

**The Catholic Record**

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**COMMUNIST LIBERTY**

The sympathy manifested by the British Labor Party for the clique of tyrants who rule Russia is not easy to understand. For, though the Labor Unions of Britain are permeated more or less by Socialist ideals and principles, at least the articulate leaders of the Labor movement repudiate predatory Socialism and its methods, and profess their faith in peaceful evolution rather than in revolution for the attainment of their ends. Nevertheless leaders and rank and file are at one in their demand for the recognition of the Soviet Government, and, at the present moment, seem to be more solicitous for interests of Red Russia than for the honor and rights of Great Britain. The British Labor leaders doubtless exercise a restraining influence on the more extreme sections of organized Labor; but it is likely also that they must, even against their better judgment, often yield something to extremist demands. On this continent labor does not loom so large politically nor are its aims so radical; but even here in Canada Bolshevik sympathy was so great as to call for the peremptory threat to take away the charter of Nova Scotia workmen if they persisted in affiliating with the Moscow International, which is the Soviet Government's other self.

Lloyd George is a politician and hence his motives may be suspected; but he is by no means alone in asserting that all other political forces will soon be under the imperative necessity of uniting to stem the rising tide of Bolshevism in England. It is perhaps keenly felt that Socialism, Communism, the rule of the proletariat, call it what you will, which embodies the vague aspirations of the many, the definite aim of not a few, is on trial in Russia. If it fail definitely and disastrously there it receives a great set-back, if not a death-blow. So, everywhere, in the ranks of Labor we find in greater or less degree an instinctive sympathy for Bolshevism.

For these and for other and greater reasons it is greatly to be regretted that the press is precluded from truthfully and fearlessly informing the world of the progress of this Russian experiment at once so interesting and of such momentous importance to civilization. How effectually the press is thus precluded from normally functioning in this matter becomes evident only when the Russian correspondents of the great newspapers get beyond the jurisdiction of Red Russia. Francis McCullagh has told how despatch after despatch was suppressed. But, he adds, "the total suppression of cables was better than the mutilation which left only the Bolshevik side of the case, and such mutilation was systematically carried out."

Last week another correspondent, George Seldes of the Chicago Tribune, relieved, at his own request, from his Moscow assignment, tells us something of the futility of efforts of honest journalism in Russia. He cables from Riga:

"The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth cannot be told from Russia today. The Russian censorship is a Communist censorship. What is favorable to the Communist cause and Bolshevik Russia passes untouched; every-

thing else is emasculated, denaturalized, distorted or destroyed.

"Russian censorship has no rules or regulations. Its object is to influence opinion abroad regarding Communism and the Soviet Government. It passes and suppresses news action daily in order to influence readers of dispatches in this and other newspapers. It especially aims to influence thought throughout America.

"For eight months I have been trying to tell as much of the truth about Russia as I have been able to discover without regard to whether the facts shed a favorable or unfavorable light on the Bolshevik regime. Frequently dispatches were altered and frequently suppressed, until the climax of the battle against the censorship came with the trial of the Catholic prelates.

"This event, coincident with Premier Lenin's serious stroke, which may result in his death any day; with the Soviet regime so nervous that it orders soldiers to fire into open windows of trains crossing the Volga, with the discovery of a military plot and with the sudden knowledge that the whole religious world has turned against them, caused a sharpening of the censorship, making honest work impossible."

Mr. Seldes quotes Karl Radek, one of Russia's greatest exponents of Communism, on the "blundering stupidity" of the censorship who has thus frankly admitted its object and methods:

"Censorship is not an institution, it is a brother.

"The Soviet censor absolutely suppresses all dispatches whether containing bald facts, interpretation of facts or the views of any person, institution or party in any way criticizing or affecting the proletariat dictatorship, the interests of the Communist Party or the position of the Soviet Government in the eyes of the world."

The American Methodist bishop who fraternized with the clerical section of the Reds had thereby a certain kind of greatness thrust upon him. The following will therefore be of interest:

"Even Bishop Edgar Blake, who walked so naively into the lion's den of Russia's so-called reformed church congress without knowing the magic formula of David, spoke tolerantly of the censorship.

"Surely, it cannot be bad," Bishop Blake said to me. "I have just read your Easter story, in which you told how a Communist crowd shouted 'Down with the Church, down with God!' The censor permitting you to send that certainly was liberal and fair."

