried into the new year of 1921 all his historic past. There was his vision of the menace of the world-war between Britain and America. Were he with us to-day he would see, in the visit of the Prince of Wales to Buenos Aires, and the exhibition of British goods on the very doorstep of United States trade, an evidence of commercial struggle and rivalry that justified his fears. Be this as it may, Maclean saw the need to rally the workers of Britain in opposition to this menace. What a contrast to Blatchford and Hyndman and other preachers of war-menace! Not the American menace! Not loyalty to the British Empire! But *the war* menace and the need to *oppose* war, by British workers in Britain, leaving American workers to oppose it in America: the need to make the armies of the kings less by the Socialists.

Again, there was the question of unemployment and the intended reduced standard of living of the working class. Maclean saw unemployment as the key question. He saw the "pink parliamenta-



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rians" and Trade Union leaders accepting the idea of a reduced standard of living as inevitable, because they could not think nor act in opposition to capitalism. They could not vision the ending of the old world order and the birth of the new. They were hypocrites, subject, abjectly subject, to the slavery of the night, because they could not read the signs of the times. Maclean determined to challenge them on unemployment. Socialism to him, at this time, meant unemployment versus Laborism. That was a practical conflict, a practical issue, a practical definition.

Unemployment notwithstanding, and because it favored in small issues the very class it must destroy finally, the capitalist was driven to express his growing need for increased output and growing hours of labor. This fatal urge, that enticed calamity as being the path to temporary salvation, Maclean opposed. It was no part of a Socialist's business to attempt such hideous patchwork reformism. The parliamentarians thought otherwise: and so, here again, Maclean pioneered opposition to rationalisation—a word that is identified with capitalist incapacity and economic comity throughout the world.

In addition to the American world-war menace, unemployment, reduced standard of living, increased output and longer hours of labor to aggravate unemployment, Maclean saw the struggle across centring round the fight of India, Egypt, and Ireland. His slogan was: "Through Marxism to Revolution—the only way."

Maclean spilled this mouthful in the New Year's issue of the *Socialist*. He pursued the program unflinchingly and paid for his consistency with his liberty, his health, and, at last, his life.

There is the story of the two delegations that approached the Town Clerk on Thursday, January 6, 1921. One was sent direct by the unemployed themselves, and headed by John Maclean. The other was a joint deputation composed of delegates from the Glasgow Trades and Labor Council and the Trade Union Unemployment Committee. The latter was headed by Harry Hopkins, of the A.E.U., who must have recalled the war days when he spoke from the same platform as Maclean on Glasgow Green. The police stopped Maclean's deputation as it approached the Municipal Chambers but permitted the other deputation to send a message to Wheatley, who interviewed Hopkins and promised a suspension of standing orders!

Rallying the unemployed took Maclean all over Lanarkshire. He became very active in Airdrie, and addressed a large number of meetings there, at the corner of Hallcraig and Hill Streets. His colleague at these meetings was Sandy Ross, an ex-policeman, whose father had been an ex-policeman before him. Sandy Ross



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subsequently retired from the movement, and his association with it, therefore, becomes a matter of small moment. He did not last the distance, and his fame or infamy was purely transient.

Both Ross and Maclean spoke at this spot on April 26, 1921, when their meeting was attended and specially reported by the Chief Constable of Airdrie, A. Wesley Christie, Police-Constable George Rees, and Police-Sergeant James Turner.

At this meeting John Maclean urged the General Strike as the first step towards Social Revolution, and insisted that the army and navy were powerless to cope with such a strike. He declared that, faced with such a strike, the rank and file of both forces would unite with the working-class movement of revolution.

He denounced the Middle Classes Union and the Special Constables as spies of the Government; and declared that, when the miners were locked out on April 1, 1921, the Government had brought out its official lorries, guarded by soldiers, to carry food to the upper and middle classes. The entire State machinery of war had been mobilised and called out to force the workers to accept lower wages and a reduced standard of life in the interests of the classes who were thriving through robbery.

Maclean denounced gambling as the counter-revolution. If his audience had given their money to revolutionary agitation instead of to bookmakers they would have obtained a better return for their investment.

The Chief Constable of Airdrie considered these perfectly true utterances to be contrary to the Emergency Regulations, 1921, Section 19, made in pursuance of the powers contained in the Emergency Powers Act, 1920. Accordingly, he divided these statements into five counts—and added six other statements which Maclean denied having made, to make eleven counts in all—and charged Maclean with sedition. Other statements were noted and charged against Sandy Ross. Both were arrested and released on bail.

On Tuesday, May 17, 1921, all roads led to Airdrie. The trial opened at the Airdrie Sheriff Court and continued till 8.15 p.m.

Maclean objected to the competency of the indictment, on the ground that it consisted of a series of disjointed statements, whereas his remarks had been consecutive. This objection—to our mind a sound one—was repelled.

The first witness for the prosecution was the Chief Constable. Maclean examined the Chief Constable's note-book and drew attention to the fact that the Chief Constable's notes were written beautifully, and could not have been taken down, in that form, whilst the writer was following a rapidly developed speech.



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This witness was kept in the witness-box for over two hours. The Court paid no attention to the fatal analysis of his excellently written reports as an indictment of their veracity.

After the other Crown witnesses had been heard, Maclean and Ross each entered the witness-box and affirmed. Maclean outlined his lecture and averred that he did believe in revolution or the coming to supreme and unchallengeable power in society of the working class. By a movement of his hands he illustrated what he meant by a complete overthrow of the existing social system.

Both accused then addressed the Court. Maclean spoke for seventy minutes. The Fiscal occupied five minutes in pressing for a conviction. The Sheriff found both defendants guilty. He sentenced each to three months' imprisonment and imposed an additional penalty of £20 fine on Ross, with the alternative of another three months' imprisonment.

Maclean's threat of hunger-striking caused the authorities to concede the treatment of political prisoners. These concessions are very slight and do not equal the treatment accorded to political prisoners in Britain a century ago, before Reformed Parliaments and "democracy" were the fashion. But the concessions meant the following rights: own clothes, books and newspapers, bed and furniture, own food, private toilet necessities.

Maclean was released in August, 1921, and threw himself immediately into an agitation for the release of Sandy Ross. He coupled the demand for the immediate release of Ross with an agitation for the revolutionary organisation of the unemployed. The police commenced taking notes of his speeches and specially reported one that he addressed at Dunmore Street, Gorbals, on September 13. At this meeting Maclean said:—

"I stand on the same platform as Sandy Ross, and as long as I am a free man, I will say the same—that is, if you cannot get food in a constitutional way, I say take it."

