

Liberator

October, 1920

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A BAEDEKER THRU AMERICA

"Here is a book-trade 'scoop' without equal. If there are books which occasion earthquakes in literature, intellectual, moral, social earthquakes, assuredly 'The Brass Check' by Upton Sinclair is such a book. In the first place, of course, for America—since the explosion of this literary forty-two centimeter shell takes place in the land between Washington and Frisco, between New Orleans and Milwaukee. But the book should also be translated into German, and that better to-day than to-morrow. It will assuredly give the German reader a sensation. . . . Sinclair's book is detective novel, picture of manners, pamphlet, leading article and social program all at once. Perhaps it is more detective novel and picture of manners than all the rest. The poet in Upton Sinclair is so powerful that if it does not entirely crush the thinker and reformer, it yet knocks him flat, at least so far as concerns the reader's whipped-up and quivering nerve interest. The Sherlock Holmes novels are, if Conan Doyle will forgive me, empty and tedious stuff beside these blood-warm anecdotes, stories, adventures, torn with tiger-claws out of a fulness of life most genially comprehended. One theme with incomparable intensity they all illuminate, turn about and prove—the monstrous machinery of propaganda, the news service and press-being of America. Truth becomes falsehood, falsehood truth; reason becomes madness, benefit becomes injury, and vice versa. . . . Upton Sinclair deals with names, only with names, with balances, with figures, with documents, a truly stunning, gigantic fact-material. His book is an armored military train, which with rushing pistons roars thru the jungle of American monster-lies, whistling, roaring, shooting, chopping off with Berserker rage the obscene heads of these evils. A breath-taking, clutching, frightful book."

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UPTON SINCLAIR, Pasadena, California.





"Write it over again, George, as follows---"

THE LIBERATOR

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October, 1920

I Change My Mind A Little

By Robert Minor

WHEN I came out of Russia a little more than a year and a half ago, my understanding of the Russian revolution was far from clear. I thought I understood it; everybody thinks he does when he comes out of Russia. But few do, and I must class myself almost with those who, like Bertrand Russell, Mrs. Philip Snowden and some of the German Independent Socialists, went to Russia, measured the Soviet regime by a preconceived standard, found it did not fit the standard, and, with the very best of intentions, returned home to spread a very damaging misconception.

I came back declaring, in France, England and America, that the working class of all countries must at any cost compel the lifting of the blockade and the withdrawal of military expeditions against Soviet Russia. But when it came to unqualifiedly endorsing the Bolshevik regime, I was silent or hinted that I must make reservations; and in one instance I made a very bad journalistic blunder which capitalist journalism was able to distort into a still worse form.

I have more recently come to the conclusion that there is something more important than to save Soviet Russia. It is to *understand* Soviet Russia. Or, one might say, the only effective way to save Soviet Russia is to understand it. I have in the past misunderstood Soviet Russia and have unconsciously spread my misunderstanding to others, even while conducting a public speaking campaign against intervention.

And to those who read my early articles and heard my speeches, I owe a public acknowledgment and explanation of my mistake. I can best accomplish that by publishing fully my former objections to the Bolshevik regime. I have never before made a full statement of these objections, because they would have had the effect of raising factional differences among defenders of the revolution, to the damage of the Labor Republic in peril. I can publish them now because I repudiate them.

1. I thought that in the early days of the revolution

Lenin and his party had diluted their Marxian philosophy with Anarchist tactics, which the needs of the revolution demanded; I thought that the overthrow of the Russian bourgeois government was in fair accord with the Anarchist tactic and in violent disaccord with Marxism.

2. I thought that, having won a commanding position by a victorious use of Anarchist tactics, Lenin and Trotzky began to settle down into their old Social-Democratic habits of thought; that they began to desert the anarchistic theories of their first enthusiasm and to conserve their own power by sinking back into the position of the conventional "Marxian" parties of the world.

3. That in arrogating all power to an iron central authority, sapping the power of the once locally autonomous soviets, the Bolshevik leaders had destroyed the roots of the revolution and the only hope of real communism in Russia.

4. That a course of compromise, which began as early as the Brest-Litovsk treaty, had led inevitably to the eradication of the original form of locally or industrially autonomous soviets, and to the crystalizing of a police bureaucracy, to military conscription, to the extinction of press freedom, to the repression of parties more revolutionary than the Bolsheviks, and into alliances with the bourgeoisie of their own country and foreign countries.

5. That the revolution had stagnated into a State Socialism sadly resembling the bourgeois governments of the world, with which it could now have no legitimate quarrel; that foreign capital would accept the offers of concessions and agreements with the Bolshevik government.

6. That the Russian State bureaucracy and an army under old-time Tzarist officers, disciplined more thoroughly than any other army ever was, would enforce upon the Russian workers and peasants the agreements made with foreign capital, thus bringing an end to most of what was good in the Russian revolution.

While holding those opinions I made a tour of the United States, addressing mass meetings. My position was that as the sole purpose of attacks upon Soviet Russia was to punish Labor for expropriating capital, we must defend Russia as representing the cause of Labor.

There was a strange disappointment to me in this speaking tour. The meetings had all the external appearance of success. But behind the cheers and in the sea of upturned faces I could read that there was something lacking in what I had to tell them. After months of meetings, I began to learn that the working masses wanted something more than to "save Soviet Russia." They wanted to *understand* Soviet Russia. Slowly I began to sense in the Labor masses a current as profound as the tides of the sea. I was bothered with the elusive impression that a great natural law was at work which I did not understand.

It was plain that the Russian revolution had set this current in motion, and that its form was pre-determined somewhere in the origin of the race. It was as pure a natural phenomenon as the breathing of the human lungs, and it could not be changed or influenced in the slightest degree except that it could be accelerated or let alone. My explanation of the Russian revolution did not explain all that the workers wanted to know; my reservations didn't register.

There couldn't be anything the matter with a natural law, so I thought there must be something the matter with me. I settled down in an out-of-the-way place to study and to discover what was the matter with my understanding of the Russian revolution. I took with me the three heavy volumes of Marx's "Capital."

While I was wading into the first volume of "Capital," someone handed me an English translation of Lenin's pamphlet, "The State and Revolution."

Bakunin or Marx?

The reading of that pamphlet was an event of my life, I read it four times. To my astonishment it contains a full outline of the program which the Bolshevik government has pursued to this day—written three months before the Bolshevik revolution. To my bewilderment I had to admit that Lenin had not preached one doctrine before his accession to power and a different doctrine afterward.

Finding Lenin's pamphlet partly based upon Frederick Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," I remembered with chagrin that I had not read that book. I read it and it struck my conceptions another blow, even harder than had Lenin's work. I found Engels exposing the origin, the character and the inevitable abolition of the State, more clearly and "radically" than any Anarchist had ever to my knowledge exposed and condemned the State.

I plunged into a long course of reading guided by the quotations in Lenin's booklet.

I re-read the "Communist Manifesto" of 1847 which, long ago, I had read sandwiched in between the works of reverend gentlemen who aspired to be Socialist mayors, and which I had then not understood. I noted with surprise that the first Russian translation of it was by Michael Bakunin. I find in that Manifesto a general outline in complete harmony with the tactics which were actually employed by the Bolsheviks in 1917, with the exception that the form of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was constructed by Marx twenty-four years later from the experience of the Paris Commune.

My next step was to Anarchist sources; and the first writing to come to my eye was Kropotkin's "The State; Its Historic Role," which I had read long ago. This deals with the same general subject as Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," and therefore, for comparison, I seized with lively interest Kropotkin's pamphlet. I was amazed and chagrined by the comparison. I am brought to memories of my visit to Kropotkin, "my Prophet," in Moscow in the Spring of 1918, the dark days when the Revolution staggered in the bravest fight that men have ever seen, under the heaviest blows that the world has ever rained upon the prostrate defenders of an ideal. I found Kropotkin surrounded by American Y. M. C. A. boys, who addressed him as "Prince," and his sole concern was that "Allied democracy should win." I went away sadly pondering on what could be the matter with a man who would let himself be called "Prince."

I found Kropotkin's discussion of the State hard to read after Engels'. I am forced to admit that Marx and Engels created the non-State philosophy, and Kropotkin did not even understand it.

Engels carefully traces man from the point where Darwin left him living in the trees of tropical and subtropical forests, through three stages of savagery, through three stages of *barbarism* (as distinguished very clearly from savagery), and merging into the period of Civilization with the invention of letter script and the making of written records. Engels proves that during these stages there never was a State known to any race of men. He describes in details all drawn from facts learned by the senses of sight and hearing just what form it was that the social body existed in, and just how that form differed by wide extremes from the State form. He shows that every tribe of men, whether of Europe, Asia, the heart of Africa or the American Indians, went through these stages without the slightest deviation except where the absence of iron ore or of domesticable animals made inevitable a deviation or an arrest of growth.

Then he brings man into Civilization (dealing here only with undisputed records) and proves that nowhere

on earth was a State or a king known until after private property accumulations began—a considerable time after Civilization began. Only after accumulations of private property had divided men into the wealthy and the poor, and the wealthy required the State to secure their wealth. He shows how and why “special bodies of armed men”—armies and police—did not exist until a wealthy class and a poor class existed and the State was formed for the sole purpose of subjecting the poor class. He shows that monogamy was not known until the advent of private property, how and why the family with a male head was formed where it was unknown before, and how and why the male came to be the property possessor.

When I have finished with the two booklets I realize that Engels has by cold scientific method proven the origin and the function of the State and the necessity and certainty of its elimination, while Kropotkin has given no coherent account of the subject whatever.

And so I have to admit that I was mistaken in saying that Lenin had diluted his Marxian philosophy with anarchism.

The State

So much for the writers, for the time being. Now let me revert to my own observations in the actual Russian revolution. Principles aside, there is nothing more certain to me now than that Pilsudski, Yudenich, Koltchak and Lloyd George would long ago have obtained possession of all of Russia if the Bolsheviki had not made a centrally controlled army under rigid discipline, or had not suppressed the bourgeoisie with the means of organized, brute, police force. And, without kidding ourselves, that is simply and plainly a State, no matter what we may call it. I used to think that, better than to form this State, even the risk of the capture of Russia by Koltchak should be run. But let us see about it. Is it possible anywhere at any time to put the propertied classes out of possession without armed force? And after you have put them out, how do you keep them out? You detail yourselves on street corners with guns. Day after day, month after month, you do this, as Bill Shatoff learned (and he was brave enough to face the fact). It is the screaming irony of revolutionary history that the Revolution in its biggest city had to depend upon an Anarchist as chief of police! What is a man standing on a street corner with a gun, day in and day out, ac-



Drawn by Elias Goldberg

Some additional professors go to investigate Bolshevism

ording to a system? He's a policeman. Call him a Red Guard or a soldier or a workingman or what your inner guts may demand that you call him—but he's a policeman just the same. Bill Shatoff was an Anarchist. But he knew that workmen had to stand on street corners with guns, or the bourgeois would do it. Bill would not call it policing, but I did and I got mad. Both of us were wrong. We ought both to have called it policing as I called it, and I ought to have done it as Bill did. (I confess that I did, one night!)

As I face the proof that Marxism itself, while prescribing the tactics employed by Lenin in overthrowing Kerensky, and, aiming for a non-State society, nevertheless calls for a transitional period of Dictatorship of the Proletariat, I have to acknowledge that Lenin is not conserving his own power at the expense of “revolutionary liberty,” but is merely continuing the armed rebellion through the “hold on” stage.

After the great flash of light from Lenin's booklet—the scientifically proven possibility of a free society without State and with no man tied to a locality—the notion of “locally autonomous” soviets is pitiful in comparison. The devil of it is that I have to admit that the Anarchist conception is *more conservative* than Lenin's. The idea of autonomous local soviets seems a constrained and tight little makeshift of a semi-State, when we see Lenin striking straight for a non-State society with a clear program for getting it more quickly than any other had ever dared hope. The very rights to memberships in village farming communes and in factory communes look ludicrously like private property rights, beside

Lenin's complete and definite plan for freeing all men from ties to plots of land and from vested rights to specific jobs.

And when I blamed the Bolsheviki for signing the Brest-Litovsk treaty, I was condemning them from a lofty dogma of abstract perfection that neither I nor any other man can rationally hope to live up to. If the Bolsheviki had lived up to that abstract "principle," the world would be in a sad plight now. How ridiculous was the idea is shown when we see the Red Armies now commanding the European situation, with the hearts of all nations beating so steadily for Moscow's cause that not a nation dares openly to declare war upon it; when the object lesson of the Russian Soviet Republic (whatever its internal faults) recruits daily more thousands in all nations for the abolition of private property from the face of the earth.