"Bishop Blake did not realize that to the Communist soul, sympathizing with the atheistic movement, such dispatches were favorable, and therefore were not censored."

Now that the world knows what the Red censorship means its capacity for harm, at least positive harm, is greatly diminished. But it must be remembered that the rigid censorship affects not only the outside world's knowledge of Russia, but also keeps Russian people from knowing anything of what is going on in the world or even in their own country. More than that the ruling clique themselves realize that a too rigid loyalty to Communism sometimes defeats its own object. For instance, Mr. Seldes tells us:

"It was only after the suppression of a majority of the telegrams of the Budkiewicz and Zpiplik trials, when the protests of the world were heard in Moscow, that Georges Tchitcherin, Commissar of Foreign Affairs, realized the colossal blunder the censorship was.

"You have undone," said M. Tchitcherin, addressing the Council of Commissars, 'my work in Europe and America. You have delayed the recognition of Russia by two years."

"Yet it is M. Tchitcherin's department which houses the censorship bureau."

"Now, to be fair to the Russian Foreign Office," continues Mr. Seldes, "I repeatedly asked the reason for the censorship. These reasons may be summed up as follows:

"Russia is an isolated nation, continually in a state of war, continually attacked and continually fought by bourgeois nations throughout the world; therefore, martial law exists, of which censorship is a justifiable part."

"This is buncombe. It gives the lie direct to the same officials' claims that the Russian Government is the strongest in the world and is supported by the people and that the nation has the most loyal army in the world. The fact is the Russian dictatorship is not of the proletariat, but of Communist officials."

And these officials will probably quarrel amongst themselves, Mr. McCullagh tells us. "Just now," he wrote after leaving Russia, "the renegade Jewish element is grasping everything" but that "non-Jewish influence will again get control and a frightful massacre of the Jews will begin, as the hatred of the people for these renegade Jews is intense."

So it may be that the dictators after destroying liberty will destroy each other and the dictatorship of the proletariat at the same time.

**LIBERTY, LIBERALISM, BOLSHEVISM**

We see at the present time what was seldom if ever before seen in the history of Christian civilization. A great nation of nearly two hundred million people grovelling in abject terror and helpless wretchedness before a handful of ruthless tyrants who have usurped all authority and exercise despotic sway over these millions in the name of liberty; boldly proclaiming that they alone can give to Russia and to the world freedom, economic, intellectual and spiritual. And all the while liberty is trodden underfoot while it is proclaimed to be the object and justification of the terrible despotism. The ravages of war in an army badly equipped and a civilian population poorly organized were pitiful and disproportionately great; but they pale before the butcheries of the Terror and the incredible toll of life taken by the famine due to the incompetence, callous indifference or deliberate will of the apostles and champions of the new liberty.

Nor can it be held that Russia is altogether exceptional. In Hungary and in Bavaria, countries of Catholic culture and tradition, Bolshevism gained actual control of Government. In Italy it was barely prevented. Elsewhere in Europe the menace was great, nor has it entirely passed away.

A tendency so widespread is not the chance creature of circumstance, but has its roots deep in ideas long inculcated.

The world now recognizes that the great Pontiff, Leo XIII., was something of a seer and prophet in his statesmanlike grasp of the elements of the labor problem brought about by modern industrialism. But not less deep was his insight into the ills of modern society which are now recognized as threatening its stability if not its very existence.

Perhaps nothing has been so abused in recent generations as the idea of Liberty. If there were nothing noble, admirable, in this great conception, its perversion would not be dangerous. But so perverted has the notion become, so vague the conception of even honest and intelligent men, that it is a commonplace to hear liberty spoken of as the antithesis of authority. Whereas there is no true liberty of any kind without authority; authority is the condition sine qua non of liberty.

Liberty has and must have its limitations and its principles. Just now a bewildered world is trying to find its bearings after listening so long to rhapsodies of liberty and being rudely awakened to the fact that unlimited liberty is the excuse for unlimited tyranny and injustice. Thirty-five years ago Leo XIII., in his encyclical on Human Liberty, analyzed its nature, its conditions and its application to human affairs. Nothing will better repay the study of the earnest student of sociology today. To summarize it were impossible, naturally; but an extract or two will serve a useful purpose.

