

THE RED FLAG

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What Is Patriotism?

The Johnsonian Definition and Others

The answer depends largely upon the point of view. From one standpoint patriotism appears as the actual religion of the modern State. From another it is the decadence and perversion of a noble and deep-rooted impulse of loyalty to the social unit, acquired by mankind during the earliest stages of social life. From yet another viewpoint, that of capitalist interests, patriotism is nothing more or less than a convenient and potent instrument of domination.

The word itself, both etymologically and historically, has its root in paternity. In tribal days the feeling of social solidarity, which has now become debased into patriotism, was completely bound up with the religion of ancestor worship. In tribal religion, as in the tribe itself, all were united by ties of blood. The gods and their rites and ceremonies were exclusive to the tribesmen. All strangers were rigidly debarred from worship. The gods themselves were usually dead warriors. Every war was a holy war. Among the ancient Jews, for instance, the holy ark of Jehovah of Hosts accompanied the tribes to battle. It was this abode or movable tomb of the ancestral deity that went with the Jews in their march through the desert, and even to Jericho; playing an important part in the fall of that remarkable city. All the traditions of the Jewish religion, in fact, were identified with great national triumphs.

The Merits of the Early Brand

Thus tribal religion was completely interwoven with tribal aspirations and integrity. Tribal "patriotism" and religion were identical. Indeed, without the strongest possible social bond, without a kind of "patriotism" that implied the unhesitating self-sacrifice of the individual for the common existence, it would have been utterly impossible for tribal man to have won through to civilization. Natural selection insured that only those social groups which developed this supreme instinct of mutual aid could survive; the rest were crushed out in the struggle for existence. Is it a matter for wonder if it be found that such a magnificent social impulse, so vital to the struggling groups of tribal man, received periodical consecration in the willing human sacrifices so common in primitive religious ceremonial? Bound up with the deliberate manufacture of gods for the protection of the tribe and its works, there is indicated a social recognition of the need for, and value of, the sacrifice of the individual for the common good.

This noble impulse of social solidarity is the common inheritance of all mankind. But being a powerful social force it has lent itself to exploitation. Therefore, with the development of class rule this great impulse is made subordinate to the class interests of the rulers. It becomes debased and perverted to definite anti-social ends. As soon as

the people become a slave class "the land of their fathers" is theirs no more. Patriotism to them becomes a fraudulent thing. The "country" is that of their masters alone. Nevertheless, the instinct of loyalty to the community is too deep-seated to be eradicated so easily, and it becomes a deadly weapon in the hands of the rulers against the people themselves.

With the decay of society based on kinship, religion changed also; and from being tribal and exclusive it became universal and propagandist. "Patriotism" at the same time began to distinguish itself from religion. The instinctive tribal loyalty became transformed, by the aid of religion and the fiction of kinship, into political loyalty. In a number of instances in political society, as in Tudor England, the struggle for priority between religion and patriotism became so acute as to help in the introduction of a more subservient form of religion. Thus patriotism became a mere accessory to patriotism as handmaiden of class rule.

A Most Accommodating Conception

Though universal religion did not split up at the same time as the great empire that gave it birth, patriotism did so. The latter has, in fact, always adapted, enlarged, or contracted itself to fit the existing political unit, whether feudal estate, village, township, country, kingdom, republic or empire. (Continued on Page Two)

Trial and Sentence of John Maclean

Before the Lord Justice General and a Jury, at Edinburgh, on Thursday, 9th May, 1918