Centralism and Discipline

We in America never knew "party discipline" as the present-day Russians understand it. I knew it only as a nasty little device for preventing any man from telling the whole truth lest he "endanger Comrade So-and-So's election as Alderman." Only to choke any man's effort to develop any thought or enlightenment in the mass.

When quickly transferred to the arena of life and death in Russia, I carried with me also this conception, this loathing of "party discipline" as making sure stagnation and defeat of the power to move. As I look upon it now, this was very naive of me. Was not unity of action necessary in Russia? While in Russia I persisted in thinking that enforced unity was not as valuable as the varied-group initiative which it sacrificed. (When I saw some of the idiocies of some of the small groups I wavered, but mostly I was stubborn in belief that absolute centralization of power was sure to lead to reaction. And I thought I saw the proof of the reaction in the signing of the Brest-Litovsk treaty and consequent prevention of open border raids by partisan (autonomous) regiments. But as I see the Red Armies now crossing the Polish border, and foresee a second signing of peace—peace possibly with a soviet republic of Poland—I have to say honestly that I believe I was mistaken in the matter of party discipline.

When, in the past three years, Moscow compelled the Left Socialist Revolutionists and some dissenting Anarchists to cease activities that varied from the one revolutionary program, Moscow was not repressing parties "more revolutionary" than the Communists—not more revolutionary—but more *romantic*. The Russian Anarchists should have put their talents into the one revolutionary organization, the Russian Communist Party, and have helped organize its discipline. The Communists and the Anarchists both made mistakes, but which *kind* of mistakes would have lost the revolution?

Have I not seen the wild gamut of weird mental aberrations, running like a thread of insanity through the unprecedented, the standard-wrecking events incident to the revolution? I have known a man to risk his life daily for many weeks as a volunteer for the most dangerous kind of work, which he did with unheard-of daring and intelligence up to a certain point where his mind went off on one of the inexplicable tangents that are known only to the uncharted seas of revolution. This same man then pitifully reversed his whole course and committed what amounted in its effect to an act of treason to his cause. I have personally known of five instances in quick succession of men entrusted with important tasks on "individual initiative" and "free work," who broke and betrayed. They broke and became betrayers, not because they were ill-meaning men, but because the individual mind, whether we like the fact or not, does not in all cases stand the strain alone of terrific demoralization and destruction of landmarks, which are part and parcel of a revolution. And we know that one break at a dangerous time may wreck the whole revolution. I have seriously compared the "individually free" work under the stress of the revolution, with the results obtained by rigid discipline of the revolutionary organization, and I have come to the conclusion that the revolution will come to wreck without the rigid party discipline. With the comparatively fixed landmarks of conditions in a capitalist regime, perhaps sometimes the free initiative of individuals has in value outweighed the advantages of "party discipline," but experience has forced me to reject individual and sub-division initiative as an a priori principle to be carried into the storm and wreckage of the actual revolution.

I only wish now that I had been subject to "party discipline" when I made a certain journalistic blunder.

Dictatorship

The question of freedom of the press and the question of police and political bureaucracy, and civil and military conscription, are all really parts of the question of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. The dictatorship of the Proletariat is not liberty, nor an instrument of liberty. It is tyranny. It is a State.

We can get nowhere in discussion of the State unless we are clear on this point. Any organized, armed, centrally controlled force is a State. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is organized, armed, centrally controlled force.

The dictatorship upholds itself by the means of "special bodies of armed men." Any special body of armed men, whatever we may wish to call it, is a police or military body. (We say "special bodies of armed men," as distinguished from an arming of everybody indiscriminately.)

Therefore, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat is a

State, controlling an entire population by police and military.

Communism is impossible where a State exists.

A State has but one way of functioning—by curtailing liberty. To say that the State is strong is to say that liberty is weak.

The Anarchist worships Liberty; therefore he is indomitably opposed to the State.

I think I have here stated the cause of the disagreement of the Anarchist-Communists with the Bolshéviki-Communists.

The answer is that in any society where there are two classes one will rule the other by an iron dictatorship. When the bourgeois class was the stronger economically, the bourgeois class could rule by its economic strength and could afford to let the State power lapse into leniency. Now, after the war, we find the working class the strongest class on the economic field, and the bourgeois class has to revive the brute force of the State to enable it to win against the working class. The working class press used to be beaten by the economic power of the bourgeois, and the police power was only occasionally called in to suppress the workers' newspapers. Now the bourgeois State subjects the workers' papers to rigid police censorship or suppresses them with heavy force. That's what dictatorship is. It uses force just in proportion to the amount of opposition it encounters. To deny either dictatorship the right to suppress, is to let the other dictatorship triumph. Any dictatorship suppresses anything that does not support the dictatorship. We have the example in Palmer's and Burleson's dictatorship, which exterminates any workers' journal that it cannot censor down to the degraded position of supporting bourgeois parliamentary "democracy."

The proletarian dictatorship does exactly the same: it suppresses every force that does not support the dictatorship.

I thought I foresaw that even if private property were abolished in Russia, there would remain a dictatorship—a ruling class. A bureaucratic class, a "commissar class." When I heard the Bolsheviks in Moscow say that the State would disappear with the completion of the revolution, I nodded my head sagely and said, "Yes, I can imagine this set of iron-handed bureaucrats voluntarily giving up power!"

At the time I did not know what the State was. I had spent years in Bakunin's train, with denunciations—but no analysis, hating the State, but never understanding what it was, is. Now I have learned what it is from Frederick Engels. And in learning what the State is, I have learned the startling truth that by its very nature and source, the State cannot exist and never did exist except while there are two classes distinguished by a difference in property.

I used to hold the opinion that the State results from

the ambition of men to rule, and that some form of domination of man by man, through force, had existed as long as the race. I realized that private property could not exist without the State, but I thought that the State could exist without private property. I had read from bourgeois writers and Kropotkin (see "The State; Its Historic Role") of "barbarian kings" and "savage rulers" where there was no private property, and I did not know that there never was a king or any political ruler where there was not a propertied class to protect and a propertiless class to suppress.

In perfect orthodoxy I thought that the State was made by the inherent egoism of men—the will to rule.

It sounds very much like "original sin," doesn't it.

There's a strong suspicion of priestcraft there.

Let us look for a conception of the origin of the State that is different from the orthodox conception of bourgeois ideology. There is but one. It is Marx's, Engels' and Lenin's.

As long as there are two classes, one will rule the other with as much brute force as is necessary to break the other. Bourgeois dictatorship aspires to rule forever. Proletarian dictatorship can only last as long as there remains a class distinction. When there remains no class that is conscious of its lost private property rights, the proletarian State will disappear and there will no longer be the physical possibility of a State. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat will last as long as there is a bourgeois with a gun or a hope.

How We Get That Way

I am not content without tracing to the roots the cause of the limitation of my knowledge of Marxism. Why did I not know? Here is the explanation, as far as I can make it:

In my first days of "studying Socialism," I, like any other American, went naively to what is called the Socialist Party. Well I remember the dingy little printing office book store in St. Louis! There were sold to me pamphlets and books listed under the head of Socialism Made Easy. The Principles of Marxism Made Plain, by the Reverend So-and-So; How Socialists Would Administer the City Government for the Benefit of the Public; Socialism and the Church, by the Reverend Father McGrady; Marxism made easy by Ferdinand La Salle (with no hint that Marx denounced La Salle as a charlatan!); Socialism by Kautsky; Socialism by the Reverend C. H. Vale; Socialism by Spargo; Socialism by Charles Edward Russell.

I drifted on the winds of adolescent idealism into the Socialist Party, Local St. Louis. I shall never forget one evening when I attended a "mass meeting" in a little hall on the South Side. Oscar Ameringer spoke long and fervently to repel the charges that Socialism would break up the family or oppose Christianity or do any

dishonest thing, as we should see if we would only elect a Socialist Board of Aldermen. I always got tired and sleepy at meetings and prodded myself with a sense of duty to the cause to stick it out, with one eye on the door so as to get away first as soon as it should be all over. I was almost the first one out this time, hurrying down the stairs alone. At the dark exit I was halted by a shabby little man who handed me a very small square of paper and then darted away in the dark. Under the street light on the next corner I read the paper. It was a leaflet signed "Anarchist Group," and it described "A Plan for Capturing Arsenals and Strategic Points of a City and Holding them against the Police" in just about the manner in which the Bolsheviks were destined in 1917 to capture Petrograd. How silly, I thought. As though any sensible man could imagine the possibility or utility of that! How much better and saner was the Reverend Charles H. Vale's explanation of the honest and lawful Marxian plan of getting the workers to elect Socialists! But that little "Anarchist" contradiction to "Marx" stuck in my memory and would not drop through all the years. When I saw it in practice in Russia, is it any wonder that I said, "This is an anarchist tactic?"

Thus the struggle within the revolutionary and semi-revolutionary ranks in America had resolved itself into the question, "radical or conservative." The socialistic and the anarchistic ranks had not reached a much closer

distinction of tactical divisions than "radical" and "conservative"—which were used as synonymous with "direct action" and "political action," or "anti-State" and "State."

As soon as I had passed through the first inevitably naive stage of accepting face values, my nature impelled me to the "radical" side. I had to repel the idea of the State, I had to throw off the Reverend C. H. Vale's "Scientific Socialism" and Father McGrady's "Religion-is-a-private-matter" and "Socialism-saves-the-family." I had to chuck La Salle's Marxism-made-easy. I did not know then that the Socialist Party was one huge machine for lying about Socialism.

I went "radical." The first people I heard repudiate the State, denounce the Church, and denounce marriage-slavery were the Anarchists.

Nearly every American with the spirit to resent the notion of living forever under State paternalism and the soundness of mind and heart to denounce mass superstition, drew his first comfort from the words of Anarchists. Probably the best mass of them, with communistic instinct, went to the I. W. W., with its philosophic background of Bakunin and Johann Most.

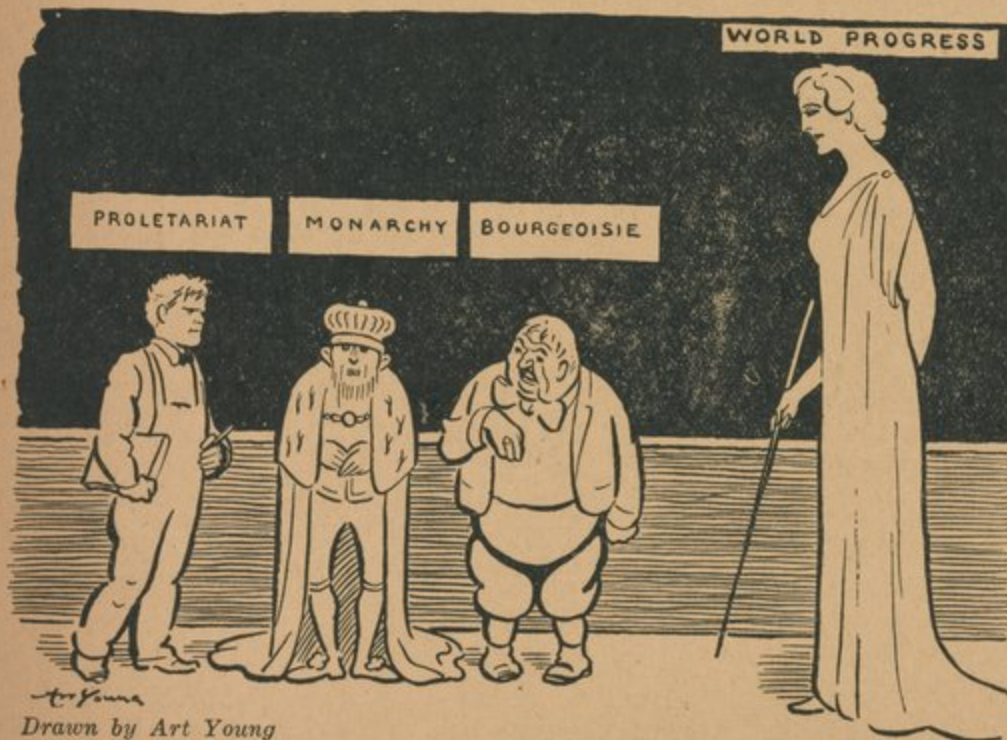
To my surprise I find it stated clearly by the infinitely wise man, Nickolai Lenin:

"Ministers and professional politicians, 'practical' Socialists and traitors of the proletariat of today have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully intelligent ground, denounce all criticism of parliamentarism as 'an-

archism.' It is indeed not surprising that the proletariat of the most advanced countries, being disgusted with such 'Socialists' as Messrs. Scheidemann, David, Legien, Sembat, Renaudel, Henderson, Vandervelde, Stauning, Branting, Bissolati & Co., have been giving their sympathies more and more to Anarcho-Syndicalism, in spite of the fact that it is but the twin brother of Opportunism."

