

# THE RED FLAG

A Journal of News and Views Devoted to the Working Class.

Published When Circumstances and Finances Permit  
By The Socialist Party of Canada,

401 Pender Street East, Vancouver, B. C.

Editor ..... C. Stephenson

SATURDAY ..... APRIL 19, 1919

## Law and Order

Marxian students are acquainted with the name of Joseph Priestly, if from no other source than the analogy which Engels draws between his chemical discoveries and their amplifications by Laviosier and the manner in which Marx amplified the economic theories of Ricardo. Perhaps they are not aware that the pioneer of modern chemistry was driven from England, his dear, dear, native land, by a lawless mob, intent on preserving "law and order."

Priestly was active in other fields of thought; in fact, chemistry was merely a side-line. He was a dissenting minister, and finally became a Unitarian. He also had very liberal views regarding monarchy. However, his writing in the field of theology had threatened the comfort of that large and, at that time (1774-1779), powerful class which sponged upon the working population as ministers of the established church. They could not answer his argument; their curish spirit prevented them from attacking by other means, so they had recourse to the means usual with such upholders of law and order. They incited a mob to do the work they were too cowardly to even attempt.

It was customary for the radical bourgeois of England to celebrate the anniversary of the French Revolution, and this event generally found Priestly in attendance.

Of course, much trepidation was felt by the spongers over these annual celebrations, and in 1791, Priestly was the victim of their malice to the extent of having his house, library and laboratory destroyed, besides narrowly escaping death at the hands of a booze-crazed mob. This mob, however, quite like other mobs, did not stop when the desires of its instigators had been accomplished. Many other respectable citizens suffered. Quite a number of the mob were killed owing to being overcome by the booze being within burning houses. We learn from eye-witnesses that the rabble stood knee-deep in booze. Quite remarkable how much booze can be found in the cellars of our best citizens. This and the quantity of water they imbibe in the morning, proves they never drink booze. We are not without experience so far as booze is concerned, but it seems that we can never find closer resemblance to the 18th century mobs than by the booze route.

Just previous to the annual dinner of Birmingham in 1797 a very inflammable handbill was circulated, and although several hundred guineas was offered for information as to the writer, printer, publisher or distributor thereof, and all the powers of state aided in the search, none of these people were apprehended. That is very remarkable, when you think it over. However, the mob, to the slogan of for "Church and King," did the dirty work. Another remarkable incident is that at a dinner given by the city shortly after the Birmingham riots, the sponsors of law and order proposed the toast of "Church and King," and one fine old fellow, Dr. Parr, sprang to his feet with these words: "No, sir; I will not drink that toast! It was the cry of the Jacobites. It is the cry of incendiaries. It means a church without

a gospel, and a king above the law!" Which goes to prove that you cannot detect an anarchist by the color of his flag nor the length of his whiskers.

Anarchy is going beyond the leather and prunella, action without law. Of course a lawyer or a parson would soon have us in deep water by asking, "what is law?" Well, we will not answer, but Joseph Priestly, the finest character in all England and one of her most active and penetrating intellects, had to flee the country before a booze-besotted mob!

Now, ordinarily, society has machinery for smoothing over the manifold and grievous frictions which arise from the various conflicting interests of its members. But on this continent a situation has arisen where a certain section of the community have taken upon themselves the function of making and enforcing laws of their own. They, being respectable citizens, and for the most part having aid from men who have been in the army during the late war, their actions are looked upon as patriotic and proper. They are nothing more nor less than anarchists. No matter how many wars they fought in, nor how many gods they worship, just plain anarchists.

Comrade McKenzie has been run out of Cranbrook, and money legally in his possession has been extracted from him by threats. Comrade Naylor has been forced out of Silverton and Trail while there on "pursuit of his lawful occasions," as the prayer book says. And now, Comrade Roberts, secretary of the Miners' Union at Silverton, has been ordered to leave town by the twenty-first of this month, by these same anarchists.

Of course this sort of thing has gone far enough. We suffer passively, though not quietly, the many restrictions upon our liberty, imposed by constituted authority. But we don't propose to allow every group of anarchists who imagine themselves the saviors of society to drive us from pillar to post, because our ideas do not flow in the well-worn channel which accommodates their concepts of citizenship.

