

WHAT OTHERS ARE THINKING

AN OPEN LETTER TO E. D. MOREL
(From J. Ramsay Macdonald.)

My Dear Morel,

Honors do not always come in by the same door or upon the same parchment. Sometimes their badge is "a purple ribbon worn over the right shoulder with a silver medal of the size of a shilling hanging in the region of the left trouser pocket," sometimes it is "a broad arrow stamped in tarry material on a suit of white canvas." But whichever it is, the gentleman holds it in small concern, knowing that both honor and dishonor belong to the essence of thing and not to their wrappings. But whilst the world demands its labels, under the impression that it would otherwise make mistakes and be unable to distinguish worth from vulgarity, a rich mind from a full pocket, a fool from a genius, discriminating people will often put the broad arrow in the forefront of all distinctions.

The Knighthood of the Broad Arrow is both ancient and noble. If it had a chapel, with banners and coats of arms and a register of names, its membership would be so rich in men whom time has honored and for whom history is a shrine that such baubles as the Garter and the Thistle would be treated by this knighthood with a condescending patronage.

In congratulating you on your honors, I am breaking a rule which I have rigidly observed for a long time. But my congratulations are really two-fold. You have been attacked with an unscrupulous malignity which has outraged the world of decency as much as any frightfulness in this war has outraged the world of humane feeling. You have been a sore offence to every blackguard who has been making holiday and cash upon the top of the wave of popular passion and credulity. They knew they could go to any length in their attacks and slanders. During a war, thrice is he armed who has prejudice on his side. I know how often you considered a prosecution and how often you were advised to treat the scoundrels with indifference. I also know how the Intelligence Department has been laying snares for you; how you and I once shared the charming smiles of an agent provocateur, paid for from our own taxes, and how the poor thing whom we pitied came to grief when she found she could not ensnare us; how your letters have been opened, read, returned to their envelopes, and then delivered; how officers have tampered with your staff and offered them appointments if they would give information against you; how, in short, you have been living in a glass house for years where there has been no privacy, with every action spied upon and reported, and running the risk that your most innocent and ordinary conduct might be converted and perverted into a criminal one. You have come scathless out of it all—and you have been trapped because you wished to send a pamphlet to Roman Rolland and some of his friends! Sneered at as a naturalized Frenchman you are now in prison because you obeyed the instincts of an Englishman and not the regulation of a Prussian official. That is the best that a Government with unlimited cash to employ spies and agents, unlimited powers and no scruples to pry into every act of yours, and an unlimited desire to get hold of you, could do against you. Such a charge as that preferred against you is, under the circumstances, the most magnificent testimonial to probity, honesty, and single-mindedness that any Government has ever given to a citizen who holds liberty in greater esteem than law, and independence of thought in greater value than departmental

orders, who honors the fine motives that are making our soldiers willing to die so much that he is determined to vindicate them against all the powers and principalities which range themselves against them.

The reason for your imprisonment reminds me of the traditional French sportsman. He starts in the morning in spick-and-span hunter's garb, a bag bulging with cartridges on his back and a prodigious gun on his shoulder. That is the Government. All day he blazes away turning sparrows into eagles in his imagination, and succeeding by sunset to knock over nothing but himself. But he cannot return to supper and glory in the bosom of his family without some prey, so he 'shoo's' a chicken into the corner of a farm yard and puts a bullet through its head. With that he returns in triumph. That was the skinny little thing that the Bow Street Attorney, under the admiring eye of the Public Prosecutor, produced as your crime from the bag of the Intelligence Department of the War Office, the livery of which has so appropriately and with such unusual honesty been chosen as green.

You are serving six months in Pentonville. Before being condemned you were refused bail. That was the scourging and the spitting process. Though your crime was political you were sent to the second division. They had to try and insult and humiliate as well as punish you. Thus they have only secured the completeness of your triumph and opened for you the higher orders of the knighthood they have conferred upon you.

The highest service that adversity does to a man is to sift his friends for him. The Congo was the crime of another ruler, and we could apply morality and righteous indignation to that. In that the Church blessed you and the mighty ones patronized you. But even then you discovered our Foreign Office. Now you are fighting a different fight, and I know how surprised you were at first that what was so plain to your Congo principles was so deserted by your Congo colleagues. You were very innocent of the world then. You will remember, perhaps, what a friend said to us one night three years ago: "I opposed one war, and I am not going to oppose another." With you the opposing of war was an incident; the supporting of truth was the concern. You were troubled, I thought, when I remarked of friends that "they will be fewer yet," and you left me without a reply when you observed that it was our families who bore the brunt of these things. That is only too sadly true. The children suffer with the fathers and for them. Never mind! The day will come when your Pentonville papers, framed and displayed with pride, will be valued by your children and your children's children as the most precious heirloom that your uprightness in character and conduct has enabled you to hand down to them.—Yours, etc., J. Ramsay Macdonald.—Labor Leader.

IF CHRIST ARRIVE IN 1917.

The editor of Mesaba Ore printed in Hebbing, Minn., comes to the rather logical conclusion that this year would not be a good one for Christ to come back to earth. Equally logical is his conclusion that "He would have one hell of a time—and likely land in jail on top of that."

He certainly would, especially if some of the preachers and his proclaimed followers discovered the kind of stuff he was preaching and that he was associating with publicans and sinners like the Social Democrats.

