

The Kingdom of Shylock

(By Frank Anstey, M.P.)

THE DAWNING SLAVERY.

"A tremendously powerful financial oligarchy is developing in the shadow of the war, the like of which has never been known in the world before—possessing more wealth, more power, more control over the destinies of the human race than any class or caste ever possessed. Beside this oligarchy, the old Roman Senate and the Venetian Council of Ten fade into insignificance. After the war the attitude of this oligarchy towards the workers will be ruthless and terrible."

—T. Quelch, in "London Justice," March 16, 1916.

The great financiers are running every Government—irrespective of party labels. In every country they devise "ways and means"; they "advise," and Governments are their executors. In every land, under every party, the shackles of the most degrading slavery are being rapidly forged. In every land the leechery of the bondholders becomes an increasing drain on the vitality of the people. "What use," said Chaumette, "is a constitution to a nation of skeletons?" And what use is democratic power, when its only result is the elevation of men who complacently walk in the footsteps of their predecessors, aping the manners, using the language, and pursuing the methods of the men they have derided, denounced, supplanted, and slavishly imitated? Thus we are faced with the fact that the ruling political party in every land is a mere instrument of the Money Bag, devising for Money Bag interests a national currency to be lent back at usury to the nation that created and sustained it. Such are the Morals of Robbery and the ethics of the political jugglers.

Great Britain is now (1917) spending £3,000,000,000 per annum on the war. Yet the more the banks lend the stronger grow their resources. They can lend ten, fifty, a hundred times the amount of gold in their vaults, and yet the gold remains—the only limit on "loans" is the capacity of people to carry the load of interest.

The currency created by the nation for the salvation of the banks is loaned back to the nation at perpetual and ever duplicated interest.

The "Round Table," in its article on "How Wars Are Financed" (June, 1915), said:—

"There must be sufficient time between the instalments of loans to allow the proceeds of the first to be expended by the Government, to pass into the hands of private persons and to filter back to the banks before the next instalment is called. If this condition be fulfilled, the nation can go on fighting for ever, as far as finance is concerned."

In other words, if these conditions be fulfilled, the banks can go on lending for ever.

Thus currency goes out in wages to soldiers and makers of requisites of war, passing along the channels of trade back to the banks for the next instalment. Thus the circle is complete. To the onlookers, there is a never-ending procession of cash. It is financial legerdemain. By it nations are deluded, defrauded and enslaved. Thus thousands of millions are loaned, yet as much remains in the vaults of the great banks as before the first penny was floated. With every new war loan the "rate of interest," the rate of blackmail, upon the struggling nationalities, is increased.

Thus in 1917 all previous 2½, 3½, 4½ per cent. blood loans were convertible into 5 per cents. to all subscribers to the "Great Victory" Loan Float—ever rising patriotism of the Parasites.

AFTER THE WAR.

The war over, and the people under the burden of millions of interest, profits flow once more into the channels of industry at the higher rates of interest created by the war.

Out of the war will come for ever annual dividends in the shape of interest upon the money invested in blood. For this the people must toil.

Out of the war will emerge two classes—Bondholders and slaves to the Bondholders.

Lord Inchcape, President of the National Provincial Bank of Great Britain and London director of the Australian Sugar, Shipping and Banking Combine, known as the Burns, Philp Company, said:—

"The heavy taxation in which Europe is involved to pay the interest on the money already borrowed, and on the hundreds of millions yet to be raised, will press heavily on the people. Their purchasing power will be reduced and their standard of life lowered."

England must recover herself in the markets appropriated by neutral nations, by nations upon whose industries sit no war burden. Whatever goes to the bondholders must come out of the flesh and blood of the workpeople. So.

"The standard of life must be reduced."

The arms of Britain, France and Russia may be as triumphant as those of Rome in the days of its greatest glory—yet the workmen of all the combatant nations will emerge from the war steeped in such awful poverty, such abject slaves of Mammon, that they will wish they were dead.

All who come out of the war alive must be bled dry that interest mongering vampires within the nation may extract from the products of toil hundreds of millions per annum.

Lloyd George, speaking in the House of Commons (May 12, 1915), said:—

"Distress, Misery, and Wretchedness always follow a great war."

The English financial journal, "The Economist," commenting on the Lloyd George speech, said:—

"The standard of life must be reduced."

In Australia interest and other charges arising out of the war will increase the burden of taxation fourfold.

Productive and distributive costs will be augmented, prices will rise to the level of the increased costs, purchasing power will be correspondingly diminished. The returned soldiery, thrown suddenly upon a depressed and dislocated labor market, will engender amongst the wage-earners an agonizing struggle for existence.

CAMOUFLAGE IN ENGLAND.

An Open Letter to Lloyd George, by Horatio Bottomly in "John Bull."

