

tion? Her long coast-line, capable of easy bombardment by both French and British tax-gatherer's battleships? I merely introduce these interrogations as indicative of many equally pertinent; of problems that would have demanded attention even if the "bad" leaders had been substituted by "good" ones.

Italy is not Russia. Many of our friends are apparently unaware of Lenin's rebuke to such visionaries. Russia, at the time of her November, 1917, coup-d'etat, had over half the army (the other half wavering and demoralized) and almost all the navy; a peasantry wanting land, workers wanting bread, and all wanting peace—and no political group capable of meeting the situation, or handling affairs. Opportunity knocked and the Bolsheviks opened the door. Furthermore, Russia possesses vast tracts of territory eminently suited for military manoeuvrings, especially retreats, a form of warfare in which troops are saved while their opponents perish; and many other physical characteristics denied to Italy, Britain, or even Germany; her southern ports are inland, her northern ice-bound for about six months. Besides, the system of the bourgeoisie had not developed as in these other lands. Its resistance was weak. When the chain of capitalist economy snapped under the strain of unrestrained credit extension, etc., due to the war, it burst at its weakest link. Many other points crowd in upon a treatment of this matter, but I must forbear.

The chapter on France, like the preceding ones, contains information ruined by the confused outlook of the author. It is a trifle amusing to see "left-wing Socialists, Anarchists (Emma Goldman take note!), Syndicalists, and Communists" lumped together indiscriminately as "revolutionary elements." We get a re-vamping of "principles" enunciated in the earlier chapters. An onslaught on dual unionism recurs in the work like a major theme in a Wagnerian opera. The I. W. W. is attacked and not explained. One might ask as to the economic background of this movement in America, which, in any case, so far as unionism goes, has done more perhaps than any other body to drag the labor viewpoint into the limelight. The rise of the I. W. W. was contemporary with vast development work; railroads, and other pioneering work in the capitalist sense, carried on by virtue of the migratory worker. Such worker, faced by conditions that meant further exploitation, resisted as best he knew. His resistance, to carry any weight, had to be organized; the A. F. of L., was lacking in form if not in other elements to accomplish this job with any possibility of success. From such a material environment grew the I. W. W. Its dangerous and confused viewpoint cannot be nullified by denouncing its entire history as a mistake. It must be explained and the workers raised in their knowledge of political life to a real understanding of their slave status and an understanding of the character of the State.

The paragraphs under the sub-head of "Noyautage" constitute an exception to the re-vamping already spoken of. A footnote tells us that this term is derived from the French word *noyau*, signifying core, heart or interior group. These *noyaux* or *nuclei* abound in all the trades organizations. A reading of this section breeds the suspicion that Foster did some excellent copy-work in launching his Trade Union Educational League in North America. It seems to be a pup of Noyautage.

The conclusion of the work is a delightful "new" Communist vespers hymn: a piece of bare-faced optimism unsupported by reality. It is a splendid specimen of the kind of reasoning which is developed through "contact with the masses"—from afar off! We are informed that "the workers are placing at their head real fighters, men who, when the next crises comes, will not cower and cringe, but will go through with the proletarian programme, even as Lenin and his group did in Russia." The fact is that the present Russian programme is a capitalist one, imposed upon Soviet Russia by conditions beyond her control.

Anyway, the definite use of the present tense is hopeful enough in all conscience. I would like to second the motion. But, alas! the workers at pre-

sent, despite wide-spread unrest, are busily engaged in filling out football coupons as a possible route to emancipation.

Besides reaching the masses, how about the technical engineers (brought so forcibly to our notice by Veblen)? Russia demonstrates that we must have at least some of these with us.

No, no! There is no royal road to emancipation. Socialist concepts must become pervasive; the masses conversant with their position and determined to rid themselves of it. To talk of establishing Communism without Communists is puerility in excelsis, and "action" undertaken under the influence of such cock-and-bull ideas will surely bring its own tragic consequences.

The need of the time is not new righteous leaders, nor melodramatic calls for "upsurges," but the spreading of a knowledge of Socialism amongst the masses. A perusal of this book will convince one also of the need of knowledge of Socialism amongst some of its newly-arisen protagonists.

W. A. PRITCHARD.

A Horrible Example

SEVERAL times of late we have delivered ourselves of some observations on the baneful effects of imperialism on the citizens of the imperialist State, pointing out the manner in which it perverts the minds of humane and intelligent persons, transforming them, quite unconsciously and against their better nature, into apologists for the most outrageous and despicable forms of exploitation. A striking example of this lies before us in an editorial on India in the "New Statesman" of London, a periodical normally well-informed, realistic and logical in its treatment of world-affairs. We here find it delivering itself of a farrago of evasive nonsense that would do credit to a diplomat. The main point of the editorial is the identification of British rule in India with "democracy." By maintaining its hold on India, even, if necessary, by the use of force to the uttermost against the native population, Britain is serving the purpose of democracy; whereas if she withdrew, the result would be chaos and barbarism. It would thus appear that the Government that staged and condoned Amritsar, hangs on in India because of a humanitarian fear that if left to themselves the Indians might set to murdering one another.

