



OUR BOOKSHELF

THE GREAT PUSH BY PATRICK MACGILL.

"The Great Push" referred to is the drive at Loos and is a descriptive account of warfare and its horrors told in the soldier's own language, and will, I have no doubt, make a hit with the Canadian public. In the introduction the writer (who, by the way, is a stretcher-bearer) says:

"The justice of a cause which endeavors to achieve its object by murdering and maiming mankind is apt to be doubted by a man who has come through a bayonet charge. The dead lying on the fields seems to ask, 'Why has this been done to us? Why have you done it, brothers? What purpose has it served?' The battle line is a secret world, a world of curses. The guilty secrecy of war is shrouded in lies and shielded by blood-stained swords."

In the second chapter you get a graphic description of war in its reality, shown of all the glitter that our daily newspaper generally gives us. Here it is: "A man came running along the trench, stumbled into our shelter, and sat down on a sand-bag. You're the London Irish?" he asked. "Stretcher bearer," I said. "Have you been out?" "My God! I have," he answered. "Tisn't half a do, either. A shell comes over and down I flops in the trench. My mate was standing on a parapet and down he fell on top of me. God! 'twasn't half a squeeze. I thought I was burst like a bubble. "Get off, matey," I yells, "I'm squeezed to death." Squeezed to death! Them was my words. But he didn't move, and something warm and sloppy ran down my face. It turned me sick. . . . I wriggled out from under and had a look. . . . He was dead, and half his head was blown away. . . . Your boys are sticking to the work out there; just going on with the job as if nothing was amiss. When is the whole damned thing to come to a finish?"

Chapter IV. gives us what the soldiers at the front are really thinking about the business.

"A big high explosive flew over our heads and dropped over our heads in a little hollow, where seven or eight figures in khaki lay prostrate, faces to the ground. The shell burst and the wounded and dead rose slowly into the air to a height of six or seven yards and dropped slowly again, looking for all the world like puppets worked by wires. This, said the postmen who observed the incident, "is a solution of a question which diplomacy could not settle, I suppose. The last argument of kings is a damned sorry business."

All through the book you get little gems such as what is given below.

"Bill and I were having a discussion a moment ago," said Pryor. . . . "Bill maintains that the Army is not an honorable institution, and that no man should join it. If he knew as much as he knows now he would never have come into it. (Page 200.)

Then read this:—

"We have no particular hatred for the men across the way," said Pryor. "My God! the trenches tone a man's temper. When I was at home, our drawing-room bristled with hatred of some being named the Hun. Good Heaven! you should hear the men past military age revile the Hun. If they were out here we couldn't keep them from getting over the top to have a smack at the foe. And the women! I believe that we are the wrong men—we able-bodied youths with even tempers! It's the men who are past military age who should be out here!" (Page 229.)

The book finishes with the writer being wounded and in the Red Cross

wagon that takes him away from the scene of action at Loos he hears another wounded man in the same wagon exclaim, "Thank God! I'm out of the whole damn business. . . . I take damn good care that I . . ."

It is a very remarkable book, full of excitement, amusement, and gross reality, and should be widely read, as it is one of the few books on the war that should find a place in the Social Democrat's library.

J. M. C.

SOCIALIST BULLETS

Did you know that a popular writer defined a pensioner as a "kept patriot"?

Socialism will prolong human life by abolishing poverty and eliminating all worry.

Lots of unionists pay their money for a closed shop and then vote for an open one.

The railroads are being run on the Malthusian theory that there are too many people.

Lots of men who claim to be seeking the truth would not know what to do with it if they found it.

Old party politicians think that when they avoid a problem that, presto! that problem is solved.

Mockery: The kind of freedom that gives you the right to leave your master and hunt for another.

We brought you the truth heretofore, but the greater part of you abhorred the truth.—The Koran.

Socialism stands for a system under which your purchasing power will be equal to your producing power.

Under Socialism there will be no place for Weary Willies who live by begging or rich hoboes who live by interest and rents.

Is there a single rung in the ladder of progress that wasn't constructed by a "crank," a "fanatic," a "dreamer," or a visionary?"

Under Socialism every citizen will get what is coming to him, and what is coming to him will consist of what he has earned by labor.

Just because you happen to believe that money won't bring happiness, it doesn't follow that poverty will incubate the joy germs.

Under Socialism it will pay to run railroads with care and use the safest methods for the preservation of employees' and passengers' lives.

The Socialist party is the only political organization that advocates the collective ownership and democratic management of the industries.

You were hungry;
You are hungry;
You will be hungry—
If you don't vote for Socialism.

There will never be any danger of the world becoming over populated as long as the railroads are privately owned and run for profit instead of use.

Newspapers do invaluable service to the capitalists by filling the workers with so much dope that they are so stupefied that they can't see the shackles on their wrists.

If you believe in a heaven in the hereafter, it doesn't follow that you should vote for hell on earth here and now.

WARTIME METHODS IN GERMANY

(Address by Herr Dittmann, Socialist Deputy, delivered in the Reichstag.)