"This indeed, is true liberty, a liberty worthy of the sons of God, which nobly maintains the dignity of man, and is stronger than all violence or wrong—a liberty which the Church has always desired and held most dear. This is the kind of liberty the apostles claimed for themselves with intrepid constancy, which the apologists of Christianity confirmed by their writings, and which the martyrs in vast numbers consecrated by their blood. And deservedly so; for this Christian

liberty bears witness to the absolute and most just dominion of God over man, and to the chief and supreme duty of man towards God. It has nothing in common with a seditious and rebellious mind; and in no little derogates from obedience to public authority; for the right to command and to require obedience exists only so far as it is in accordance with the authority of God, and is within the measure that He has laid down. But when anything is commanded which is plainly at variance with the will of God, there is a wide departure from this divinely constituted order, and at the same time a direct conflict with divine authority; therefore it is right not to obey.

"By the patrons of Liberalism, however, who make the State absolute and omnipotent, and proclaim that man should live altogether independently of God, the liberty of which We speak, which goes hand in hand with virtue and religion, is not admitted; and whatever is done for its preservation is accounted an injury and an offence against the State. Indeed, if what they say were really true, there would be no tyranny, no matter how monstrous, which we should not be bound to endure and submit to."

The doctrine of the absolutism of the State was openly advocated by the Prussians who dominated German policy before the War. It was met and fought and partially defeated by the Catholic Church, in the Kulturkampf, forty years before the civilized world took up its challenge in 1914.

But not to Prussians is this most vicious principle of Prussianism confined. Everywhere, more or less, and here in Canada not less than elsewhere, is the principle of the supremacy of the State advocated openly or by implication upheld.

Now the Moscow gang is the Russian State. They are perfectly logical when they claim absolute authority. Their course of action would be no whit less reprehensible or disastrous if they had the support of the majority of the people—which, indeed, they may have. The divine right of the majority is quite as absurd and un-Christian as the divine right of kings, and may be made the excuse for tyranny quite as odious in one case as in the other.

To the point also is the following extract from Leo's Letter already quoted:

"What Naturalists or Rationalists, aim at in philosophy, that the supporters of Liberalism, carrying out the principles laid down by Naturalism, are attempting in the domain of morality and politics. The fundamental doctrine of Rationalism is the supremacy of the human reason, which, refusing due submission to the divine and eternal reason, proclaims its own independence, and constitutes itself the supreme principle and source and judge of truth. Hence these followers of Liberalism deny the existence of any divine authority to which obedience is due, and proclaim that every man is the law to himself; from which arise that ethical system which they style independent morality, and which, under the guise of liberty, exonerates man from any obedience to the commands of God, and substitutes a boundless license."

Without further comment we subjoin this paragraph from the same source.

"Moreover, besides this, a doctrine of such character is most hurtful both to individuals and to the State. For, once ascribe to human reason the only authority to decide what is true and what is good, and the real distinction between good and evil is destroyed; honor and dishonor differ not in their nature, but in the opinion and judgment of each one; pleasure is the measure of what is lawful; and given a code of morality which can have little or no power to restrain or quiet the unruly propensities of man."

The reflective mind, occupied with the social conditions of the present day, will find the great Letters of the great Leo a lamp to the feet in the study of sociology.

**FREEDOM NOT LICENSE**

By THE OBSERVER

There is nothing we boast more about than the freedom we enjoy under our constitution and our laws and our parliamentary system. We have grown so accustomed to the idea of freedom; we have for so long seen it operate without question, that we have begun to assume, unconsciously of course, that it has no limits, which is one fallacy; and that nothing can seriously damage or lessen it, which is another fallacy. There is no objection to making, in Tennyson's phrase, the bounds of freedom wider yet, from time to time, provided that the extensions of freedom do not verge upon license, that is upon an indulgence in actions which are morally wrong and hurtful to peace, order and good government. Conscience, properly enlightened as the result of instruction, humility, and prayer, will usually indicate the line between morality and immorality, and a development of good judgment based on the desire to do what is best for the State, together with a calm consideration of possible dangers to the State, will usually suffice to restrain civil action within the bounds of reasonable freedom.