The following week he was arrested at the meeting and charged with sedition on account of this utterance. The next morning he was charged with sedition at the Southern Police Court. The charge was duly read over by Superintendent Ord, and in due course Maclean was remitted to the Glasgow Sheriff Court. He was tried by Sheriff Boyd.

Maclean's speech from the dock established the unconquerable character of the man. Here are some excerpts:—

"The only time Ross and myself made any public utterance to these people was in the City Hall. We deliberately stated in the City Hall that, instead of breaking up our organisation, we wanted to hold together. Ross's message to them was that if there were any who



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could not hold out, it was their business to go and take food rather than die of starvation. We hold to this principle, and it is one I shall hold to as long as I live. It is one of the fundamental principles of my life."

"At these meetings in the evening and particularly in Stanley Street I pointed out I was going to be a candidate at the November election and I outlined my programme. I said that the only thing which would guarantee people a livelihood was a Socialist and a Communist Republic—in fact the whole world put in possession of the working class. I said I was a Revolutionist. I said I did not want their votes under false pretences. I came before them as a Revolutionist candidate. I wanted them to go whole-heartedly with me for a complete revolution in Society. I did not want their votes on sentiment, or on my municipal programme."

"I said, so far as we were concerned, if it was a case of death by starvation, or the taking of food, I urged the taking of food rather than death by starvation; and from that I will not recoil."

"During the war it was said that John Maclean was a traitor to his country. I never was. I never said I would fight for my country; I said I would fight for my class."

"When I stand up for my comrade I am prepared to suffer for him, and I am glad I have been charged here, because it is going to let the whole world know that John Maclean stands by those who are of the same conviction as himself. This is a glorious opportunity for me and I am proud that I have been indicted for standing by Sandy Ross—for standing by my class."

"I for one am out for a Scottish Workers' Republic."

Maclean was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. This sentence was served in Barlinnie Prison. Maclean was released from here on October 25, 1922.

The present writer was imprisoned in Duke Street and Barlinnie Prisons, Glasgow, from March, 1921, to June, 1922, and so came into personal contact with Maclean during this infamous imprisonment that took so much toll of Maclean's nervous energy.

The toll notwithstanding, John Maclean's spirit remained undaunted and the white flame of his great enthusiasm seemed extinguishable. Speaking in St. Mungo Hall, Glasgow, on November 19, 1922, Maclean denounced Smuts for the execution of Long, Hull, and Lewis in connection with the Rand strike; and Cosgrove for the execution of the Irish Republicans. The next day he forwarded letters of protest to both Smuts and Cosgrove and declared himself again as the upholder of Red or Working Class Republicanism.



IX. By the Graveside

John Maclean died on November 30, 1923. His passing was a surprise alike to friend and foe. He died as he would have wished, fighting, struggling in the cause he loved, striving for the truth he saw, seeking the republican commonweal. George Lansbury paid his tribute to the courage and ability of our dead warrior in the columns of the *'Daily Herald'*, and reminded the parliamentarians that only the tenderness of Maclean's conscience debarred him from enjoying the luxury of political success. The Communist Party paid its tribute. Even Gallacher has forgotten what he said in detriment of the dead warrior a few weeks before his passing. And now those who despised and opposed in life, stand beside the grave and appreciate. I know not whether these tributes be sincerities or hypocrisies. But methinks, 'twould have been better to have uttered them whilst the warrior yet fought, whilst the battle oppressed him, and when a mead of praise and some slight suggestion of help would have comforted. My conscience could not praise in death the man whom I had attacked and outcasted in life.

More consistently, but not more nobly, the *Forward*, quoting Latin to remind us that nothing but good should be spoken of the dead, proceeds to write in vigorous English more ill than good. It views Maclean's activities as Anti-Labor when they were but Anti-Labor Party, a quite different proposition. Time will prove that John opposed the Labor Party from very zeal for Labor, from very loyalty to Socialism.

Beside the grave I have no tongue for eloquence, no gift of speech. I would bury the dead in silent meditation and keep the memory of their heroism green in my heart, and borrow their courage to sustain my spirit. I have not the words with which to point the moral of the dream that is rounded by two eternal sleeps. I only know that John Maclean was a brave and tireless fighter, uncorrupted by hopes of reward, loved, and hated too, because he served the outraged and oppressed. I identify myself with all the noble words Lansbury pens about him: but, alas! did I pen such words, I could not turn to Christian stupidities for consolation nor entertain them for another day, nor could I walk the staid, respectable paths of parliamentary opportunism and distinction.

We turn aside from his grave, wearied and dissatisfied at the tributes paid in death that, were the dead to rise, would be withdrawn in life, and replaced by gibes and sneers.

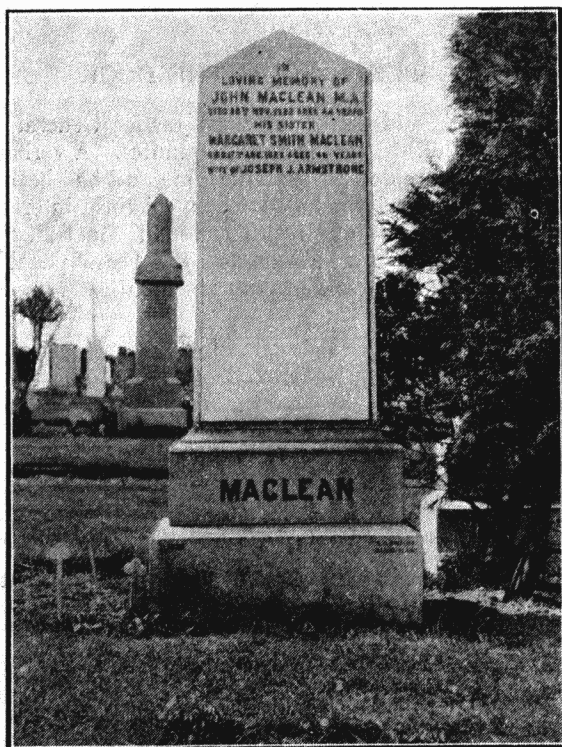


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The grave is kind. It gives rest to the wearied brow, peace to the harassed warrior. And life calls us—to battle. Not without sadness, but without sorrow, we leave the great dead to sleep, and spend the small interval of life that belongs to us, speeding the day for which he yearned with all the devotion and energy of his being.

John Maclean sleeps. His soul goes marching on. Wherever Socialism calls it hosts to battle, wherever the red flag flies in triumph, wherever the rebel falls before reaction, the memory of John Maclean will stir the heart of man, sobering yet enhancing success, comforting and sustaining in defeat. The man of whom so much can be said in death lived the short day of man not in vain. Rest, brave chief, rest! We are the braver for your struggle, and must battle on to achieve the glory of your ideal, until, one day, the great silence calls us too, and the kindly fates bestow their final kiss of everlasting peace.

