

## NEW STRATEGISTS

By Robert Blachford.

We are a wonderful nation, and the mountain that has been in such sore labor will shortly bring forth a mouse—a wee, ridiculous mus.

In other words, the feeble outcome of the dark and hissing intrigue, the contemptible sequel to the portentous political crisis is a demand from Mr. Loud George that the war shall be conducted by a committee of three: Mr. Loud George, and two others.

"And straight against that serried host, forth went the dauntless three." They ought to have offices in Tooley Street.

At the time of writing the names of Mr. Loud George's fellow-strategists are uncertain. Perhaps their personalities do not matter; what does matter is the undoubted fact that they will be civilians. They will be all three civilians. Mr. Loud George's idea of conducting a war is to exclude all men of naval or military training and experience from the Board of Control.

Let us envisage that fact; let us grasp it; let us comprehend it with such intelligence as the gods have given us.

We are a great naval nation. Upon our Navy we depend for our food, our liberty, and our lives. We have the best and the most formidable Navy the world has ever seen.

And since the war began, more than two years ago, we have never had a sailor in the Cabinet, or on any of the numerous committees of war.

We have at present campaigns in the Balkans, in Egypt, in Asia, in East Africa, in the North Sea, and in France and Flanders, and since the death of Lord Kitchener we have not had a single soldier in the Cabinet or upon any of the committees chosen to conduct the war.

And now, after a prolonged growling and muttering storm amongst the civilian politicians, we are to be saved by Mr. Lloyd George and two other Mandarins. We are a wonderful nation!

We are a wonderful nation, and there is every indication that we shall stand it: this latest of the many political jobs through which our sailors and soldiers have fought and our people at home have suffered.

Our Navy is all right; our Army is all right; our naval and military commanders are all right; our people of all classes are all right. Our fatal weakness all through the war has been our government, our cabinet of 23 civilians. The 23 civilians having made a mess of things, we are now told that three of the messers will now proceed to conduct the war as it should be conducted—according to the ideas of Mr. Lloyd George and his two assistant strategists.

Does anyone believe for a moment that the three selected civilians are the best men we can find for the purpose of conducting the war? Probably not one adult Briton believes anything so foolish. But the people will continue to allow it. They will continue to fight and pay and to suffer and to die, and the three civilians, selected from three and twenty failures, will be boomed and belauded as the prospective saviours of their country.

It is our way. A sailor at the Admiralty, a soldier at the War Office, any naval or military man on a war committee would be regarded as a dangerous innovation. We have always left the affairs of the nation in the hands of a family party of windy political contortionists, and we cannot shake ourselves free from the incubus of that fatal tradition.

Yet we are not logical even in our absurdity, or we should replace Sir Douglas Haig by Lord Haldane and Admiral Beatty by Mr. Winston Churchill. For if sailors and soldiers cannot safely be trusted to conduct a war why not put lawyers and stump orators in com-

mand of our fleets at sea and our armies in the field?

Doubtless a war cabinet of three civilians will be better than a war cabinet of twenty-three civilians, and we may be moderately thankful that the Cabinet of three does not include Mr. Asquith; but is it impossible for our people to realize before it is too late that for the conduct of the greatest war ever waged a cabinet of civilians, large or small, is not the right sort of cabinet at all?

If we want the war conducted in a warlike manner we need only a committee of two: General Sir William Robertson and Admiral Jellicoe. And that committee should be given a free hand and full independence of all civilian interference. Even so our commanders would be sufficiently handicapped by the flabby and timid conduct of our Foreign Office and by the wobbling and nervous procrastination of our domestic government.

For it is most flagrantly evident that the political mandarins—who have presumed to interfere with our naval and military commanders have proved lamentably unequal to the management of the business for which they are supposed to be specially qualified.

The muddle and disaster at the Dardanelles, in Mesopotamia, and in the Balkans; the muddle over the recruiting and the exemptions; the muddle over the food prices, the coal prices, and the pensions; the ghastly blundering in Ireland would have convinced any nation but our own, that our government is wholly and radically unfit to govern.

These mandarins do not understand business, do not understand war, do not understand the people; and yet they have the unparalleled cheek to propose to start out upon a spouting tour with the object of rousing the country to make an effort. These mandarins, who have had to be periodically shaken out of their sleep and reminded that there is a war on, are now going to make rhetorical appeals to the people to get a move on. And while they are carrying out what one journalist has neatly described as a gas attack, the dauntless three, Mr. Lloyd George and two other civilian strategists, are going to conduct the war.

I write before the event, and it is still possible that the ingenious coup d'état may not come off. I ought to say that these three modest gentlemen wish to conduct the war, and have threatened to resign if they are denied. It is an interesting little comedy, and we can only pray that Sir John Jellicoe and Sir William Robertson and Sir Douglas Haig and Sir David Beatty may stiffen their backs and refuse to let the civilian strategists do anything dangerously foolish. If our naval and military commanders resign the country may wake up and muzzle their mandarins: the whole twenty-three of them.—The Clarion (England), December 8, 1917.

### NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

This paper is published twice a month, and not weekly. As some of our subscribers are under the latter impression, we beg you to take notice that the Forward will be issued at the present rate until there is a change in prices of supplies.—Ed.

"La Societe des Gens de Lettres," Paris, has a special fund designed to aid authors' widows. Mme. A. Baratin has willed half a million francs to this fund. Some day the widows of wage-slaves will be remembered. Or, better still, the living wage-slaves will insist on a natural social order. Then neither widows nor others need fear the penury that accompanies exploitation.

