

## Our Book Review

### "THE ONLY POSSIBLE PEACE"

**D**URING the past few months many men have endeavored to find some way of putting an end to war. We have seen such men as President Wilson, David Starr Jordan and a host of other capitalist thinkers try and fail miserably. The latest and most distinguished to appear on the field is F. C. Howe, commissioner of immigration of the port of New York. Howe is known throughout the United States as one of the greatest American liberal thinkers. His many books on various social questions speak for themselves.

In his book, "The Only Possible Peace," he deals with the causes of the war and the means to put an end to all wars. The slaves who have their master's ideas will do well to read this book. Their patriotism would disappear like a whiff of smoke. That "War for Democracy" nonsense would be stale for them. The war as he sees it was due to the building of the Berlin-to-Bagdad railway by Germany. Completed, it would spell the ruin of England. He gives six reasons why the Berlin-to-Bagdad railway would cause the decline not only of England but France and Russia as well:

1. Germany supreme in the Near East was in a position to cut off England from Australia, Egypt and India.
2. Menace to British investments totalling six billion dollars in eastern countries.
3. British mercantile supremacy menaced by German ascendancy in the Mediterranean.
4. Danger to the economic and financial power of England.
5. Disaster to British industry.
6. Loss of employment to thousands of future colonial rulers recruited from the wealthy class of England.

He then proceeds to describe the methods used by the contending powers to stave off the world catastrophe; how England tried to block the financing of the railway and in 1899 managed through a secret treaty with the Sheik of Koweit to secure control of the last section of the railway from Bagdad to the Persian Gulf. He also shows that Serbia was the immediate barrier to the German plan and that in order for the railway to run through German-controlled territory, it was essential for Serbia to be put out of the way. England, through her control of the last section of the railway, also blocked German aspirations in the Far East. Hence the war.

But Howe, in common with other capitalist thinkers, is blessed with the faculty of drawing unscientific deductions from the facts. Nevertheless, one would think from what he writes on page 17 that Howe spent many nights absorbed in the pages of Marx's Capital. Witness this:

"For the new social democracy was international minded. It was opposed to imperialism. It challenged secret diplomacy. It demanded disarmament. It threatened the economic-political diplomatic structure. The ruling classes were further concerned over industrial conditions because of their effect upon political conditions. Industrial depression might mean political revolution. The increase in machine power and capital investment

was increasing the output of the mills faster than it could be consumed at home for the workers received low wages. This limited their power to buy. The surplus produced could only find a market in other lands. The output of the mills and factories must be disposed of somehow, otherwise there would be industrial collapse. Collapse meant distress, increased poverty, possibly revolution. The whole economic structure of Europe was dependent not only on maintaining markets already secured, but on opening new markets to absorb the increasing output of the mills and factories."

Thus he explains why Germany was so anxious to build this railway from Berlin to Bagdad. It would appear very simple from this searching analysis of the capitalist system of production to find a remedy of putting an end to war. Howe reverts back, however, to the petty capitalist patriot and hurls words of condemnation at the heads of the German Junkers for precipitating this war. He begins to imitate the servile editors in accusing the Kaiser of being the cause of the war forgetting what he writes on page 17. There he specifically states that unless Capitalist countries can find an outlet for their surplus products, disaster was in store for them. He does not seem to realize that the German capitalists were face to face with the alternative of a social revolution, due to their inability to find new dumping grounds, or war—and war was the order of the day.

However, in offering remedies to end future wars, Howe proves his incompetency to solve the problems facing human society. And though, unwittingly, he gives the solution of the problem, his petty capitalist mind fails to comprehend that fact. Instead, he advocates free markets, a league of nations, freedom of the seas, etc.

Free markets or other remedies of a like nature cannot put an end to war. While the capitalists of all countries are compelled to find a dumping ground for the surplus wealth produced by the working class, war is inevitable. This is due to the fact that production is conducted for profit and not for use.

The league of nations is a fact, yet Japan is building the largest battleship ever known. The great powers are preparing for the next war. Onward Christian Soldiers!

JOHN TYLER.

### WINDY CHURCHILL

The Junker Churchill was afraid to face a meeting of the Liberal Association in Dundee, the constituency which he represents. The association passed a resolution denouncing the policies of the government with a special animus against Churchill and his scheming against Soviet Russia.

A Canadian correspondent of the London "Common Sense," writing in the Oct. 25 issue, of conditions in Canada gives one laconic, but expressing line to its financial position. He says, "The financial situation, is, to put it mildly, bad."

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## The Farmer Question

Comrade,

It is unfortunate that a discussion on a technical subject can not be conducted by the participants without the interjection of sarcasm, but such is "human nature."