“He had intellect to comprehend his highest duty distinctly, and force of character to do it; which of us dare ask for a higher summary of his life than that?”
—*T. H. Huxley.*



JOHN MACLEAN'S RESTING PLACE, EASTWOOD CEMETERY,

We do not believe in tombstones, but one was erected over the body of John Maclean. Perhaps the Labour movement wished to keep down his spirit.

APPENDICES

1.—SPEECH FROM THE DOCK.

John Maclean's address to the Lord Justice General, and Jury, at Edinburgh, May 9th, 1918, lasted 75 minutes. A verbatim report was published in pamphlet form at the time and has been reprinted several times since. It is included for its historic interest. At its conclusion, the Jury, without retiring, found Maclean "Guilty as Libelled." The Judge passed a sentence of 5 years' penal servitude. Of this sentence, Maclean served only six months.

It has been said that they cannot fathom my motive. For the full period of my active life I have been a teacher of Economics to the working classes, and my contention has always been that Capitalism is rotten to its foundations, and must give place to a new society. I had a lecture, the principal heading of which was "Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not kill," and I pointed out that as a consequence of the robbery that goes on in all civilised countries to-day, our respective countries have had to keep armies, and that inevitably our armies must come clash together. On that and on other grounds, **I consider Capitalism the most infamous, bloody and evil system that mankind has ever witnessed.** My language is regarded as extravagant language, but the events of the past four years have proved my contention.

THE CLASS WAR.

He (the Lord Advocate) accused me of my motives. My motives are clean. My motives are genuine. If my motives were not clean and genuine, would I have made my statements while these shorthand reporters were present? I am out for the benefit of society, not for any individual human being, but I realise this, that Justice and Freedom can only be obtained when Society is placed on a sound economic basis. That sound economic basis is wanting to-day, and hence the bloodshed we are having. I have not tried to get young men particularly. The young men came to my meetings as well as the old men. **I know quite well that in the reconstruction of Society the class interests of those who are on top will resist the change.** And the only factor in Society that can make for a clean sweep in Society is the working class. Hence the Class War. The whole history of Society has proved that Society moves forward as a consequence of an under class overcoming the resistance of a class on top of them. So much for that.

I also wish to point out to you this, that when the late King Edward the Seventh died, I took as the subject of one of my lectures, "Edward the Peacemaker." I pointed out at the time that his "entente cordiale"



Appendices

with France and his alliance with Russia were for the purpose of encircling Germany as a result of the coming friction between Germany and this country because of commercial rivalry. I then denounced that title, "Edward the Peacemaker," and said that it should be "Edward the Warmaker." The events which have ensued prove my contention right up to the hilt. I am only proceeding along the lines upon which I have proceeded for many years. I have pointed out at my Economic classes that, owing to the surplus created by the workers, it was necessary to create a market outside of this country, because of the inability of the workers to purchase the wealth they create. You must have markets abroad, and in order to have these markets you must have empire. I have also pointed out that the capitalist development of Germany since the Franco-Prussian War has forced upon that country the necessity for empire as well as this country, and in its search for empire there must be a clash between these two countries. I have been teaching that, and what I have taught is coming perfectly true.

I wish no harm to any human being; but I, as one man, am going to exercise my freedom of speech. No human being on the face of the earth, no government is going to take from me my right to speak, my right to protest against wrong, my right to do everything that is for the benefit of mankind. **I am not here, then, as the accused; I am here as the accuser of Capitalism dripping with blood from head to foot.**

In connection with the "ca' canny" question at Parkhead Forge. I wish to take up some of the particular points first of all before I deal with the revolution. It is quite evident that it was in connection with a report in the "Forward" that reference was made to David Kirkwood. It was there reported that Kirkwood had made a record output. Now, David Kirkwood, representing the Parkhead Forge workers, at the end of 1915, when the dilution of labour began, put forward a printed statement for the benefit of Mr Lloyd George and his colleagues, the first sentence of which, in big type, was—"What you wish is greater output." He said that the Parkhead Forge workers were then prepared to give a greater output and accept dilution if they, the workers, had some control over the conditions under which the greater output would accrue. That was his contention. Since he has got into position he seems to have boasted that he has got a record output. The question was put to me: Was this consistent with the position and with the attitude of the working class? I said it was not consistent with the attitude and the position of the working class; that his business was to get back right down to the normal, to "ca' canny" so far as the general output was concerned.

THE "CA' CANNY" POLICY.

The country has been exploited by the Capitalists, in every sphere, to get the toilers to work harder to bring victory. I said at the commencement of the war that, while this was being done, and while assurances were being given that at the end of the war the people would get back to normal, I said that circumstances would make such a return impossible. Now I have ample evidence to support that belief; I have used it at my meetings at Weir's of Cathcart—that they were asking the workers to toil harder, not only during the war, but after the war they wish them to work harder and harder, because **there is going to be "the war after the war," the economic war which brought on this war.** You see, therefore, the workers are brought into a position where they are speeded up, and they are never allowed to go back again. They are speeded up again and again. What is the



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position of the worker? This country is not a free country. The worker is deprived of land or access to the land; he is deprived of workshops or access to the materials and tools of production; the worker has only one thing to do in the market, and that is to sell his labour power. The Capitalist purchases that labour power, and when he gets the worker inside the workshop, his business is to extract as much of that labour power out of him as possible. On the other hand, when it comes to wages, then the employer applies the principle of "ca' canny." **"Ca' canny" is quite justifiable when it comes to the employer giving wages to the workers.** And we have seen it since the commencement of the war. Prices rose right away from the commencement of the war, while the workers' wages were kept at the old normal. Their wages were kept low. The purchasing power of the workers' wages was therefore diminished. They were therefore robbed to that extent. At the same time the workers were asked in the name of the country to work harder, "but," said the employers, "we will not give you any more money, although the money you are getting is purchasing less in the way of food, etc." That is the position.

The employers are changing their opinions now as a result of experience, but in the past they considered it in their economic interest to pay as low a wage as possible. On the other hand the position of the workers is to give as little of their energy as they possibly can and to demand the highest wage possible. **If it is right for the employer to get the maximum of energy and pay the minimum of wage, then it is equally right for the worker to give the minimum of his energy and demand the maximum of wage.**

What is right for the one is equally right for the other, although the interests of the two classes are diametrically opposed. That is the position; and in view of the fact that many of the workers have over-worked themselves and have had to lie off through overstrain, and considering the treatment they get when thrown on the scrap-heap—kicked out like dogs when they are no longer useful—they are compelled to look after their own welfare. The worker has therefore in the past adopted the policy of "ca' canny"; and I have, in the interests of the working class advocated the policy of "ca' canny," not because I am against the war, but, knowing that after the war the worker will have the new conditions imposed upon him, I hold still to the principle of "ca' canny." I accede to that.

