

THE TORCH.

No. 1.

NOVEMBER, 1913.

[ONE PENNY.]

OBJECTS.

1. To throw the torchlight of criticism upon all phases of society.
2. To advocate free association in production, the establishment of Anarchist Communism, and the abolition of all forms of authority.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Larkin sent to gaol! Those words should have burnt into the memory of every man and woman, and their far-reaching significance well understood. Here is a veritable champion of the toiling masses—himself a son of the people—sent to prison to expiate the fearful crime of having dared to put himself upon the side of the masses against the masters. Meanwhile Sir Edward Carson, K.C., P.C., M.P., remains at large and unmolested, despite his violent speeches stirring up open rebellion against Home Rule.

Let the *Daily Sketch* speak for us. Commenting upon the sentence, it says:—"Another eminent Irishman has used heated language in the heat of a political campaign," and goes on to say, "Surely excuses at least as valid can be found for this Irish workman, combating *manifest and acknowledged evils, struggling, not for political freedom, but for bread.*" It concludes by saying: "It is certain that, justly or unjustly, Dublin workers will believe the authorities to be on the side of the employers." "Justly or unjustly"—there can be no two opinions as to which side justice lies. Justice is represented as being blindfolded; we suspect the bandage has slipped. It was not Justice who released Larkin, but fear—fear of the Government that they might lose their profitable jobs.

The most important point of all these happenings is the great value they have in helping to remove the scales from people's eyes—scales of prejudice, tradition, ignorance—that they may see their enemies in their true light. The fact that the priests stood placidly by and lifted no finger to help the starving women and children, coupled with the travesty of justice alluded to, completes the evidence against the latest Trinity, or, if one may call it so, a modern "Trioeracy." The Church and State have always shared each other's joys and woes, mostly against the worker, and the capitalist, who is the master of them both, completes the

picture. They are determined to oppose at all costs the workers' fight for the final triumph—"the conquest of bread."

After the most disgraceful and hellish manoeuvres of the Irish clergy to condemn the children back to life in Dublin's dark and dreary dens, it is scarcely possible that any will be found to question our assertion that the Church is the tool of the capitalist. Why, if anyone still had illusions as to the solicitude of the priests for the welfare of the people, they would surely be now dispelled, for it has been openly and undisguisedly stated by one of these "fathers" that the children would become *discontented with their lot* (!) if sent for a holiday to decent homes. These priests did not wish to see the kiddies removed from the seat of war and properly cared for—a starving child is the finest weapon to beat the fighting fathers into submission, breaking down their determination, and making them humble slaves once more.

Twenty-one thousand Dublin rooms contain a family apiece. What a splendid nursery for the development of the Catholic faith which the holy fathers are afraid will be lost if the kiddies came to English homes. Better lose it if that is all it means—for the workers.

Reverting back to the *Daily Sketch*, which has a few more lines upon the curtailment of free speech, etc. One would gather that these things only happen in Germany and Ireland. It speaks of the "immense army of Socialist voters" in the former country, and recurring riots; we grant the immense army of Socialists, but what of the riots? Where be they? These things are not confined to Germany, or Ireland, or China, but are inherent in the capitalist system. What of Fred Crowsley, Tom Mann, Guy Bowman, who, as G. B. Shaw said, were imprisoned for speaking common-sense to soldiers? George Lansbury, and now Larkin, have paid the same penalty for talking common-sense to civilians.

The oppressors of the workers know no distinction of country, sex, or creed, except in so far as it makes the subject easier or otherwise for exploitation. The masters have started a class war, and we must beat them at their own game. The workers have only to realise their own power to use it. Remember, that "he who would be free, himself must strike the blow."

TO THE GENERATION KNOCKING AT THE DOOR.

Break—break it open ; let the knocker rust ;
Consider no " shalt not," nor no man's " must " ;
And, being entered, promptly take the lead,
Setting aside tradition, custom, creed ;
Nor watch the balance of the huckster's beam ;
Declare your hardest thought, your proudest dream ;
Await no summons ; laugh at all rebuff ;
High hearts and you are destiny enough.
The mystery and the power enshrined in you
Are old as time and as the moment new ;
And none but you can tell the part you play,
Nor can you tell until you make assay,
For this alone, this always, will succeed :
The miracle and magic of the deed.

JOHN DAVIDSON.

THE TORCH-BEARERS.

Coming events cast their shadows before them, for everywhere around us to-day lie the heavy shadows of industrial upheaval, and the pathway the workers tread is made dark with ignorance, fear, superstition, and treachery.

Their history records how age after age has brought only a tightening of the bonds of servitude until wavery has become a more complete form of slavery than that of the chattel slavery of early history, or the serfdom of the Middle Ages.