We mentioned a couple of weeks back that in our opinion, an attempt to interfere with a member of the working class engaged in purely working class business would be the rallying point for the prevailing sentiment regarding the One Big Union. It would seem that some people were determined to supply the seed for that which they look upon with abhorrence and dread. That, however, is solely their affair.

To return to Priestly: King George wrote to his secretary that he could not "but feel better pleased that Priestly is the sufferer for the doctrine, he and his party have instilled, and that the people see them in their true light; yet I cannot approve of them having employed such atrocious means of showing their discontent."

Priestly wrote, "This invasion of the Goths and Vandals, I little foresaw, and hope it will never be repeated, as I fancy the experiment will not be found to answer."

He was mistaken: the bourgeois are true Bourbons; they learn nothing; neither do they ever forget.

In his spirited letter to the inhabitants of Birmingham written July 9, 1791, he says: "Answer your arguments and your business is done; by your having recourse to violence, is only proof that you have nothing better to produce. Should you destroy myself as well as my house, library and apparatus, ten more persons of equal spirit and ability would instantly rise up!"

This latter assertion is, of course, somewhat questionable as a corollary to the destruction of one pioneer, but, as a consequence of a four dimensional principle of human progress, it follows, from a basis which Priestly clearly saw and expressed in many ways, of which perhaps the following words are the best: "It was ill policy, in Leo the Tenth, to patronize polite literature. He was cherishing an enemy in disguise. And the English hierarchy (if there be anything unsound

## India

[New York Nation]

"In discussing the proposed coercion bills under consideration by the Government of India, the London "Herald" observes that Britain has discovered by bitter experience in Ireland 'how impossible it is for 45,000,000 people to govern 4,000,000 against their will.' Obviously, the problem becomes even more impossible when the 4,000,000 are increased to 300,000,000, as in India, when 6,000,000 lives have been lost by influenza in the last few months, and when the worst famine in years is ravaging a helpless population. With prices of food grains ranging from fifty-one to one hundred per cent. higher than last year's record, and a fodder famine threatening the cattle supply, it must comfort the people very little to hear that from a total of £86,000,000 in the present annual budget, £41,000,000 is to be devoted to military expenses. The unrest and economic distress now promise to be aggravated by the enactment of two coercive laws carrying into effect the recommendations of the Rowlatt Commission which investigated sedition. The two bills, which are reported to be certain of passage, provide severe measures of repression and punishment for Nationalist agitation. The All-India National Congress has protested unanimously against the bills. The entire native press is in opposition. According to the "Herald," twenty-six public meetings and every Indian association of importance have joined in the protest. Twenty-two of the twenty-four non-official Indians on the India Legislative Council are opposed to the measures. There is, however, no indication that native opposition or liberal British opinion will prevent their enactment. Apparently Great Britain is bent upon flourishing the whip with one hand while she offers her subject peoples sweets with the other. The Montagu-Chelmsford proposals for reform and increased self-government in India seem to be an honest, if excessively cautious, attempt to satisfy the aspirations of the people. They are opposed by extreme Indian Nationalists and are supported only with certain reservations by the moderates, but the unanimous opposition of the conservative British elements in India and the Tories in England makes it evident that they are at least liberal in intent. Great Britain, however, intends to be prepared for any contingency. If the Montagu reforms fail to satisfy her Indian subjects, the sedition measures will be at hand to make satisfaction compulsory."

in its constitution) has equal reason to tremble even at an air-pump or an electrical machine."

We might suggest to the heroic gents who are intent upon saving society, that, of far greater menace to their so-called "law and order" is the contemplated air voyage across the Atlantic ocean, than all the One Big Unions and Bolsheviki extant. Happily, "they never learn, neither do they ever forget." J. H.

### SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

PROPAGANDA MEETINGS

SUNDAY, APRIL 20

At 8 p.m. Sharp

EMPRESS THEATRE

Corner Gore and Hastings

Speaker ..... W. W. Lefebaux