

THE POISON THAT DESTROYS

By E. D. MOREL.

(CONTINUED.)

Reasons for a National Court of Inquiry Self-Respect and the Dead

This, then, is the material, very briefly summarised, which establishes that the people of this country have been the victims of an "immense deception" both in regard to the genesis of the war and as to the alleged motives with which it was entered upon by the Allied Governments of Imperial Russia, France, and Great Britain. Thereupon this question arises. Are the real interests of the nation served by encouraging it to remain ignorant, or indifferent to, this deception; or by urging the nation to appreciate more and more clearly the truth and what is involved in it? There can be no doubt as to what the answer to that question must be. Indeed, the issue is from its very nature, and will continue to be, a live one whether the nation treats it as such or not. But if the nation persists in regarding it as a dead one, the moral and material consequences cannot fail to be disastrous.

Let us set out here the chief reasons why the nation should face the truth and constitute itself a grand court of inquiry in this matter. There are, in the first place, a whole host of reasons which can be classed under the heading "self-respect". We will only touch on two. First, our duty to the dead.

Each English wood and hill and lane
Remembers one
Whose feet will never pass its way again
Glad of the sun.

Do we fulfil that duty by laying wreaths upon a cenotaph or by burying the bones of an "unknown soldier" in Westminster Abbey? What does that cost us! As they fronted the miseries and agonies of those far-flung fields of death, so must we front the heart-searchings, the moral troubles, the intellectual disturbances which an honest grappling with facts necessitates. Their faith in the righteousness of the cause for which they died is not dimmed by our discovery that it was not what it purported to be, and what they believed it to have been. It is infamous to suggest that investigation into the circumstances of their being called upon to die, can tarnish the memory of their sacrifice. On the other hand, we, the parents, the relatives, the comrades of those who fell, are eternally dishonoured if, that sacrifice having been demanded and consummated for purposes other than those proclaimed, we are content to leave the matter there. The editor of a great newspaper is recently reported to have said, as an excuse for closing his columns to such arguments as are here advanced, that if the British people knew the truth about the war there would be a revolution. The only revolution which would happen, and it is the most urgent of our national needs, is a thought-revolution which would show us that our supreme duty to the dead is to probe to the very bottom the tragedy which cut them off in the flower of their youth. We have laws to protect our pockets being filched and our houses being broken into by scoundrels. If a holocaust of nearly a million of our young men does not suffice to invoke in us the determination to secure constitutional protection for their sons from the secret intrigues, the false statements, the interested machinations of politicians, diplomatists, and journalists, and the human scum for which war means riches and what it is customary to term "honours", then, indeed, our monuments to the dead are but a sham, our civil and religious commemorations an indecency.

Self-Respect and the Living

Then does it really matter nothing to us that we should have been duped and doped, persistently and continuously lied to by Ministers who are our servants, paid with the national moneys, raised to power and office by our votes? That this reputed democracy should be revealed in its foreign policy—the branch of government that matters most, since in the ultimate resort it determines all the others—as a dictatorship more absolute than that wielded by autocratic monarchies? Does it matter nothing to us that the power of committing us to policies breeding war without our knowledge should be resident in the hands of individual Ministers of the Crown? Does the system which permits the youth of our country to be mortgaged years in advance and in secret to scientific massacre on behalf of foreign obligations which the nation would repudiate if it knew them, raise in us no spirit of revolt? Are we really to lie down under the insult and wrong done us by false statements made to Parliament year after year to the very moment when war was sprung upon us; passively submit to having been victims for eight years of a propaganda of falsehood, now derisively discussed and repudiated by the very men and agencies that smothered our intellects with it, in order to conceal these deceptions from us? Do we care so little about our rights of citizenship as to remain unaffected by the terrible utterance of the leader of the Conservative Party in the House² that if the engagements towards France and Russia entered into by Ministers without national sanction had been known to the nation and the world the tragedy of 1914 would not have taken place, a view also enunciated by President Wilson³? Think of all that lies behind an utterance such as that, from a man in that position and from that man himself, for Mr. Chamberlain is one of the few men in public life whose political honesty is not contested by his opponents. Recall also that two members of the 1914 Cabinet, of whose integrity their countrymen had been so long convinced that they habitually referred to both alike as "honest John"—Mr. John Burns and Lord Morley—retired rather than appear, by remaining in the Government, to condone the fraud practised upon the nation. And do we not at length perceive that the outrage of the "Peace" is the inevitable sequel of the outrage of the fraud? Is all this to be tolerated, to lead to no investigation, to no inquiry, to no steps of future safeguards?