Nor should it be assumed that the same degree of freedom is fit for all men at all times and under all conditions. The true theory of making the bounds of freedom wider yet, is to extend it as fast as people are found capable of using it with judgment and to their own good and not to their own harm. This may be illustrated by taking an extreme case. Some years ago, it was seriously proposed that the United States retire from the Philippine Islands, and hand them over to the natives. That sounded very well to some people; it seemed to be a very generous and disinterested thing to do. But the moral atrocity of the proposal soon struck the minds and consciences of the American people in general.

The United States had entered into those Islands, and by so doing had assumed responsibilities, one of which was to see that the natives were ruled in a civilized way, and she could not without shame hand the government of the Islands over to a native population who were wholly unfit for such a responsibility. It mattered not then whether she had taken the Islands justly or unjustly; she had them, and with them all the responsibilities of proprietorship. The same thing may be said of England's position in India. She went into that country for selfish reasons of pure business, and consolidated her position there by many wrong acts; yet she could not now hand over India to its native populations and thus bring about the return of chaos. These illustrations are sufficient to show that freedom is not to be measured out for all people as one measures out trade goods to all who ask for them: it is a thing to be used with propriety and justice; and no one is entitled to have it who is not reasonably capable of so using it. And the same thing is true of each of the successive grants of freedom by which the bounds are made "wider yet."

"Who knew the season when to take, occasion by the hand and make, the bounds of freedom wider yet." So Tennyson expresses it, and expresses it very well. There is the season and the occasion, and those who demand freedom or an extension of freedom out of that season, are as unwise as those who would give it to them without taking "occasion by the hand" at the right season.

No careful observer of the times in which we live can fail to see that it is being assumed that men are now, if they never were before, entitled to receive any concession they may choose to ask for; whether the thing they want to do be right or wrong, good or bad, helpful to the State or ruinous in its probable consequences. In other words, the distinction between liberty and license is not being kept well in sight. That a thing is wanted is supposed to be proof that those who want it are entitled to it. On all sides we hear ridicule and vituperation directed at this one or that who is so old-fashioned as to think that there is danger here or danger there. If one can attach any meaning that is comprehensible to much that is being said and written, it seems to be thought by some people that there is probably no such thing as moral danger, but that if there does happen to be some such thing, people have full and

complete right to incur it to any and to every extent, and that it is sheer tyranny on the part of the State to interfere.

A thousand popularity-seeking editors are telling the public, always credulous where some human weakness is flattered, that it is impertinent as well as ridiculous for the law to put bounds to the sacred right of the public to do as they like. There is to be no restriction on amusements, nor on drinking, nor on gambling, nor on trade combines, nor on profligating, nor on theatres, nor on books or other literature, nor on anything else, we suppose, that the vagrant fancy of man may suggest that he do or have. We seldom see anywhere a paper or book, except in the old-fashioned corners where Catholics hold the old-fashioned Catholic views, in which it is made clear that freedom is fast passing into license. We are sorry to say that Catholics are not always alive to the Catholic view of such matters. We wonder if Catholics in general have any idea of, for instance, the Papal constitution on the subject of forbidden books. There is some reason to think that many Catholics are becoming disposed to regard that prohibition as lightly as thousands of them have brought themselves to regard the Lenten fast.

In the middle of the last century the Irish peasant never took as much as a cup of cold water till noon, and went to his hard work in the fields fasting like that. He seldom took a bit of meat in Lent, seldom though he could have had it, fast or no fast, since he was too poor to have it. At noon he took a meal of potatoes and milk. In the evening he took a small collation, and then fasted till noon the next day. From such men and women the Irish of Canada are descended. Is it strange that they had clear spiritual perceptions? They repressed their bodily appetites, without which repression there can be no spiritual clarity. Are we their spiritual equals? We are not; but there is worse than that to be said of us. We are becoming so blinded as to imagine that they were foolishly pious. God help us and give us sense.

Well, such retrogressions as are to be charged against us; such loss as we have made in spiritual perception and clarity, we may ascribe to our deluding ourselves, in one way or another, and to a greater or less extent, with the notion that we are such perfectly wonderful people that we do not need rules and that it is foolish or worse to tie our conduct up with rules and bounds. That is to say, we have lost the power to perceive the danger of license, and also the keenness to see the danger line between liberty and license.