The wealth of the few has been made possible by the crushed, degraded, and ruined lives of the many ; and, despite incessant toil, the worker has only become poorer and more enslaved than in all past history. The spending capacity of wages has been reduced, and long hours have left no leisure for recreation.

The admirers of our paternal Liberal Government tell us there has been much labour legislation of recent years. Health Insurance and Old Age Pension Acts have been graciously conceded. Are the toilers still unsatisfied ? Will not the cry of the Labour Party for more and more " labour " Acts quiet their restlessness ? Are they still rebellious ? A few of the workers know how the chains of wage-slavery have become heavier despite new labour laws added to the Statute-book during the past seven years of Liberal administration. They know quite well that the Servile State may not be so far away that they can ignore the fight for freedom. They see that their ills cannot much longer be palliated by Acts of Parliament. That, despite its so-called beneficent legislation, this institution is powerless to heal the wounds of our industrial life. They are beginning to criticise this " representative " Government, enquiring into its origin, and asking why it should have power to

enslave. They begin to see it is in reality a concrete expression of Capitalism, by means of which the fetters are kept riveted.

Anti-governmental ideas have spread in proportion as knowledge has thrown increasing light upon the institutions of our " free " country.

Our emancipation from exploitation will only be made possible by the abolition of wage-slavery—and this will be achieved not by law-making, but by law-breaking. Judge-made law is the protective weapon of private property, which cannot exist without it. Destroy it, and the commercial morality of our twentieth century will perish.

By allying ourselves with the oppressed of the earth we declare ourselves the mortal enemies of all forms of exploitation ; and inasmuch as Parliament has always sanctioned oppression, and placed the legal seal upon our slavery, we oppose it as being an obstacle to progress.

We emphatically deny that any form of government is compatible with human freedom, for all forms of government imply coercion and the compulsory abrogation of the rights of the governed.

We, the disinherited of the earth, dimly begin to comprehend what life should hold for us. We see that no wealth, no art can be worthy the name that is not contributed to and shared by each person within the community.

Those who realise these things have become the torch-bearers of a free society which shall be founded upon the useful industry of all, and where a new morality shall make exploitation an unknown thing.

In every age and every forward movement a little band of pioneers, steadfast, strong, with vision ahead of its age, has led the way. This is the motto of the torch-bearers of a bygone age : " The Frisian shall be free, as long as the wind blows out of the clouds and the world stands."

Let the spirit of the ancient Frisians animate us, let us indeed become the torch-bearers treading fearlessly the road to liberty, regardless of all obstacles, that others too may join us until our invincible force shall win at last the long-lost heritage of freedom.

The *Daily Sketch* says and does some curious things at times. Were the following paragraphs purposely placed next to each other ?—

" The King arrived at Elveden Hall from Sandringham yesterday for three days' shooting as the guest of Viscount Iveagh.

The seventh food ship for Dublin workers will be sent by the Trades Union Congress this week, and another has been ordered for next week."

Apropos of shooting, Shaw told an audience at the Albert Hall to arm themselves against possible police charges. We dare not have said that. Lansbury and Larkin give us a hint of our probable fate.

ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

Every society, on abolishing private property, will be forced, we maintain, to organise itself on the lines of Communistic Anarchy. Anarchy leads to Communism, and Communism to Anarchy, both alike being expressions of the predominant tendency in modern societies, the pursuit of equality.

Time was when a peasant family could consider the corn it sowed and reaped, or the woollen garments woven in the cottage, as the products of its own soil. But even then this way of looking at things was not quite correct. There were the roads and the bridges made in common, the swamps drained by common toil, the communal pastures enclosed by hedges which were kept in repair by each and all. If the looms for weaving or the dyes for colouring fabrics were improved by somebody, all profited; and even in those days a peasant family could not live alone, but was dependent in a thousand ways on the village or the commune.

But nowadays, in the present state of industry, when everything is interdependent, when each branch of production is knit up with all the rest, the attempt to claim an Individualist origin for the products of industry is absolutely untenable. The astonishing perfection attained by the textile or mining industries in civilised countries is due to the simultaneous development of a thousand other industries, great and small, to the extension of the railroad system, to inter-oceanic navigation, to the manual skill of thousands of workers, to a certain standard of culture reached by the working classes as a whole—to the labours, in short, of men in every corner of the globe.

The Italians who died of cholera while making the Suez Canal, or of ankylosis in the St. Gothard Tunnel, and the Americans mowed down by shot and shell while fighting for the abolition of slavery, have helped to develop the cotton industry in France and England, as well as the work-girls who languish in the factories of Manchester and Rouen, and the inventor who (following the suggestion of some worker) succeeds in improving the looms.