The following paragraph will enable you to understand why the capitalists

of all lands hate Socialists and fear their propaganda:

All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.—Karl Marx.

LA FOLLETTE

(By Mark Sullivan, in Collier's.)

Senator La Follette is what folks often call "a trying person." Last March and April he put himself in the forefront of public attention by a stubborn and spectacular effort to prevent our entrance into the war—a performance which flooded the press with execrations of him. Thereupon he retired from public view, passing four months with only infrequent participation in the debates. Now he emerges, and it turns out that he has been busy framing a tax measure which takes no account of the bills prepared by the committees, a piece of pioneering work which commands the respect even of the persons who, politically, do not like him. Senator Lodge of Massachusetts said of it:

"The Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. La Follette) has a bill on a different system from ours—a coherent system, but a different theory. I do not agree with the theory, but there is no doubt that it is a coherent and intelligent system of raising revenue."

It would be difficult to exaggerate the amount of devoted application of midnight oil involved in this self-imposed task. On the part of Senator La Follette it is characteristic. His career has been divided between performances which can only be described as capricious obstinacy, and the successful performance of unique tasks, the solving of new problems born of changed economic conditions, which could only be done through high intelligence, intense application, and real courage. Taking his more than thirty years of participation in public affairs as a whole, the balance is on the credit side.

Senator La Follette's tax bill drops all that long and complex business of imports on coffee, tea and other subjects of general consumption which formed the bulk of the bill originally written by the Ways and Means Committee; he ignores that committee's arbitrary and unintelligent dip into an increased tariff of 10 per cent. on imports. He makes no change in existing taxes except to increase those on incomes and liquors. He faces the business of paying for a war as a new problem. He proposes to pay it, logically, chiefly out of the excess profits made by those who make and sell war supplies. It may well turn out that no man in Congress will have made so useful a contribution to the conduct of the war as the one who most stubbornly resisted our entering it. Probably the ultimate form of the Revenue Bill will be some variation of Senator La Follette's idea. In any event, the Ways and Means Committee is now utterly discredited.

MR. DOOLEY ON CAPITAL AND LABOR

It was different when I was a young man, Himmissy. Capital was like a father to Labor, givin' it its board an' logins. In them golden days a wurukin man was an honest artysan. That's what he was proud to be called. The week befor illiction he had his pitcher in the funny papers. He had his arr'b ar'ound Capital—a rosy, binivolent ol' guy with a plug hat and eye-glasses. They were going to the polls together to vote for simple ol' Capital.

"In return fr' fidelity he got a turkey ivry year. At Christmas time Capital gathered his happy family round him, an', in the prisence iv the ladies iv the neighborhood, gave them an oration. 'Me brave lads,' says he, 'we've had a good year. (Cheers.) I have made a millyun profit. (Sensation.) Ye have done so well that we don't need so many. (Long and continyous cheerin'). Those who can do two mins wurruk will remain, an', if possible, do four. The old faithful sarvints,' he says, 'can come back in the Spring.' An' the bold artysans tossed their paper caps in the air an' give three cheers fr' Capital. They wurruked till ol' age crept on them, an' then retired to live on the wishbones an' kind wurruuds they had accumulated."

—Social Revolution.

SONG OF THE PRISONER

A dirge for Socialists, truth-seekers and editors who dare to criticize the existing state of anarchy and chaos. Oh, yes, I'm guilty right enough; It ain't no use to throw a bluff, An' yet I guess society Kin share the guilt along with me. I ain't the sort to weep and whine— But say, wot chance, wot chance was mine?

Born in a dirty, reeking slum, Where decent sunlight never comes, An' starved for food and starved for air Through all my years of boyhood there;

But even then I might 'uv been Reformed to be some use to men, If e'ry time I left the trail They hadn't jammed me into jail, Where thieves and all that rotten crew Would teach me worse than all I knew. Oh, yes, I'm guilty, that is clear, But e'ry guy who's listenin' here, An' all you swells and goody folks Who sniffs at me, and all such blokes, Is guilty, too, along with me, An' will be, till the world is free Of stinkin' slums and rotten holes That poisons people's hearts and souls, An' cheats them from their very birth From any decent chance on earth. I ain't the kind to weep and whine— But say, wot chance, wot chance was mine?

(Unknown.)

—Social Revolution.

GENUINE TEARS

Le Matin, Figaro, and Petit Journal (all Capitalist) are proved by documents in the archives of the ex-Tsar to have been regularly supplied with cash, doubtless for the purpose of boosting the Franco-Prussian alliance and the loans of French money to Russia. The tears of these great papers at the success of the Russian Revolution are unmistakably genuine.

—Forward, Glasgow.

STOP PRESS NEWS

Bainbridge Trial Result.

Charge 1. Circulating literature with the intent to prevent recruiting—"Charge withdrawn," no argument. Charge 2. Circulating a seditious libel. Not heard. Carried over to the assize court. Trial may take place next week, or may be laid over until January, 1918. I don't mind if they lay it over until next century.

Bainbridge.

Don't be downhearted, comrades, about the conditions of the progressive and revolutionary movement in our little Canadian Parish. Take a long and broad look across the continents and you will see Socialism coming so fast it will make you dizzy.

Hustle up a few new subscribers for the Canadian Forward.

Order a bundle of Forwards for distribution in your locality.