

Conscription Policy Designed For Industrial Enslavement

'LOOKING BACKWARD' FORWARD

"They are not the most ominous signs of the times. No; by far the ugliest sign of the times is the fact that of late years two words which have for half a century been tabooed in British politics are now, after some whisperings and stealthy hintings, beginning to be spoken trippingly on the tongue. These words are Protection and Conscription. They are words of abomination and desolation—words that should be resented by the people as an insult to their understanding and a threat to their liberty." Thus wrote Robert Blatchford, in an article entitled "The Wisdom of the Times," in the Clarion, as far back as 1902, when he dealt with the opposition of the Tories to the social reform movement. This opinion was not only held by Blatchford that Conscription was a threat to the liberty of the British people. The Duke of Wellington, one of the generals in the last European war, opposed conscription on similar grounds. He said:—

"It is quite clear that the British regular army cannot be raised by conscription or ballot. The right of a country to the services of all its subjects for defence can well be understood. It is on the principle of defence that the seafaring man is liable to be impressed for service in the King's ships, and that all the inhabitants of the country are liable to be balloted for to serve in the militia. But the force called the regular army, which is liable to be sent to any part of the world, not for the defence of the land of England, but of a colony or settlement, or for the conquest of any foreign territory, cannot be considered in the same light. Men cannot with justice be taken from their families and from ordinary occupations and pursuits for such objects. The recruits for the regular British army must be volunteers. Accordingly, there is no instance in which the system of raising men for the army by voluntary enlistment has been departed from, whatever may have been taken from time to time the wants of the service for men."

"Terminological Inexactitudes," or— Lies?

Since the war has commenced Great Britain has adopted Conscription, with the result that militarism has become supreme and parliament is gradually becoming only a debating society with no power. Trade unions have lost nearly all their hard won rights, which it took nearly a hundred years of agitation to obtain, and laws passed by parliament regarding tribunals and conscientious objectors are ignored. In the introduction of the military service bill such men as Philip Snowden and J. Ramsey MacDonald protested and declared that such measures would lead to industrial conscription. This was denied by the rulers, but when the military service (No. 2) bill was before the House Mr. Asquith and Lloyd George made themselves plain enough to be understood.

Mr. Asquith said: "The worker who might happen, for any reason, to be obnoxious to his employer—if for instance he had taken an active part, as a trade unionist, in movements for the rise of wages, or for the improvement of the conditions of labor—the employer may take advantage of this or that pretext to dismiss him. Therefore, he loses his exemption certificate; unless he can get re-employment at once at a similar trade, he becomes, ipso facto, a soldier and subject to military law. . . . I am glad to say that I hope and I believe, at a time like this, and in conditions such as those under

which we live, cases of this kind would be rare.

David Lloyd George said: "What we want is not compulsion for the army, but for the workshop."

The act provides for the exemption of men who can demonstrate or prove their conscientious objection to war, yet such men as A. Fenner Brockway, Clifford Allen, C. H. Norman, are languishing in prison because of their conscientious objection to war. Militarism snapping its fingers at the law, knowing that it is now supreme!

Under conscription in England men are no longer free to go from one factory to another, where they may get higher wages for their labor power. That is not all. Here is part of a letter I have just received from a Socialist councillor in a mining district in Britain. He says: "Committees have to be formed at all the collieries represented by managers and men to try men who have not been working and fine them from \$1.00 to \$5.00; so you see that we have industrial conscription as well as military conscription."

Under the act the widow's only son and support was not to be called for service, but militarism defies the act and the widow's only son and support is conscripted and sent to the front. I have before me a letter which is dated December 14, 1916, from a widow's only son, who has been called to the colors. It is written on Y.M.C.A. paper and is as follows:—

An Objector's Mess of Pottage.

"From the above address you would at once learn that I must be a soldier, and so I have been since the first day of May this year. I am in the Signal Service of the Royal Engineers. My training being now at an end, you see I am on draft for 'Somewhere.' So I am here awaiting final orders for a place called 'Mesopotamia.' It has been most trying to leave my dear mother all alone. More so, after the trying life she has had to come through. But mothers are indeed so wonderful and brave! She has stood the loneliness bravely. But now when I am expected to leave the country at any moment, she must be coming through a most trying time.

"But we are in God's keeping, and I shall hope to return when this struggle comes to an end, and find my dear mother waiting my return. I must not dwell on such thoughts, which only makes one feel miserable. So I do hope you will write my mother again. It is sure to cheer her up for a wee while.

"With all good wishes, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

"Sapper W.H.B.S."

THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

The Government that enacts conscription and enforces conscription is more likely to subscribe to its own political death warrant than to sign a new lease of life.

Conscription may put Sir Robert Borden and his party on the road to political death. Conservatives should be content to have their party die so long as the remainder of the party's life in office be that remainder long or short, is adorned with the large fulfilment of national duty.—Toronto Telegram, May 23, 1917.

The sacrifice of short rations would be faced more cheerfully in Canada if the people did not know it was for the benefit of the manipulators of food corners.—Toronto Globe.

Germany must surely be feeling the pinch of hunger with food almost as dear in Berlin as in Toronto.—Mail and Empire.