"The usual criticism of the Anarchists by the modern Social-Democrats has been reduced to the purest middle-class triviality: 'We, forsooth, recognize the State, whereas the Anarchists do not.' Naturally such trivialities cannot but repel any revolutionary workingmen who think at all."

I would refer to the "Philosophical Essays" of Joseph Dietzgen, the personal friend of



Drawn by Art Young

"Jimmie, take the head of the class. You can certainly do better than this doddering imbecile."

Marx, who, you will remember, in defiance of his fellow "Social-Democrats," took over the editorship of the Anarchist paper in Chicago during the 1886 tragedy. This man was a tower of cool intelligence and bravery almost entirely overlooked here in America, where the Kautskians avoided him as a leper for his position as stated in these words: "While the anarchists may have mad and brainless individualists in their ranks, the socialists have an abundance of cowards. For this reason I care as much for the one as the other. The majority in both camps are still in great need of education, and this will bring about a reconciliation in good time."

It is time for that reconciliation. We of both factions are the debris of the split of the First International.

It is reasonable to assume that we, being men, not gods, have made some mistakes. And it is likely that the *kind* of mistakes we have made is some kind that leaked in on us from the surrounding welter of commerce, politics and priestcraft.

If the "Social-Democrats" have been tainted with the ideology of politics, the trades-unions the ideology of commerce, maybe we have accepted—

Well—a faint trace of the ideology of priestcraft.

I take up again Bakunin's "God and the State." Its first paragraph is a perfunctory acceptance of Marx's materialist conception of history, and then he dismisses science and plunges into metaphysics.

What does it mean that I find a powerful analysis and destructive repudiation of the State from the pen of Engels, in the method of Darwin and of the sciences upon which we all depend, and from the pen of Kropotkin and Bakunin only an unexplained disapproval in which my honest faculties force me to recognize the old metaphysical style of moralizing and anathema?

In Kropotkin's booklet, "The State, its Historic Role," I find the expression, "absolute liberty." I think that phrase fixes a large part of the difference between the Anarchists and the Bolsheviks. So let us define "absolute liberty."

But when it comes to defining it, I cannot do it. What is "absolute liberty"? I am at a disadvantage, because I have never seen or felt it or any manifestation of it. Maybe you can help me, if you have ever seen absolute liberty. But I don't think you ever did. I think that if you try to define absolute liberty, you will find yourself strangely in about the same position as in trying to describe an angel.

Absolute liberty is one of the things that do not and never did, and cannot exist.

If we are shaping our life and acts by the thought of *things that do not exist*, then the priest has done his work well. Then we will be inefficient. When you begin to weigh a question, in what manner do you approach it? What is the measuring rule that you take to your mind? Is it your Anarchist ideal? Is your An-

archist ideal Freedom? Liberty? Or Absolute Liberty?

I am afraid you are talking about an angel.

Let us test it by seeing how it works out in practice. What is the purpose of the priest when he induces you to follow spooks instead of reality? I think it is that when you follow non-existent things you don't do any harm to your oppressors.

Let us see then what has been the concrete effect of this priestly worship of a non-existent absolute freedom. Thousands of Anarchists, the most vital men of resource and action, after having supported the initiation of the revolution, are now, during the Proletarian Dictatorship, sullenly resentful of what they consider a reaction. How do the Communist parties get their recruits? Mostly by skimming the already skimmed milk of the "Socialist" parties. The Third International will not acquire its natural vitality while the men of Anarchist training stay out.

I don't know whether the rumors are true that the Anarchist military leader Makhno, with a following of 75,000 soldiers, remained idle in Southern Russia, refusing to go to the Polish front because they, who favored the locally autonomous soviets, could not support the centralized Bolshevik State. But, if the story is true, it means that the Soviet Red Army was defeated in Poland when the 75,000 men idle in the South with Makhno might have saved it. Makhno was governed by loyalty to a non-existent thing, not by a calculation of material results.

I think Makhno was following an angel.

I think it is time to be done with this priestcraft.

Liberty does not exist except in material living and *limited* by material things. Not absolute, but limited, not abstract in the ideal, but concrete in fact.

What strange power has Lenin? Why does every adversary, one by one, fall before him? Why do they all undergess him? Why do all European governments falter and waver between courses, losing their hold on half "their" populations, till Lenin can say to Lloyd George, "I command more men in England than you command"? Why is he the leader of the only nation that can dare to order its population into war?

The answer is that Lenin is a scientist in an unscientific world. Capitalism by its nature must follow its mad militarists into combat with Soviet Russia, like moths to a flame.

And, for the rest that I have to say, it is written in Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," in the "Communist Manifesto" of 1847, in "The State and Revolution" by Lenin, in the letters from Marx to Bakunin; and it echoes in the tread of the Red Armies now marching through Europe for the welfare of you and me.

I withdraw every reservation that I made in my praise of the Russian Soviet Republic.

Rosa Luxembourg to Sonia Liebknecht

(We are privileged to publish for the first time in English this rarely beautiful letter written by Rosa Luxembourg to the wife of Karl Liebknecht from the Breslau Prison, in December, 1917.)

IT is a year now that Karl lies in the Luckau. I have often thought of it this month. And exactly a year ago you were with me in Wronke, shared your beautiful Christmas tree with me.

It is my third Christmas in my cell, but don't take it tragically. I am as calm and joyous as ever. Last night I lay awake a long time—I can never sleep nowadays before one o'clock, but have to be in bed by ten, then dream all sorts of things in the darkness.

Last night, then, I thought how remarkable it is that I live always in a joyous intoxication without any particular reason. So, for instance, I lie here in the dark cell on a mattress hard as stone. About me in the building reigns the usual deathly stillness. One imagines one's self entombed. A light-spot from the lantern which burns before the prison all night long, patterns itself on the ceiling. Now and then I hear the muffled vibration of a train passing in the distance, or, very near, beneath the window, the throaty cough of the guard as he takes half a dozen slow steps in his heavy boots to ease his stiff legs. The sand crunches so hopelessly under this footfall, that the whole desolation and inescapability of existence ring through the damp, dark night.

So I lie alone, quietly, wrapped in the manifold black sheath of winter—the darkness, the boredom, the unfreedom of it—and yet my heart beats with an unknown, incomprehensible, inner joy, as though I walked through meadows in radiant sunlight. And in the darkness I lie smiling on life, as though I knew some secret charm which would give the lie to everything that is mean and dreary, turning it into sheer radiance and joy. And all this time I search within me for the cause of this joy, find nothing, and have to smile again at myself. I believe the secret is nothing but life itself; the impenetrable darkness is as beautifully smooth as velvet, if one will only see it rightly. And in the grinding of the wet sand under the slow, heavy footfall of the guard, there rises a wonderful song of life—if one only knows how to listen. In such moments I think of you, and wish I might share this magic key with you, so that you might always, and under all conditions, realize the beauty and the fullness of life, that you might live in the same intoxication, walking as through meadows. I do not mean to tempt you to asceticism and to imaginary joys. I welcome for you all real joys of the senses. It is only that I would give you, if I could, my inexhaustible inward cheer; that I might know that you walked through life

wrapped in a star-embroidered cloak, sheltering you from all that is small and trivial and disheartening.

* * * * *

O, Sonitchka, I recently suffered a keen anguish here. In the court where I go walking military trucks often come, packed full with bags of soldiers' coats and shirts, often blood-stained. These are unloaded here, distributed among the cells, mended, then reloaded and returned to the army. Recently such a wagon came, spanned with buffaloes instead of horses. For the first time I saw these animals at close range. They are more broadly and powerfully built than our cattle, with flat heads and horizontally-curved horns. The skulls are rather like those of our sheep, quite black, with great liquid eyes. They come from Roumania—war-trophies. The soldiers who drive these wagons tell that it was very difficult to catch these animals accustomed to freedom, and still more difficult to break them in for dragging loads. They were frightfully beaten, so that the term *vae victis* applies. About a hundred of these animals are said to be in Breslau alone. Moreover, accustomed to the meadows of the Roumanian uplands, they receive only miserable and scanty fodder. They are heedlessly exploited, dragging every possible burden, and so quickly perish.

Several days ago a wagon laden with bags came in so heavily loaded that the buffaloes were unable to pass the threshold of the portal. The soldier who was driving, a brutal fellow, began belaboring the beasts with the thick end of his whip, until the prison-superintendent, outraged, called him to task, asking whether he had no compassion for the animals. "No one has any compassion for us men either," he answered, with an ugly laugh, and went on more brutally still.

At last the beasts drew up over the hill, but one was bleeding. . . . Sonitchka, the hide of the buffalo is proverbially tough, and even this was bleeding. During the unloading, the beasts stood quite still, exhausted, and the one that bled looked before him with the expression, over his black face and in his dark, soft eyes, of a weeping child. It was exactly the look of a child which has been severely punished, and knows not why; knows not how to escape the brutal violence and the agony of it. I stood before him, and the beast looked upon me. My tears rolled down. His own tears they were. One cannot for his dearest brother, quiver in anguish greater than I, in my helplessness, did at this mute woe. How far, how utterly beyond reach, lost, the free, opulent, pastures of Roumania! How otherwise the sun shone there, the winds blew! How otherwise were the bird-song and the musical calls of the herdsmen! And here—this alien, hideous town, the dank stables, the nauseat-



Drawn by Cornelia Barns

Their Trip to Europe

ing hay, mingled with rotting straw; strange, terrible men, and blows—the blood running from the fresh wound. . . . O buffalo, brother, we two stand together here, so helpless under the yoke—one only in our suffering, our impotence, our longing.

Meanwhile, the prisoners busied themselves about the wagon, unloaded the heavy bags, and dragged them into the building. The soldier pushed his hands into his pockets, strutted across the court, grinned, and whistled a popular song. And the whole glorious war passed before me. . . .

Soniusha, darling, be calm and of good cheer in spite of all. This is life, and we must accept it—brave, undismayed, and smiling.

ROSA LUXEMBOURG.

HILLS

I WISH I were as patient as the hills
 That look upon the busy town all day,
 Behold the people and the people's homes,
 And never have an evil word to say,
 Though what they sometimes see God only knows;
 The hills that stand so fair and proud when snow
 Has come and boys slide down their great wide breasts,
 And streams they suffer to pass to and fro,
 Are strings of pearls; the moon-kissed hills that watch
 The town's old actors finish out their scene.
 I wish I were as patient as these hills,
 As quietly observing and serene.

William Troy.

“Now That You’ve Got the Vote---

WHAT are you going to do with it?”

That question is being asked at a great many dinner tables. It is being asked in a tone of quizzical amusement, which masks a secret masculine perturbation. And it is generally answered with a polite but weary smile. “What is the use to tell them?” is the thought behind the smile. “We’ve told them so often, and they can’t get it through their heads. Anyway, we’ve got them guessing!”

There is a reason for the widespread masculine inability to understand women’s plans for their political future. The reason is that men have a notion of their own as to what women are going to do—a notion so strongly ingrained that no arguments can remove it. They think they *know* what women are going to do with the ballot.

And what they think it is, is enough to bring a laugh from the most war-worn suffragist. Yes, accustomed as the woman militant is to the oddities of the masculine mind, familiarized as she has been by experience in lobbies and court rooms with the quaint and freakish twists and turns of the male intellect, the revelation of the real secret of man’s attitude toward woman’s enfranchisement never fails to seem to her irresistibly comic.

But men take it quite seriously—*it* being their own notion of what women are going to do with the vote. In spite of what women may say, they still hold to it. That is why they have so stubbornly opposed woman suffrage.

And what is this masculine notion? Simply this: that women are—I mean, that women will—that is—No, I can’t come right out with it. It sounds too silly. I shall have to preamble about it a little first.

You see, most men begin their lives as children. And their first consciousness of Woman is as The Boss. She may be at times a delightful playmate, and again at times a superior and divine being; but she is essentially the Boss of the Home. Father comes in and interferes, distributes rewards and punishments capriciously, and makes himself respected and envied. But Mother is always on the job. She tells our infant citizen what he can and can’t do. She makes him wash behind the ears. She forbids him to go with the other boys to the ol’ swimmin’ hole. She won’t allow him to use slang, and scrubs his mouth with soap when he attempts a manly

swear-word. She tells him fighting is wicked. She won’t let him play marbles for keeps. She teaches him “pretty manners.” She makes him go to Sunday School. She wants him, in short, to be a Nice Boy.

He escapes with relief into a masculine world in which he can do as he pleases. When he marries, he comes under the feminine yoke again, but only—he thanks heaven—within the walls of his home. There is still the great rowdy, vulgar, exciting man’s world outside.

