

THE CANADIAN FORWARD

To Our Contributors—

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It has always been the opinion of broad minded statesmen that to take away the liberties of subjects is to incite the license of rebels.—G. F. Stirling.



The Socialist movement in old Cumnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, is making great progress. Cumnock with a population of five thousand was the home of the late Keir Hardie. The Socialist movement has just been successful in putting a third man into the town council, Mr. Livingstone Russell. The other two are Councillors Jas. Neil and Allan McCaul. During the year the Socialists held sixty-one public meetings with an attendance varying from 100 to 1,000 persons, and collections amounted to \$800.

"A man does not come the length of the spirit of martyrdom without some active purpose, some equal motive, some flaming love. If you have a nation of men who have risen to that height of moral cultivation that they will not declare war or carry arms, for they have not so much madness left in their brains, you have a nation of lovers, of benefactors, of true, great, and able men. Let me know more of that nation; I shall not find them defenceless, with idle hands springing at their sides. I shall find them men of love, honor, and truth."—Emerson.

INTERVIEW WITH TROTSKY.

(By Arthur Ransome.)

(Special Correspondence of The London Daily News.)

Petrograd, Jan. 8.—I had a hurried talk with Trotsky at the Smolny Institute just as, after a final consultation with Russian members of the peace delegation, he was starting for Brest-Litovsk.

He was leaving with the mistaken conviction that the Entente Governments wanted Germany to succeed in making an advantageous separate peace with Russia, so that, guarding herself in the east, she might agree more willingly to surrender what the allies want in the west. The allies would then blame the Bolsheviks for the lost freedoms of Poland, Lithuania and Courland.

He was also under the impression that Lloyd George had made a statement that allowed such an interpretation.

I assured him that he was mistaken, but he was difficult to convince. He said:

"That is the allied policy."

I asked his opinion of a possible International Labor Conference to decide conditions of peace.

He said:

"It would do no harm."

Bolsheviks Will Fight.

I asked whether the Bolsheviks would fight in case the Central powers refused to accept the decisions of that conference.

He replied: "The question is not fairly put, for it does not guarantee that the Entente Governments would accept the conference's rulings. In any case the Bolsheviks will fight independently of the rulings of such a conference unless they coincide with the democratic peace desired by Russia. The attitude of the Bolsheviks would not be influenced by the attitude of the allies' Governments, but only by the attitude of the allied peoples."

Moves a Soldier at a Time.

I asked him what his own hopes were for a general and acceptable peace, and whether he thought the Germans desired such a peace.

He said:

"It is difficult to say, because Germany has not yet been offered the chance of a general and acceptable peace, but they must need it. To-day four German deserters came to me, a lieutenant and three soldiers, and told me of the difficulty the Germans have in moving troops from this front. They have given up trying to move large units. They take the men one at a time, and the men, knowing where they are going to be sent, jump out of the train and escape. At this minute in the Kovno district, behind the German front, there are twenty-five thousand German deserters concentrated together and armed with machine guns. The Germans have surrounded them, and being unable to get their own men to attack them, are trying to reduce them by starvation."

I asked him what terms he actually hoped to get.

He refused to be drawn out, and said, laughingly: "If we were really logical we would declare war on Britain now for the sake of India, Egypt and Ireland. You have read our peace declaration."

I protested that Britain made nothing out of India.

He replied: "Then give up being so altruistic. You British are the most chauvinist nation on the earth without knowing it."

He laughed again, shook hands, and was off.

LIBERTY.

And let me tell you what I mean by liberty of the body. It is to give to every man what he earns with his hands. And this great question of division has got to be settled even in the United States. Capital takes too much; labor gets too little. Labor will not always live in a hut with capital living in a palace. Flesh and blood are more sacred than gold, and the time will come when the law will see that every man has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit not only of happiness, but the right to catch some of it before he dies. I want to live until I find an aristocracy of honesty, of generosity; an aristocracy of intelligence; an aristocracy of heart and brain. I am sick of the old kind. I want liberty for every man. I do not believe in the law of supply and demand as applied to flesh and blood. If they who toil cannot have some of the good things of this world, then I do not want anybody to have them.—Robert G. Ingersoll.

THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF GERMANY.

(By Stafford Whitby.)

The most conspicuous demand in war oratory at present is for the democratization of Germany, which, it is said, would guarantee future peace. Now the democratization of Germany might conceivably be achieved by the German people, or it might conceivably be granted by the German rulers. Let us glance at these alternatives.

