

LIBERTY (?)

After the Peace treaty was signed the following was issued over the signature of King George:

"The signing of the Treaty of Peace will be received with deep thankfulness throughout the British Empire. This formal act brings to its concluding stages the terrible war which has devastated Europe and distracted the world. IT MANIFESTS THE VICTORY OF IDEALS OF FREEDOM AND OF LIBERTY, FOR WHICH WE HAVE MADE UNTOLD SACRIFICES.

"I SHARE MY PEOPLE'S JOY AND THANKSGIVING, AND EARNESTLY HOPE AND PRAY THAT THE COMING YEARS OF PEACE MAY BRING TO THEM EVER INCREASING HAPPINESS AND PROSPERITY. (Emphasise ours).

"(Signed) GEORGE, R.I."

We wonder if George read the Walsh-Dunne report on conditions in Ireland before he signed the above. This report records a situation almost unbelievable of the brutality on the part of the British authorities. "Hundreds of men and women have been confined to prison for months without charges being preferred against them; hundreds have been discharged from jail with broken constitutions and shattered minds as a result of their treatment. Prisoners have been confined in narrow cells with their hands hand-cuffed behind their backs, night and day; in this condition they are fed by jail attendants, and are permitted no opportunity to answer the calls of nature, other than to lie in their filthy clothes. During the winter the prisoners have been showered with ice-cold water, and forced to lie on stone floors in their wet clothing; many of these died of pneumonia."

Or did he peruse the statements from the Indian Famine Fund Committee: "Plague and famine are rampant in India. Thirty-two millions of death have already taken place, and one hundred and fifty millions are on the verge of starvation. This hunger is causing widespread revolts, which are ruthlessly suppressed by means of bombs from aeroplanes and bullets from machine guns." We do not suppose he learned of the recent Glasgow strikers being pushed back to work at the points of bayonets. Or of the returned soldiers (who fought for freedom and liberty) in Winnipeg, who were received with a volley of bullets when they attempted to hold a silent parade in protest to the high-handed acts of the Canadian authorities in arresting strike leaders. Volumes could be written on the "freedom" and "liberty" handed out to the workers under British capital.

We of the class-conscious workers know of what freedom and liberty is spoken of. It is the freedom to buy and sell. Freedom to carve up small nations. Freedom to live on the blood and sweat of the toiling millions. Freedom to live a life of ease and luxury. Freedom to abstain from toil. However, this freedom is about ended. The working class realize that such phrases from bourgeois lips are meaningless. We have found out by experience that freedom to our masters means death to us. We understand that rulers and ruled have nothing in common. We know that our freedom can only come by the class struggle. So we are organizing our forces for the coming industrial democracy, when we, as a slave class, shall rise to the summit of modern society.

Child Massacre as a Political Weapon

By Norman Angell

When the Germans sank the Lusitania and slew several hundred women and children, we knew—at least we thought we knew—that that was the kind of thing which Englishmen and Americans could not do. In all the hates and stupidities, the dirt and heartbreaks of the war there was just this light on the horizon: that there were certain things to which we at least could never fall, in the name of victory or patriotism or any other of the deadly masked words that are "the unjust stewards of man's ideas."

And then we did it. We, too, sank Lusitanias. We, too, for some cold political end, plunged the unarmed, the weak, the helpless, the children, the suffering women to agonizing death and torture—without a tremor. Not alone in the bombing of cities, which we did so much better than the enemy. For this we had the usual excuse—it was war. "They killed my sister," said a young Allied aviator starting on his bombing raid. They? The little children whom his bombs tore to pieces, the little girls whom he blinded and maimed? Had they killed his sister? Let that pass. But after the war, when the fighting was finished, the enemy was disarmed, his submarines were surrendered, his aeroplanes destroyed, his soldiers dispersed—months afterwards, we kept a weapon which was for use first and mainly against the children, the weak, the sick, the old, the women, the mothers, the decrepit: starvation and disease. Our papers told us—our patriotic papers—how well it was succeeding. Correspondents wrote complacently, sometimes exultingly, of how thin and pinched were all the

children, even those well into their teens; how stunted, how defective the next generation would be; and how, among the younger children, those of seven and eight looked like children of three or four, and how those beneath this age simply did not live. Either they were born dead, or, if they were born alive—what was there to give them? Milk? An unheard-of luxury. And there was nothing to wrap them in; even in hospitals the new-born children were wrapped in newspapers, the lucky ones in bits of sacking. The mothers were most fortunate when the children were born dead. In an insane asylum a mother wails: "If only I did not hear the cry of the children for food all day long; all day long." You see, to "bring Germany to reason" by such means we must drive mothers out of their reason.