Politics has always been a part of that man’s world. He doesn’t want it spoiled by the intrusion of women. But that isn’t all. Politics is a small part of life for the ordinary man. What he is really afraid of is that women are going to spoil it all. They are going to run everything and everybody. Life generally is going to be nice and clean and pretty—and, O sorrowing Satan!—pure! No card-playing! No horse-racing! No boozing! No wenching! No naughty plays or books or pictures! No anything—except just work, and good manners and clean clothes and nice language, and saving your money, and being everlastingly good. . . .

It might be asked by a disinterested observer from Mars where men got such an idea of women, and how they can reconcile it with their everyday observations of the sex. Why should they think women so frightfully better than themselves? The answer is that Mother was that way. She had all the virtues—and she enforced them. This original impression of womankind, one deeply cherished by every male, seems to be stronger than any subsequent impression. A particular woman may be devilish enough; but Woman is divine—she is a terrible and efficient angelic guardian of man—an Angel Boss.

Who can wonder that poor, lazy, quarrelsome, sensual, vulgar, ordinary well-meaning men should resent the idea of turning their whole lives over to the rule of such a terrible and perfect creature?

It is not a question of admitting woman to *equality*. Equality fiddlesticks! Is a mother the “equal” of her little boy? No, by George, that boy’s only chance to have a say-so of his own is to sneak off to the place where the gang hangs out. If Mother were once admitted to equality there, it would be just like back at home. You see, a Mother is a Mother. Her function is mothering. She mothers everything. There’s no stop-

ping her. Give her a vote, and she'll mother the whole world!

That—and I cross my heart and hope to die if it isn't absolutely true—is the reason why men have opposed giving women the vote.

Why, then, *did* they give it to her? For the same reason, precisely. What Mother asks, she will have. She calls, "Willie! Wil-lie! Will-e-e-e!"—and the most hardened truant, hearing, blanches. He may pretend not to hear, but he can't stick it out. Finally he comes slinking home. "Were you calling me, mother?" he asks innocently—and does what he is told. The politicians asserted that the conduct of the militant suffragists was "unwomanly." But well they knew, every man of them that ever had a mother, how darn womanly it was.

And not only the politicians, but ordinary men, think these things. And they think also, "Well, why not? She's bound to run things anyway." Yes, even the men who voted for suffrage think that women are going to mother and boss and clean-up the social scheme. They conceive this feminine bossing chiefly in terms of "Don'ts." And they are reconciled to it. After all, they feel, we have to be bossed by women. We can't take care of ourselves properly. It'll be best for us in the long run.

In fact, if women don't proceed now to interfere with masculine habits, there is going to go up a vast sigh from masculine mankind—a sigh at once of relief and of disappointment. We like to be Mothered, truth to tell, and are never quite happy unless we are being led, squalling and protesting, upward and on by the Eternal Bossing Feminine.

And if women have taken all that trouble to get the vote *just for our sake*, as we instinctively feel—if they are really intent on regulating and censoring and prettifying our masculine existences, there is quite a lot of work to be done.

Take—no, take cigarettes. We smoke a great deal too many of them—I know I do. And we will never have the moral stamina to stop, of ourselves. Obviously, the only thing to do is take them away from us. And if women in their embattled might, roused like lions after slumber, in unvanquishable number, put through the proper legislation, we will submit meekly if grumblingly. We shall even vote for the anti-cigarette law, if ordered.

And so on. There are lots of things that can be taken away from us which we would be better—much better—off without. And if women are concerned solely with our masculine welfare—as we men-children naturally expect them to be—their political activity will be a series of stern and motherly prohibitions.

But it is just possible that women are not thinking of men's welfare in connection with their new political powers. Perhaps they do not want to institute a beneficent maternalism. Perhaps they do not want to tie men

to their apron-strings. Perhaps they want to untie those apron-strings from themselves!

Woman's political powers can indubitably be used to enslave men; and men, unquestionably, will stand for it. These same political powers can, on the other hand, be used to emancipate women. It is doubtful if men would quite like that; but the question has never been raised with them—they have simply never dreamed of such a thing.

Yet perhaps women do not like the role of mother well enough to wish to increase its burdens. Perhaps their babies are enough trouble to them as it is, without their trying to reduce all masculine mankind to a similar state of infantile dependence. Perhaps they are tired of saying "Don't!"

Yes, it may be that they will use the vote to help themselves become persons in the great world of work and adventure and effort outside the home. The one thing more than any other which now hampers their personal enterprise is the fact that motherhood is made a disability in the world of work. Once they have children, they are expected to stay at home and take care of them, forever and ever, amen. And when they retire from the great outside world in which they have been earning a living, when they do devote themselves to the career of motherhood, they find that it is a non-paying job. For doing something in an office or a factory, they are rewarded with a sum in a pay-envelope every week. But when they have children, they get nothing whatever for it. This may possibly, from the feminine point of view, seem like laying it on a bit thick.

They may very reasonably ask of the world an equal chance with men in doing interesting work of all kinds, and equal pay for doing it. In these matters, as they may find, the vote will not help them so much as economic organization; but all the same it may come in handy at odd times.

They may very reasonably demand that motherhood should not be a bar to other employment; and here the vote can help them in certain professions where the conditions of employment can be dictated by the voters.

They may also ask that motherhood itself be given the status of socially useful work, and paid for by society as a whole with some kind of maternity subsidy.

Such a subsidy would make women freer than they are now to have children when they wish. They could have children without ceasing to earn an income, and without cutting down the income of their husbands to a point often, as things stand, beneath the danger level. As it is, only the childless working-woman can afford to have a child; when she has a child, she automatically ceases to be able to afford to do it—a rather silly state of affairs, when you stop to think about it. The vote can mend matters here very decidedly—if it is true that women want to use the vote for their own benefit.

Another thing; so long as motherhood is an accident, it will be for the vast majority of women in this world something in the nature of a tragic accident—or at least one of Nature's practical jokes in the worst possible taste. The children who "just happen" will continue to happen at the wrong time—when they can scarcely be fed or clothed. These chance-comers, after a little stay in such a discouraging world, with milk at 22 cents a quart and no money to pay for it, will lose heart in the struggle for existence, and return to the dark whence they came at the current appalling rate. If a reasonable proportion of the children that are born are to live, they must be *wanted*. At present, a romantic masculine body of lawmakers which regards the facts of birth as in some way obscene, are engaged in maintaining laws which prevent the spread of information among poor people which would enable them to control the size of their families. These masculine lawmakers have constituted themselves the guardians of the Infantile Death Rate. They won't let it be cut down. For in order to die, these unwanted children must first be born; so born they are, and die they must—and the masculine lawmakers are virtuously happy. But it may be that the women who have to bear these doomed children may think differently about it. And here again the vote will be their weapon.

For these are the chief burdens of women: the burden of involuntary motherhood; the burden of bearing and rearing children without an income; the burden of a widespread economic taboo against mothers; and the burden of unequal pay for equal work.

Against some of these conditions the vote by itself may prove no very useful weapon. But these are the conditions with which awakened womanhood is at war; these are the injustices which she will, if she wants to achieve freedom, seek to change by her vote.

If, as I say, she really wants to use the ballot for herself. But men will never believe this. And sometimes I doubt it myself. Perhaps she would rather take away my cigarettes.

FLOYD DELL.

Octobricks

THE vacation season is over, but owing to the poor mail service a lot of coal miners and street car men have not heard the news.

EGYPT is to have a place in the sun." To an outsider it sounds like the one thing that Egypt doesn't need.

NEW YORK farmers cannot afford to sell apples at present prices or New York eaters to buy them. The middleman's attitude toward apples seems to be: "They shall not pass."

CONGRESSMAN ESCH has been defeated for re-nomination and Senator Cummins is seriously ill, but the Esch-Cummins law goes marching on—with its hands in our pockets.

THERE must be something in a name, because it was Justice Hitz of the District of Columbia who swatted Burleson and restored second-class mail rates to the *N. Y. Call*.

THE *Call's* Washington man says that the "Colby" note on Russia was opposed by everybody in the state department, including Colby. After this the secretary should not be allowed to read any of a state paper except the dotted line.

THE Prince of Wales is a brave young man, but, like the drunken prohibitionist, he is not fanatical on the subject. So it is announced that he will not stop in India on this trip.

THE Italian workingmen have discovered a new form of nuisance, the walk-in. Curiously enough, it started life as a lockout.

THE Italian movement, we are told, is not political. What British labor does is vastly more important than what Parliament does. And in this country observers complain that the people are taking no interest in politics. Is it possible that the women got the vote just when it was no longer worth having?

COX and Harding have both receded from their uncompromising attitudes on the League of Nations and are not far apart. Since they have found no basis for disagreement, it has been decided that the campaign shall be about the campaign.

A HUNDRED THOUSAND people went to a meeting at a New York race track and they cheered heartily while Governor Cox was speaking. The only drawback was that they were cheering the aeroplanes.

"NO wars will occur under the League of Nations," says Senator Hitchcock, "and should trouble arise in a foreign land"—all is now clear. The League of Nations will abolish war by calling it "trouble."

LATEST reports from Crimea indicate that White Hope Wrangel is retreating in the general direction of Paris.

THAT seems to be the only place where he has any friends.

HOWARD BRUBAKER.



Drawn by Maurice Becker

"Six months ago that potato would only have cost me a dollar and a half."

Under Two Flags

By Michael Gold

THE Italian revolution was visiting here in New York this last month; a pretty thing, a graceful, fiery creature, impudent and romantic as a young girl, and as beautiful to the sad eyes of one who has beheld only our common-sense, ground-gripping, home-grown revolutionary spinsters these many, many years.

I saw the blessed little foreigner, after it had slipped in one dawn between the decks of a husky grey

weathered freighter named the Crema, that the Italian seaman's union has bought along with five other ships and is running not for profits, but to pile up finances for—you know what.

I went aboard on a bright Neapolitan day, with a deputation of Italian Socialists and others, to see what was to be seen. There was the long desolate wooden Brooklyn pier, with the usual bilious guards brooding

on their flat feet amid the hillocks and tarpaulin-covered pinnacles of assorted freight. There were the sweating, docile longshoreman, and then the grimy, angular old unregenerate beast of a Crema herself, sitting on the greasy river up against the docks. The sun beat on her, the stench and sound of work rose from her dark insides, she was ugly and real as a pile driver or a railroad tie.

The steward came out to meet us, a tough little fighting man of about thirty-five, with one of those hard masculine proletarian faces that have taken the heaviest blows of history and have always come back for more. He grinned joyously behind his tawny moustache as he shook our hands and greeted us. His blue eyes gleamed. He told us he was glad to see America. Then he drew our attention to something floating from the masthead. He was an old Italian Syndicalist, and knew what would be the best way of pleasing a fellow-worker.

It was the Red Flag! The flag of our poor, bleeding, betrayed fatherland, the World, waving there against the New York sky! Within binocular distance of all this—our slums, our skyscrapers, our vast hypocrisies, our overwhelming shames—the New York that we know!

"You see, just like Russia!" the little steward said proudly, tipping me a Rabelaisian wink, and folding his arms in a wonderful Italian gesture.

Russia! The young wireless telegrapher, the carpenter, the chief mechanic and some of the crew in their loose-clothed, sunbrowned, easy muscular pride stood about and repeated enthusiastically, "Como Rusia! Como Rusia!" And most of the talk that afternoon was about Russia, and the great and good thing that is being hammered out there in the dreadful flaming forge of the proletarian Revolution.

One of the crew, a barrel-chested, black-haired seafarer, massive as an oak, with tattooed fists and jolly eyes like a kid's, told of what he had done for Russia. He had helped take apart some of the machinery in one of a fleet of ships that was destined to carry supplies from Genoa to Kolchak. These ships, belonging to the Allies, are still riding in the harbor, out of the way of mischief. Another chap told of the swift times he had had during one of those many general strikes that finally, in their own crude and unlettered way, taught the refined Italian government intellectuals the higher diplomatic wisdom of recognizing Russia which so pleased and amazed our own liberals.

Russia! . . . About two weeks later, fifty-five members of the crew of the Calabria, Italians working on an English Anchor line ship, struck rather than transport 800 Polish reservists to Danzig for service against Russia. They walked out, every man jack of them, down to the cook and the mess-boys. They forfeited their pay, and their passage home, rather than hurt the little finger of Russia. They wandered about

for two weeks broke and jobless, and then the Italian Chamber of Labor here, of which Arturo Giovannitti is secretary, found the crew and fed them and showed them the Rand School, the Call building and all the other sights, and then finally had them sent home as the honored guests of the red ship, the Crema.