A few quotations will show the tenor of the argument:

The withdrawal of the British power would be the end of the British peace, and with it would vanish all possibility of a democratic India.

Abdication would be treason to democracy.

For our part we place democratic principle above nationalistic sentiment, and we believe that the democratic experiment ought to be tried.

(The British must not leave India) until we have had time to create the machinery and the personnel with which India might defend herself against enemies within and without her gates, and achieve an actually stable form of self-government.

In Western Europe we all believe very profoundly in the doctrine of 'free speech'; it is the very foundation, not only of our liberties, but of our ability to develop a coherent national consciousness. But we have no right lazily to assume that 'free speech' amongst the illiterate millions of India means the same thing, and has the same practical sanction, as among ourselves.

This is the sort of self-deception that might be expected from a Curzon or a Churchill; though at this late day, it would seem a bit crude for even the most hardened Tory to try to work the derisive Wilsonian phrase "safe for democracy," in apology for the most ruthless large-scale imperialist exploitation that has ever been seen in the world. The idea of democracy is no more contemplated by British rule in India than by American rule in Haiti and San Domingo, or by French rule in Morocco, or by the action of the highwayman who menaces unarmed pedestrians with his gun while he snatches their valuables. What a grotesque sort of democracy,

which can find no better use for such men as Mahatma Gandhi and Lajpat Rai, than to keep them locked behind prison bars!

Let us look at the origins of this great British-made democratic influence upon India. The original British establishment in India was the usual chartered company intent on large profits for its shareholders. The company's first step was the securing of concessions from native rulers. Backed by British governmental power, it rapidly progressed to the usurpation of authority in various Indian States, though for a period it retained the native rulers as figureheads. Sometimes the company would encourage some powerful prince to descend upon his weaker neighbours, slaughter them, and add their territory to his own domains. The British would then deprive him of his loot, in payment for their assistance, and in addition levy increasingly heavy tribute on him until in despair he committed some overt act against them and was in his turn gobbled up by the exponents of "democracy." The enterprising young imperialists who spread British rule over India freely utilized corruption, bribery, assassination, thieving, forgery, false treaties, double-dealing, in pursuance of their ends. Democracy seems out of this picture. It seems, indeed, out of any picture that can be drawn of India since the first days of British rule. However, the term was so horribly misused during the war that today it may mean almost anything.

The "New Statesman's" disparaging reference to the illiterate millions of India is perhaps lifted from the "Morning Post." In a single generation after being freed from Turkish rule, Bulgaria achieved a good degree of literacy, and in a few decades the people of Finland, despite the blighting effects of Russian control, raised themselves to the position of possessing the most widely diffused literacy of any people in Europe. If, after a century and a half of British rule, the masses of India are still illiterate, this unfortunate condition can scarcely be held as a reproach against the natives themselves. Out of the fat revenues wrung from this land of misery and starvation, the British rulers appropriate for educational purposes scarcely enough to purchase one lead pencil per capita for the child population, which would not go far towards providing for school-houses, textbooks and the like. Voluntary native schools are forbidden by the British raj, so the only hope of any instruction for the average child in India lies in precarious attempts at educational boot-legging. "Beware above all things popular education!" is one of the Russian Tsarist mottoes rigorously adopted by the imperialist rulers in India. It is not, of course, free speech among the illiterate that worries the Anglo-Saxon masters. The natives whom they gag and incarcerate are not drawn from the inarticulate mass, but are men like Gandhi and Lajpat Rai, who would be welcomed as comrades by the choicest spirits in any civilized society, men in comparison with whom most of the leaders in the British Government or our own would be rated as virtually illiterate.

It distresses us to behold our contemporary becoming a devil's advocate in matters such as these. We are not opposed to the British brand of imperialism any more than to the American or any other variety, and if we refer frequently to the British product, it is only because it happens to be the most conspicuous line in the market. It is obvious that the British people can not themselves be free until they have cast off the spell of imperialism that their masters of the black art have woven over them. For us in America this is peculiarly a thing to be taken to heart, for our own imperialist adventure is well under way, its Oriental enterprises have just received the sanction of a treaty duly ratified by the Senate, and already the sorcerers of privilege are busy with their incantations over the underlying population that must yield the cannon-fodder. It is by no means inconceivable that in the course of events the American people may be dragooned into a war against the British people "to make India safe for democracy," while our cousins across the sea are called to the colours against us "to preserve democracy in India." ("The Freeman," N. Y.)