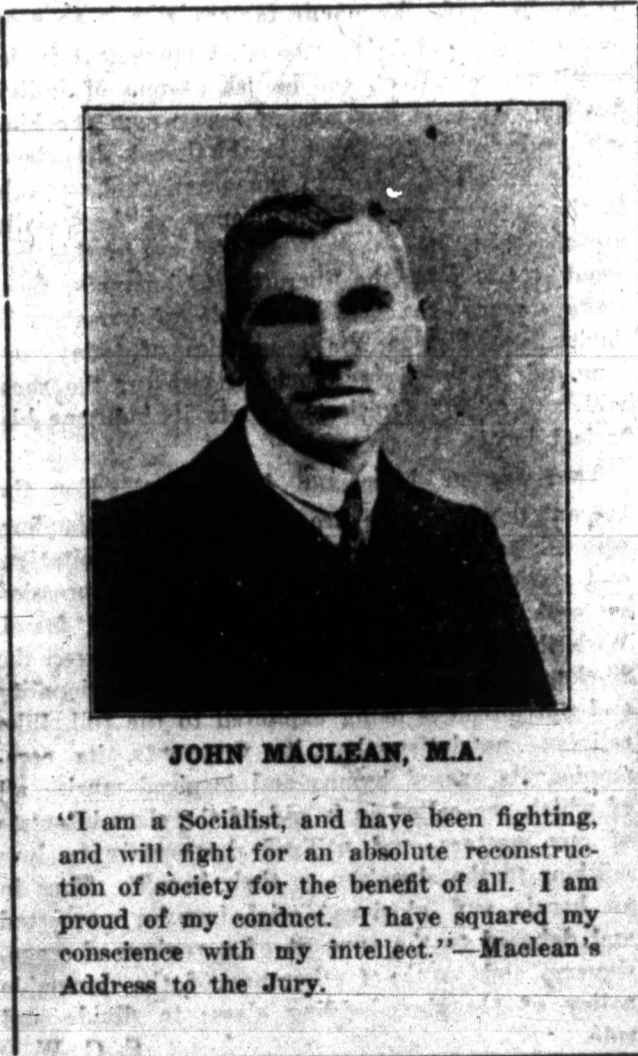
At Edinburgh on the 9th of May, 1918, John Maclean, M.A., one of the ablest and most courageous fighters for Socialism that this country has produced, was sentenced to five years' penal servitude. The charges were brought under the Defence of the Realm Regulations, for the violation of which Maclean had been previously sentenced to penal servitude, and from which, in July, 1917, in consequence of the efforts of the Socialist comrades in Russia and of the agitation in this country, he was released after serving fifteen months of a three years' sentence. The remaining eleven months of this term have been added to his present sentence.

Maclean's magnificent work for Socialism is well known, and as the founder of the Scottish Labour College, we believe he will be gratefully remembered beyond his own time.

With Karl Liebknecht, John Maclean shares the honour of being one of the first honorary vice-presidents of the Russian Soviet Congress, and he is also the Bolshevik Consul for Glasgow.

The trial of which an account is given in the following pages, aroused tremendous public interest, one of the most piquant incidents being an over-night march from Glasgow to Edinburgh, by a body of enthusiastic supporters.

The speeches on which the various charges are based, were delivered at a time when, from various causes, revolutionary feeling ran high in the Clyde district and all over the country. This feel-



ing was not denied expression by Maclean, who with noble disregard of possible consequences to himself, did not hesitate to say what others silently and safely thought.

The above is an extract from the introduction to the account, in pamphlet form, of the trial and sentence of John Maclean, M. A.

The pamphlet was first published by the Clyde Workers' Propaganda Defence Committee and is republished in this country by the "Western Labor News," Winnipeg, Manitoba, under the title, "Condemned from the Dock." Price \$6.50 per hundred, or 10 cents each.

Get this pamphlet and distribute it. It contains valuable propaganda matter. History will reverse the verdict against John Maclean and it will yet be seen that it was not he that was under indictment, but the Capitalist system of bloodfests and intellectual, moral and physical debaucheries. The following words from Maclean's address to the jury, registers the thoughts and sentiments of hosts of the inarticulate millions who have already passed judgment upon Capitalism.

"I wish no harm to any human being, but I, as one man am going to exercise my freedom of speech. No human being on the face of the earth, no government is going to take from me my right to speech, my right to protest against wrong, my right to do everything that is for the benefit of mankind. I am not here then, as the accused; I am here as the accuser of Capitalism, dripping with blood from head to foot."