"We felt that we could not hold up our heads when we went back to Italy if we had worked on the ship bringing Polish soldiers to Danzig!" said the spokesman of the crew. "Our fellow workers would call us traitors to the working class. We would rather starve than help the Polish and anti-Soviet imperialists!"

* * * *

In Philadelphia, however, something strange happened. The I. W. W. longshoreman's local had been expelled for refusing to stop loading a ship of munitions consigned to General Wrangel. To anyone who has ever held a wobbly card, or been inside a wobbly hall, or even sung one of Joe Hill's songs, this fact when stated will sound as impossible as the recent rumor that Christ is coming to earth again on November 24th next.

I went to see what it was all about. Russia again! This time I saw vividly why even workers who are *not* revolutionary are rallying to Russia, why in this country A. F. of L. locals are stirring uneasily at the mention of war against Russia, and why so much unusual internal pressure is being brought on Mr. Gompers to pronounce the necessary word against that war.

The I. W. W., as an organization, generally, needs no extraordinary prodding to throw itself body and soul into the fight on the invaders of Red Russia. The organization that stood on trial in Chicago, and saw hundreds of its best men go to jail for revolutionary syndicalism, needs no apology for sideslips, weaknesses or indiscretions. It can take care of itself. It has character; it can perform its own surgical operations. Its honor is permanent and sure. The rank and file of the wobblies, all over America, are as true as steel; they will always keep the organization on the proper course.

But in Philadelphia, as I have said, something strange had happened. The wobbly local, Number 8, of the marine transport workers' industrial union, had been shot to hell from the revolutionary point of view by a sudden addition of 6,000 to the membership roll.

There had been a long strike, in the course of which these 6,000 joined up with the thousand old-timers in the port. A few weeks after this strike was lost, and the men had gone back to work, someone came from New York with the startling message that about a hundred of the local members were loading shells at Pigeon's Point on the Delaware river, near Wilmington. The ship being loaded was the Westmount, bound for whatever Russian port General Wrangel would be able to receive it in. There were 300,000 of these shells, in half a dozen

iron corrugated buildings belonging to the Duponts, and other ships were to follow—seven others.

The delegate who came from New York insisted on immediate action. At a rump meeting, where about fifty fellow-workers were present, he is said to have gotten excited and called the crowd international scabs, to the great astonishment of many of them, who had never heard of Wrangel. They became excited in turn; the issue took a stupid personal turn, and they voted against him.

The delegate went back to New York, and reported that the local had refused to stop loading the shells, which was true. Chicago promptly expelled the local. Then another general meeting was held, to which more than a thousand came, and the whole matter was gone over again, and the local voted not to load another shell for Russia. *The other seven ships, if they go, will go empty.*

I came to Philadelphia about a week after that meeting, when the news was being spread that the I. W. W. Executive Committee was considering the reinstatement of the local, and seemed favorably disposed to the idea. In the long, dim I. W. W. hall, like a huge barn, there were knots of burly negro longshoremen in their blue overalls sitting about on the benches and idling away their spare hour or two between jobs.

They were not the wobbly type, the revolutionist type. They were slow, well-meaning, hard-working laborers who had come into this union because it was the most effective in the port. I was interested in hearing what these men thought about the whole Wrangel boycott.

"I'll tell you what I think, brother," said a powerful black giant, with a calm, wide face like a piece of rugged sculpture. "I think that we done right in not loading those shells. I don't know who you are, but the boys here will back me up in saying that we aren't trying for no revolution in this country. But we done right in not loading those shells for Wrangel."

"Why?" I persisted.

"Why? Because it would be scabbing, that's why. A union man has never got the right to scab. We couldn't hold our union together if we scabbed."

The others shook their heads approvingly. The Italian workers fought for Russia because they saw with Marxian clearness all that she meant to them. The workers of America do not see this yet, in the main. But they have the strange, sure instinct of this negro longshoreman, that to aid the enemies of Russia is to aid the enemies of labor the world over. For fifty years labor has built up its morality, in which scabbing is the most mortal of sins. And now, even in America, there is the dim knowledge that Russia is only a nation of workers who have gone on strike against international capitalism, and that no one should scab on her.

To the Twelfth Juror

WHEN I looked hard in those blue eyes, my son,
And saw no melting and no mercy there,
No scruple zeal, nor conscientious care
For points in virtue to be lost or won,
But just like the cool barrel of a gun,
A level, friendly look into the air,
Too humorous for faith, too brave for prayer,
I knew that in twelve chances I had one.

And when you looked up laughing at the judge,
While all his jurors, locked up sixty hours,
Confessed in sweat they could not make you budge,
I did not feel like calling all the Powers
To righteous witness justice had been done—
I felt that to be with you would be fun.

MAX EASTMAN.

A Friend of Russia

HERMAN LATHROP TUCKER, who was killed in an airplane accident in San Francisco at the time of the Democratic convention while distributing propaganda for the lifting of the Russian blockade, was the kind of American whose career makes one believe in America. He was an adventurer in the finest sense, an adventurer in thought as well as in action. He had led the expedition which climbed for the first time the sheer heights of Corupuna, the topmost peak of the Peruvian Andes. But he had done things which were, for a member of his class, more unusual than that. When in Butte, Montana, in the Government forestry service, he saw one day outside his office a group of men who were attempting to speak on the street corner, and who were being pulled down by the police and taken off to jail as fast as they got up, he inquired, and found that they were members of the I. W. W. He rushed out, mounted the soap-box in his turn, and had barely uttered the words, "I am an American, and I believe in—" when he was arrested and carted off to jail with the others. He found himself in the company of Bill Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and eighty other members of the I. W. W. Within a few days he was also a member. He became an active worker for socialism. Herman Tucker was only thirty-seven years old, and his friends regret, together with the loss of an eager and boyish and ever lovable personality, the magnificent energy and fearless spirit which would have found more splendid opportunities for action in the great future that awaits us. But though it was only in an incidental skirmish, a fighter cannot choose his death—and he died fighting for the revolution.

Mexican Labor and the Mexican Government

By Carleton Beals and Robert Haberman

BLOOD!!! Red drops of it, trailing beneath monstrous flaring headlines across the front page of "El Universal," Mexico's leading, respectable daily—her New York Times. Thus Bolshevism, like Poe's Red Death, stalked among the horror-stricken Mexican aristocracy. But the blood was only red ink, and the Revolution is not yet. The real situation may be gathered from President De la Huerta's statement that Mexico's doors are open to all who come, Bolsheviks, Anarchists, or American business men. He himself, he says, is a "Kautskian Socialist."

But behind the screaming headlines of the *Universal* was the information for all who could read social events that the great world currents of the revolutionary labor movement are washing the tropic shores of Mexico. Strike after strike proclaims the fact. During the last month not one industry and scarcely a factory in Mexico has been exempted. The marine workers, the thirty thousand oil workers of Tampico, the 15,000 railway workers of the British Vera Cruz line, the 10,000 miners of Zacatecas, the 8,000 *campesinos* of the cotton-fields of the Laguna District near Torreon, the 18,000 textile workers, are some of the larger groups involved. General strikes, partial strikes, strikes for higher wages, strikes for shorter hours, teachers' strikes, students' strikes, strikes for union recognition, as many kinds of strikes as rats in Browning's Pied Piper of Hamelin Town.

A remarkable phase of this awakening of Mexican labor is the class-consciousness manifested by the agrarian workers. The cotton-pickers of the Laguna district, deserted by the organizers of the Confederacion Regional Obrera, Mexico's A. F. of L., arose in spontaneous revolt—8,000 of them—and won higher wages, shorter hours and union recognition. In Michoacan the soldiers demobilized themselves, and appropriated lands. On September 16 will occur a nation-wide demonstration of the agrarian workers to convince the government of the advisability of continuing to make land reforms.

An amazing spirit of solidarity has suddenly appeared. In the Vera Cruz general strike the marine workers, in some instances including the officers, walked off the boats. Senor Don Antonio Ancona Albertos, president of the Mexican Senate and recently nominated

Governor of Yucatan, when he wished to leave Vera Cruz was obliged to telegraph Felipe Carrillo, head of the Socialist Party of Yucatan, as follows:

"I beg of you to appeal to the strike committee of Vera Cruz, Calle de Zaragoza 44, asking in the name of the Socialist Party of Yucatan, that, for comradeship, the steamer *Jalisco* be permitted to sail immediately so that I may arrive in Yucatan in time to call the elections."

The *Jalisco* was the only vessel that left Vera Cruz during the strike. The officers of one other boat, who threatened to leave and unload elsewhere, were confronted with telegrams showing that labor would not move their cargoes in any port of Mexico.

The same spirit of solidarity was shown in the textile industry, controlled by French capital, when the workers in 400 factories scattered over all but five states of the Republic gave the employers the alternative of rehiring a discharged member of the union, or withstanding a general strike. The cigarette trust, El Buen Tono, suppressed a whole department in order to get rid of the secretary of the union. A general strike forced them to re-employ him.

Foreign capital recommencing operations in Mexico has soon discovered that old tactics toward labor are no longer feasible. The Vera Cruz-Mexico City railway, the Queen's own, so-called because it is largely owned by the Queen of England, which has recently been returned to its owners by the government, announced that it intended to remove certain workers, and that it would pursue a different policy toward labor unions. The "different policy," to be inaugurated August 1, was not explained, but the company was immediately confronted by a general strike and was forced to grant a 100 per cent increase in wages. The Guggenheim interests in northern Mexico were recently forced to recognize the miners' union, something that they have done in few places in the United States.

Such are some of labor's most recent victories in Mexico. The struggle of Mexican labor has been long and bitter. The Mexican worker arose in blind anger against Porfirio Diaz. But he gained nothing from Madero, unless it was freedom to organize. Under the old Huerta his newly-formed organizations were well-nigh crushed out of existence. He contributed his *bataillones rojos* to the success of Carranza and gained a

glittering Constitutional provision, machine guns, fire hoses and a treason act.

The Mexican worker is ignorant and uneducated, but he is stubbornly conscious of the fact that he has a right to enough to eat. His organizations have been used again and again by politicians; his treasuries, built up from contributions from his starvation wages, have been repeatedly emptied by dishonest leaders. He lacks orientation and effective organization. His officers are usually men who have a superior education, but little principle, and although usually more widely read than the American kind in the revolutionary classics, adhere to the letter and not to the spirit of their creed.

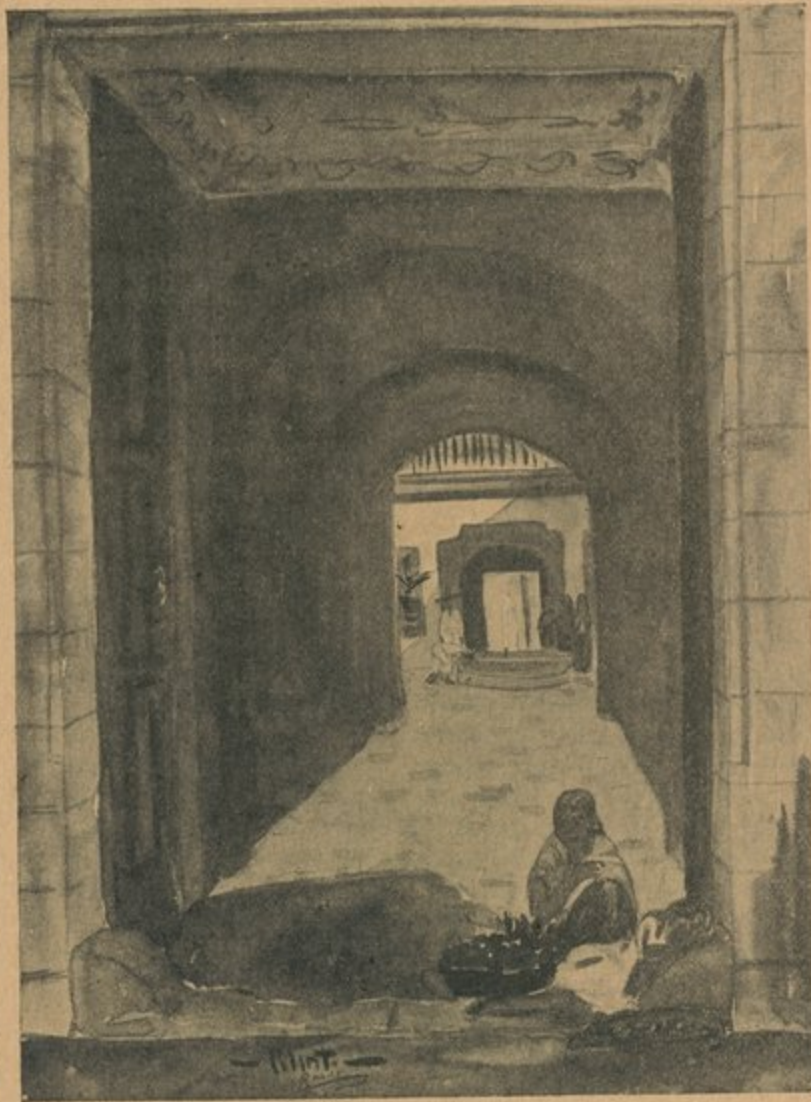
But the spontaneous revival of union strength, treading on the heels of the recent revolution, the outbreak of strike after strike, has gained the character of a purposeful rank-and-file movement. Under Carranza not a strike was won except during the brief period that Plutarco Elias Calles was Minister of Commerce and Labor. Since Carranza's overthrow not a single strike has been lost. This arises from the character of the labor revival, the increased liberty incident to a change in regime, and the astonishing friendliness to labor of the new government.