**NOTES AND COMMENTS**

AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHERS, those especially who do their own laboratory work, will be interested in recent scientific developments as to the effects of red light rays. Ordinarily, the silver bromide of photography is insensitive to these rays, but by dyeing the film, says a writer in *Everyday Science*, it is possible to cut off the shorter rays and make the longer ones of the red end of the spectrum do the work. A new dye recently tried, called crypto-cyanine, makes the film so sensitive to the extreme red, the longer visible rays, that photographs of landscape may be obtained by it almost instantaneously.

SUCH PHOTOGRAPHS look strange, for chlorophyll, the green coloring matter of leaves and plants, pours out much of the energy it absorbs from sunlight in the form of red rays, invisible to the eye, but very visible to the dyed film. Hence green leaves appear as white as snow, just as if they were self-luminous. It has been suggested that by photographing Mars with these new plates it should be possible to determine definitely whether the much-disputed markings on that planet are vegetable growth.

IN VIEW of recent revelations by travellers of name as to the existence still of cannibalism in some parts of the world the enquiry as to why certain races or tribes have become cannibal is interesting. A contributor to that valuable periodical *Country Life*, thinks that the cause was the constant craving for meat in lands where mostly grain abounds, and he gives the result of

his own observations along this line in equatorial Africa, mentioning particularly the Natives of the Bahr Aouk, whose performances as meat eaters may be classed as extraordinary.

WHEN THESE natives inhabit a stockless area, says Mr. W. D. M. Bell, the writer indicated, they go for months without flesh, except, perhaps, an occasional rat, mongoose or bird. In these circumstances the craving for meat naturally becomes intense, and, in his opinion, is the cause of cannibalism. When as a result of a successful elephant or hippopotamus hunt they have suddenly unlimited meat they simply gorge themselves, one man eating from fifteen to twenty pounds in twenty-four hours. All night long he will eat and doze and eat again. Then his skin assumes a peculiar dull color, and his eyes turn yellow, and for about three days he remains in a sort of torpid condition after the manner of a gorged boa constrictor. At the expiration of that period he recovers his natural appearance and is again full of energy. In a short time he wants his grain food again, and if he has his choice will eat a large portion of grain and very little meat.

"If," PROCEEDS Mr. Bell, "the meat is very fat, as with the elephant, the natives are likely to become extremely fit on the latter diet. For example, for sixty-three days of consecutive marching a *Kitangui*, or head porter of mine, who was of slight build, carried his mat, his blanket, fifteen pounds of rations, and a tusk that weighed one hundred and forty-eight pounds. The shortest day was five hours, and some days were very long indeed. For rations throughout the march he had ten pounds of native grain every day, and as much meat and elephant fat as he cared for. His physical condition was magnificent throughout."

AS THE outcome, some will say, of recent political movements in Italy, but really from the revival of the inherent religious instincts of the people, the power or influence of Freemasonry in Italy is said to be very decidedly on the decline. Recent Roman correspondence makes this very clear. "These many years," says one observer, "its secret powers, its influence and its wiles were so widespread and ubiquitous in the world of Rome that I never dreamed I should live to see the day when the Italian Government would repudiate the sect. Nor did I think I should live to read how every newspaper in Italy would unite in a cry of execration against the Lodges. Were the customs of Socrates, that genial old philosopher, with us now, Freemasons would likely be forced to drink the hemlock, as public enemies and corruptors of the youth of cities."

"NOT UNTIL I read of how the *Corriere della Sera* of Milan (perhaps the most powerful daily paper in Italy) had joined in the condemnation of Freemasonry did I realize how low this anti-Catholic sect had fallen in the eyes of even those who have little sympathy with the Church. In past years this paper was one of the props of the Lodges; now it joins in the hue and cry against the selfish 'patriotism' for private ends of the individuals controlling it, ever ready as they were, to exploit any party, Socialist, National or Radical in order to serve their pockets and prejudices."

It is now recalled, he further says, how all attempts to bring about reconciliation with the Holy See during the past fifty years failed because the Lodges would have it so. It is also recalled how when the Italian army met disaster at Caporetto, emissaries were dispatched to the most remote sections of the country to whisper into the ears of the populace that it was the priests who had got Italy into the war, and then betrayed her. With the revulsion of feeling that has now come about the day of retribution has also come to the sect with a vengeance.

No more surprising instance of this revulsion of feeling has transpired than what is described as the "conversion" of D'Annunzio. The poet who in the past was nothing if not anti-clerical, is said to have visited the ancient Magazzana Abbey