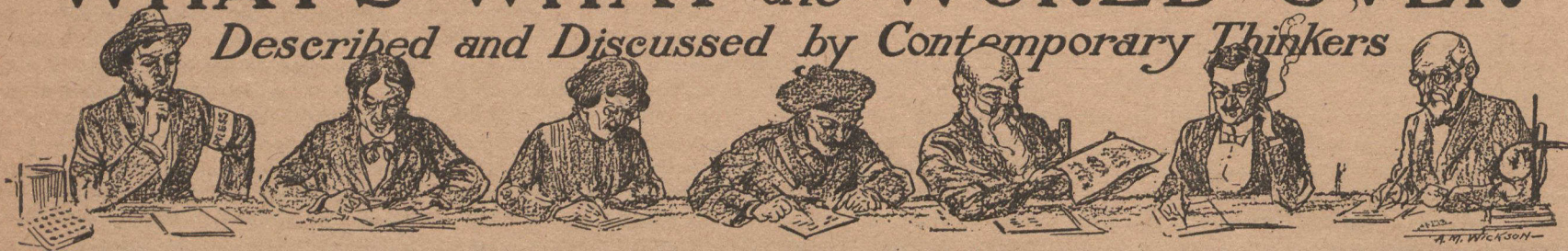


WHAT'S WHAT *the* WORLD OVER

Described and Discussed by Contemporary Thinkers



POLITICAL IDEALS

And the Doctrine of Force Discussed by an American

THERE is probably one purpose, and only one, writes Bertrand Russell in the North American Review, for which the use of force by a government is beneficent, and that is, to diminish the total amount of force used in the world. It is clear, for example, that the legal prohibition of murder diminishes the total amount of violence in the world. And no one would maintain that parents should have unlimited freedom to ill-treat their children. So long as some men wish to do violence to others, there cannot be complete liberty, for either the wish to do violence must be restrained, or the victims must be left to suffer. For this reason, although individuals and societies should have the utmost freedom as regards their own affairs, they ought not to have complete freedom as regards their dealings with others. To give freedom to the strong to oppress the weak is not the way to secure the greatest possible amount of freedom in the world. This is the basis of the Socialist revolt against the kind of freedom which used to be advocated by laissez-faire economists.

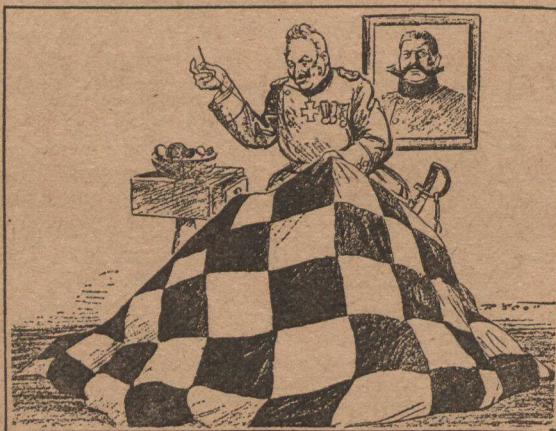
Democracy is a device—the best so far invented—for diminishing as much as possible the interference of governments with liberty. If a nation is divided into two sections which cannot both have their way, democracy theoretically insures that the majority shall have their way. But democracy is not at all an adequate device unless it is accompanied by a very great amount of devolution. Love of uniformity, or the mere pleasure of interfering, or dislike of differing tastes and temperaments, may often lead a majority to control a minority in matters which do not really concern the majority. We should none of us like to have the internal affairs of Great Britain settled by a Parliament of the World, if ever such a body came into existence. Nevertheless there are matters which such a body could settle much better than any existing instrument of government.

The theory of the legitimate use of force in human affairs, where a government exists, seems clear. Force should only be used against those who attempt to use force against others, or who will not respect the law in cases where a common decision is necessary and a minority are opposed to the action of the majority. These seem legitimate occasions for the use of force; and they should be legitimately occasions in international affairs if an international government existed. The problem of the legitimate occasions for the use of force in the absence of a government is a different one, with which we are not at present concerned.

Although a government must have the power to use force, and may on occasion use it legitimately, the aim of the reformers to have such institutions as will diminish the need for actual coercion will be found to have this effect. Most of us abstain, for instance, from theft, not because it is illegal, but because we feel no desire to steal. The more men learn to live creatively rather than possessively, the less their wishes will lead them to thwart others or to attempt violent interference with their liberty. Most of the conflicts of interests, which lead individuals or organizations into disputes, are purely imaginary, and would be seen to be so if men aimed more at the goods in which all can share, and less at those private possessions that are the source of strife. In proportion as men live creatively, they cease to wish to interfere with others by force. Very many matters in which, at present, common

action is thought indispensable, might well be left to individual decision. It used to be thought absolutely necessary that all the inhabitants of a country should have the same religion, but we now know that there is no such necessity. In like manner it will be found, as men grow more tolerant in their instincts, that many uniformities now insisted upon are useless and even harmful.