SECRETARIAL NOTES

Dominion Executive Committee motion re conscription:

Moved and seconded that in view of the government's effort to adopt a measure for "Compulsory military service," that the Dominion Executive Committee declares that it will endeavor by all legitimate means within its power to prevent the enactment of the suggested military service bill. But should such legislation be passed, we will refuse to abide by such a law. And that we recommend that all our locals and members take similar action, refusing to bear arms. And that, in order to demonstrate our unity of purpose, all members of the party are requested not to append their signatures to any registration form that may be circulated by the government, and to be fully prepared to go to prison as a demonstration of loyalty to the principles of international Socialism. And that the secretary wire instruction to all executive bodies. Carried unanimously.

Local No. 3, Jewish, Toronto, have appointed a delegate to the Jewish Socialist convention of America, to be held in New York on the 27th of this month. National and international problems of the first dimension will occupy the attention of this congress.

The Toronto Conference of Russian Socialists are doing good work in collecting funds to help their comrades in Russia. The Ukrainian local, No. 52, has elected a committee of fifty to assist the conference in this project, and they will immediately commence a house-to-house canvass for subscriptions.

BAINBRIDGE DEFENCE FUND.

W. E. Carey, Windthorst, Sask. \$	1.00
J. W. Cutt, Dunvegan, Ont.	1.00
T. Skinner, Brantford, Ont.	2.50
T. G. Hughes, Asquith, Sask.	10.50
Mrs. Peterson, Malmö, Alta.	5.00
J. Lyons, Ottawa, Ont.	10.00
J. Conner, Toronto	4.00
May Day Mass Mtg., Toronto.	18.18
H. Perkins, Toronto.	3.00
J. Simpson, Toronto	1.00
Hamilton Ukrainian, in bulk.	16.50
Previously acknowledged	141.78

Total \$214.60

The International Socialists Picnic will be held by Ontario comrades at Grimsby Beach on July 14th, 1917. All locals take notice.

Owing to pressure of correspondence on the military service proposals, we are unable to give them all space, and have boiled them down considerably on this account.

INFORMATION REQUIRED.

Dulcan Foley, one-time resident in Winnipeg, is requested to communicate at once with the associate editor at the "Irish Worker." Note address. Mr. J. Carney, 22 Tooker Place, near 863 N. Dearborne St., Chicago, Ill.

Comrade F. G. Hipping, of Winnipeg, Man., will commence his tour of Manitoba about June 20th. Locals and sympathizers who desire him to visit their locality are requested to write him at the address appended below. His executive has decided the route ahead as follows: Regina, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and Brandon, in the order named. Towns intervening between these points may be visited if the matter is taken up with him at once. Write F. G. Tipping, 985 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg, Man.

I. BAINBRIDGE, Dom. Sec.

Capitalism has no religion. It is neither Protestant, nor Catholic, nor Jewish, nor Mohammedan. Capitalism exploits all religions for business purposes. No wonder so many churches permit the commercializing of religion and forget all about the Nazarene and his humanitarian teachings.—N. Y. Call.

THE GOOD TIME COMING.

Come hither, lads, and hearken
For a tale there is to tell,
Of the wonderful days a-coming
When all shall be better than well.

For that which the worker winneth
Shall then be his indeed,
Nor shall half be reaped for nothing
By him that sowed no seed.

Then all mine and all thine shall be
ours,
And no more shall any man crave
For riches that serve for nothing
But to fetter a friend for a slave.

And what wealth then shall be left us
When none shall gather gold
To buy his friend in the market
And pinch and pine the sold!

Nay, what save the lovely city
And the little house on the hill,
And the wastes and the woodland
beauty
And the happy fields we till.

And the painter's hand of wonder,
And the marvelous fiddle bow,
And the banded choirs of music,
All those that do and know.

For these shall be our and all men's,
Nor shall any lack a share
Of the toil and the gain of living
In the days when the world grows
fair. —William Morris.

SLAVES.

James Russell Lowell.

Men, whose boast it is that ye
Come of fathers brave and free,
If there breathe on earth a slave,
Are ye truly free and brave?
If ye do not feel the chain
When it works a brother's pain,
Are ye not base slaves indeed,
Slaves unworthy to be freed?
Is true freedom but to break
Fetters for our own dear sake,
And with leathern hearts forget
That we owe mankind a debt?
No; true freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free.
They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing, and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.

WAR DEMANDS FREE PRESS.

"Of all times, in time of war the press should be free.

"That, of all occasions in human affairs, calls for a press vigilant and bold, independent and uncensored.

"The times of war corruption and venality, sordidness and greed are always active, always prevalent. It was so in the civil war, when the union seemed to be going to pieces. It was true—notoriously and brazenly true—during the Spanish-American war. Men were fed on diseased food that greed might riot in profits.

"I know of nothing more important to a free people in time of war, in time of great stress, than a free press."—Senator Borah in United States Senate.

GENERAL SHERMAN ON WAR.

"I confess without shame that I am tired and sick of war. Its glory is all moonshine. Even success the most brilliant is over dead and mangled bodies the anguish and lamentations of distant families appealing to me for missing sons, husbands and fathers. It is only those who have not heard a shot no heard the shrieks and groans of wounded and lacerated that cry aloud for more blood, more vengeance, more desolation."—General Sherman.