

These Soldiers

"The Opium of the People"

SOLDIERS never seem to sense the uses of diplomacy. They have a broad frankness that refreshing, after the evasive subterfuges of our...

Thus, General Hoffman put his soldierly boot on the table in the midst of the Brest negotiations.

So, later, he upset many fairy stories about Germany's defeat, by his declaration that the 'upstart' Kaiser was responsible for the internal unrest that had killed the military arm."

Did not General Dyer shoot up the Hindus, and become totally unable to understand why any fuss should be made over it? It was enough for him, that his word must be kept, rather than have them think him a weakling.

Here (U.S.A.) we have General "S.O.S." Wood, a promising white hope for autocrat of "God's country." How many anxious hours must he have wasted his backers? And since he blurted out his memorable creed, or beliefs of the methods needed here to preserve "law and order," entitled "Back to the barn at sunrise," or "Ship 'em, or shoot 'em," what a change in his hopes of fortune, politically.

And now, here is General W. S. Graves, late commander of Uncle Sam's forces in Siberia, back in our midst. And he is so crudely uninformed. Fancy him telling us this:

Said he: "At the mention of the word Bolshevik people instantly conjure up a mental picture of a rowdy anarchist, with a bomb in one hand and a torch in the other."

Can you blame 'em, General, they have seen those pictures often in their press.

"But," he goes on, "the Bolsheviks in Russia are working for peace, and the good of the country. In my belief, they are trying to be eminently fair and just to the people. They have deplored the murders and bloodshed which took place before they came into power in Siberia, January 31st, this year, and are doing everything they can to stamp it out."

Him from Siberia too, and been fighting against the Bolsheviks. He ought to have known better. However, we, the salt of the earth, see in the papers every night almost, "authenticated" stories of the atrocities committed there. Even as I write, a paper stares me in the face, shrieking its headlines at me. "Kaiserism and Bolshevism, twin spawn from Hell." Really, General, you are very naive. Do you wonder you have been assigned to that obscure grave in the Philippines, Fort McKinley, Ryman? It is a grave offense you have committed. You will never make a diplomat, General Graves.

But "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good." Indeed, yes!

F. S. F.

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Local (Winnipeg) No. 3

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ACCORDING to the Paris correspondent of the Chicago "Daily News," the Vatican, in southwestern Europe and Germany has seemingly entered on a movement of the greatest importance, namely, open co-operation not only with Protestants and all other Christian sects, but even with the Jews, to combat the anti-religious spirit as manifested by Socialism. He quotes Msgr. Kordatch, Archbishop of Prague, who, in a speech before a conference of his co-religionists, among other things said: "As Catholics, we will even go as far as to hold out our hand for political action. We will extend our hand to faithful Protestants who, like us, believe in the divinity of Jesus and in the Decalogue, these ten commands of God. We will work with them in politics. We will work to construct states even with believing Israelites, and even with Liberals. I have expounded these principles to the representatives of Jesus Christ, to Pope Benedict XV., who has absolutely approved of them."

The Church has always realized that an antagonism exists between science and religion. Unfortunately, very few workers realize that. Practically all the Socialist parties in the world have maintained that "religion is a private matter." Even such a Marxist as Pennekoek is addicted to that view. They do not seem to realize that the great theoretic weapon of the wage-workers in their fight for freedom is science; that religion has been one of the stumbling blocks in the paths of progress.

Soon after Constantine proclaimed Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, Science began to feel the heavy hand of the church.

"The Christian Party asserted that all knowledge was to be found in the Scriptures and in the traditions of the church; that in the written revelation, God had not only given a criterion of truth, but had furnished us all he intended us to know. The church thus set herself forth as the depository and arbiter of all knowledge."—Draper.

She was ever ready to resort to force to compel obedience to her decisions. Inquiry was considered to be a crime; to doubt was to be damned; and the Bible was made the final authority on all questions. Papacy thus took a stand which determined her whole future career; she became a stumbling block in the intellectual advancement of Europe for more than a thousand years.

"Not till the education of Europe passed from the monasteries to the universities, not till Mohammedan science and classical free thought and industrial independence broke the sceptre of the Church, did the intellectual revival of Europe begin."—(Lecky).