Good political institutions would weaken the impulse towards force and domination in two ways: first, by increasing the opportunities for the creative impulses, and by shaping education so as to strengthen these impulses; secondly, by diminishing the outlets for the possessive instincts. The diffusion of power, both in the political and the economic sphere, instead of its concentration in the hands of officials and captains of industry, would greatly diminish the opportunities for acquiring the habit of command, out of which the desire for exercising tyranny is apt to spring. Autonomy, both for districts and for organizations, would leave fewer occasions when governments were called upon to make decisions as to other people's concerns. And the abolition of capitalism and the wages system



CAN HE MAKE US FLY IT?

"Each mast should show a large flag, checkered white and red."—From Germany's U-Boat Note to America.

—Scott, in Cleveland Leader.

would remove the chief incentive to fear and greed, those correlative passions by which all free life is choked and gagged.

Few men seem to realize how many of the evils from which we suffer are wholly unnecessary, and could be abolished by a united effort within a few years. If a majority in every civilized country so desired, we could, within twenty years, abolish all abject poverty, quite half the illness in the world, the whole economic slavery which binds down nine-tenths of our population; we could fill the world with beauty and joy, and secure the reign of universal peace. It is only because men are apathetic that this is not achieved—only because imagination is sluggish, and what always has been is regarded as what always must be. With good-will, generosity, and a little intelligence all these things could be brought about.

GERMAN LITERATURE!

What It Is and Isn't is Worthy of Study

THE idea is ingrained in the public mind that the British universities are tarred wholesale with a pacifist and pro-German brush, declares Prof. M. A. Gerodwohl, in the Fortnightly. The sacrifices made on the battlefield by so many

of our dons and students should suffice to disprove any such sweeping statement. There is ground for suspicion, but only in regard to a loud, but numerically feeble, academic set.

I know not, however, whether such intellectual aberrations on the part of professedly British universities were, all things considered, more astonishing than the insidious, if no whit less dominating, influence which German pedagogy had acquired, as it were, by infiltration during the past two decades at that acknowledged foyer of French enlightenment and wit—the Sorbonne. I need hardly remark that the triumph of Goettingen en Sorbonne in 1913, despite 1870, was an infinitely greater victory for Kultur than its capture of, say, Oxford or London; and that it might have proved a far more durable victory for the Reichsland than Essen's triumph at Maubeuge. It marked the zenith of Germany's policy of peaceful penetration to the very heart of the enemy specially written down for future subjection or destruction. But it is precisely the 17-inch howitzer that, by battering the ramparts of Maubeuge, which can and will be raised anew, shattered for once and for all time the Fortress of Kultur within the precincts of intellectual France.

The golden ages in every literature are those in which the national spirit has been at its highest, whereas literary decadence has invariably been heralded by the predominance of cosmopolitan ideals. Besides, neither in German creative literature nor in German literary criticism is there anything to warrant the Germanizing craze that prevailed three years ago in both French and British academic circles. German literature ranks almost lowest among the artistic literatures of Europe. Of supreme literary artists Germany numbers but two, Goethe and Heine (even though, for my part, I would gladly concede a third in the person of the Austrian poet-dramatist Grillparzer). And of these two and only supreme German literary artists each, at some period or other of his career, repudiated the Fatherland as his spiritual home. Goethe hailed in turn the ideal world of ancient Greece and the conception of Napoleon's world-empire as his liberators from the narrowness and greed of German particularism—that particularism of which Prussian Imperialism is nothing but the modern and felonious compound. It was in Paris that Henry Heine sought refuge from both the German "Schutzmann" and the German "Witz." Heine almost throughout, and Goethe in the major portion of his works, that portion, too, on which his claims to a foremost place among the immortals mainly rests—the lyrics, the later dramas, and Faust I.—are by no means typically German, but in the one case Greek rather, or Alexandrine, and in the other distinctly Parisian in sympathy and temperament. There are hardly any figures in literature that can compare with Goethe at his prime for serenity of feeling and symmetry of framework, nor with Heine at his best for the simple exquisiteness of form and feeling.

All of which is tantamount to reaffirming that there is no sufficient intrinsic virtue in German creative literature or in German literary teaching to explain and justify our pre-war panderings to the German seats of learning. I need hardly add that in particular the perverted handling of linguistic study and literary research, which I have endeavoured to expose, does not apply to the German language and literature alone, but to the instruction given by Germans in every language and literature, whether ancient or modern. Artistic form and composition are ignored throughout. The Teutonic scholars are, I know, very apt to jeer, and it may be not unrightly, at the flights of English classical scholars in Greek