National Honour

And after our self-respect, our honour—if indeed the two can be separated. If our late enemies, towards whom in the course of war our statesmen frequently declared they wished no permanent ill, whose possessions they "as the Lord liveth" did not covet but upon whom they have been, and are, instrumental in inflicting by the peace treaties innumerable ills, and whose possessions, national and personal, they have seized and retain—if these our late enemies be, as even the public admissions of Allied statesmen prove them to have been, and as the archives of their previous partner—Imperial Russia—so prodigiously confirm, neither plotters nor instigators of the war, sharing responsibility for it, assuredly, through their late rulers, but perhaps to a less extent than the late rulers of Russia or even those of France [perhaps as Professor Raymond Beazley writes "rather victims than conspirators, rather sinned against than sinning"]—then who will deny that our national

honour is also at stake in this great debate? For did we not smite this people, through their women and children, for long months after the cannon had ceased to thunder, in order to force them into acceptance of terms contrary to those we had pledged ourselves to impose and on the strength of which pledge they had delivered themselves over unarmed to our justice; in order to force them to admit that which we and they knew to be untrue, and which meant for them decades of unparalleled humiliation and titanic burdens? And are we not chastising them daily with scorpions, invoking that untruth in justification of our action? Can we continue thus to stain our honour without smirching the national soul?

The National Safety

From considerations of national honour, let us pass to considerations of the national interest. Can we afford, from the utilitarian standpoint, to close our eyes to an immediately recent past when the effects of it are ever present and cumulative? We are marching along the wrong road. Every advance we make upon it increases the difficulty of retracing our steps. Yet how can we get upon the right road, and keep upon it, without finding out just how and where we took the wrong turning? For three and a-half years the inspiration of our foreign policy has been punishment. We have been punishing those whom we finally struck down. But in so doing we have been punishing ourselves—all the time. We are still doing so. To what end: for what purpose? My brother has sinned, and for his good must I chastise him? But if by some inexplicable phenomenon the lash I lay upon his back rebounds and weals my own? Maybe it is the way the gods have of showing me that I, too, am not without sin: that my brother and I sinned in company. And that reflection might well be the beginning of wisdom. "Through terror to triumph." Wherein the "triumph"? As partners in a gigantic combination greatly superior from the first in man-power and resources we won the war. With such odds in our favor material "triumph" suggests a certain modesty—in retrospect. There might indeed have been a real triumph, the triumph of the ideals which our politicians and our pressmen ever held out to our young men as they swung singing to their doom: betraying them at the end for thirty pieces of silver:

We fought at Armageddon for the brotherhood of Man;
And safe within their fences the tricksters plied their trade.
'Twas the old fight we fought; and it ends as it began:
The gamblers held their hands till the last Trump was played . . .
And the freedom that we fought for is an unremembered tune.

What have our people gained—the People? Prosperity? Regular employment? Security of tenure in agriculture or in industry? Educational improvement? Better homes? Hope? None of these things alas! Then is it not for them that we plead here when we say to their leaders: "You are ashamed 'an you teach them not their great betrayal and consecrate your lives to so fortifying them with the knowledge of it that that knowledge shall be an impregnable bulwark for them in the years to come. Without knowledge they are helpless—and you know it." And what have been the gains of the State? Security? It is less secure from external danger than in 1914. In 1914 a 60 to 40 superiority in our favour in capital ships, admitted as the basis of its naval policy by our nearest rival. In 1922 no superiority at all: impossible for us to aspire beyond a one-power standard. An acknowledged inferiority in aircraft in which we compete, as in chemical research (chief raw material of future wars, bar the human element), with no advan-

tage over others, and whose development, to say nothing of the submarine, has destroyed our strategic insularity, our safeguard for a thousand years. Our State is less secure from the internal dangers incidental to an irresponsible and secretive management of its affairs even than in the years preceding 1914. For long immunity has confirmed the oligarchy that ruled us then, and rules us now, in the triumphant insolence with which it increasingly violates the spirit of the Constitution, strengthens its dictatorial powers, and invades the rights of the people.

(To be concluded)

- 1) Alec Waugh, "A Collection of Poems written during the War." (Allen & Unwin.)
- 2) February 8, 1922.
- 3) At Columbus, September 4, 1919. Wilson made an even more explicit declaration later to the same effect.
- 4) Laurence Housman (Collection of War Poems (op. cit.)).

