

Class Consciousness.

The aristocracy of rags rises up against the aristocracy of titles and privileges. A caste movement is opposed to the spirit of democracy

By J. W. MACMILLAN.

This is one of the watchwords of the revolutionary propaganda. Though it is a denial of one of the essential principles of socialism, the equal rights of all, it is the chosen weapon of Marxian socialism, the most thorough-going and militant form of socialism, in its war on privilege. The fact that it is rather an assertion than a denial of privilege may perhaps make it a better weapon. Men are more easily attracted to the prize than to the even share. They respond more eagerly to the invitation to become masters than comrades.

Class-consciousness has betrayed Russia into the hands of Prussia. We may venture to hope that the domination of one hundred and seventy millions of people occupying the huge central areas of Europe and Asia by the false and cruel junker caste may not be for long, but we cannot deny that it exists, and that it came about through the disintegrating influence of class-consciousness. When the Russian private became convinced that he and his class ought to command the officers of the army; when he decided that he had a right to leave the trench if he wished to, and to command the services of the inferior classes who owned the shops, houses and hotels, and operated the railways, to gratify his wishes, the offensive or resisting power of Russia was gone.

The same disintegrating force is palpably visible in the I. W. W. of America, and in similar movements in France and America. Canada is by no means free from it. One would have supposed that, for the present at least, all who love and desire freedom would unite in fighting the Hun. But no! There rise up from the gutters and lanes of the cities a mob who jeer at the pains and toils of those who have entered the strife. The pre-occupation of war is to them nothing but a welcome chance for asserting their unabashed claim to supreme power and wealth. It may look to an outsider as if this mob were but a horde of thieves and traitors, but they do not so regard themselves. They are the proletariat, they vaunt, and the rightful owners of all the world, and they propose to take what is their own. It matters not that their claim is utterly false, and their hopes utterly fatuous. Such is their creed, in which they profoundly believe, and for which many of them are prepared to die.

Those of us who can remember thirty years back in the history of the North American continent may well be disturbed at such a phenomenon as the I. W. W. It is surely wise that we attempt to understand it, and to locate it in its historical connection. It is not likely to lessen because of being faced by the crude artillery of passion and hatred. It is not likely to be denounced or cursed out of existence. Better to ask why it should be.

Class-consciousness is caste. It is the adaptation to inverted purposes of a social force of vast antiquity. It is the claim of a class to be intrinsically superior to all other classes, and to the consequent right to rule over them. It matters not that this class is at present ragged, hungry and ignorant. If they make good their claim they will soon emerge from that condition, or, more probably, the stronger ones among them will emerge, leaving the weaker ones to sink back into the mass of the exploited. Stranger things have happened in the annals of Egypt, Rome and northern Europe. The uncouth and rugged assailant has certain advantages over his highly cultured enemy which have sometimes won him victory.

It is both caste and the revenge of its victims upon caste. The aristocrats of every age and country have been shrewd and successful in imposing their claims upon their fellows. By patronage, by ceremonial, by leading in spectacular employments, such as sport and war, by a certain demeanor, and, most of all, by the possession of the land and the tools, they have maintained themselves in unmerited supremacy, and have eaten of the luxuries of life, for which others labored who ate them not.

THE SAFETY VALVE.

Class-consciousness is the rebound from disinheritance. Generations have passed and the common people have been persistently denied the good things of life. If, by some chance, they had a toe-hold on independence it was taken from them. The nobility devoured the monasteries, which were of some use to the poor. The landlord enclosed the com-

mon, where the cottager had pastured his geese. The new machinery came and snatched the tools out of the workman's hands, so that he could no longer work without another's permission. Huge credit systems sprang up, not perfectly understood by those who employed them, but which further favored the man who owned collateral and penalized the man who owned nothing. What wonder that hunger and weariness, fatigue and sickness, embittered the common man. John Stuart Mill doubted if all the mechanical inventions had lightened the day's toil of any human being. Thomas Huxley thought that some kindly comet, which should sweep the whole earth away, might be a desirable consummation for the greater part of the human family. It is immensely to the credit of humanity that the laboring classes, in the pinch of want, turned to self-help rather than to plunder, and invented the trades union as the means to deliverance.

A ROYAL ROAD.

But many of the unprivileged are not attracted by methods so slow and deliberate as organization and negotiations. They want a quicker way, a more royal road, to happiness. Themselves the victims of the penury and ignorance into which they were born they are naturally impulsive, fickle and violent. When they come together in masses they are peculiarly susceptible to the feral influences of mob conditions. Hence the Bolsheviki and the I. W. W. It is a new caste challenging an old caste. The Frenchman who said, "I cannot but believe that the Almighty will show consideration to a gentleman,"

is matched by the chorus of the song, "Hallelujah, I'm a bum." The aristocracy of rags rises up against the aristocracy of titles and privileges.