The P. & O. Company is contesting the British Government's right to compulsorily acquire certain of its ships.

## MAKING THE FUR FLY

Eugene V. Debs is making the fur fly in his speech-making tour through the eastern states. The press generally is giving him considerable attention. In reporting his speech at Canton, Ohio, The Canton Daily News said:

Debs was forcible in his denunciation of class rule as opposed to a rule of the people. This condition, he told his hearers, was a survival of middle age serfdom, and the source of existing industrial evils, including war. War, said Debs, was the product of capitalistic oppression of the masses and the expression of capitalistic greed divided into different camps and fighting for mastery. America, he said, stood on the threshold of a world in travail. He warned his auditors against the tocsin of war which he said was being "sounded" by the ruling class for private gain and continued subjugation of the workers, and that this propaganda was "urging itself in the guise of patriotism."

Debs said in part:

"War is always dictated by the ruling classes, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain; but the battles are fought by the working class. They have everything to lose, even their lives.

"There is much talk at the present time of standing by the president. I am willing to stand by the president if he stands for the things I want, but when I look at the gang that stands behind the president, I know it isn't my crowd."

Debs said every tyrant in history had wrapped himself in the cloak of patriotism or religion or both. Patriots, he said, were usually patriotic at long range. The people, Debs said, had too long been "lulled by the siren voice of the statesman who moved them to unreasoning frenzy by shaking the folds of his nation's flag and inciting them to organized murder on each other." Preparedness, said the speaker, was the first stage of war.

"I just wish for one coward nation," Debs declared, "a nation too cowardly to commit murder."

The Socialist party, Debs told his audience, was the only bona fide peace movement on earth.

"This peace movement knows no boundaries; it is international and its followers are moving toward a worldwide democracy," he said.

The speaker touched on the high cost of living and cited statistics in his contention that there was an ample quantity of food, but that it was being shipped overseas for purposes of private gain.

Debs told his audience that the workers were strong only when they learned to think, and that they were now beginning to use their brains as well as their hands. This awakening of class consciousness, said Debs, was mounting in an ever-increasing tide and foreshadowed the dawn of Socialism as the accepted political creed of the world.

The speaker compared present-day Socialist leaders with the rebel leaders of revolutionary days and the abolitionists who fought public opinion on slavery before the civil war.

### Sees Victory.

"The capitalists oppose the Socialists to-day, but their grand-children will place flowers on the grave of Socialists," said Debs.

The old order of society, Debs said, could survive but little longer and that Socialism would be then in order. The continued growth of the Socialist party, he said, sounded the warning of impending change. This swelling minority, the speaker told his hearers, will soon become the majority and with it would come the co-operative commonwealth.

"Classes and class rule and their attendant evils of poverty, misery, turmoil and strife are inherent in the capi-

talistic system. This is because one set of men owns the tools with which wealth is produced, while another set uses them, and there is an irrepressible conflict over the division of the profit. The capitalist owns the tools he does not use; the worker uses the tools he does not own.

"The working class alone made the tools; the working class alone can use them, and the working class must, therefore, own them."—American Socialist.

## TRADE UNION NOTES

The Federationist is in receipt of advices from a reliable source in Calgary which have a direct bearing on the migration of labor from the coast to the prairies. These are to the effect that at the present time there is an abundance of idle men in Calgary, that men are flocking in from the States, and that the farmers will probably use this condition of affairs as a lever to reduce wages, despite the fact that only recently they turned down a guarantee of \$1.50 per bushel for their 1917 crop, a price which would have made them open their eyes a year or so ago.

The advices received by The Federationist read, in part, as follows:—

"The influx of labor from the coast cities to Calgary just now, induced by the one-cent rate offered by the C.P.R., appears to be entirely out of proportion to the demand for labor. I have met some friends from Vancouver who are keenly disappointed at the state of the labor market here.

"There is a little demand for farm help, and the general wage is from \$50 to \$55. In a few cases, where the men are known to be thoroughly experienced the farmers come across with from \$60 to \$65.—B. C. Federationist.

## NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT

Notice to Locals.—We shall be glad to publish each week beneath this heading reports of the doings and activities of any local. Copy sent in should be written clearly on one side of the paper only. Reports should be brief as possible.

The Ukrainian comrades have divided the country into three sections, viz., West, Centre, East, each section having complete autonomy over the territory under its control, similar to the English provincial organizations.

The Lithuanian Local of Montreal desires to purchase supplies direct from the D. E. C. Later they will consider the advisability of forming a language section. We will be pleased to hear from our Western Canada Lithuanian locals on this question.

### EDUCATION OF THE WORKERS.

Nothing is of more importance than the education, the true education of the working class itself. Every worker student. The rank and file, the common herd, so-called, must wake up, open its eyes, and set itself to thinking about its slavery and about how to break its chains. A few "smart" leaders cannot do this. It can only be done by the slaves themselves.

Too much dependence on so-called leaders has always been, and is to-day, the weakness of the labor movement.

Freedom must have its beginning in the brain and heart of the working-class. Ignorance and indifference must be overcome and every union should be an educational center.

The workers must build up a political party of their own and use it in their struggle to abolish wage-slavery. But there is a difference between developing political power as a means of emancipation and chasing votes for the sake of holding office.

—It were better to have no opinion of God at all than such an opinion as is unworthy of Him.—Bacon.