SALE OF LANDS FOR CASH

Rural Municipality of Wolverine No. 340 Province of Saskatchewan, Canada.

NOTICE is hereby given that the council is prepared to accept tenders, for the purchase of the following lands, for CASH.

The north half of S.E. 1-27-36-23-W2, near Humboldt;
The N.W. 1-4-34-24-W2, near Plunkett.
The said lands having been forfeited under the provisions of the Saskatchewan Arrears of taxes act and become vested in the name of the municipality, a clear title subject to current taxes only, will be given the purchaser covering said lands.

Tenders to reach the undersigned not later than JUNE 2nd 1923.
Dated at Burr, Sask.
This 4th day of May 1923.

R. H. CASH Secretary-Treasurer.

M241

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HUMBOLDT, SASK.

VILLAGE OF ST. GREGOR PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN FINANCIAL STATEMENT of Receipts and Expenditures, Assets and Liabilities From January 1st, 1922, to the 31st day of December, 1922.

RECEIPTS		EXPENDITURES	
Bank Book (General)	\$683.35	Printing, Stationery and Postage	\$3.80
Cash on Hand (General)	198.17	Interest on Loans and Exchange	15
Municipal Tax Collections	1042.98	Maintenance Total (p. reverse side)	118.15
Licenses	70.00	Capital Outlay (per reverse side)	700.00
Dog Tax	9.00	Schools, Account Current Levy	472.25
Loans	2013.50	Prov. Treas. Acct. Public Revenue Collections	14.69
Public Revenue Tax Collections	28.17	Actual Bank Book Credit Balance (General)	696.63
Outstanding Cheques Current Year (General)	103.60	Cash on Hand (General)	139.60
Total	\$2145.27	Total	\$2145.27

ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Credit Balance at Bank (General)	\$696.63	Loans (Fire apparatus)	\$625.00
Less Outstanding Cheques	103.60	School Account Current Levy (per reverse side)	136.98
Cash on Hand (General)	139.60	(Total)	761.98
Uncollected Municipal Taxes	27.57	Prov. Treas. Acct. Collections	27.62
Uncollected Public Revenue Taxes	760.20	Total Current Liabilities	789.60
Total Current Assets	760.77	Assets over Liabilities	1246.17
Total Capitalised or Fixed Assets (per reverse side)	1275.00		
Totals	\$2035.77	Totals	\$2035.77

PARTICULARS OF ASSESSMENT AND TAXES		DETAILS OF TOTALS OF CAPITAL OUTLAY AND MAINTENANCE PER REVERSE	
Gross Assessments	\$14,095	Sidewalks, Orig. Cost	\$365.00
Less Exemptions	10,715	Street Work	400.00
Taxable Assessment	\$14,095	Police Expense	12.00
Municipal, Arrears and Penalties	\$16.00	Fire Apparatus	1390.00
Municipal, Penalty added January 1, 1922	2.22	Depreciation	116.00
Municipal, Current Levy	546.75	Present Value	\$1275.00
Municipal, School, Current Levy	494.23		
Public Revenue Taxes, Arrears Dec. 31, 1921	55		
Public Revenue Taxes, Current Levy, 2 Mills	28.19		
School Arrears and Penalties (prior to 1919 acct.)	11.35		
Total	\$1099.29		

SCHOOL TAX LIABILITY ACCOUNT	
Balance due end of previous year	\$115.00
Current Levy	494.23
Total due	609.23
Amounts paid to School	472.25
Liability as at end of current year	\$136.98

SUMMARY OF VILLAGE RECEIPTS FOR YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1922.

Tax Receipts		General Receipts	
Quantity	Serial Numbers To	Quantity	Serial Numbers To
On Hand Jan. 1, 1922	49 A52 A100	39	A12 A50
Received during 1922	109 A101 A200		
Total	149	39	
Used during 1922	27 A52 A79	5	A12 A17
On Hand Dec. 31, 1922	122 A79 A200	34	A17 A50

Population of Village, 100. A. J. RIER, Jr., Sec. Treas.

I hereby certify that I have audited the account of the Village of St. Gregor for the year ending December 31, 1922, and compared the said accounts with their relative vouchers and that I find the same to be correct and in accordance with the foregoing financial statement.

Dated at St. Gregor, this 28th day of March, 1923.

V. O. BRABON, Auditor.

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