Suppose that, in response to the appeals of the Allies, especially those of Mr. Wilson, or (what may be regarded as a more likely occurrence) in response to the appeals and example of their Russian brothers, the German people were to carry through a revolution and were to democratize Germany in earnest. Would the ruling class of the Allied countries feel quite happy? Would they not be disposed to think that Germany had become too much democratized; and might they not now say: "We will treat only with a 'stable government,' and, having destroyed Militarism, we will now destroy Anarchy?" Has their attitude been encouraging towards the revolution of the Russian people and towards the democratic principles of settlement formulated by the Russian people? Instead of responding to the idealism of the Russian Revolution, are they not, rather, inclined to echo the advice which Burke gave to the English ruling classes with reference to the idealists of an earlier revolution (the French Revolution), "Let us keep their principles from our minds; their daggers from our hearts?"

The invitation to revolt against their ruling classes, which in effect some of the chief spokesmen of the Allies have given to the people of Germany may well be contrasted with the attitude of the ruling classes in their 'own countries' towards the possibilities of revolution there. The ruling classes in Great Britain are calmly confident that a revolution by the people in their own country is the last thing that can be expected—or need be feared. Yet some of them ask a revolution of the people of Germany, whom they have continually described as exceptionally docile.

Revolution in England.

Indeed, a revolution is the last thing that the "comfortable" classes expect in England. In a recent issue of "Punch"—a periodical whose wit is peculiarly expressive of the outlook of the comfortable classes in England—there is a picture in which this attitude can be plainly read.

Scene: a drawing room.

The Colonel: "I'd take all those mutinous hound and put 'em against the wall." (? reference to the Bolsheviks.)

Aunt Jane: "But, my dear, the awful

thing is that it has spread to our own army. I heard two soldiers in the train to-day talking about their sergeant-major in a dreadful way."

At this the colonel and his soldier son are shown as grinning.

The point of the joke is the absurdity of thinking an uprising of the English proletariat possible.

Democratization a Guarantee.

Consider the other alternative: Suppose that being desirous of securing peace, the rulers of Germany were to conform to the Wilsonian condition, and make the constitution of Germany as democratic as that of Great Britain, France, or the United States. Would this action on the part of the rulers of Germany guarantee the presence of the real democratic spirit; and, more particularly, would it be any guarantee of the destruction of a militaristic spirit in the conduct of foreign policy and the incoming of a democratic one? Would this be any guarantee that the intellectual atmosphere of Germany, her press and schools, would no longer be under the control of the wealthy classes: of the capitalists and their allies the militarists? We have only to take a candid view of the so-called democratic countries to see that equal and universal suffrage offers no guarantee that the wealthy classes and special interests would be much less able to enlist the majority of the people in support of their policies.

If the general mass of men would but give their attention to the actual facts, and particularly to the facts of the foreign policy of the democratic nations, instead of remaining content with mere phrases, the unsoundness of the current implication that, should Germany "democratize," her foreign policy could never again lead to war, and that the peace of the world would necessarily be secure, would be at once apparent. But, unfortunately, there is no general acquaintance with the facts of foreign policy (and upon foreign policy, let it never be forgotten, depend the issues of war and peace), particularly during that significant period the decade following the conclusion of the France-British Entente in 1904, as they have been set forth by E. D. Morel, Bertrand Russell, and other writers. It would not be in the interests of war-time myths that popular cries should be brought to the test of facts; and, indeed, the majority of people are well content to accept the war cries, which excuse their war passion, without submitting them to any severe analysis.

True democracy Non-Militaristic.

The demand for the democratization of Germany owes its appearance of cogency to the just apprehension that the true democratic spirit could never inspire war. We may notice here an instance of the adoption by the ruling classes of a phraseology which exploits the finer apprehensions of the mass of men, such as we have occasion to notice frequently in modern society. Certainly it must be admitted—must, in fact, be urged—that the democratic idea is entirely opposed to war-making, and that a society, such as that which Social Democrats desiderate, in which the democratic spirit was truly embodied, would never engage in a foreign policy of an aggressive nature, and would be internationalistic and not imperialistic or merely nationalistic in its tone. Certainly a true democracy would never break the world's peace, but, when the democratization of Germany is urged to-day as a guarantee of world peace, those who urge it have in mind merely a democracy such as that possessed by Great Britain, or France, or the United States; that is, a capitalistic and merely political democracy. And the facts of diplomatic history say quite indubitably that such a democracy is no guarantee of a truly democratic and pacific foreign policy.