This governmental attitude, whatever its meaning or motive may be, has been demonstrated in a number of ways. During the spontaneous strike of the Laguna cotton-pickers, the proprietors determined to ship in the strike-breakers from outside. The government refused to permit this, informing the owners that as soon as the strike was settled they could have all the men they needed, and that the government would pay part of the cost of their transportation. Thereupon the proprietors convinced several local military officers

that it was their duty to arrest the leaders, as was done in all the strikes during the Carranza regime. Calles, now Secretary of War, telegraphed an order for their immediate release, and added that any officers who in the future molested a strike-leader would be court-martialed. The oil-owners of Tampico, when the workers

began carrying their red banners down the streets and advocating the workers owning the industry, called for troops as in the good old brutal Orozco-Carranza days, but Calles replied that breaking strikes was not the business of the army.

The government has been tactfully acceding to all labor demands. When the soldiers of Michoacan settled upon idle lands, the Assistant Secretary of War, Sarzano, gracefully issued a statement that the War Department had "established a military-agrarian colony" in that state. When Villa demanded land for his soldiers, and schools for their children as a condition upon which he would cease his rebellion, the government replied: We shall not only give them land, them and the Cedillistas and the Zapatistas and the rest of the agrarian *istas*, but in four different parts of the Republic we shall build at least four



In old Mexico.

model cities with schools, theatres, paved streets, electric lights, and telephone service surrounded by lands to be distributed to the people.*

*There are several measures by which the Mexican Government can get possession of land for such projects. For instance, the Idle Land law, the first law signed by President De la Huerta. This law was vetoed by Carranza, but it happens that any vetoed law may be put in operation by the next man to occupy the presidential chair. This law surpasses single tax in that it provides for the use of the land and lets the values take care of themselves. Any land not plowed or not sown by given dates may be petitioned for (to the extent of seventy acres in the Federal District) by any individual who cares to farm it. The petition, made to the *Ayantamiento*, must be granted within three days, and the individual may have possession for three years by the payment to the town council of not more than 5 per cent., or if he demands seeds and tools—which is his right—of not more than 10 per cent. of the value of the crop.

The new government has even asked labor to cooperate with it in the management of the state. Recently when the President heard of an impending split in the labor movement, he called the leaders to a luncheon in which he urged them to remain united as the government needed labor's organized support. This may well have had an element of politics in it, but imagine the political situation which would persuade President Wilson to sit down to luncheon with Samuel Gompers (quite possible), Eugene V. Debs, William D. Haywood, and the heads of the Communist Parties!

When a short time ago a labor commission from the Federal District, the industrial center of Mexico, visited De la Huerta and told him that the workers were in a majority in the district, and that they thought a workingman should be governor, he requested them to send him the names of three men. When, from their list De la Huerta named as governor Celestino Gasco, a mechanic and one of the founders of the famous *Casa del Obrero Mundial*, the factory owners organized a *sindicato* and declared they would close their doors. But the factories appear to be still running.

Another of the nominees, J. D. Ramirez Garrido, was made Chief of Police for the Federal District. Ramirez Garrido was also one of the founders of the Mexican labor movement, and a man who has spread the doctrines of Socialism to the four corners of the Republic. He first gained his social consciousness as a student in Vera Cruz, when in 1907 he saw the striking textile workers shot down in the village of Rio Blanco in such numbers that their bodies had to be run out on flat cars and dumped in the sea. He left Vera Cruz, and, risking the wrath of the Dictator, established a little paper, *La Vos de Juarez*. He is the author of "From the Red Soap Box," "Revolutionary Feminism," "The Burning Word," "Jesus in the Light of Morality and Socialism," etc., etc.

I asked him what he had done for labor since becoming Chief of Police.

He said that he immediately raised wages in the Department seventy-five per cent, and intended raising them higher, that he had appointed propagandists to jobs that they might continue their propaganda without economic fear, that he had named Elena Torres, Treasurer of the Communist Party, to the position of Secretary of the Secret Service Department, that he had refused to license any chauffeur who was not a member of the chauffeurs' union, that he had proffered the police band to play when wanted at any labor meeting, that not a single policeman had been used to break a strike.

Other interesting appointments have been that of Luis N. Morones, head of the Confederacion Regional Obrera, to run the munition factories, and Rosendo Salazar, of the *Casa Mundial* to run the printing department. The danger of such appointments to the revolu-

tionary labor movement is obvious. Yet Morones, though a typical A. F. of L. boss, has organized all the 9,600 workers in the munition factories into one industrial union; and under Salazar, for the first time the government printing employees are also organized.

The President, during the first month in office, appointed two workers to investigate the penal colony on the Islas Marias in the Pacific, where men have been buried for years. They were instructed to interview every man, find out the reason for their internment, the treatment they had received, and how long they had to serve. On the recommendations of these two men, 1,000 prisoners were immediately released.

Such seems to be the labor policy of the new government to date. But the general recrudescence of power in Mexican labor is far more significant—it is a part of the general world-movement toward the left. The Soviet idea is growing. It has invaded the government printing offices. The workers elect new workers. They elect the heads of the sub-departments. It has invaded the ranks of teachers and students. When the teachers went on strike a year ago to force the government to pay their salaries, a little clause was tucked away in their demands asking for self-determination in the schools. The teachers were beaten to their knees by fire hose and treachery, but today they are in session to elect their own superintendent. When the students of the National Preparatory School refused to recognize their principal and became too demonstrative, Carranza turned the fire-hose upon them and locked some of them up. A few weeks ago students and teachers in joint assembly elected their own principal. This same thing has been occurring in other parts of the Republic. The Soviet idea has invaded the ranks of the workers in Tampico, and in every strike they openly speak of the day in the near future when their red banners will be floating over the offices of the oil companies.

This stirring determination of Mexican labor even



Ixtapalapa

ruffled the surface of the Convention of the *Confederacion Regional Obrera* recently held in Aguas Calientes. This organization, created largely through the efforts of Luis N. Morones, is a negative A. F. of L.-like body. The program adopted at Saltillo in 1918, and practically repeated the following year at Zacatecas, and this year at Aguas Calientes, is an innocuous, indefinite mouthing of phrases concerning land-distribution, enforcement of the labor provisions of the constitution, proper representation on the conciliation and arbitration committees, and a cringing, sentimental appeal to the government to be good to the workers. It contains no word on industrial organization, no word about effective propaganda, no word regarding the ultimate purpose of the organization, the ultimate goal of labor.

Yet this year's convention developed, for the first time, a spirit of solidarity and class-consciousness that may have far-reaching consequences. Morones, although he has always been the dominant personality at all labor conventions, has never gained the full confidence of the mass of the workers. His political relationships, his connections with the A. F. of L., keep that distrust constantly alive. The Mexican worker fears political methods with the fear of a burnt child. Morones' understanding of men and affairs led him to desert Carranza and organize the Partido Laborista in support of the candidacy of Obregon. His efforts to control organized labor politically have brought him, as well as other leaders of the C. R. O., well to the front in the new semi-labor government. Morones is now head of the munition factories, a position of power and prestige. Morones is head of the C. R. O. Can he continue to hold both positions?

At the Aguas Calientes Convention his principal antagonist was A. Diaz Soto y Gama, an agrarian leader, head of the *Partido Agrarista*, and for seven years with Zapata in the hills. Soto y Gama is a thorough Marxian scholar, but unfortunately also a politician.

When the strikers from the Monterey metal works, the biggest single factory in the country, took the floor to ask for financial aid from the Confederacion, a motion was made to send a telegram to De la Huerta, asking for his intervention in behalf of the workers, and secondly to hold a ball to raise funds. Soto y Gama immediately declared that strikes were not won by sending telegrams to the government, nor by waiting to give balls. He split the convention upon this little point between those who for ten years and more have been cringing at the feet of the Mexican government, and those who believe that Mexican labor has attained its majority, and is capable of maintaining its own rights.

Far more symptomatic is the attempt to organize the *Confederacion Comunista Obrera* upon a revolutionary program. Although the elements behind this new move-

ment are not encouraging, its program is broader than that of the *Casa del Obrero Mundial* which was suppressed by Carranza. It repudiates political action, insists upon industrial organization, denounces government job-holding on the part of union leaders, attacks the A. F. of L. and the affiliation of the C. R. O. with the A. F. of L. Its purpose is summed up in direct action and recognition of the Third International.

The unruly spirit in the recent convention and the formation of this new organization certainly indicate that Morones will have to rise to the occasion or lose his leadership. Morones will sooner or later have to take his stand upon industrial organization, upon direct action, upon recognition of the Third International. He will have to rise to the demands of the aroused spirit of Mexican labor, or he will lose the power that he has wielded so cleverly and ambitiously for so many years.

Labor's recently demonstrated power to paralyze the industries of the country is not only a challenge to Morones and his group; it is a challenge to the new government which is trying so hard to be friendly to labor. The Mexican government must watch its step. It is between the devil and the deep sea. It is damned if it does and damned if it does not. It is between labor which, if it wishes to help, it nevertheless cannot help fast enough, and American capital whose power it cannot ignore. Organized Mexican labor offers one more irritant to American capital in Mexico. The more revolutionary are the demands of Mexican labor the more irritating will the situation become. Carranza, who was not a radical but a stiff-necked aristocrat, irritated American capital by his slogan of "Mexico for Mexicans," with which phrase he fabulously enriched a little clique of military favorites, and drew down the cry of "Bolshevik." How easy it will be for the new government, which is in any event interested in social reconstruction, to draw the lightning of the same cry upon its head! At this writing the representatives of the American newspapers in Mexico City are heckling and harrassing the government officials from office boy to President, trying to tie them down to some statement that will reveal a secret sympathy for Russia!

Think of the tragedy of a people who live day and night under the fearful shadow of armed intervention, not knowing when the blow will fall, not knowing when their land will be crossed and recrossed by foreign soldiers and pounding cavalry, their government destroyed, their land made conquest. The Mexican people live constantly with that dread in their hearts. But if the Mexican government is subjugated by American capital, either diplomatically, or by fear, or by armed destruction, American capital will still have to answer to Mexican labor. Beyond the Mexican government is the Mexican proletariat, beyond the Mexican proletariat is the revolutionary world proletariat.



Cop: "Your Honor, this prisoner cracked a safe."

Judge: "Who do you know in your ward?"



Cop: "Your Honor, this feller murdered his mother."

Judge: "Can't he git anybody to go his bond?"



Cop: "Your Honor, this man is a Communist."

Judge: "Twenty years in the hole!"

SONG FOR A FOOL

OVER a mountain and through a wood
I went and the fairies led me;
The climb was steep, but my heart was good
And the elves brought honey and fed me;
And the wood was full of horrible things,
Of snakes with legs and wolves with wings
And yellow toads with claws and stings—
But I laughed aloud and they fled me.

After a dancing star I went
Up out of the teeming city;
And O, but I thrilled with vast content,
Though the old folk wept for pity.
"The outlaw goes to the wolves," they cried;
But the wolves that they can never abide,
I knew would romp at the outlaw's side—
And the dancing star was pretty.

The priest looked up as I passed him by
Where he mooned at his empty pages;
The old folk cowered in hovel and sty
And counted their penny wages.
"Tis a will-o'-the-wisp; go to," they said,
"For the lad's a fool and he'll come back dead."
But I knew that my dancing star shone red—
And fools are wiser than sages.

Leonard Cline.

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New Soviets for Old

By Floyd Dell

WE in America have our own way of doing things. In Russia when they got tired of the gestures and vaporings of the Constituent Assembly, they sent a corporal's guard to disband it. They took politics that seriously in Russia. But when we get sufficiently tired of politics—and we are getting more tired every day—we shall probably elect Charlie Chaplin to the Presidency.

Things are moving in that direction. Already we are sending, not our political experts, but our popular humorists to report the proceedings of the great Republican and Democratic conventions; for the proceedings of these conventions are now universally regarded, except by the small class of people to whom politics is a business, as a humorous event. To the politicians themselves, the present state of politics appears in the light of a tragedy; but to everyone else it is a farce.

