

Watch for
Red Week
Plans
Next Issue

THE CANADIAN FORWARD

Are You
Boosting
Your Own
Paper?

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE SOCIAL - DEMOCRATIC PARTY

New Series, Vol. 1, No. 6

TORONTO, CANADA

January 27, 1917

Mr. Fenner Brockway Court-Martialed

Editor of Labor Leader:

At Chester Castle, on Saturday morning Mr. Fenner Brockway was court-martialled for refusing to obey a military order. He made the following statement:—

Parliament has enacted that persons holding my views shall be exempted from the provisions of the Military Service Acts. I am before you, not because I have broken the law, but because the tribunals have not administered the law.

Even if it had been the intention of Parliament to make me a soldier, I should not have become a soldier. No honorable man would consent to participate in an act of murder because the State ordered him to do so. To me war is murder. I cannot participate in it.

(To avoid misunderstanding, I only add that by this I do not mean that in my view every soldier is a murderer. An act must be judged by its motives, and I appreciate fully the spirit of sacrifice and duty which has animated thousands of others.)

I believe all war to be wrong. I believe that mankind is in reality one, that the universal spirit dwells in all men and unites all men. I believe that human personality is sacred, because it is an expression of the universal spirit. War violates the spiritual enemies of the human race, degrades human personality, and destroys human life. Therefore, holding the faith I do, I cannot participate in the war under any circumstances.

But even if I believed war justifiable under certain conditions, I should not participate in the present war. I should participate in it because I believe the Governments of this and other countries are deluding the peoples as to the objects they have in view, are getting them to lay down their lives by false pretences, and are using them as pawns to fulfil purposes which are often the direct opposite of those they imagine themselves to be serving.

I do not believe that the German Government was alone responsible for the war. I do not believe that any one Government is responsible. I believe that all the Governments of the Great Powers share responsibility for it, and that there is little to differentiate the degree of guilt of one from another.

I believe that the war was caused by the intrigues of financiers of both sides, by the machinations of the armament rings of both sides, by the secret diplomacy of both sides, by the military and naval aggression of both sides.

The British Government declared that it entered the war to defend small nationalities. Since when has the British Government become the champion of small nations? The last war the British Government fought—the Boer war—was a war to crush two small Republics; the story of the extension of the British Empire over the face of the earth has been one of an unending series of attacks upon small nations; during the war the British Government has annexed Egypt, violated the independence of Greece, etc. These facts suggest that

the British Government was very earnest when it declared that it entered the war to defend small nationalities!

The British Government declared that it entered the war to safeguard the sanctity of international treaties. Since when has the British Government become the champion of international treaties? When Germany and Britain appeared to be on the eve of war in 1911, it was Great Britain and her ally France who had been guilty of tearing up an international treaty—the Act of Algeiras. Does this suggest that the British Government was very earnest when it declared that it entered the war to defend international treaties?

The British Government declared that it entered the war to resist the ambition of Germany for world-power. Since when has the British Government become the champion of weaker nations against the Imperialism of stronger powers? Before the war began the British flag flew over one-fifth of the territory of the earth. Does that suggest that the British Government was very earnest when it expressed its indignation against the ambition of the German Government?

The British Government declared that it entered the war to establish democracy and freedom. It has allied itself with the most autocratic and tyrannical power in the world—the Empire of Russia.

The British Government declared that it entered the war in defence of France and Belgium, and not to acquire any territory for itself. It has captured practically all the German colonies, and has announced its intention of retaining a great part of them.

The British Government declared that it entered the war to overthrow the menace of German militarism. It has imposed upon the British people the same accursed system of militarism as has degraded Germany.

The British Government declared that it entered the war to enthrone in Europe that liberty which is the traditional pride of England.

The popular justification of the British intervention in the war was the German invasion of Belgium, but all who are acquainted with the question of foreign policy know that the British Government would have participated in the war whether Belgium had been invaded or not. The Government policy since '04, a policy carried out in secret, had bound us to France and Russia; and, whatever the cause of war, once France and Russia became involved the intervention of the British Government became inevitable.