So far as Parkhead Forge is concerned, I also pointed out that none of the great big guns had been made for some time prior to the great offensive. When the offensive came, Gough, the friend of Sir Edward Carson, the man who before the war was going to cut down the Irishmen, he retreated and lost so many guns, and then the Glasgow workers had to give over their Easter holiday in order to make those guns. We have, therefore, Beardmore and others responsible for shortage of certain material, and we know from further disclosures that millions of shells have been useless, and perhaps that has been due to the fact of over-speeding, so that even over-speeding may do nothing for the advancement of the war. Furthermore, if big reserves of material are going to be built up, and the Germans are to be allowed to get them, that is going to be to the advantage of the Germans, and not to the advantage of the British.

"DOWN TOOLS" AND FOOD.

With regard to the next point, "down tools," so far as Glasgow is concerned, I do not think I told the workers to "down tools." I am of the opinion that I said—"Now that you are determined to 'down



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tools,' it is of no use standing idle; you must do something for yourselves.'" As a matter of fact my statement was based on a resolution that had been passed by the A.S.E. in the Clyde area, the official Engineers' Committee. It met and it determined to down tools against the introduction of the Man Power Bill

At the same time that was supplemented by unofficial effort at Geddes' meeting in the City Hall. There a resolution was put up by the workers and carried virtually unanimously, that if the Man Power Bill was put into operation, the Clyde district workers would "down tools." It was unnecessary for me, therefore, in the light of these official and unofficial statements, to urge the "down tools" policy.

As a matter of fact, we were told that the Government had dismissed many munition girls just immediately prior to the great offensive, so that if the workers are guilty of stoppage of output of munitions, the Government is likewise responsible in the dismissal of those thousands of girls.

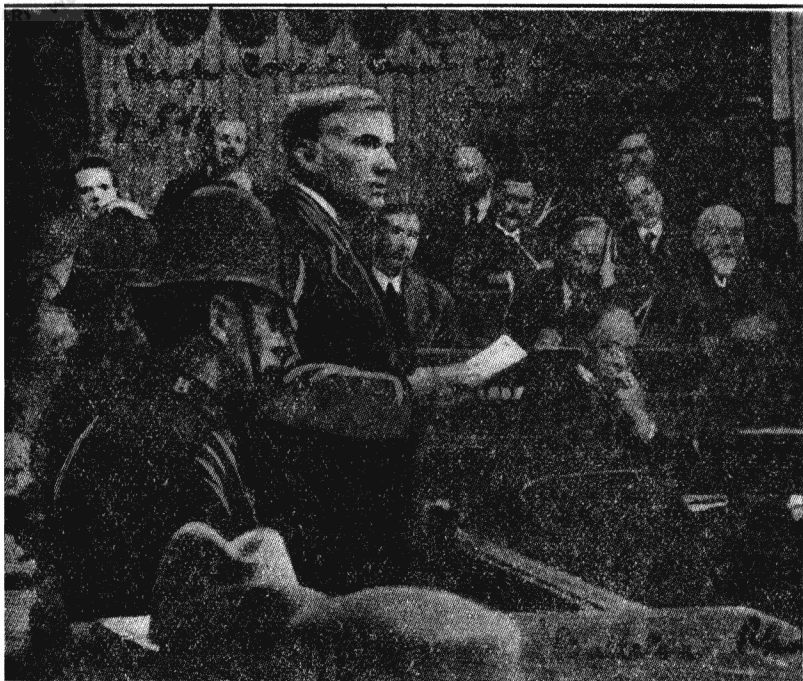
Now then, food and farms. I pointed out to the workers that what was necessary if they stopped work was the getting of food. There had been a shortage; the Government had held up the supplies, for several reasons probably—perhaps to get this rationing passed, in order to have a tight hold on food, and also lest the people get out of hand in reference to this Man Power Bill. I knew that there was plenty of food in stores in Glasgow, and that the farmers had food stored up in their farms. **The farmers have used the war in order to make huge profits for themselves.** And then the Government assisted them in connection with the potato regulations; and latterly, at the end of last year the Corn Production Act was passed, not in the interests of the farm labourers, but in the interests of the farmers.

When the demand for more food production was made, the farmers said they would do their best, and the Government refused to give the farm labourers a minimum wage of 25s. to 30s. a week—25s. at that time being equivalent to 10s. in normal times. The farmers were going to get extra as a consequence of the Corn Production Act. I therefore pointed out that if the workers went to the farmers and did not get the food stored up in the farms, they should burn the farms. We as Socialists have no interest in destroying any property. We want property to be kept because we want that property to be used for housing accommodation or other reasons, but I specially emphasised about the farmers for the purpose of drawing attention to this particular point.

In the same way when it came to a question of seizing the Press, I suggested that when the "Daily Record" was seized, the plant should be broken up. I did not say that in connection with the "Glasgow Herald." I said so in connection with the "Record," not that it is a good thing to break up printing plant, but in order to draw attention to the Harmsworth family and to the Rothermeres, and so on, and their vile press, which seems to be an index of the culture of Britain. I mention that particularly here, that I said the "Record" plant should be broken up, in order to emphasise the disgust of the organised workers with regard to that particular family or newspapers.

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

So far as Ireland and America are concerned, that was mentioned particularly for the purpose of getting food from the St. Lawrence, food from the United States, and food from the Argentine. What was needed was food in order to hold our own, for, as the "Glasgow



John Maclean, in the Dock at Edinburgh, May 9, 1918.

Herald" pointed out, when the Bolsheviks first came into power, **Britain was withholding food from Russia, in the expectation that frost and famine would overthrow the Bolsheviks.** That is to say, they were anxious to murder women and children inside Russia, as well as men. The suggestion I made was in order to draw the attention of the workers to the need of having plenty of food stuffs to keep them going.

So far as the Government's responsibility for the murder of women and children is concerned, the reason for my statement is perfectly obvious. They have been accusing the Germans of killing women and children in this country. Perfectly true. Of course bombs dropped in Germany have not killed women and children, marvellous to say! But that apart; we had the Government getting hold of the food supplies immediately prior to and immediately after the New Year, and creating a shortage. I pointed out that it was an artificial shortage. The Government was therefore responsible for the queues.

Women were standing in queues in the cold, and women had died of what they had contracted during their standing in the queues. The women had died therefore in consequence of the action of the Government, and I threw the responsibility upon the Government—and I do so still.