No doubt the readers of the Forward, in common with the readers of the news despatches concerning the war, get considerably mystified by the contradictions made in the speeches which are one day highly optimistic and the next tend to pessimism. This same mental condition seems to prevail in England, and the following letter printed in "John Bull" and addressed to Mr. Lloyd George will give our readers some idea of the camouflage that that gentleman and his colleagues are placing before the British public. The letter in part follows:

One of the many disadvantages of writing in a paper which has to go to press several days before its date of publication is that you are compelled to "budget" for what may happen in the interval—and in war, as we all know, it is the Unexpected that always happens. Thus, whilst the printing machines are belching out nearly two million copies of this issue, the House of Commons will be discussing the remarkable speech delivered by the Prime Minister of Britain—in the French Capital. And it is about that speech, mainly, that I want to write. Oh, that speech! I am not very much concerned with the Supreme War Council—so long as it doesn't interfere with Haig and Petain. As an Observing and Advisory body it is capable of good work, and should have been set up two years ago. And now that it has been constituted, it would have been wiser not to have talked much about it. Anything and everything which is calculated to assist the Allies to win the war should be carefully concealed from the enemy—not trumpeted from the housetops. That is bad strategy—the sort of thing which the Advisory Council itself should set its face against. Let the Kaiser think we are learning nothing from the lessons of the war—and don't tell him that at Versailles he will find a Supreme Council always sitting. You see, those Hun alchemists have a nasty knack of finding their way about! Only a few days before my recent visit to the Front, a squadron of them had made direct for a great Base Hospital sixty miles behind the lines, for the purpose of dropping bombs upon the American ward; but let that pass. Good luck to the Supreme Council—although I can't help wondering how much better we should have been even if it had existed at the time of the Italian disaster, for are not we assured that General Cadorna never anticipated any trouble and never applied to the Allies for help? If he, on the actual Front, foresaw no danger, how on earth

could any Supreme Council, sitting in Versailles have done so? And I recall this statement in the Queen's Hall speech of August last: "There are persons in this country who would set up Committees to direct the conduct of the war. The nation has set up its own Committee, and that is the House of Commons." Still, what I want to talk about is the speech.

An Unhappy Speech.

Let us see exactly what it was that the Prime Minister said. The first definite statement he made was that "in a prolonged war nothing counts as much as a good conscience"—which, of course, is all flap-doodle. Nothing counts so much as good troops and munitions. Then came a compliment to Russia—"who now lies stricken through no fault of her own"—more flap-doodle! After that, we got a retrospect of past efforts at unification and co-ordination of the various battle fronts, and of conferences designed with that end. But it seems that "in the absence of a genuine Inter-Allied Council . . . there had to be an appearance of a strategic whole. . . . and it was solemnly proclaimed to the world that the unity of the Allies was complete. . . . That unity, so far as strategy went, was pure make-believe." Now let us stop there for a moment. It was none other than Mr. Lloyd George, who, after the famous Rome Conference in January last, came back and said: "I have just returned from a Council of War of the four great Allied countries upon whose shoulders most of the burden of this terrible war falls. I cannot give you the conclusions; there might be useful information in them for the enemy. There were no delusions as to the magnitude of our task, neither were there any doubts about the result. I think I could say what was the feeling of every man there. It was one of the most businesslike Conferences I ever attended. We faced the whole situation, probed it thoroughly, looked the difficulties in the face, and made arrangements to deal with them—and we separated more confident than ever." And who was responsible for the "Rome Official" message, after that Conference, that "At the conclusion of its labors the Conference once more recorded the complete agreement of the Allies on the various questions discussed, and it was decided to carry out a still closer co-ordination of their efforts?"

What Has Happened?

That doesn't look as though the idea of co-ordination were a sudden inspiration—and I confess that I'm bewildered by the declaration of the Premier that all these solemn announcements were "pure make-believe." Well may I have asked, the

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"Distress, misery, and wretchedness always follow a great war."

Awful is the price the workers must pay, so that Shylock may get his bloody "shentage." He will draw blood from sweating brows and hungry mothers all the days that God gives them life. This war weakens the workers and strengthens the Money Bags. This war means misery for the toiler, and "much monish" for the bondholder.

This war makes the living worker a slave, and fills the treasury of Shylock to overflowing.

Workingmen! You shall eat less—have poorer food—shabbier clothes—scantier furniture—fewer pleasures—and know more hardships than ever you knew in all your days and generation.

You want to know "Why?"

Is it not plain? If every year Shylock is to draw hundreds of millions more in interest from his investments on wasted lives and bloody slaughter, you who remain alive must slave for it and pay for it! All your days shall be "made bitter" with hard bondage. That is your future, workingmen. That is what they mean when they say "the standard of life must be reduced."

The workers come back from the war doomed to toil and pay annual tribute, not to the foreign conqueror, but to a small, exclusive, moneyed clique within the nation—the Kings of the Kingdom of Shylock.

These are the "conquerors"—these "Lords of Finance." Beneath their yoke must men of all nations tread.

"The hapless producer of wealth goes forth into a night illuminated by no star—he travels in a desert where the ever retreating mirage makes his disappointment a thousandfold more keen."

—"Labor Call," Melbourne.