A falsehood? Exaggeration? Listen to an English cabinet minister—one of the old English political order, bearing a great historical name—Mr. Churchill, speaking months after the armistice, in the House of Commons, on March 3:

"We are enforcing the blockade with rigor. . . . This weapon of starvation falls mainly upon the women and children, upon the old, the weak and the poor, after all the fighting has stopped."

Oh, but not to the extent of causing thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of little helpless children to suffer and cry through the long nights, to drive women insane with it—that is German propaganda. Well, here is a witness: the Berlin correspondent of the Daily Express, perhaps the most ferociously patriotic, German-hating, Hun-baiting paper in England. This is his testimony:

"The Germans have killed British and French babies, so I suppose one should have no qualms about killing off a few thousand German babies and their mothers in a fecund state. I made earnest inquiries concerning childbirth among women of the poorer classes of Berlin, and I verified the statements I obtained. Seventy per cent. of expectant mothers are horribly under-nourished, and when they are taken to lying-in hospitals they are in a starving condition. Because of their situation they are unable to stand in food lines in order to obtain the small food rations allowed them. These women steal all the food they can, and I have seen them rummaging through dust-bins to find potato peelings. . . . I have encountered dozens of children two years of age who have never tasted milk. Children born just before the war seem in fairly good condition, but those born since Armageddon was let loose on the world are shrivelled-up creatures. The men say they will not be slaves of the East; the factories are idle because there are no raw materials, and yet these people do not understand that they have been beaten. They are in a state of despair and see nothing in front of them but black misery."

"It would have been more merciful," said Bob Smillie, the miners' leader, "to turn the machine guns on those children." Put this question to yourself, patriot-Englishman, patriot-American: Was the sinking of the Lusitania as cruel, as prolonged, as mean, as merciless a death as this? And we—you and I—do it every day, every night. Here is the Times of May 1, half a year after the cessation of war, telling the Germans that they do not know how much more severe we can still make the "domestic results" of starvation if we really put our mind to it. To the blockade we shall add "the horrors of invasion." The invasion of a country already disarmed is to be marked—according to our threats—by horror.

But the purpose! That justifies it. What purpose? To obtain the signature to the treaty of peace. Many Englishmen—not pacifists, not sentimentalists, but bishops, judges, members of the House of Lords, great public educators, Tory editors—and many Americans have declared that this treaty is a monstrous injustice. But if the Germans say so, that becomes a crime which we shall know how to punish. "The enemy have been reminded already," says the Times, proud organ of British respectability, of conservatism, of distinguished editors and ennobled proprietors, "that the machinery of the blockade can again be put into force at a few hours' notice. . . . Rejection of the peace terms now offered them will assuredly lead to fresh chastisement."

"Fresh chastisement"—some great artist should interpret the editorial warning for the better instruction of German mothers and fathers; a vast sea of small, deadly white, skinny faces, and then finally long, unending lines of little tiny graves. Germany will sign. "Gentlemen of England and America, Messieurs les Francais, you have us. Oh, decidedly you have us. We yield. That is why we sign." Suppose they add that postscript to this famous treaty? And what is the value of a signature so enforced and so explained? The value? Will not Lloyd George and Mr. Wilson be able to bring back those signatures? Will they not have "made peace"—permanent peace? Shall we not have destroyed this Prussian philosophy of frightfulness, force and hate? Shall we not have proved to the world that a state without military power can trust to the good faith and humanity of its neighbors? Can we not then celebrate victory with light hearts, honor our dead and glorify our arms? Have we not served faithfully those ideals of right and justice, mercy and chivalry for which a whole generation of youth went through hell and gave their lives?