We know that women and children—human material—have been used up inside the factories, and the housing of the working class in this



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country has been so bad, and is so bad to-day, that the women and children of the working class die in greater proportion than the women and children of the better-to-do classes. I have always pointed out that the death rate among the working classes has always exceeded that in the better-to-do districts.

I also pointed out that the British Government had sent Russian subjects back to Russia to fight, and had given their wives 12s. 6d. per week and 2s. 6d. for each child. Now, when I was functioning as Russian Consul, two deputations of Russian women came to me and they told me sorrowful tales of depression, disease and death in consequence of the fact that they had received 12s. 6d. per week and 2s. 6d. for each child. I wrote to the Secretary for Scotland in regard to that, and I received no reply. The children ought not to suffer because their fathers have been taken, but those children have suffered. There is not a Lithuanian family in the West of Scotland but has trouble to-day as a consequence of the starving of these people. **These women and children of the Russian community have died as a consequence of the meagre supplies given to them by the British Government.** And I seize this opportunity for the purpose of making my statement public, in connection with these women, in the hope that the public in general will press the Government to see that these women and children are attended to at least on the same scale as the wives and dependents of British soldiers.

AMERICAN "INDEPENDENCE."

With regard to the Yankees, I said, and I say to-day, that the Yankees are out for themselves. The British Press — the British Capitalist Press — sneered and jeered at the Americans before the Americans came in, and pointed out how the Americans were making piles of profit out of the war, but were not participating in this fight for so-called freedom. Those insults were offered to America, and when Mr. Woodrow Wilson said that America was too proud to fight, then that was used venomously. Therefore, if I erred, I erred on the same side as the capitalist class of this country. I made the statement on American authority, not off my own bat. My authority is Professor Roland G. Usher, Professor of History at Washington University. I think his statement in "Pan-Germanism" is one of the finest, showing the moves throughout the world leading up to this war, and Usher has his bias in favour of Britain.

What I wish to particularly refer to are his two books, "Pan-Germanism" and "The Challenge of the Future." In "Pan-Germanism" he surveys North and South and Central America. He takes the Atlantic first, and explains what will be the consequence of the war as regards South and Central America whichever side wins, and then he takes the Pacific. He works it out from a material and economic point of view, his purpose being to get Central and South America to work in with the United States. In his later book he modifies that position—that is to say, in "The Challenge of the Future." He points out that America is still to-day economically dependent, that is to say, she has got to pay interest to financiers in France, in Britain, and therefore America cannot afford to carry out the bold schemes referred to in his book "Pan-Germanism."

I may now state that to-day the business men of this country know perfectly well that the Yankees are boasting of their independence. Therefore when you see references to American independence, that



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means that she no longer needs to pay interest to investors from outside, and that her policy will be modified in consequence of that new phase. This gentleman points out that as a consequence of American dependence she must say which side she will take. This book was printed prior to America entering the war. Woodrow Wilson's policy works in admirably with the suggestions in that book of Professor Usher, "The Challenge of the Future."

ALLIES AND THE BOLSHEVIKS.

We know quite well, too, that the United States of America prevented Japan in 1915 getting economic and political control over North China. Twenty-one articles were imposed on China after the Japs had released their grip of the Germans there. America, alive to her own interests, getting to know of these 21 points, forced Japan to withdraw. America was there working in her own interests.

Japan has been, I think, incited to land at Vladivostock in consequence of the Russian Revolution, and in order to crush the Bolsheviks. The allies on both sides are united to crush the Bolsheviks. America did not take that course. America, early on, began to back up the Bolsheviks because America was afraid that, if Japan got half Siberian Russia, that would give her a strategic control of Siberia, and it would mean a closed door to American contact across the Pacific with Russia proper. America therefore has been looking to her own interests, and for that reason I contend that the Yankees, who have been the worshippers of the mighty dollar, are looking after their own interests in the present war; and, as to the great boast they have been making about what they are going to do, and their inadequate returns— that, I think, shows that America has not been over-anxious to plunge right away into this war and make all the sacrifices she has said. I know, of course, that America has had her own troubles at home, racial troubles, and also troubles with the workers. Numerous strikes have taken place in America since the commencement of the war, not only in consequence of the war, but also in connection with the economic position.

SOME BRITISH ATROCITIES.

Now then, I come to the doctors. The doctors I referred to were the prison doctors. When I was in Peterhead it was plain sailing until the middle of December, and then the trouble began. I was fevered up, and being able to combat that, I was then chilled down. Two men came to see me at the end of December, a prominent lecturer in this country and Mr. Sutherland, M.P., and to them I protested that my food was being drugged. I said that there was alcohol in the food lowering my temperature. I know that potassium bromide is given to people in order to lower their temperature. It may have been potassium bromide that was used in order to lower my temperature. I was aware of what was taking place in Peterhead from hints and statements by other prisoners there; that from January to March, the so-called winter period, the doctor is busy getting the people into the hospital, there breaking up their organs and their systems.

I call that period the eye-squinting period, because the treatment then given puts the eyes out of view. Through numerous expedients I was able to hold my own. I saw these men round about me in a horrible plight. I have stated in public since that **I would rather be immediately put to death than condemned to a life sentence in Peterhead.** Attacks were made upon the organs of these men and also upon their nervous systems, and we know from the conscientious objectors that the Government have taken their percentage of these men—some have



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died, some have committed suicide, others have been knocked off their heads, and in this way got into asylums. The very same process has gone on there. Mrs. Hobhouse has done a good service to mankind in registering the facts; but, unfortunately for Mrs. Hobhouse, she does not know how the result has been obtained. I experienced part of the process, and I wish to emphasise the fact that this callous and cold system of destroying people is going on inside prisons now.

Whatever is done to me now, I give notice that I take no food inside your prisons, absolutely no food; because of the treatment that was meted out to me. If food is forced upon me, and if I am forcibly fed, then my friends have got to bear in mind that if any evil happens to me, I am not responsible for the consequences, but the British Government. If anything had happened to me when I was last in prison, it would have been attributed to John Maclean, not to those who are working in the interests of the Government. I have been able to lay down my principle and policy, not from mere internal and personal experience, but from objective experience. I studied the matter carefully, I combated the evils that were going to be perpetrated by the Government by reducing my food to the minimum, and the present Secretary for Scotland knows that when I was in Perth I wrote to him asking more food because of my reduced weight. I was about eight stones in weight at the time, and the doctor, after weighing me, had to grant me more food. The food, however, was of no use to me. I threw it into the pot. My position is, therefore, that I take no more Government food, that I will not allow any food to be forced in upon me, and if any food is forced in upon me I am not responsible for it; but when the Government can launch millions of men into the field of battle, then perhaps the mere disposal of one man is a mere bagatelle and a trifle.

RUSSIA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM.

