

What Others Are Thinking

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR SAM HUGHES ON FREE SPEECH.

True democracy is open, frank, free trust in the people, bogus democracy, or autocracy, fears the people, suppresses the facts and suppresses the people as far as it may. Autocracy is mistrustful; autocracy imposes restrictions and repression. Chloroform is a splendid anesthetic, but it is a mighty poor medicine, and even as an anesthetic it must be carefully administered. I therefore deprecate anything like the imposition of chloroform methods in connection with public affairs, whether those of the country generally or those pertaining more particularly to the war.

We hear over and over again in the press the cry of the autocrat, or the imbecile—for the two are very often the same—that in war democracy fails; that democracy cannot meet the situation caused by war. I have been a careful reader of history and a student of matters connected with the war, and I have yet to see the situation presented during this conflict, whether in Britain, Canada or France, that could not be successfully met by the application of the old methods of responsible government to which we have so long been accustomed. No situation can arise that calls for autocratic methods which are not in harmony with the principle of responsible government. We have had a recent illustration in Canada. On a certain occasion a certain gentleman in a certain place wanted to give utterance to certain ideas. Every restriction that gentle autocracy could devise was placed upon him, without success. Free speech and free action have settled and calmed the great Dominion of Canada to a greater degree than any one could believe possible, and they have most successfully alleviated the situation. Repression is always the policy and the practice of weak and incompetent men. The freedom of the press must be maintained; the press must be given the opportunity of selling itself, or not, as it chooses. The press must be left free. As the poet says:

"If the ways to hell are free,
We left them free to Heaven."

I think, therefore, that the press should be left absolutely free and untrammelled, each newspaper being allowed to conduct itself in its own way, as far as possible consistent with the rights of the people in this great war. Recently it has been my privilege again and again to see some censored articles that have been prevented from going before the people. Really, one would scarcely believe it possible that men of such narrow vision could be found as to repress and cut out section after section of articles that have been published again and again in England. If you talk with any one coming from England, you will find that things are known there concerning our forces and concerning everything that is going on which are religiously suppressed in this great Dominion. I do not know who the censors are; I assume that they are men of great breadth of judgment, soundness of conception, and so on. I do not know whether they are inspired by some of these new councils, and committees that are being formed; but I do say that the repression and censoring of articles that should find their way into the public press should be stopped. Who are the people? Who are we? Who are the Government,

that they seek for one instant to muffle public sentiment or prevent the people from knowing what is going on? The Government is composed of magnificent honorable gentlemen; I have not a word to say against them, but I do think two or three good Cabinets could be formed out of the material gathered around this Government. There is scarcely a township or county council in Canada could not furnish material just as good—I say this with all due respect—as that which is found in those who are carrying on the affairs of this country. There is method in my madness; what I want to impress on the House is that we should trust the people. If some of the people I have mentioned could not make a better showing than some members of the Government, God pity them. Let us, therefore, be careful that in seeking to establish democracy in Germany, we do not establish autocracy in Canada.

This is a new House, composed of new men, independent thinkers, men not yet circumscribed by so-called party discipline. True discipline is educational as well as in military matters, means, as I have always maintained, freedom of thought and action, instruction, development, polish, capability, strength of character, and resolution. These are the characteristics of discipline, according to the proper interpretation of the term. The so-called discipline is merely repression. The members of this House are not yet influenced as the party whips mildly crack the lash but they are strong, capable men, resolute of purpose to help this Government, and if necessary, to compel this Government to live up to its pre-election promises in regard to winning the war, and to go as far in that regard as the Government chooses to go. We are behind the Government's back until the finish. The people at large impel hon. members, while they in turn, in firm, kindly ways, will inspire the Government to action. The aim which actuates this House is to help to win the war; to help to smash the enemy, to help to maintain pure and unsullied the freedom our ancestors won and which they have handed down to us; to help to overthrow and root out every vestige of tyranny to be found in Germany, aye, or in Canada—and, let it be done quickly. Action is the word. I know I voice the sentiments of my colleagues when I urge the Government to full, energetic, effective and whole-hearted action, and I have said, we are behind them as far as they choose to go along those lines. The true people of Canada, worthy of the fullest trust and confidence, stand behind us and them. Let chloroform methods, therefore, disappear from the public life of this country, and let true democratic principles prevail.—Hansard, May 6, 1918.

WANT SOCIALIST ARRESTED.

The Hamilton Board of Trade has addressed a letter to Premier Borden requesting the arrest of Lorne Cunningham, of Guelph for supposed seditious utterances. Our Comrade delivered a lecture in Hamilton, Ont., at which the objectionable utterances were supposed to have been made. It is to be noted that these projects are invariably put forward by the representatives of Big Business, and not by working class organizations.

A SPEECH BY LENIN.