At the Democratic convention the other day, some bright delegate, a few years in advance of his time, cast a vote for Irvin Cobb as president. And here is what Nominee Cobb thinks about the two conventions, as reported to his paper at the cost of I do not know how many dollars a word: "One outstanding difference between the Republican Convention and the Democratic Convention is the same difference that would be remarked between a deaf-mute home and a lunatic asylum. . . . The Republicans operated a steam-roller. The Democrats have ridden on a merry-go-round. You can have a lot of fun and kill a lot of time riding on a merry-go-round, but you don't seem to go anywhere in particular."

You can call that humor, if you like, but I call it Criminal Anarchy. It is the uttering by word of mouth, printing, or otherwise, such expressions as are calculated to bring the government of the United States into disrespect and contempt. It is an indictment of the sacred and not-to-be-criticized institution of democracy. If Old Irv Cobb were not privileged by the ancient profession of the jester to utter plain truths, he would get his, all right, from his fellow-nominee Mitchell Palmer. That is the sort of

thing that Mitchell has been putting Communists by the thousands in jail for saying—or rather, for thinking, because in default of proof that the Communists actually said such things, the attorney-general's office has had to fall back on mind-reading. And as a mind-reader, the Quaking Fighter—for which term we are also indebted to Mr. Cobb—has nothing to yield to the most expert clairvoyants of the day. He is right—there are not merely thousands, but millions of people beginning to think just that way about the United States government.

Consider: this is a year, as the spellbinders would say, pregnant with possibilities for the future happiness of



"Either Side Will Do."

mankind. The rôle which America is to play in world politics, and as a consequence the very fate of Europe, and of civilization itself, is bound up in the choice which we are now making, my friends and fellow-citizens! And who cares a darn? Politics has become a bore. Let them tinker the old broken-down stage-coach, and dispute for the position of driver. The silly old contraption does not interest us any more. It never takes you where you want to go, anyway. And this is a world of motor-cars, elevateds, undergrounds and airplanes.

Which nobody knows better than the gentlemen who are disputing for the driver's seat on the old stage-coach. Does anybody think any longer that our elective political system really touches the vital affairs of the nation? You have a vote, and so has J. P. Morgan. But when it comes to deciding whether there is to be a war or not, who has the say-so, you or J. P.? I ask the question, but you had better not answer it, because there is a law against answering such questions. But it is not an overt act to reflect upon the possibility that Mr. Morgan would not wait till the next election to bring his influence to bear upon the decision. If you had to go down-town, and the Fifth avenue stage-coach made the trip only once in four years, it is possible that you would not wait, either; you would take the subway.

But people have felt that it is more dignified to keep the old stage-coach as part of the landscape, and let it make some sort of tottering and wheezing trip every four years or so. It is something to point out to foreigners, something to teach children about in the schools. Sort of what we used to call, before we got sick of everything that reminded us of the war, *camouflage*. And as long as it did seem dignified, that was all right. But now it's getting to seem just ridiculous.

And yet we won't dispense with it for a while yet. As a people, we have an affection for antiques. We love European princes when they come to visit us. And we kind of like democracy, too, because it is a sort of American antique—not as decorative as European royalty, but certainly quite as useless. We are inclined to be resentful when an enterprising young nation like Soviet Russia throws its Constituent Assembly on the scrap-heap. Such people, we feel, are lacking in reverence.

Another thing we don't like is the way they decided that certain people should not have a vote. If they had just let them have a vote, and then excluded the men they voted for from the Constituent Assembly, we would have seen a Sister Democracy in the Soviet Republic, and recognized her at once.

But the Russians are simple-minded people. They believe that the government should be openly and frankly run by the class which has the power. Here in America we take an awful lot of trouble to pretend the opposite. Everyone knows that the capitalist class has the power, but we hate to admit that they are running the government. It's got so that the great corporations can't

even buy a few hundred delegates to one of the old party conventions without raising a scandal, and ruining some poor aspirant's chances for the nomination. We all know that whoever is elected will take his orders from the class that has the power; but we don't like the situation to be too plain.

There was a time, long ago, when our political system, with its exquisite balance of state's rights and national rights, meant something—when the "check" upon the Executive by Congress, and vice versa, was significant of a working compromise between two conflicting wishes of the American people. Our government arose in response to a desperate necessity—the necessity of getting down to business lest everybody starve to death at the end of a prolonged war which had brought production almost to a standstill. People—the influential people, representing the classes which had the power in those times—got together and said, "What shall we do?" The system which we call democracy was the result of their cogitations. They established a peculiar kind of council, designed to harmonize the different interests of the people who had power. Thus the American Soviet, which we are accustomed to call Congress, was established.

It worked—that is to say, it did harmonize sufficiently the conflicting interests of the classes which had power. It continued to work, after a fashion, until the Civil War, when the slave-power of the South and the new capitalism of the North fought for the great West. Since that time, with capitalism triumphant, the old political machinery has been obsolete. It has not represented any real diversion of interests. Capitalism has governed through either party at will, and generally financed both parties. The party system itself has been a device, maintained at great expense, for the purpose of drawing the attention of the people away from the fact that a dictatorship had been established. The administration could change every four years, while the dictatorship remained continuously in power.

Democracy gives you the choice between Harding and Cox and whichever you choose makes no difference to the dictatorship. And as long as democracy remains, we shall have only that fake choice—we shall have capitalism in the saddle.

But as democracy fails to do its work—as it fails to disguise the essential conflict, it comes more and more into ridicule and disrepute. It is an obsolete soviet-system, and people turn from it to some new arrangement. They gather together, and say, "What shall we do?" And there is the beginning of a new soviet-system.

But Communists are not the only ones who are getting together and saying, "What shall we do?" The capitalists are doing the same thing. In their informal soviets, their unofficial gatherings which represent the real power behind democracy, there is the beginning of a Capitalist Soviet, ready when the moment comes to

throw off the disguise of democracy and rule by naked force. It is only a question of which shall rule—and which will be required by force of circumstances to suppress its enemies by force—the capitalist class or the working class. Democracy only postpones for a time the clash of open class war.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that Eugene V. Debs were elected President on a Communist ticket. And suppose he outlined in his inaugural message the necessity of everybody having enough to eat and wear, and a nice home to live in, and plenty of coal to keep up the winter fires; and suppose he pointed out that this could be done by the elimination of profit, and asked for the passage of legislation to that effect. What would Messrs. Harding and Cox be doing? Confering together, in company with General Wood and Woodrow Wilson and Hiram Johnson and W. R. Hearst and Governor Allen and their backers in Wall Street, as to how this calamity was to be averted. Just like the pro-slavery gentlemen when Lincoln was elected. The next step would be civil war. And out of that war would emerge a dictatorship—a plain, unadorned, unmistakable capitalist dictatorship. And any Communist president who allowed such obvious counter-revolutionary leadership as is represented by these men to be at large, would be riding for a fall. No, if Debs were not looking for even more trouble than was legitimately due him, he would order the arrest of the whole kit and caboodle, and lock them safely up in his home tier in the Atlanta prison. And that would be dictatorship. There is no escaping it—open class war brings open dictatorship in its train. It is only a choice of dictatorships.

The reason for this is that open class war means complete industrial chaos; and chaos must be ended, one way or the other. Dictatorship—making the other fellow powerless—is the only solution. The work of the world must be done. Goods must be produced and distributed. People must have coal in the winter. There must be food to eat. But do we want these things produced under the lash of hunger and under the threat of death at the mouth of machine-guns by men who are not getting enough of what they produce to keep them contentedly at work? Or do we want the industries turned over to the workers themselves, and the lash of hunger applied to those who have been accustomed to live on profits? It is well-known which Mr. Gary wants. There is little doubt as to which, in a pinch, Messrs. Harding, Cox, Wood, Wilson, Johnson and Hearst would choose. And, under our democratic system of



Drawn by Maurice Becker

In Dannemora

Ben Gitlow: "They struck for you in Dublin, Jim. Now they're striking for MacSwiney in New York."

Jim Larkin: "Shure, give 'em time and they'll strike for you in Jerusalem."

government, they have the choice—not you.

We are going through a period now in which we tolerate democracy because we hate to think about war. We muster up what interest we can for the sham-contest between Harding and Cox because that is more agreeable than facing the real issue. We are tired of war. We long for peace. But there is no peace. In the background waits the real struggle. We shut our eyes to the future. We hate to think about any kind of a Dictatorship. But we have seen the fateful lightning of its terrible swift sword, and we feel the insignificance of the games we are playing, the paltriness of our pretences, the insignificance of our personal destinies. All the more on that account, we cling, for the moment, closer to our immediate interests, we hug our illusions, we turn away perhaps from the To-morrow towards which we inexorably are swept. But the tattered rags of democracy are blown away in the great wind that sweeps across the world, and we see a vision of embattled armies. To-morrow we shall be conscripted, on one side or the other, in a war which knows no neutrality. Let us eat, drink and be merry, but when the call comes which side shall we be on?

Farmer Strikers in Spain

By John Dos Passos

WHEN we stepped out of the bookshop the narrow street steamed with the dust of many carriages. Above the swiftly whirling wheels gaudily dressed men and women sat motionless in attitudes. Over the backs of the carriages brilliant shawls trailed, triangles of red and purple and yellow. It was fair-time in Cordova; the carriages were coming back from the *toros*.

"Bread and circuses," muttered the man who was with me, "but not enough bread." We turned into a narrow lane, where the dust was yellow between high green-and-lavender-washed walls. From the street we had left came a sound of cheers and hand-clapping. My companion stopped still and put his hand on my arm. "There goes Belmonte," he said. "Half the men who are cheering him have never had enough to eat in their lives. The old Romans knew better; to keep people quiet they filled their bellies. Those fools—he jerked his head backwards with disgust. I thought of the shawls and the high combs and the hair gleaming black under lace and the wasp-waists of the young men and the insolence of black eyes above the flashing wheels of the carriages. "Those fools give only circuses. Do you people in the outside world realize that we in Andalusia starve, that we have starved for generations so that those black bulls for the circuses may graze over good wheat-land . . . to make Spain picturesque! The only time we see meat is in the bullring. These people who argue all the time as to why Spain is backward and write books about it,—I could tell them in one word: malnutrition." He laughed despairingly and started walking fast again. "We have solved the problem of the cost of living. We live on air and dust and bad smells."

He was a book-seller at whose shop I had stopped a few minutes before to ask an address. When he learned that I was looking for Francisco Azorin, an architect who had served a term in prison for supporting the recent strike of farm laborers, he ushered me into his back room with that wonderful enthusiastic courtesy one finds so often in Spain. There he and his errand boy and a carpenter who happened to be there, all talking at once, told me about the strike, how the region had been for months under martial law, and how they and everyone else of Socialist or Republican sympathies, had been packed for weeks into overcrowded prisons. It ended by the bookseller's coming out with me to show me the way to Azorin's office. "Every workman in Cordova would die for Azorin," he whispered to me as we went up the stairs.

We found Azorin busy designing a schoolhouse; he has recently been elected a municipal councillor. He is

a sallow little man with a vaguely sarcastic voice and amused air as if he would burst out laughing at any moment. He laid aside his plans and we all went on to see the editor of *Andalusia*, a pro-labor weekly. In that dark little office, over three cups of coffee that appeared miraculously from somewhere, with the pungent smell of ink and fresh paper in our nostrils, we talked about the past and future of Cordova, and of all the wide region of northern Andalusia, the fertile irrigated plains, and the dry olive-land stretching up to the rocky, waterless mountains, where the mines are.

In Azorin's crisp phrases and in the long ornate periods of the editor the serfdom and the squalor and the heroic hope of these peasants and miners and artisans became vivid to me for the first time. Occasionally the compositor, a boy of about fifteen with a brown ink-smudged face, would poke his head in the door and shout: "It's true, what they say, but they don't say enough—they don't say enough."

From the Tagus to the Mediterranean stretches a mountainous region of low rainfall, intersected by broad river-valleys which, under irrigation, are enormously productive of rice, oranges, and, in the higher altitudes, of wheat. In the dry hills grow grapes, olives and almonds. A country on the whole much like Southern California. Under the Moors this region was the richest and most civilized in Europe. When the Christian nobles from the north reconquered it, the ecclesiastics laid hold of the towns and extinguished industry through the Inquisition, while the land was distributed in huge estates to the magnates of the court of Catholic Kings. The agricultural workers became virtually serfs, and the communal village system of working the land was replaced by the plantation method of cultivating by areas with day laborers. The province of Jaen, certainly as large as the State of Rhode Island, is now virtually owned by six families.

