

ment has left that stage behind it; whether one judge that this is for good or for evil, one's own bias on these questions will decide.

The difference between Mr. Gompers and the British labor movement is partly due to the fact that the latter has behind it the experience of nearly four years of war. Rightly or wrongly it has reached the conclusion that the existing order of private capitalism lies at the root of the policies which are responsible for the war. At the Buffalo meeting of the American Federation of Labor in November, Mr. John Hill, a fraternal delegate from the British Trade Union Congress, said: "That this war generally arises out of the imperialistic efforts of kings and emperors for a larger portion of the earth's surface in the capitalist interests, to control an ever larger proportion of the product of the worker's toil, and that all nations shared in the responsibility for this war, that below all intrigues are the capitalist interests, and that unless we emancipate ourselves from the domination of capitalism, there will be no democracy after the war, is the position of the English workers." What the British labor movement is quite clear about is that there can never be a settled peace on earth as long as competitive capitalism furnishes the motive of national policy; and it has made up its mind to abolish this source of trouble. It recognizes that this task, like charity, begins at home, and in its report on reconstruction, it lays the axe to the British root of the tree. The cynical readiness of the big business interests to turn the country's necessity to their own advantage, especially in the early stages of the war, before the Government interfered with the wild epidemic of profiteering, has served to remove finally any lingering sense that the good of the nation is bound up with the existing industrial order; and British labor is resolved that the existing order must go.

It has naturally less misgivings in contemplating the change in so much as the war has revealed the stupid wastefulness of the system of private capitalist enterprise. The revelation which the close industrial organization required by the war, has provided of hitherto unexplored and even unsuspected possibilities of production in British industry, has demonstrated that "big" business as we have known it is exceedingly "bad" business. The immense increase of output in all industries, through proper coordination, standardization of processes, the systematic use of scientific investigation, and a more adequate oversight of the physical condition of the worker, has made it plain that private capitalism either would not or could not make proper use of the productive resources of the British people. For instance, the ignorant opposition of the average employer to the movement for decreasing the hours of labor has discredited his judgment and his capacity for handling men, in view of such findings as those recorded

by Lord Henry Bentinck in the *Contemporary Review* for February. Lord Henry shows conclusively from data drawn from the engineering, printing and textile trade that "in every case, in which experiments have been tried, the result in output has been favorable to a shortening of the working day."

That private capitalism has thus been discredited does not however mean that the British Labor Party has adopted a policy of State Socialism. The very circumstances which have revealed the inefficiency of private capitalism have also led to a deep dislike of State control. The working of the Munitions Act has proved that the State may be as harassing and troublesome an employer as the individual or the corporation; and the British Labor Party's problem is to find a way by which private capitalism may be eliminated without introducing the policy of industrial control by the State. Here again they have been helped by the experiences of wartime. The Garton Foundation and the Whitley Committee on Reconstruction, the one a private, the other a parliamentary body, and neither committed to "labor" views—have been led by a study of industrial conditions in wartime, to advocate measures of democratic control in industry; and the experiments in democratic control which have been made, especially in the woolen trades, have plainly demonstrated its practicability and its economic value. Out of these circumstances has emerged the doctrine of national ownership with decentralized and democratic industrial control, which seems to underlie the economic policy of the British Labor Party.

It appears, therefore, that the difference between the British Labor Party and Mr. Gompers is that the former contemplates a radical change in the existing economic framework of industry, whereas the latter is content to work for the improvement of labor conditions within the existing framework. Mr. Gompers adheres to the "nibbling" policy, the policy of raids upon the enemy's trenches here and there as the occasion arises. The British Labor Party stands for a calculated offensive en masse. It was evident that the old guerilla leadership was becoming obsolete in British labor before the war; and the trade unions were beginning to develop the large-scale strategy of the general strike. But it is now clear that the venue of the conflict will be henceforth transferred from the shops to the House of Commons. While Mr. Gompers still preaches his doctrine of political indifferentism, the British Labor Party has resolved upon the attempt to take control of the machinery of government. The general strike is abandoned for the general election.

Historically it is the case that political power has belonged to those who possessed economic power; and Mr. Orage, the leading