In his reply to my article on the "Farmer Question," Comrade Pilkington says some statements he made in his pamphlet "Wage-worker and Farmer" are considered by me misleading. If he had read more carefully, or at least had not been so quick to jump to conclusions, he might have been saved the discomfort of a roughened poll. (Is it red? comrade.) As to considering any of his statements misleading, I had forgotten about the pamphlet mentioned, until it was brought to my notice by his reply to me.

If applying to the sales department of tractor manufacturing concerns is the "only means possible" to find whether the tractor "materially affects the value of farm produce," I do not wonder that "students of the Marxian school"—viz., Pilkington—are "all at sea," for, as "students of the Marxian school" should know, sales do not create commodities, labor does that. Neither do sales of experimental machines indicate anything, except that they "look good," and have plausible salesmen.

If your correspondent refers to the farm tractors when he mentions the "forces at work," I may inform him that they are very seldom at work in this district at least. Most of the time they "set" in the mud. There is at least a dozen within a radius of six miles, and though their owners played at ploughing with them for the first year or so, they soon discovered that what with lost time from breakages, worn parts, owing to dust, etc., and trips to town for fuel, there was no advantage in their use except for threshing, especially, as they usually had horses "eating their heads off" at the same time.

Will your correspondent please tell us what force compelled the "average farmer to buy, buy, buy improved machinery and more land to keep in the game." The present writer, along with many other farmers, has not been so compelled, so far as land and a traction engine is concerned, and has kept in the game very nicely. An improved method does not force itself by occult powers on a victimized community. Over-production is the weapon of force which an improved method employs to compel other producers to adopt it. Without over-production, there is no aggressive force. The first users of the improved method must lower the price of their commodity in order to get a sale for the increased amount of goods which result. This drop in the market price, eventually, as the improvement is adopted by other producers and becomes more general, forces the backward producers who have not adopted it into various stages of "poverty," and bankruptcy. Thus is supply and demand equalized again, and prices brought to the new values. If only a small proportion of the producers have adopted the improved method, they are able to retain almost all the advantage derived from it.

If then, we in the farming industry

are at a point where the method of farming is rapidly changing and driving us to "ruin," and that is the cause of our poverty, how is it that 20 years ago, when the tractor had not appeared on the farm, the average farmer was in, if anything, worse case than he is now, instead of living in comfort, and even in the luxury that the average rate of productivity would, even at that time have granted to the unexploited worker.

The fact, in my opinion, is that the comparatively few large farmers, by exceptional executive ability, have been able to cheapen their individual cost of production to considerably below the average, and so are reaping an average amount of profit, while the average farmer, even if he owns his farm clear, must live in comparative poverty.

Our loving comrade must not attach too much importance to the figures of loans, when given in the aggregate, they sound big that way; but when we consider that a loan of \$3000 drawing interest at 10 per cent., would tax the farmer to the extent of \$300 a year only, we see that that does not make the difference between slavery and freedom. Many skilled wage-workers could stand it, if they lived in shacks, on the cheapest food, and used a clean suit of overalls for a "Sunday" suit.

If Comrade Pilkington doubts that the surplus wage-workers are continually flooding the farmer's field of production and without finding it necessary to "buy a modern farm" either, I can give him the addresses of at least a dozen wage-workers who have become farmers, and who are my immediate neighbors and acquaintances. (Perhaps it is necessary to say that I give this as typical of the West.) Also I may inform him that over 160 thousand homestead entries were made in Saskatchewan alone from 1906 to 1915 inclusive.

"Marxism" has been degraded by a certain section of "Marxists," to a series of narrow formula:

- (1) Average prices equal values.
- (2) Wages are the expression in money of the amount of labor, socially necessary to produce the laborer, etc.

It is forgotten that the value of a commodity may fall, in a broad sense without a reduction in the amount of labor necessary to produce it. It is also forgotten that a standard of living is historically set for the workers, and that by a voluntary lowering of this standard, money may be "saved" by certain individuals, at certain times. I do not think Marx was fool enough to waste his energy writing "Capital," if the intricate capitalist system could be explained so simply. As well try to explain the flight of a bird by an imperfect understanding of the law of gravity alone, though that might be sufficient to explain the falling of a brick from a chimney top.

Let us hope the farmer does get the view in chronic form, that he is robbed at the point of production; (for that is near enough to pass for correct) that he is exploited at the point where he lets go of the product of his labor, and receives less than its "equitable" value in exchange. Is this being "robbed at the point of consumption" as my critic informs us.

H. F. S.