Thousands of men and women were either burned at the stake or imprisoned in vile dungeons for doubting the statements found in the scriptures. Men were murdered for maintaining that the earth was round, or that the earth was not in the centre of the universe. Galileo was treated with remorseless severity for maintaining that the earth moves around the sun. Bruno, one of the greatest scientists of the middle ages was burned at the stake, charged with teaching the plurality of worlds. De Dominis was imprisoned for offering an explanation of the rainbow. By order of the church, the great Alexandrian library, the greatest library of ancient times, was destroyed. According to Draper, the Inquisition, that terrible weapon of the mediaeval church between the years of 1481-1808, punished over 340,000 heretics, 32,000 of these being burned at the stake.

So much for the past history of Christianity. Volumes would be necessary to record the crimes committed by the religious fanatics during the dark ages. We must, however, not forget for a moment that Protestantism, Judaism and other religions have a past that is just as black as that of Roman Catholicism. The history of these churches is covered with the blood of thousands, nay millions, of victims sacrificed to Superstition.

Luther, the founder of the Lutheran Church and the Father of Protestantism was revolutionary when the conflict was between the Papacy and his masters, but when the Peasants' War which in a few

weeks spread over entire Germany, Luther the revolutionary priest became one of the most zealous defenders of the then ruling class. Against the Peasants' breach of obedience, he now turned his wild fanaticism with a desperate blood thirst, an absolute delirious cruelty. In his brochure against the rebellious peasants, he states:

"Inasmuch as they are evil-minded, and brazenly refuse to obey, and furthermore resist their masters, they have forfeited life and soul as to all faithless, perjured, mendacious, obedient knaves and villains. Therefore, it becomes the duty of all here to strangle and stab secretly or publicly, all such, and remember that there is nothing so poisonous, injurious and fiendish as a rebellious person; just as you would kill a mad dog; if you do not strike him, he will strike you, and with you the whole country."

The greatest strength of the church lies among the ignorant, superstitious, backward agricultural population of the world. This reactionary mass constitutes the greatest menace to Socialism. The majority of the supporters of the various Centrist or religious political parties of the world come from this class. In Hungary, Poland and Belgium, they control the government. From Msgr. Kordatch's statements, it would appear that a union of the liberals and Centrists is a foregone conclusion. Atheist France is now represented at the Vatican by Jules Cambon! Gone are all the petty differences between the two groups. Both realize their common enemy, Socialism.

With the exception of Italy, the platforms of the Centrists are more or less of an extremely reactionary nature. In Italy, however, they are face to face with a different situation. Due to the strength of the Socialist movement, the platform of the Italian Catholic Party is more or less similar to that of the various yellow Socialist parties of the world. One writer in the "Nineteenth Century," of January, 1920, enthuses over the significant statement:

"I salute the good fortune of Italy. The cancer in her heart is healed. The Catholic party is now the defender of the State, and public authorities are no longer in conflict."

There is no question that the church has little influence with the great mass of industrial workers. Despite the free movies, lots of pretty girls and other inducements, the majority of the churches in the large cities are conspicuous by the absence of the workingman. The cause of the irreligion of the industrial proletariat is due, as Veblen puts it:

"The artisan class, on the other hand, is notoriously falling away from the accredited anthropomorphic creeds and from all devout observances. This class is in an especial degree exposed to the characteristic intellectual and spiritual recognition of the undisguised phenomena of impersonal, matter-of-fact sequence and unreserved conformity to the law of cause and effect. This class is at the same time not underfed nor overworked to such an extent as to leave no margin of energy for the work of adaption."

Religion is the handmaid of Capitalism.

"Churches are supported to exist only on condition that they preach submission to the State as at present capitalistically organized. Indeed, the religious bodies, as the almoners of the rich, become a sort of auxiliary police, taking off the insurrectionary edge of poverty with coal and blankets, bread and treacle, and soothing and cheering the victims with hopes of immense and inexpensive happiness in another world, when the process of working them to premature death in the service of the rich is complete in this."—George Bernard Shaw.

Under all its multifarious forms, the modern mission of religion is to cloak the hideousness and injustice of social conditions and keep the exploited meek and submissive. Socialism, however, is the possibility of social conditions that are rational and humane and need no mask. Therefore, to tear the veil of hypocrisy and mysticism from modern society is to urge the workers to end its misery and inequality.

However, the importance of the religious question must not be overestimated. It is important, but yet secondary to the great class war that is raging over the entire earth. But it must be remembered that religion is one of the bulwarks of Capitalism, and that it is used by the ruling class to keep the slaves in subjection. No intelligent workman can honestly avoid the religious conflict.

"Religion is the opium of the people."—Marx.

JOHN TYLER.