So far as Russian freedom and British slavery are concerned, I wish to draw attention to the fact that an article appeared in the 'Scotsman' the other day about Bolshevism, and I have a feeling that that article was written especially for this trial to create a feeling against Bolshevism. The statements in that article are a travesty. **Inside Russia, since Lenin and Trotsky and the Bolsheviks came into power, there have been fewer deaths than for the same period under any Czar for 300 years.** Capitalists have been killed perhaps, officers have been killed perhaps, because they have not submitted to those who have come to the top—the majority of the people—in the name of Bolshevism. Some may have been put to death.

When there was a shortage and disorganisation of the food supplies before the Bolsheviks came into power, there may have been individuals who, in their scramble for food for themselves, have gone to excess, but the crimes of individuals cannot be charged to Governments. No person would hold the Government responsible for the action of those individuals. The Bolshevik Government has not given orders to kill men. They have to imprison men until a complete reconstruction of Society has come about. **It may be news to some of you that the Co-operative movement in Russia has grown more rapidly than in any other part of the world.** And since the Bolsheviks have come to power, co-operation has been growing more and more rapidly. The universities have been used during the day, and in the evenings, to train the working classes in order that they may manage the affairs of their country in an intelligent manner. The schools have also been used in the evenings, the music halls have been used, and the theatres, and the



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picture houses, all have been used, not for the trivial trash which is given to the people of this country—but all for the purpose of organising the production of food and the work inside the workshops and factories.

We saw that prior to our comrades in Russia signing their treaty, when the Germans made their advance into Esthonia, Lithuania, and so on—the border countries between Germany and Russia—the Capitalist class in the respective towns had lists of men who were members of the Soviets, and those members of the Soviets were taken and put against a wall and shot at the instigation of the propertied class of Russia. They have been responsible for more deaths than the Soviets. Our Finnish comrades, the Red Guards, have pointed out that the ordinary procedure of war has not been acceded to them, that as soon as the White Guards (the capitalist class) take any of them prisoner, they immediately put them to death. It has been said that our comrades over there in Russia were working hand in hand with the Germans, and the proof of this was that the Germans allowed Lenin to pass through Austrian territory. Our comrades have stood up against Germany as best they could, and the capitalists—the so-called patriots of Russia—have been working hand in hand with Germany in order to crush the people of Russia. That has been done in the Ukraine. It has been done in the various States stolen by Germany from Russia.

FACE TO FACE.

The Lord Advocate pointed out here that I probably was a more dangerous enemy that you had got to face than in the Germans. **The working class, when they rise for their own, are more dangerous to capitalists than even the German enemies at your gates.** That has been repeatedly indicated in the Press, and I have stated it as well. I am glad that you have made this statement at this, the most historic trial that has ever been held in Scotland, when the working class and the capitalist class meet face to face. The Bolsheviks got into power in October, and the people wished peace, and they were doing their best to get peace. The Bolsheviks wished peace throughout the world. They wished the war to cease in order that they might settle down to the real business of life, the economic reorganisations of the whole of Russia. They therefore got into negotiation with the Germans, and they and the Germans met at Brest Litovsk.

Towards the end of December there was a pause in the negotiations for ten days, in order to allow the British and their Allies to go to Brest Litovsk. An opportunity, therefore, was given to Great Britain to go to Brest Litovsk. Ten days were given. The last day was January 4th of this year. Great Britain paid no attention to this opportunity, but on January 5th Lloyd George, in one of his insidious speeches, seemed to climb down, as it were. He was followed by Mr. Woodrow Wilson. But a speech by Mr. Lloyd George on the 5th was of no use. It was mere talk. **It was mere camouflage, or, a better word still, bluff, pure bluff.** Why did the Government not accept the opportunity and go to Brest Litovsk? If conditions absolutely favourable to Germany were proposed, then Britain could have stopped the negotiations and plunged once more into the war, and I am confident of this, if Germany had not toed the line and come up square so far as peace negotiations were concerned, that the Russian workers would have taken the side of Britain, and I am confident of this, that the Socialists in all the Allied countries would have backed up their Governments in order to absolutely crush Germany, and we would at the same time have appealed to the Socialists of Germany to overthrow their Government.

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Great Britain did not do so. On the other hand, they came on with their Man Power Bill, and also with their factor of short food. All these things must be considered in their ensemble before you can understand the position taken up by myself. When this universal peace meeting was held at Brest Litovsk, then Trotsky played a very, very bold game. He knew the risks he ran. He and the Bolsheviks spread millions of leaflets amongst the workers of Germany in the trenches—the German soldiers—urging them to stop fighting and to overthrow the Kaiser, the junkers, and the capitalist classes of Germany. They made a bold bid by trying to get the German workers on to their side. Great Britain has been doing the very same since the commencement of the war. **Great Britain has been trying to bring about, and hoping and urging for a revolution in Germany, in the hope that the working class would overthrow the autocratic class there and give us peace.**

From a British point of view, revolution inside Germany is good; revolution inside Britain is bad. So says this learned gentleman. He can square it if he can. I cannot square it. The conditions of Germany economically are the conditions of Britain, and there is only a very slight difference between the political structure of Germany and that of this country at the best. And so far as we workers are concerned, we are not concerned with the political super-structure; we are concerned with the economic foundation of society, and that determines our point of view in politics and industrial action. Our Russian comrades, therefore, did the very same as the British have been doing; they appealed to the German soldiers and workers to overthrow their Government.

Strikes broke forth in Italy. The strikes in January passed into Germany, more menacing strikes than have taken place inside the British Isles. An appeal was made from comrades to comrades. Many soldiers in Germany mutinied; many sailors of Germany mutinied, and these men are being shot down by their Government. **All hail to those working men of Germany who refused at the bidding of the capitalist to go on with this war.** Their names will go down bright and shining where those of the capitalist of to-day and of the past will have been forgotten.

It would be a very bad thing for the workers of the world if a revolution were developed and carried through to success in Germany and no similar effort were made in this country. **The German workers' enemy is the same as our enemy in this country**—the landlords and the capitalists are our mutual enemy — and if it was their business and their right and their duty to overthrow their autocratic government, then it will be a duty on us not to allow these men to overthrow their Government, and then to allow France, Britain and Italy to march over them and make these German workers slaves at the dictates of the capitalists of the other parts of the world. There was the situation from their point of view and from our point of view.

THE CAPITALISTS ABOLISH THE CONSTITUTION.