The following is a summary of a speech made by Lenin at the sitting of the All Russia Congress of Soviets:

Comparing the Soviet Government with the Paris Commune of 1871, he pointed out that the former had profited by the experience of the latter and had constituted itself exclusively on the authority of the workers and poorer peasantry, to the exclusion of capitalists and Imperialists. The way the peasantry had grasped the meaning of the regime was remarkable. They had now become the most faithful friends and allies of the working class, because they realized that the Socialisation of the land could only be brought about in conjunction with the nationalization of the banks and the establishment of working class control over production. During the protracted period of transition that must necessarily elapse between Capitalism and Socialism, the proletariat must exercise a dictatorship. Socialism could not, however, be forced on the peasantry, and it was necessary to do what they were doing, namely, educating the peasants in Socialist theories and practice. He pointed with satisfaction to the alliance between the Bolsheviks and the Left Revolutionary Socialists, becoming more intimate every day. Referring to the reproaches of the Right Section of the Congress against the establishment of a dictatorship and the use of force, he exclaimed that it was a mistake for anyone to imagine that Socialism would ever be brought them on a platter. Never in history have the questions at issue in the struggles between classes, been solved in any other way than by violent methods. When it was a question of suppressing the exploiters in the interests of the exploited classes, he frankly confessed he was all for violence.

Of course they still had a long road full of difficulties paved with sacrifices and blunders for what they were now doing was an entirely new thing. The transition they were passing through—a transition the greatest in human history—could not be effected without mistakes and violence. In the meantime they had not been wholly unsuccessful in their internal reforms and experience would be their teacher in improving their methods. Anyone could denounce civil war—but were they then to allow the Korniloffs and Ukrainian reactionaries to obstruct their course for the benefits of the property classes? Should the latter be successful the sort of terror and force employed by them would be of a totally different order from that of the Soviet Government. The reason for the comparative mildness of the latter was the strong foundation upon which it rested. As for the boycott of officials and others, it could surely have been foreseen that "all that band of capitalists and swindlers and hooligans and saboteurs" would obstruct the transition from Capitalism to Socialism. He hoped, though he could not affirm, that more violent methods would be unnecessary for their attainment of final victory over the exploiting classes. The new regime would create a new Socialist Red Army, able to secure the triumph of Socialism both at home and abroad—the Russian Red Republic would then be invincible. There would be many difficulties in the way, they might have to fight the bourgeois of foreign countries. England and France, who have not permitted a single Bol-

shevik paper to enter their country during the whole time of the Revolution. But the workers of those countries would come to their assistance. In due course, he was confident the Revolution would spread to other countries which would learn by the Russian experience. The Russian Socialist Republic of Soviets would be a standing torch for International Socialism, and what the Russians had begun would be completed by the German, French and British peoples.

AUSTRIAN SOCIALISTS.

The Vienna Socialist paper, the Arbeiter Zeitung, says: "If Parliament does not desire simply to abdicate and to renounce all influence over the most important decisions" it must declare that "it will not vote one cent so long as Baron Burian is entrusted with the direction of foreign policy." When shall we see a similar spirit here?

KING CONSTANTINE'S LETTERS.

The letters of the King of Greece to the French Deputy, M. Benazet, present the picture of a feeble victim struggling in the grip of a stronger power. But though weak in face of the Allies, Constantine revealed himself as a tyrant at home.

OVERCROWDING.

The Garden Cities and Town Planning Association reports that 167,911 persons in Stepney, Poplar and West Ham are living under overcrowded conditions!

THE SPREAD OF REVOLUTION.

The German Government has complained to the Russian Socialist Government that Austrians and Germans who are prisoners of war in Russia have formed revolutionary committees to establish equality between officers and men. The German Government demands that this sort of thing be put a stop to and "awaits an immediate reply" as to whether its orders have been obeyed. Will refusal to obey mean another German attack on Russia?

LANSDOWNE AND THE VOLUNTEERS.

In the House of Lords on April 1th, Lord Besborough moved and Lord Lansdowne seconded that tribunals should make exemption conditional on joining the volunteer force. The Government accepted the amendment. Did someone say that Lansdowne is a pacifist?

—Workers Dreadnought.

A POINTED QUESTION.

How do you like the "freedom" of this country, anyway?

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circular was as to where the writer's wits were when he was composing it. I do not even feel aggrieved though classed among the "cowards" for, as the poet says:

"A moral, sensible, well-bred man,
Will not affront me,
And no other can."

I have written this letter with the faint hope that it may act, if only in a small way, as an antidote to the excessive presumption that at present afflicts certain of the Kitchener Section of the S.L.P.

Though excommunicated by the high priests of Kitchener, but relying on their indulgence, I make bold to sign myself,

Your Comrade,
Jimmie Higgins,
(One of the Rank and File.)