Because it is a caste movement it is opposed to the spirit of democracy. It denies equality. Its basic assumption is that of superiority, and its contempt for kings and landlords is only excelled by its contempt for the middle class, or the bourgeoisie, as it loves to call this large and steady-going portion of every nation. It is immoral to its very core, because it derives worth from adventitious circumstances, not from ability and character. It is frankly anti-Christian, having none of that humbling and ennobling reverence which makes man own at once his sonship to the Divine and his brotherhood in the human. It is bad and dangerous all through, as caste has always been.

The important thing is that wise and thoughtful people should not take sides with either the old or the new caste. The frenzied follower of the soap-box orator has certain strong claims on our sympathy and assistance. The striking coal-miner may be acting in a highly illegal, unpatriotic and villainous fashion, but he has a right to inform us as to the treatment he and his kind have commonly gotten at their work and in the homes provided for them. After all, the coal operators did not make the coal they have come into the ownership of. The Mac-Namarras and Orchards have the right to present their pleas of extenuation.

The Government of Canada is addressing itself to problems of after-the-war reconstruction. We are at a point in our national career filled at once with hope and with peril. Unfortunately, we have little social machinery and few social traditions that will be of help. The plans to be adopted must be courageous if they are to be effective. They must be filled with the sense of the rights of men as men. Neither the alleged aristocracy of wealth nor the alleged aristocracy of poverty may be privileged, but the gifts of nature and the future must be held for the common man.

Manufacturers Make Representations to Government

Ottawa, March 14.

A deputation consisting of about thirty-five of the leading manufacturers of Eastern Canada and from as far west as Winnipeg formed a deputation which waited on the Government. S. R. Parsons, Toronto, president of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, was the chief spokesman for the delegation. He was followed by R. Harmer, Hamilton; Stanley McLean, Toronto; T. R. Deacon, Winnipeg; J. N. Sherrard, Toronto; J. H. Sherrard, Montreal, and G. M. Murray, secretary to the Canadian Manufacturers' Association.

In their representations to the Government the delegation asserted that various changes and restrictions imposed on industry had brought about considerable alarm among manufacturers, especially since it had been stated that what had already been done was nothing in comparison with what was in prospect.

They asked the Government to consider these matters "from a national rather than a sectional standpoint." Figures and facts were submitted to show the interest which Canada has in manufacturing industries and that had it not been for these industries Canada would have been practically bankrupt during the war. The delegation urged that, unless industries were preserved in economic strength in the meantime, they would not be able to take care of their enlisted employees, with whom they had contracted obligations, on their return to civil life. This would mean, they urged, a large number of unemployed when peace was declared.

A particular point raised by the delegation was that of opposition to farm tractors being placed on the free list, unless at the same time raw materials used in the manufacture of tractors in Canada were admitted duty free. The manufacturers also asked that in case of any further suggested changes in the tariff industries affected should first be consulted.

A prosperous manufacturing concern here and there, the delegation claimed, should not be taken as a guide to the profits of manufacturers generally, any more than should be done in the case of a profit of ninety per cent of capital made in the year 1916 by the Grain Growers' Grain Co. The average net profit on capital employed in manufacture over any

reasonable period of time was, the delegation asserted, extremely moderate.

If duties on implements had to be paid by farmers, it was equally true that manufacturers had to pay duty on machinery they used, except that in the latter case a higher duty was collected. They claimed that the average duty collected in the United States under the new democratic schedules on dutiable goods was 30.67 per cent. In Canada the duty collected on dutiable goods averaged 23.78 per cent, or about 75 per cent of the average American rate.

Reference was made to the Order-in-Council on packers. The manufacturers expressed a fear that, as the regulations and restrictions on packers were much more drastic than those put into force in the United States, they might result in a narrowed market for hogs and cattle. In view of the campaign of production to increase live stock, it was considered that there would this year probably be an increase of 33 per cent. If such were the case the packers would not, with such restrictions, be able to extend their plants and premises, and provide proper facilities for taking care of the increase.

It had been intended to discuss the newsprint situation, but in view of the fact that the manufacturers of newsprint and the publishers were likely to get together it was stated the delegation withheld any statement they might otherwise have wished to make.

The delegation agreed that agriculture must be maintained in the strongest possible condition, and emphasized also the necessity of maintaining industries. In the latter connection, they pointed to a movement in Great Britain to exempt from taxation any profits of a business retained in the business for further expansion. Such a policy was considered in Great Britain to be in the national interest.

Finally, the manufacturers stated that they were quite prepared to bear their full share of war burdens and taxations, especially when such were considered from a scientific and national standpoint.

In his reply, Sir Robert Borden promised full consideration of the representations made. He declared that it was the policy of the Government to deal with all interests impartially, with a view to national efficiency and service.