It has been pointed out that if we developed a revolution the Germans would come over and, instead of having liberty, we would be under the iron heel of the Kaiser. If I grant that that is true, it is equally true in the other case that the Allies would do in Germany what the German Kaiser with the capitalist class of Germany would do in this country. There can only be a revolution when the workers of all the countries stand united and Capitalism is crushed, and until then the war must go on incessantly and incessantly. It is not because I am against my own people. **My own people are the workers here, and the workers in Germany and elsewhere.**



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It was not the workers who instigated the war. The workers have no economic interest to serve as a consequence of the war, and because of that, it is my appeal to my class that makes me a patriot so far as my class is concerned, and when I stand true to my class, the working class, in which I was born, it is because my people were swept out of the Highlands and it was only because of my own ability that I remained. **I have remained true to my class, the working class, and whatever I do I think I am doing in the interests of my class of my country.** I am no traitor to my country. I stand loyal to my country because I stand loyal to the class which creates the wealth throughout the whole of the world.

We are out for life and all that life can give us. I therefore took what action I did in the light of what was transpiring inside Russia, inside Austria, and inside Germany. You have got to bear that in mind when you wish to understand my remarks. I therefore urged the workers in this country that if they were going to strike, mere striking was useless, because they would be starved back into work again, and that if they were going to be against the Man Power Bill, it meant they were out for peace. And as there were no signs on either side of coming to an amicable constitutional conclusion, then it was the business of the workers to take the whole matter in hand themselves.

War was declared!—no matter the motive, no matter the cause, all constitution and order was thrown aside, and in the prosecution of the war the British Government found it necessary to throw aside every law in this country and to bring in the Defence of the Realm Act, which means the negation of all law in the country. I have repeatedly pointed out that if the Government wishes to get a grip of any individual, they do so under the Defence of the Realm Act. The Government have power to do anything they desire. That may be right, or it may be wrong, but the position is this, that the bringing in of the Defence of the Realm Act has thrown aside all law and order as we know it during normal periods.

In the plunge into the war we have the abolition of constitutional methods, and therefore I contended, and I contend to-day, that if it is right and proper on the part of the Government to throw aside law and order—constitutional methods—and to adopt methods that mankind has never seen before, then it is equally right that the members of the working class, if the war is not going to cease in a reasonable time, should bring about a reasonable settlement, and a reasonable settlement to the workers is no victory to either side.

PROBLEMS AHEAD.

If one side or the other wins, then the revenge will come, as France to-day is seeking revenge after the drubbing she got in 1871. Realising that we, as representatives of the workers of the world, do not wish one side or the other to be the victors. We wish the status quo prior to the war to be re-established. If the workers are going to do that, then it means that they have to adopt methods and tactics entirely different from the methods which would be adopted, or could be adopted under normal circumstances. Abnormal lines of action must be taken, and I urge abnormal lines of action to be taken, such as our comrades in Russia took. The very circumstances of the war forced in upon the Russian workers' committees, and their national Soviets the line of the action which they adopted, and the only way we could do it would be to adopt methods peculiar to the working-class organisation in this country in the interests of the workers themselves.



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The suggestions I made were intended only to develop revolutionary thought inside the minds of the workers. I pointed out at the meeting on the 20th that representatives of the police were present, and therefore if the workers were going to take action themselves, it would be absolutely foolish and stupid for them to adopt the suggestions I had given them. I only gave out these suggestions so that they might work out plans of their own if they thought fit to take action to bring about peace. I was convinced, and **I am still convinced, that the working class, if they are going to take action, must not only go for peace but for revolution.** I pointed out to the workers that, in order to solve all the problems of capitalism, they would have to get the land and the means of production.

I pointed out to them that if capitalism lasted after the war, with the growing size of the trusts, with the great aggregations that were taking place, with the improved machinery inside the works, with the improved methods of speeding up the workers, with the development of research and experiment, that we were going to have the workers turning out three, four and five times as much wealth as they had done in pre-war times, and a great problem would arise—a greater problem than ever before—would arise before this country of disposing of its surplus goods on the markets of the world, not only of getting markets for these surplus goods, but of getting the raw materials. We see to-day in the committees appointed by the Government that they are anxious to get control of the markets of the world in order to exclude the Germans.

THE RUSH FOR EMPIRE.

Our Government has already appointed a Land Organisation of the Board of Trade and of the Foreign Office whereby it is going to plant agents here and there throughout the world, so that in a scientific method British products may be thrown on to the markets of the world. This is scientific methods applied to commerce internationally as well as nationally. These preparations are being made, it is said, for the purpose of carrying on the war after the war. Nobody denies that there is going to be a war after the war, an economic war between the Germans and her friends, and the British and the Americans and their friends, and there is going to be a war between the nations, and the respective Governments will take care that, as far as they can, their capital will be planted in areas over which they have control.

You have, then, the rush of empire. We see that the Americans already have got one or two of the islands in the West Indies, and I understand that America has also got hold of Dutch Guiana. It has also been suggested that Mexico be brought into the American States. Britain herself is looking after her own interests. She has taken the German Colonies, she is also in Mesopotamia and in Palestine, going there for strategic reasons, but when Britain gets hold of Mesopotamia, Palestine and Arabia, she will use them for her own ends, and I do not blame Britain for that. Britain has got many troubles.

We see Japan also on the outlook. Japan has been trying repeatedly to get control of Northern China. She would also like to get a great big chunk of Siberia. Even to-day we see the tentacles being sent out, all anxious to grab more and more power. We know the secret treaties and disclosures made by our Bolshevik comrades. We know that these nations have been building up their plans so that when the Germans have been crushed they will get this territory, or that territory.



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They are all out for Empire. That was absolutely necessary for the commercial prosperity of the nations.

All the property destroyed during the war will be replaced. In the next five years there is going to be a great world trade depression and the respective Governments, to stave off trouble, must rush more and more into the markets of the world to get rid of their produce, and in fifteen years' time from the close of this war—I have pointed this out at all my meetings—we are into the next war if Capitalism lasts; we cannot escape it.

Britain has the wealth. Britain did everything she could to hold back the war. That necessarily had to be the attitude of Great Britain, but in spite of all Great Britain's skill or cunning, there has been war. I have heard it said that the Western civilisations are destroying themselves as the Eastern civilisations destroyed themselves. In fifteen years' time we may have the first great war bursting out in the Pacific—America v. Japan, or even Japan and China v. America. We have then the possibilities of another war, far greater and far more serious in its consequences than the present war. I have pointed that out to my audiences.

"NOTHING TO RETRACT."

In view of the fact that the great Powers are not prepared to stop the war until the one side or the other is broken down, it is our business as members of the working class to see that this war ceases to-day, not only to save the lives of the young men of the present, but also to stave off the next great war. This has been my attitude and justifies my conduct in recent times. I am out for an absolute reconstruction of Society, on a Co-operative basis, throughout all the world; when we stop the need for armies and navies, we stop the need for wars.

