

THE FUTURE OF WAR AND PEACE

IV.—State Capitalism.

It is prophesied in some quarters that at the conclusion of hostilities Europe will face a series of revolutions which will destroy monarchy, repudiate war debts, and create conditions favorable to a lasting friendship among nations. That there will be much dissatisfaction is certain, but there is no reason for expecting that the ruling powers will be immediately overthrown. They may be forced to make improvements, to advance social legislation and bring in far-reaching reforms. These measures will do more than allay popular discontent; their effect will in reality be to strengthen the power of the classes in control.

The chief change the war has already produced in all countries involved, and even in neutral countries, is the increased power of the State. It is impossible for private enterprise to meet all the war-time needs, and the general good of those groups for whom the war goes on demands that in many instances they merge their individual interests into collective State interests. The Government must take a hand in the operation of factories, mines and railways, in the regulation of prices and control of the food supply in the direction of personal effort. No doubt many of the measures are of a temporary nature, but the tendency will be towards an increased activity on the part of the State. All nations will be left with problems which only the State can handle. The lessons learned from necessary measures of war-time will be applied to peace conditions.

Whether or not Germany wins the victory in battle, she has already forced even enemies to adopt her methods. What is Prussianism in one place may be heralded as Democracy in another. An English Bismarck in the person of Lloyd George may lead in the establishment of Democracy, but whatever its name it represents a condition of State paternalism with national efficiency as its object. And all this for the benefit of the organized capitalist class. But because it is said that shortly the nations will find the order of individual control displaced by State enterprise, and because such in order represents a higher national development, it cannot be claimed that the change came about in the direct interest of all classes. Democracy may mean an incidental improvement in the conditions of the people, but only because this brings a greater direct benefit to the State. The State is not the people. The State comes to represent a highly organized collectivity of centralized capitalist interests. The interests of the State and people are diametrically opposed.

The present tendency due to the war is not in the direction of permanent peace. Even neutral countries are multiplying their preparation efforts, and nations formerly comparatively peaceful like England and her colonies, can never get back to their pre-war basis. The immediate tendency is toward greater militarism. Even the United States cannot escape it. Past tradition cannot stifle the growing military power. Whatever the wishes and claims of statesmen concerning their peaceful objects, conditions will dictate otherwise. When placed in concrete situations and faced with "dangers," peace pledges have no more value than Germany's guarantee of Belgian neutrality, or an English Prime Minister's promise to the married men.

But the immediate tendency may be permanent. It may not be the ultimate tendency. Nations are peaceable or warlike according to their state of development. Given ample room for expansion and internal growth, and access to the sea, as the United States

has had, the peace conditions will generally obtain. But the internal development in the United States will soon be comparatively complete. The fear that sooner or later American interests will be found in conflict with other interests supports the Preparedness program. From the capitalist standpoint the fear is justified. But the argument that preparation is for defense loses its force when viewed from the world standpoint. There can be no general defensive war; all war is both offensive and defensive. The motive for aggression is usually sufficient to explain the reason for defence.

The aggressive tendency is present in all modern nations. However, the size of the earth imposes a limit upon expansive possibilities, while productive ability can be expanded almost without limit. The need to expand becomes greater, the possibility less. If wars are resorted to for the purpose of breaking the bonds their success will become more and more unsatisfactory. They will not solve the problems Imperialism embraces. Immediately and for some time to come benefits may accrue to the victor in war but ultimately the exploited backward nations will themselves become trade competitors and a crisis will arise which must entail the downfall of Imperialism, and, in fact, of the capitalist system.

—Mervyn Smith.

(To be Concluded.)

NEWS OF THE MOVEMENT

Notice to Locals.—We shall be glad to publish each week beneath this heading reports of the doings and activities of any local. Copy sent in should be written clearly on one side of the paper only. Reports should be brief as possible.

CORRESPONDENCE

SASKATCHEWAN EXECUTIVE PASS RESOLUTION.

We, the members of the Provincial Executive Committee of Saskatchewan, declare our united opposition to conscription—military or industrial—and in pursuance of the precedent established in the British Colonies of New Zealand and Australia, we maintain that it is the right of the citizens of Canada to decide by popular vote whether or not conscription shall be imposed upon the male population of Canada.

LOANS.

There's a war-incited nation
After loans;
Filled with hope and wild elation
With the loans.
There are many joyous cables,
There are papers full of fables,
And the international Babels
Tell of loans.
There's the people of the Kaiser
After loans;
And the British, nothing wiser,
After loans;
There's a subtle press, romantic,
Makes the French and Russian frantic
And the Serbian cut an antie,
Over loans.
There are clamorous Italians
After loans;
There are Turks in fierce battalions
Fed on loans;
There's the little yellow Jappie,
There's the Austrian fierce and snappy,
And the Belgians are made happy
With their loans.
When the war some day is ended
Over loans.
And the battered buildings mended
With the loans.
When the interest on reverses
And on victories touch both purses,
There will be some fearful curses
Over loans.

HOW AUSTRALIA KEPT SUGAR FROM SOARING IN PRICE

By W. Francis Ahern.

(By Call News Service.)