The object of the projected law relating to the preventive prison (Schutzhaft) is very acceptable to us; we will co-operate with the commission to obtain an ordinary procedure in legal form with an obligation of damage rights for persons wronged. But one thing should be understood: this projected law gives the character of a State institution to a species of prison which is absolutely illegal and which, in my opinion, is not justified by any military or political necessity. It would be preferable, therefore, to be guided by our demand and to suppress all reference to the state of siege, and with it the preventive imprisonment.

The preventive prison is to-day a means of combating parties and individuals who find themselves in political opposition. As far back as last May this form of imprisonment had already created a veritable terror, and since then the situation has only grown worse. The Government has revived the laws of execrable memory that preceded the revolution of 1848, and those voted against the Socialists; the system of police denunciation and the regime of spies are flourishing anew, and, as in the days of the law against the Socialists, hide themselves under the mask of the patriot and the savior of his country.

For years the authorities have kept up these imprisonments, which do not rest on any judicial basis. The safety guaranteed by the laws has been shattered; all protection of the laws has been abrogated, and, as if in derision, this whole procedure has been denominated one of "security and protection." The more benignant this phrase appears, the more does it conceal of baseness and villainy.

A military chief of police openly declared to an Alsatian victim of this system: "In fact, more than one man profits from this chance to get rid of a good friend." Infamy and debauchery at this moment are feasting in veritable orgies (the speaker is called to order). The victims, defenseless, have to bear everything; the denial of justice is crushing them in a way unworthy of a human being, and destroying their material resources and their family life. And this terrible fate has been imposed upon them because no crimes punishable by the laws can be proved against them—in comparison with them criminals are to be envied. For this situation, as terrible from the moral as from the material viewpoint, these gentlemen of the Government appear not to have a spark of intelligence.

The Mehring Case Typical.

In the Mehring case Mr. Helfferich naively said to the Budget Commission: "It is, however, preferable that Mehring should be in the preventive prison rather than he should be at liberty and be able to commit an act for which he would have to be punished." According to that logic everybody in the world ought to be arrested in order to preserve everybody from breaking the laws. Mr. Helfferich's ideal seems to be a German national house of detention.

Mehring objects in most energetic fashion to this benevolent intervention of the State, and is ready at any moment to bear the responsibility of his acts.

The Mehring case is a classic proof that we are not very far away from Mr. Helfferich's ideal. Mehring was arrested because in an intercepted letter addressed to Deputy Herzfeld, he had declared himself in favor of a demonstration for peace in Potsdam Square, and had offered to draw up a manifesto inviting the public to it—that is all

that could be charged against him. There was no punishable act. And that is why this man of more than 70 years was arrested. How long will it be before even thoughts will no longer be free from punishment in Germany?

Mehring is one of our most distinguished historians and authors. He belongs in the first rank of German intellectual life and is known far beyond the boundaries of Germany. The moment that it is learned abroad that such a man has been imprisoned "preventively," simply to eliminate him from public life, you need not be astonished if both inside of Germany and outside of it the German Government is held in very low esteem. A Government must be in a bad plight, indeed, to lock up the brightest minds in the country for the purpose of stifling their valid impulses—that is the first reflection that will occur to every one upon hearing such news.

The Case of Mme. Luxemburg.

In the same fashion Mme. Dr. Rosa Luxemburg has been in prison for long months without the law's being able to establish the slightest misdeed against her. She is in disfavor because of her political views; men fear her intellectual influence upon the laboring masses and the creation of an energetic socialistic opposition. That is why they have put her in prison. The Government does not appear to know that by this act it has aroused the deepest indignation of all the woman Socialists in Germany—that it has given a blow of the fist to the whole socialistic labor movement in Germany by such arrests.

Neither does it appear to understand the effect produced on other nations, whether neutrals or enemies. Its members ought to reflect that to fight against a Government which imprisons without reason some of the most widely known members of the international proletariat must appear a socialistic duty, so to speak, in France, England, Italy, and Russia, and that by such measures the German Government is reviving among its enemies the will to prosecute the war. That is the effect of such a policy of violence.

As for the treatment endured by the persons arrested, it is truly infamous and revolting. In spite of his great age and his uncertain health, Mehring has been kept for months in a miserable hole; it is only in recent days that his friends have succeeded in having him transferred to the infirmary of the Moabit Prison. As for Mme. Luxemburg, about four weeks ago she was suddenly sent for one evening when she was in bed at the women's prison in Barnim Street, and transferred to the police station in Alexander Place. There she was locked in a small cell where only prostitutes arrested in the street are ordinarily confined until they are brought before the Judge. The cell has only half the normal space.

All visits to Mme. Luxemburg are forbidden; the newspapers which she received at Barnim Street have been taken away, and even the visits of her physician have been interdicted. The food is absolutely impossible for her to eat, so that she has had to have her meals brought in from the neighborhood and pay very dear for them. Her health is poor, and only her extraordinary energy keeps her up. One of her close friends writes to a colleague of mine in the prefecture: "The situation at the police station is a direct menace to her life." A moment before this session I was informed that Mme. Luxemburg had suddenly been transferred from that station to Wromke, a province of Posen; exile is thus added to imprisonment. Thus does the preventive prison serve the reactionaries as a weapon against the socialistic opposition in this country.

(To be continued.)

It must be true that most people are fond of works of fiction or the daily papers wouldn't have such large circulations.