How, then, shall we estimate the share of each in the riches which ALL contribute to amass?

Looking at production from this general, synthetic point of view, we cannot hold with the Collectivists that payment proportionate to the hours of labour rendered by each would be an ideal arrangement, or even a step in the right direction.....

The mitigated individualism of the Collectivist system certainly could not maintain itself alongside a partial Communism—the socialisation of land and the instruments of production. A new form of property requires a new form of remuneration. A

new method of production cannot exist side by side with the old forms of consumption, any more than it can adapt itself to the old forms of political organisation.

The wage system arises out of the individual ownership of the land and the instruments of labour. It was the necessary condition for the development of capitalist production, and will perish with it, in spite of the attempt to disguise it as "profit-sharing." The common possession of the instruments of labour must necessarily bring with it the enjoyment in common of the fruits of common labour.

We hold further that Communism is not only desirable, but that existing societies, founded on Individualism, *are inevitably impelled in the direction of Communism.* The development of Individualism during the last three centuries is explained by the efforts of the individual to protect himself from the tyranny of Capital and of the State. For a time he imagined, and those who expressed his thought for him declared, that he could free himself entirely from the State and from society. "By means of money," he said, "I can buy all that I need." But the individual was on a wrong track, and modern history has taught him to recognise that, without the help of all, he can do nothing, although his strong boxes are full of gold.—P. KROPOTKIN ("Conquest of Bread").

MONOPOLY OF CAPITAL.

The following figures are of interest. There are 1,400,000 rich persons who own between them £634,000,000, 4,100,000 comfortably-off persons own £275,000,000, while 39,000,000 own between them £935,000,000.

Of the 939,030 persons with £8,048,000,000, as many as 312,120 own between them but about £258,000,000, leaving 626,910 persons with £7,791,000,000. Of the 626,910 persons with £7,798,000,000, as many as 507,300 have between them £1,863,000,000, leaving 119,610 persons with £5,928,000,000.... Thus, the closer we get to the facts, the more amazing the monopoly of capital appears. It is literally true to say that a mere handful of people owns the nation. It is probably true that a group of about 120,000 people, who with their families form about one-seventieth part of the population, owns about two-thirds of the entire accumulated wealth of the United Kingdom....

As to the insignificant fraction of the national wealth owned by the working and lower middle classes, it is mockery to term it the "capital of the working classes," as is done not infrequently. It corresponds, for the most part, to the squirrel's store of nuts. It stands chiefly for sick pay,

unemployment benefit, funeral moneys, bits of jerry-built houses, and so forth. It is rarely industrial capital used for the benefit of the savers.

Those who have so little property cannot bargain fairly for the sale of their services with those who own the national undertaking. A small group of private owners exercises the effective government of the nation, through the possession of the means of production, which are the means of life. As for the Government at Westminster, it is impotent, because, like the mass of the people, it owns little or no property. It cannot even control the chief source of the national wealth—coal, or the prime factor in trade—railways. The investments of the State, like the investments of the masses, are a negligible quantity. And those rule who own.

L. G. C. MONEY ("Riches and Poverty").

FORCIBLE FEEDING.

Forcible feeding—by this means are British bulldogs winning unenviable notoriety throughout the world. Liberty-loving people condemn it as an outrage and a detestable tyranny. . . . But there is another crime being committed in Britain by these self-same effete "statesmen" who violate all canons of liberty in their treatment of British women. Forcible feeding is bad enough; but what of forcible starvation? What of the countless thousands of men, of women, and of tender little children doomed to forcible starvation by the rulers of "dear old England"? Surely those who lament in tones of horror at the awful atrocity of forcible feeding, can muster up even greater indignation and loathing at the thought that in their land there are hundreds of thousands condemned by an insane social system that is condoned by British "statesmen" to a life of forcible starvation, with its concomitant evils of stunted body, deformed mind, and premature death.

—*Maoriland Worker, N.Z.*

ANARCHY.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal.
—*Century Dictionary.*

ANARCHIST MEETINGS.

GLASGOW.—Sundays, 3 p.m., Jail Square.
Friday Evenings, Dalhousie Street.

LIVERPOOL.—Communist Club, 20 Islington.
Sunday Evenings, Discussions.

HACKNEY.—Sundays, Noon, Victoria Park.
Sundays, 8, King Edward Road, Mare Street.
Mondays, 8.30, Queen's Road, Dalston.
Wednesdays, 8.30, Reading Lane, Mare Street.
Fridays, 8.30, Morning Lane, Mare Street.

NORTH LONDON.—Sundays, 3.30, Finsbury Park.
Thursdays, 8, Garnault Place.

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