

WHAT OTHERS ARE THINKING

Bright Clippings from Wide-a-woke Contemporaries

CLEAR THE DECK.

By Jack Cosgrave.

It is beginning to be clearly discerned by workers that their organized movement for economic and social justice is alien in every country to every political system.

Every form of national and international government presupposes subjection of a proletarian class, and continuance of social conditions involving human slavery. There is no deviation, whether the country is pagan or Christian, a kingdom or democracy! The truth is being gripped that the Labor movement is purely an economic one, having no necessary connection or relationship with nationality, ethical or religious development. That the solution of the social problem depends upon physical rather than psychical forces, and the condition that will follow economic emancipation will not necessarily spell happiness and content, but freedom! The emancipation of the human race from economic thralldom is only the first step in the march of human progress.

Let the ground be cleared of all cant. The Labor movement, being at bedrock economic, is essentially materialistic in conception and scope, and represents the natural impulses of a hungry mob, pregnant with unlimited noblenesses, when free development is assured, rather than with the reasoned climax of altruist ethics.

Though it has to be accepted, we despise the intriguing and sordid side of the class war; but less do we accept, and more do we despise, a condition of educated or cultured opinion that gets satisfaction and content in a social state that involves human degradation and slavery.

Too long has the democracy been the plaything of a glib-tongued casuistry, that reasoned acceptance of its degradation and slavery as naturally or divinely ordained, and social deliverance only possible by the slow evolution of the superman. By such specious pleading has organized labor been disarmed in the past, and every effort frustrated by apostles of "education," or by those who control the looking for seats in Kingdom Come! The logic of established facts, and history down the centuries, proves that all ethical and religious systems—when a crisis comes—count for nothing against economic stress, and the powers of wealth control.

The workers have little to learn outside of the one great virtue of class solidarity, that they must "by themselves be befriended." Their success depends upon the necessary readjustment of the structural and functional organization of Labor, that will enable it to coerce the state in its attitude to governmental problems, by dominating the economic situation: as employerdom does now. Success must depend upon this alone. It must be boldly admitted Labor is at war with society as at present constituted. Even a democratic state, that acquiesces in human exploitation, or degradation, has no rights or respect to claim from organized workers up in arms against it. What must characterize the organization of Labor's industrial democracy will be its structural and functional human relationship. There is no question of right or wrong. It is a question of organized power.—Industrial Worker.

WAR AND CRIME.

By Willis Andrews.

Veraschagin, the great Russian painter, was once asked by a patron of art to paint a picture of what he considered the worst evil in the world—whereupon the artist portrayed upon canvas a

scene of war in its most hideous aspect and named it "Crime."

This has added interest in view of the statement recently made by a prominent eastern clergyman, who says that war is simply God's plan to work out perfection in the human race. The thought has been taken up and reiterated by lesser lights of the cloth all over the land. This attempt to place the responsibility for the worst of all crimes upon the shoulders of the Almighty naturally leads one to wonder what is really the province of the devil himself, for it makes of satan an aimless wanderer over the face of the earth without any known occupation.

Every warring nation assures the world that it is in close partnership with the Ruler of the Universe, and already in this country prayers are being offered up asking that divine guidance be given to the work of slaying fellow-Christians across the seas.

Tennyson wrote of the soldier:

"Theirs but to do and die,
Theirs not to reason why."

It is high time that every man should begin to "reason why" when it is asked of him to pierce the quivering flesh of some man of whom he knows nothing and against whom he has no grievance.

MY COUNTRY.

By Kate Richards O'Hare.

"I am an American first and a Socialist second." This bombastic statement has been made many times in the last few months by men and women who did not stop to weigh their words or realize the consequences of such an attitude of mind. Nor are the Socialists the only people who mouth such cant—Church members and Labor unionists are also guilty.

These human parrots overlook the fact that the very cornerstone of the Socialist movement is the international brotherhood of labor; that the basis of organized labor is the international welfare of the workers; and that the fundamental creed of the church is the brotherhood of all God's children. If God draws no national lines; if Socialism is international and organized labor knows no boundaries, how in the name of reason can a Christian, a Socialist, or a Labor unionist declare that nationalism is "first" and all other things "second"?

Europe is to-day a blazing example of "nationalism" first and all other things secondary. Two groups of the master class, which is also international, foment a war to decide which group shall have the lion's share of the profits wrung from the toil of the workers. These industrial masters were far too wise to allow the war to be known as a class war, so they moved their pawns, the kings, on the chessboard of life and war ranged between the nations. The workers of the nations at war were not consulted as to their wishes in the matter of war, the masters attended to all details. The workers were simply called from field and workshop to man the colors of their various nations and do the fighting and the dying while their wives and children paid the bitter price of war in hunger and misery and untold suffering.

When the master class sounded the trumpet of war, straightway the Socialists, labor unionists and Christians forgot their ideals, their principles and their vows. The Socialists became nationalists first, and Socialists second; the labor unionists became "patriots" first, and labor unionists second, and the Christians became soldiers first, and Christians second. The Socialists re-

puated internationalism, the labor unionists forgot the solidarity of labor, and the Christians discarded the "Prince of Peace" and embraced the war god of Mammon. Because nationalism was exalted above all else, Europe is one vast charnel-house, soaked with blood, reeking with the stench of putrid human bodies, scarred by trenches and shell, while famine and pestilence rages throughout the continent, kindling the fires of misery and hunger maddened revolt.