Sydney, New South Wales, Feb. 25.—Many economic problems faced Australia when the war came upon us, threatening a serious shortage of the food supplies to the people. Exploitation grew rife in the country, and every week made it more difficult for the bread winner to resist the inroads on his income. The supply of sugar needed drastic attention, yet there was never a commodity presenting difficulties so complicated.

For many years now sugar growing in Australia has been a highly protected industry, local prices ranking at least \$25 per ton of refined sugar above the world parity. This extra amount of money was paid by the consumers of Australia in order that the sugar industry may be allowed to live in Australia, and to be worked by white labor.

The States of Queensland and New South Wales benefited most under this arrangement, for sugar growing is confined to these two States, comprising the northwestern corner of Australia. That price was cheerfully paid, and we considered that at that price the guaranteed purity of our Australian sugar was cheaply bought. But for the Alien restriction act, the sugar growers could have produced sugar by colored labor cheaper than we are getting it to-day. And without the bounty of \$25 per ton the sugar growers could have imported sugar cheaper than that grown in Australia from the islands of black labor in the Pacific. Thus the bounty compelled the growers to produce sugar in Australia by white labor and the alien act prevented their getting coloured labor into Australia to produce the sugar at low wages, to the detriment of Australian workers.

But the war dislocated the world price of sugar, and sent it soaring to the clouds, consequent to Germany and Austria—both great sugar producing centers—being unable to get their products away to the outside world. The war also hampered the sugar export trade from other countries.

Instead of the Australian price being \$25 above the world parity, very soon the world parity was above the Australian price. And if Australia allowed it, the Australian sugar growers, by exporting, could have made fortunes out of the crops that Australian consumers had protected for their own use.

The Australian Government acted only in time—when record shipments were actually on the way to the steamers to be exported out of the country. In one second, figuratively speaking, every ounce of sugar was arrested in Australia and became government property.

But there were difficulties in the way. The sugar business of Australia is very complicated, since each Australian State fixed its own price. And so it was not long before the growers got dissatisfied with the prices fixed. They said the sugar trust was not treating them fairly, while the sugar trust said the government was to blame in its profit-fixing, and so got rid of the blame that way. The sugar trust said the price was fixed on a wrong calculation. The crop of 1913 had been the best ever, not only for Australia, but for the whole world. Australia had grown enough for its requirements, but owing to the world's surplus, some 70,000 tons was also imported to Australia, with the result that Australian prices declined. Thus a delicate position had to be dealt with, and this could only be solved by the Federal and State Governments acting together.

One feature of the whole business is

that the sugar trust—which is the Colonial Sugar Company—has no competitors in Australia worthy of the name, so that once legislation was made it would be easy to put into operation.

And so the State and Federal Government decided to nationalize the industry. And the big task was done in an extraordinary simple manner. The sugar trust was turned into an agent for the government. First of all, all sugar was seized under the sugar acquisition act. Then a price was fixed for buying raw sugar, and a price was fixed to sell refined sugar at.

Thus hemmed in on all sides the sugar trust was turned into an instrument for protecting the growers on the one hand and the consumers on the other.

And under these arrangements there can be no more unfair dealing, either with the growers or the sugar consumers. And even those opposed to the government interfering with the price of sugar admit to-day that the government has done more to place the sugar industry on a sound basis than has ever been done before. This because for the first time in Australia history the industry has been freed from the iron autocracy of a private monopoly which was responsible to no one but its own shareholders.

In addition to this, the government appointed cane price boards which fixed the price of the cane as between the growers and the mills. Each district had its own price board, and above these a central board was appointed to hear appeals. These boards were elected on most democratic lines, and once their ruling was arrived at, it stood.

Thus the labor government of Australia liberated the sugar industry, and protected alike the whole of the consumers of Australia from being forced to pay famine prices for their sugar at a time when sugar was plentiful in Australia.

As in the case of the wheat and wool industries, it is reasonably certain to say that never will the sugar industry be allowed to go back into the old channels of private enterprise. Government price-fixing has come to stay in Australia.

THE BLOOD VOTE.

The poem that defeated conscription in Australia.

"Why is your face so white, Mother?
Why do you choke for breath?"
"O, I have dreamt in the night, my son
That I doomed a man to death!"

"Why do you hide your hand, Mother,
And crouch above it in dread?"
"It beareth a dreadful brand, my son,
With the dead man's blood 'tis red."

"I hear his widow cry in the night,
I hear his children weep,
And always within my sight, O God,
The dead man's blood doth leap!"

"They put the dagger into my grasp,
It seemed but a pencil then,
I did not know it was a fiend aghast
For the priceless blood of men."

"They gave me the ballot paper,
The grim death warrant of doom,
And I smugly sentenced the man to death
In that dreadful little room."

"I put it inside the box of blood,
Nor thought of the man I'd slain,
Till at midnight came like a whelming flood,
God's word and the brand of a Cin."

"O little son; O, my little son,
Pray God for your mother's soul,
That the scarlet stain may be white again
In God's great Judgment Roll."

W. R. WINSPEAR.
Sydney, Australia.

Occasionally, old party politicians attack capitalism with a feather duster.