I have taken up unconstitutional action at this time because of the abnormal circumstances and because precedent has been given by the British Government. I am a Socialist and have been fighting and will fight for an absolute reconstruction of Society for the benefit of all. I am proud of my conduct. I have squared my conduct with my intellect, and if everyone had done so this war would not have taken place. I act square and clean for my principles. I have nothing to retract. I have nothing to be ashamed of. Your class position is against my class position. There are two classes of morality. There is the working-class morality and there is the capitalist-class morality. There is this antagonism as there is the antagonism between Germany and Britain. A victory for Germany is a defeat for Britain; a victory for Britain is a defeat for Germany. And it is exactly the same so far as our classes are concerned. What is moral for the one class is absolutely immoral for the other, and vice versa. No matter what your accusations against me may be; no matter what reservations you keep at the back of your head, my appeal is to the working class. I appeal exclusively to them because they, and they only, can bring about the time when the whole world will be in one brotherhood, on a sound economic foundation. That, and that alone, can be the means of bringing about a reorganisation of Society. That can only be obtained when the people of the world get the world, and retain the world.

Appendices

2.—QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT.

House of Commons,
Wednesday, August 16, 1916.

Mr. SNOWDEN asked the Secretary for Scotland if he will take into favourable consideration the remission of the sentence of three years' penal servitude now being served by John Maclean, in Peterhead prison, for alleged seditious political utterances, in view of the severity of the sentence and the much lighter sentences which have been passed for similar and more serious offences in England and Wales, and in view of the character of the police evidence on which Maclean's conviction was secured?

Mr. TENNANT: No, Sir; I cannot undertake to give any promise of remission on either of the grounds stated; and I must enter a protest against the suggestion implied in the concluding portion of the question.

3.—FREE PARDON.

After his release, John Maclean received a Free Pardon, addressed to him in the following terms:—

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary for Scotland to inform you that the King has been pleased to grant you a free pardon, in respect of your Convictions at the High Court, Edinburgh, on 12th April, 1916, and May 9th, 1918, last of offences against the Defence of the Realm Regulations. The warrant granting the free pardon has been forwarded to the Court of Justiciary for record.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JAMES M. DODDS.



John Maclean

4.—GLASGOW GREEN MEETING.

The following account of the Glasgow Green meeting that preceded John Maclean's arrest was published in *The Spur* (Vol. II., No. 10), March, 1916.

The Bulletin, Glasgow's daily picture paper, in its issue for January 31st last, pictured a portion of the vast crowd that assembled the previous afternoon at the Nelson Column, Glasgow Green, to proclaim its opposition to the Military Service Act. There were two platforms. Our contemporary snapshotted one, and featured James Maxton, M.A., speaking, supported by chairman, Henry Hopkins, John Maclean, and ourself. *The Prohibitionist* has complained that no lead was given at this meeting. Speaking for ourself, we cannot see what lead can be given in resistance to a measure, where resistance depends all the time upon the resolution of each individual. If, to proclaim that one resolute individual can defy successfully an irresolute government, is to give and to maintain a lead, at least we did this. Certainly, we did not support the proposal to seek the repeal of a measure, contempt and defiance can destroy. Successful though the meetings have been in Dundee, we challenge the editor of the *Prohibitionist* to show wherein the Tay has given any better lead than the Clyde in this matter. After all what is needed is not so much worry about conscription as consistent anxiety to accomplish the revolution and so to end all possibility of militarism.

Maxton, who spoke fearlessly enough at the Green Meeting, is chairman of the Scottish section of the I.L.P. He has played a prominent part in the Anti-conscription campaign and we have met him at different times, always enthusiastic, in Dunfermline and Cowdenbeath, etc. In the latter place, at the time of our last visit, he held some enthusiastic meetings. Our views are much opposed on Socialist first principles; but we know him as an active fellow-member of the Glasgow N.C.F. Up to February 7th last, he spent his spare time seeking bread-and-butter as an assistant master at the Haghill School, Glasgow. Since then he has been transferred to the Finnieston School by the School Board Teachers and Teaching Committee for taking French leave from his duties in order to attend the Labour Party Conference at Bristol, from Tuesday, January 5th to Friday, January 28th last. Maxton was refused leave of absence by the Clerk of the Board and replied that he considered it his duty to take it. For this he was reprimanded and threatened with summary dismissal did he repeat his offence: deprived of his salary for the time taken; denied any increased pay when his salary next fell due for revision; and transferred as stated above. Of course, the severe penalty is due to Maxton's opposition to the war.

The night before Maxton went to Finnieston School, John Maclean was arrested under the Defence of the Realm Act for seditious speeches. He was handed over to the Military Authorities and conveyed to Edinburgh Castle. After a week's residence here, he was given the option of a civil trial and brought back to Glasgow, where

Appendices

he was charged in private before the Sheriff. He was released on £100 bail, pending his trial at the Edinburgh High Court.

On the day that the School Board Committee decreed their punishment of Maxton—January 29th—the Glasgow police, headed by Superintendent McPhater, of the Northern Division, raided the premises of the S.L.P. press, 50 Renfrew Street, where *The Worker* had been printed and seized type and MSS, intended for the forthcoming (5th) issue. They acted under a military warrant, which was not produced at the time of the raid, and closed the premises. Later, the premises of the linotype firm which had been setting up the type for *The Worker* were raided and closed. The ban was removed a day later upon the firm signing an agreement like that signed by the Civic Press. Another day passed; and the S.L.P. was permitted to issue *The Socialist*, its organ, which had been held up in the press.

The authorities decided that the S.L.P. rooms had been used as a centre for producing, printing, publishing, and circulating—in the form of *The Worker*—a newspaper among the workers engaged on war material in and around Glasgow, with the object of causing mutiny, sedition, and disaffection among them. Accordingly, on February 7th, Chief Detective-Inspector Campbell, of the Northern Police Division, assisted by other officers, arrested John W. Muir, 256 Cumbodden Drive, Maryhill, editor of the suppressed paper; Walter Bell, 33 Gardner Street, Partick, manager of the S.L.P. press; and William Gallacher, 43 Well Street, Paisley, chairman of the Clyde Workers' Committee. The following morning they were charged before Bailie Morton at the Northern Police Court and remitted to the Sheriff. They were taken to the County Buildings and brought before Sheriff Craigie for declaration on the charge preferred by the Crown. Mr. George Giles, deputy fiscal, prosecuted and Mr. Rosslyn Mitchell, writer, represented the accused. The proceedings were private, but the charge related to the article:—"Should the Workers Arm? A Desperate Situation." Bail was refused. Twelve workshops, numbering 15,000 workers, struck in consequence, and the accused were released, each on £50 bail, pending their trial in Edinburgh.