The ten million dead men who rot on the battlefields of Europe were nationalists "first" and Socialists, labor unionists and Christians "second." God knows they have paid in blood and death for placing nationalism above internationalism the solidarity of labor and the creed of Jesus Christ.

Can we Americans learn a lesson from the fate of our brothers and sisters in Europe, or must we, too, wallow in human blood and putrid human flesh. Must we endure the fires of the bankers, food speculators, and ammunition makers.

I am not pro-English; not pro-German; not pro-American; I am pro-working-class! Kier Hardie, sleeping beneath the heather of Scotland; Jean Jaures, dead by an assassin's hand; Karl Liebknecht, in a German prison, and Rosa Luxemburg, in her dungeon cell, are nearer and dearer to me than Rockefeller, Morgan, Schwab, or Dupont.

The world is my country, the workers are my countrymen, peace and social justice are my creeds, and to these and these alone I owe loyalty and allegiance.—Social Revolution

THE WINNING OF THE WAR

At Home and Abroad.

(By H. M. Hyndman).

We have arrived at the most serious crisis of the whole war. Owing to the imbecility, malfeasance, and worse, of our own government, before and since hostilities commenced, this stupendous struggle, which is in truth "the suicide of the white race," has lasted at least ten months longer than it need have done. If the British navy had not been deliberately hampered in its legitimate action by Mr. Asquith, Viscount Grey, and the foreign office, Germany would have sued for peace last year. The holocaust of men unnecessarily killed and wounded by this weakness or treachery calls for justice.

What we have still to do—though Mr. Asquith's coalition administration does not seem to recognize it—is to win. We have also to take care that after all the terrific sacrifices made to ensure victory, this nation and its allies are not cajoled into a ruinous peace. To say that the people of this country have confidence in our present rulers is ridiculous. They have not. Each day that passes they have less. There lies the real danger. Doubt and distrust are everywhere, and are spreading even to the men fighting at the front.

The navy is splendid. The army is splendid. The nation as a whole is splendid. Only the "politicians" are rotten all through. The war if lost, or not won, will have been given away for us at home.

Yet in spite of our government and its mismanagement, in spite even of the miserable fate of Roumania, Germany is being beaten. General Brusiloff says so, General Joffre thinks so, our own soldiers and sailors believe so. The greatest menace to modern civilization since the Ottoman Turks were defeated under the walls of Vienna is being crushed down—slowly but surely. But unless we common Englishmen insist upon vigour and determination, honesty and straightforwardness from our caucus of mediocrities at the top, the noblest of our race from the United Kingdom and our Colonies who have fought and fallen in the cause of freedom will have fought and fallen in vain. "Nous sommes trahis!"—we are be-

trayed!—cried the French in 1870. Englishmen foolishly laughed. But betrayed they were, as was afterwards conclusively proved.

Let us take care that we do not awaken too late to find that we also have men and women in control among us who prefer their faction to their country and sacrifice their patriotism to their pockets.

Now is the time for one great, persistent, determined and organized national effort. The future of Democracy and Socialism for more than a full generation are at stake. I for one hope the New Year will see all Socialists and all common Englishmen combined in one great organization of the whole people, under competent and upright leadership, to secure victory over militarism and the triumph of democratic Socialism in this and other lands.—The Clarion, England, December 8, 1917.

PROSPERITY AND STRIKES.

It should appear curious to those who do not study economic causes and effects that the more prosperous a country is under the capitalist system the more discontented are the working class who produce that prosperity. This is an anomaly indeed and yet to the student of economics there is nothing strange about it.

The reports of the United States Bureau of Labor show that during the first nine months of the year 1915 there were 916 strikes and lockouts and that during the first nine months of the year 1916 the number had increased to 2,584.

The prosperity of 1916, if such it can ever be truly called in the present system, was far greater than that of 1915.

Stage Employes' Union, No. 81, has and in fact greater by far than ever before in the history of the country. This abnormal state of affairs was of course produced by the European war. The exports from this country to foreign markets for 1916 aggregated more than seven billion dollars, or an average of more than five hundred million dollars per month.

Of course with such enormous exports of the country's products, coupled with the monopoly control of what remains for the domestic market, the high cost of living is easily accounted for, and the high cost of living has more than absorbed the paltry increase in wages which has been granted, and as a consequence, the workers are not only not better off, but actually worse off than they were before their wages were increased and the cost of living more than offset the increase, and hence the multiplication of strikes and lockouts in all the principal industries of the land.

In the year 1916, by far the most prosperous in the history of the country, there were nearly three times as many strikes and lockouts as there were in the preceding year of 1915, when prosperity was just getting its start and the wage increases had not yet taken place nor the cost of living mounted to the incredible altitude which it now occupies.

All of which simply means that prosperity for the working class is a fraud, a delusion and a false pretense under the capitalist system. The real prosperity is exclusively enjoyed by the capitalist class who pocket the swelling profits while the workers continue at their slavish tasks for shelter and shoddy and provender enough to feed their labor power and keep it alive.

Socialism, the collective ownership of industry and production for the benefit of the workers will bring real prosperity to the country and bring it for all who are willing to do their share to earn it.—American Socialist.

The force back of every great change in the form of society has been necessity—the necessity of securing a living. It is this necessity to-day that is forcing the masses to accept Socialism.