Europe was divided into two hostile groups of nations, and, whilst I do not deny or desire to diminish the aggressive designs of Germany and the Triple Alliance, particularly since '11, anyone who suggests that Germany alone actively prepared for war on a big scale is simply revealing his ignorance. The fact is that during the decade 1905-14 Austria and Germany expended \$217,000,000 on military and naval preparations, whilst Russia and France expend-

ed \$1,147,000,000. If we add the expenditure of Great Britain, the total of the Triple Entente becomes \$1,800,000,000.

If the purposes of the British Government in entering the war was really to secure the liberation of Belgium, the evacuation of France, and the destruction of the menace of German militarism, those objects could be obtained tomorrow; and the British Government knows they could be obtained tomorrow without the shedding of another drop of blood. The British Foreign Office knows that Germany is prepared to withdraw from Belgium and France; and everyone knows that Germany has signified her willingness to enter a league of nations to enforce peace, which is Lord Grey's own proposal for destroying the menace of a strong and aggressive military power.

Why, then, does the British Government continue to sacrifice thousands of British lives? It does so because prizes and prices have been promised to her allies for the part they have played in the war. France has been promised Alsace-Lorraine; Italy has been promised Dalmatia; and Russia has been promised Constantinople. Instead of fighting for the liberty of the small nations, as they think they are, the British soldiers are being duped into fighting for the advancement of the power of Dalmatia to a foreign rule. Instead of fighting for the establishment of a permanent peace, the British soldiers are being duped into fighting to give new strength to a menace to peace graver even than German militarism—I mean the menace of the Russian Imperialism.

I do not intend to suggest that the British Government is particularly reprehensible among the powers. As I have already said, I do not think there is much to choose between them. I have dealt with the faults of the British Government because I am asked to join the British Army. If I were a German, and were asked to join the German Army, I should have no difficulty in denouncing the policy of her Government with equal emphasis.

I believe the ruling classes of all the powers are responsible for the war. I believe the working classes are mere pawns in their hands. I believe the time will come when the workers will consent to be pawns no longer, and I hope the action I am taking now will do a little, at least, to hasten the coming of that time.—Labor Leader.

HENRY GEORGE ON CONSCRIPTION OF WEALTH.

"As I have said before, the wealth expended in carrying on the war (the Civil War) did not come from abroad or from the future, but from the existing wealth in the States under the national flag, and if, when we called on men to die for their country, we had not shrunk from taking, if necessary, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand dollars from every millionaire, we need not have created any debt. But instead of that, what taxation we did impose was so levied as to fall on the poor more heavily than on the rich, and to incidentally establish monopolies by which the rich could profit at the expense of the poor. And then, when more wealth was still needed, instead of taking it from those who had it, we told the rich that if they would voluntarily let the nation use some of their

CONSCRIPTION OF WEALTH.

BRITISH LABOR DEMANDS IT

Congress at Manchester Rejects Proposal for Peace Offer and for Socialist Conference.

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

Manchester, Eng., Jan. 25.—Immediate conscription of accumulated wealth to lighten the financial burdens of the war is demanded in a resolution adopted unanimously to-day at the annual meeting of the Labor Party. The resolution calls for taxation of not less than 15 shillings in the pound of unearned incomes, direct taxation of land, and nationalization of the banking system.

In introducing the resolution Ramsay MacDonald, Labor member of the House of Commons from Leicester, said that after the war the country would be left with a debt of \$4,000,000,000, with an annual fixed charge of more than \$200,000,000.

No Socialist Conference.

The conference defeated a motion proposing an international congress of Socialists to be held simultaneously with the peace conference. Some of the delegates said it would be impossible to meet Germans in this way.

An amendment proposing a Socialist and trade unionist organization, to be confined to the allied powers, was adopted.

Against Peace Proposal.

The conference rejected by a vote of more than three to one a resolution favoring the immediate offer of peace proposals.

wealth we would make it profitable to them by guaranteeing the use of the taxing power to pay them back, principal and interest. And we did make it profitable with a vengeance." Canada seems bent on making the same mistake.

The women hit John Barleycorn at the late election. They will yet learn to strike at the high cost of living with a Socialist ballot.

"FENNER BROCKWAY'S DEFENCE"

We have, at the request of several Locals, produced this "Remarkable Defence of the International Attitude to War," in leaflet form.

Order at once from the Literature Secretary, 363 Spadina Ave., Toronto.

Price \$2.25 Per 1,000 Copies