All through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the liveliest people in all Spain swarmed overseas to explore and plunder America so that the tilling of the land was left to the humblest and least vigorous. And immigration to America has continued to be the safety valve of the social order. It is only comparatively recently that the consciousness has begun to form among the workers of the soil that it is possible for them to change their lot by any other means. As everywhere else, Russia was the beacon-flare. Since 1918 an extraordinary change has come over these frugal, sinewy peasants, who, through centuries of oppression and starvation, have kept, in spite of almost complete illiteracy, a curiously

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vivid sense of personal independence. In the back rooms of taverns revolutionary tracts are spelled out by some boy who has had a couple of years schooling to a crowd of men, who listen or repeat the words after him with the fervor of people going through a religious rite. Unshakeable faith possesses them in what they call "la nueva ley" (the new law), by which the good things a man wrings by his sweat from the earth shall be his and not the property of a distant senor in Madrid.

It is this hopefulness that marks the difference between the present agrarian agitation and the violent and desperate peasant risings of the past. As early as October, 1918, a congress of agricultural workers was held to decide on strike methods, and to formulate a demand for the expropriation of the land. In two months the unions (*sociedades de resistencia*), had been welded—at least in the province of Cordova—into a unified system with more or less central leadership. The strike which followed was so complete that in many cases even domestic servants went out. After savage repression and the military occupation of the whole province, the strike petered out with compromises which meant considerable betterment of working conditions, but left the important issues untouched. The rise in the cost of living and the grow-

ing unrest brought matters to a head again in the summer of 1919. The military was used with even more brutality than the previous year. Attempts at compromise, at parcelling out uncultivated land, proved as unavailing as the Mausers of the Civil Guard to quell the tumult. The peasants have kept their organizations and their demands intact. They are willing to wait, but they are determined that the land upon which they have worn out generations and generations shall be theirs without question.

All this time the landlords brandish a redoubtable weapon: starvation. Already thousands of acres that might be richly fertile lie idle, or are pasture for herds of wild bulls for the arena. The great land-owning families hold estates all over Spain; if in a given region the workers become too exigent, they decide to leave the land in fallow for a year or two. In the villages it becomes a question of starve or emigrate. To emigrate many certificates are needed. Many officials have to be placated. For all that money is needed. Men taking to the roads in search of work are persecuted as vagrants by the civil guard. Arson becomes the last resort of despair. At night a field of standing grain catches fire mysteriously, or the country house of an absent landlord burns down, and, from the parched hills where gnarled

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almond trees grow, groups of half-starved men watch the flames with grim exultation.

Meanwhile the press in Madrid laments the "incultura" of the Andalusian peasants. The problem of civilization, after all, is often one of food calories. Fernando de los Rios, Socialist deputy for Granada, recently published the result of an investigation of the food of the agricultural populations of Spain in which he showed that only in the Balkans—out of all Europe—was the workingman as under-nourished. In calories the diet of the average Cordova day-laborer represented something like a fourth of that of the British workman's.

How long it will be before the final explosion comes no one can guess. In the last municipal elections, when six hundred Socialist councillors were elected in all Spain—in contrast to sixty-two in 1915—the vote polled in Andalusia was unprecedented. These Andalusian peasants will not cling as violently as most of the European peasantry to the habit of private property. All over Spain one comes upon traces of the old communist village institutions, by which flocks and mills and bakeries and often land were held in common. As in all arid countries, where everything depends upon irrigation, ditches are everywhere built and repaired in common. The idea of private property is of necessity feeble where

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there is no rain; for what good is land to a man without water? Still, until there grows up a much stronger community of interest than now exists between the peasants and the industrial workers, the struggle for the land and the struggle for the control of industry will be, in Spain, as I think everywhere, parallel rather than unified. One thing is certain; however long the fire smoulders before it flares high to make a clean sweep of Spanish capitalism and Spanish feudalism together, Cordova, hoary city of the caliphs, where ghosts of old grandeurs flit about the zigzag ochre-colored lanes, will, when the moment comes, be the center of organization of the agrarian revolution.

When I was leaving Spain I rode with some young men who were emigrating to America, to make their fortunes. When I told them I had been to Cordova their faces became suddenly bright with admiration. "Ah, Cordova!" one of them cried. "They've got the guts in Cordova."

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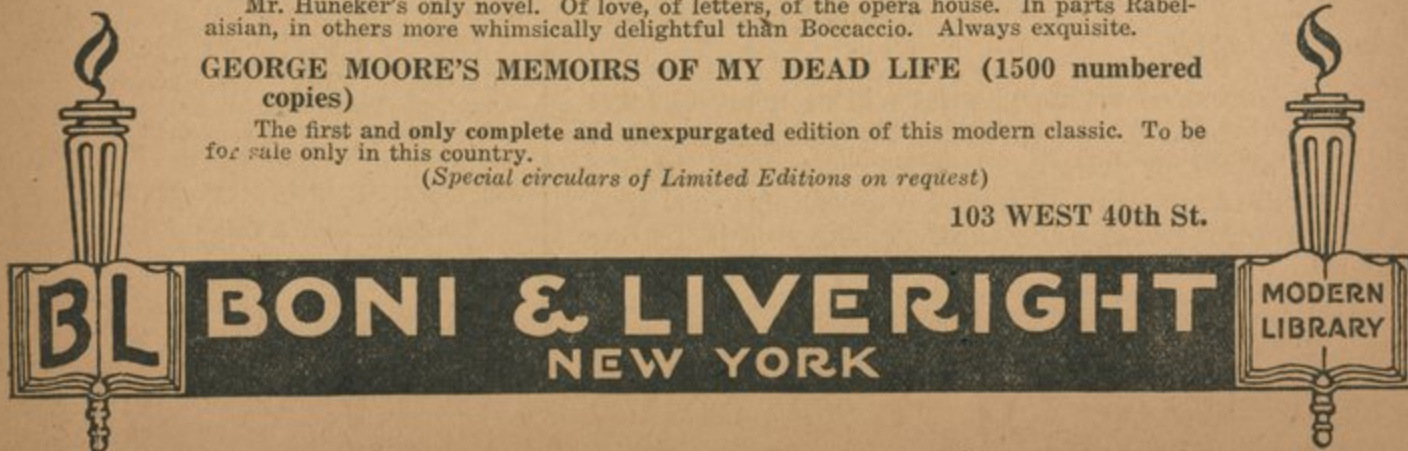
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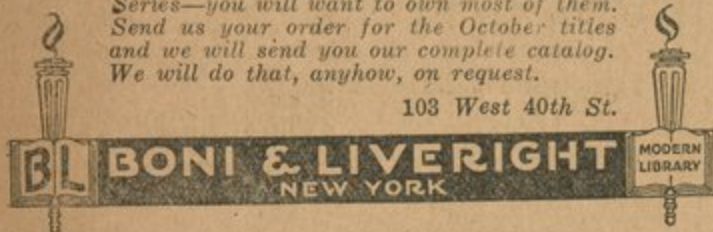
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I TRY TO TEACH MY SOUL TO BE

I TRY to teach my soul to be
Patient as a suppliant tree,
But I was made of snow and fire,
Of mountain torrent, of sea's desire,
Of sun-washed peak, of windy space,
Of fevers of the desert place,
Of grief untutored, and of woe,
Too hurt, too deep for rest to know,
Of joys too keen and wild to name.
How can I such a soul-self tame,
How can I root these rushing feet and be
A patient tree?

Annette Wynne.

CHOICE

I SET on this barren board
(Yours is the choice, not mine)
The bread and leeks for your hunger's ease,
The unacknowledged wine.

No protests—no demands—
Always there will be
The driftwood fire that warms your hands,
The stars you will not see.

Muna Lee.

INVITATION

(Dedicated to the conscientious objectors still in prison)

NOW let him in, the outcast one
With thorns about his brow.
The flags are furled, the war is done,
We need not fear him now.

Go call him, though he wear the mark
Of rude, poor friends he found
Where we had thrust him in the dark,
On unanointed ground.

We'll bathe his feet, make shine his thorns;
Robe him again in white;
And who his gentle message scorns
Shall feel our holy might.

But have a care lest those should press
Who fed him while we warred;
Wipe off the shadow of their kiss,
And keep the doorway barred.

We'll set him in a sacred ring,
Free from their touch of sin.
Again shall hallelujahs ring!
Go, bishops, let HIM in.

Olive Dargan.

AT A CAFE

WISHES are birds. You have been circled round
With them, invisible, I sent you in distress,
Flown from my heart that long had held them bound,
Surpassing winds in their sharp eagerness.

You have not seen their dim shades on the ground:
Nor heard them: never felt their pinions press
Beating the air, but never making sound,
And hanging over you in breathlessness.

So with you here, the stumbling little words
Lie down like frightened children in the dark,
Lie down and weep; and wishes winged like birds
Fly crowding back, with this the only mark
That I have almost told you breathless things,—
You hear the weary folding-down of wings.

Genevieve Taggard.

HAWAIIAN VOLCANO

RED is the mouth of Pele, passionate
Against the fires of the kindling stars:
Fire to fire moves: the heavens wait
As low to earth comes, crimson-dripping Mars:
They kiss in thunder, shudder, suffocate—
Below men pause and listen, at their wars.

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He made his pen a sword against sins of society

*The amazing and pathetic story of Brann, the Iconoclast
Why he was feared and worshipped, hated and loved.
How he fascinated his friends and crazed his enemies.*

By SIDNEY HERZ

A TEXAS brawl—a man shot in the back. The man who fired the fatal bullet meant that it should wipe out Brann, the Iconoclast. Instead, the shot brought the slain man immortality. It centered the attention of the world on an American writer whose lashing words and cyclonic phrases bore the marks of genius.

William Cowper Brann was born in Coles County, Ill., January 4, 1855, the son of Rev. Noble Brann. His mother having died when he was two and a half years old, he was placed in the care of William Hawkins, a Coles County farmer.

At the age of thirteen he quietly walked away one dark night leaving behind him the only place he had ever known as home, and he entered upon his first revolt against life without friends or means and almost destitute of education.

In July, 1891, the first issues of his paper, "The Iconoclast," appeared. The venture was unsuccessful. Nothing daunted, in 1895 he revived "The Iconoclast" and it was successful from the start.

Brann, the Iconoclast

Brann has been classed as a humorist. But

"I want to see more homes and fewer hovels, more men and fewer dudes. I want to see more women with moral courage to brave the odium of being old maids rather than the pitiful weakness to become loveless wives. I want to see more mothers who would rather be queens of their homes than the favorites of fashionable circles; women who would rather have the love of their husbands than the insolent admiration of the whole he-world—women who do not know too much at 15 and too little at 50."—Brann, the Iconoclast.

his humor was of the order of Racine and Moliere. He was not content to merely amuse or entertain people. He aspired to arouse public sentiment in the interest of certain long-needed reforms. He hated sham and defied every form of fraud, hypocrisy and deceit. He made of his humor a whip with which to scourge from the

temple of social purity, every intruder there. He stood alone in defiance of popular humbugs and frauds.



Brann, the Iconoclast

Then, as the blinding flash of lightning, as the rending crash of thunder, Brann struck! The structures of society shook, the towers of hypocrisy tottered, the castles of convention crumbled and above the fiery ruins, above the blackened wreckage, the resplendent figure of Truth stood revealed in blinding nakedness.

The Brann Tragedy

On April 1st, 1898, Brann was shot down in the streets of Waco by one of his enemies. Before he fell, he turned on his assailant and buried five bullets in his body. The shooting

took place just opposite my newspaper stand. Brann died a few hours later. But little did he realize his own glory, his own magic of words, his own thundering, crashing power of expression. And although he himself is gone, his flaming spirit lives.

I felt at the time of Brann's death that many people would like to have copies of Brann's Writings, so some friends gathered to-

"I can forgive much in that fellow mortal who would rather make men swear than women weep; who would rather have the hate of the whole world than the contempt of his wife."

"The man hanged for homicide usually repents and is jerked to Jesus, while his victim, cut off in the heyday of his sins, is supposed to go to hell a-wopping."

"Too many young ladies rush into literature instead of the laundry—become poets of passion instead of authors of pie."

"I am sometimes tempted to believe that the only friendship that will stand fire is that of a yellow dog for a pauper negro."

"Many people are killed by pneumonia—contracted while keeping their mouths open on subjects they know nothing about."

"A woman who has two husbands in a twelvemonth is a stranger to that sentiment which makes a war-horse linger at the dead soldier's side and the faithful dog starve himself upon his master's grave."

gether and decided to publish everything that Brann had written. The first edition of Brann's Complete Writings amounted to more than 3,000 sets. They were all sold before a second edition of 6,000 sets could be rushed through the presses. And there was good reason.

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