

PROBLEMS FACING STRICKEN WORLD

Shall Chaps on Reconstruction in Europe Follow the Great World War?

DANGER IN GENERAL UNREST

Practically Universal Feeling of Discontent Will Grow Unless the Causes Which Gave It Birth Are Removed.

Article VII.

By FRANK COMERFORD.

A specter haunts Europe. It is the ghost of unrest. When I started out to interview unrest in Europe I did not give my ear to the idle theorist who always knows all about everything, but never from direct experience with it, nor did I go to the agitator who preaches unrest in red words. Neither did I seek out the type of fanatical labor leader, who is eager for trouble, who is trying to mobilize unrest and marshal it under the banner of Revolution. I passed by the place-hunting, time-seizing politician. I was not interested in platitudes and promises.

I sought knowledge of unrest from those who knew it from contact with it, those who were part and parcel of it. I went to the man in the street, the average man. I talked with the sweaty, dirty coal miner at the mouth of the shaft. He had just come from his day in the darkness deep in the ground. I visited the man who works in the mills. I listened to the rough speech of the teamster. I went to factories and talked with men between the two whistles which mark the time of the noon meal. They munched at black bread, ate cheese or sausage, gulped tea, coffee or cheap, diluted red wine. I spent time with the idle, the idle by choice as well as those without work through no fault of their own. Only yesterday many, yes, most of these men were in khaki; now, back on the job in overalls, they were thinking. Their speech was troubled. Discontent looked out from their eyes. I could feel it. They talked it, but never as unrest, always protest.

Unrest Must Be Quieted.

Their state of mind is the problem. Unrest is epidemic; it is militant. There is little of pacifism in it. It is real. It is not without cause. To get close to the cause of this disease which threatens revolution, one must know and understand what is going on in the minds of the men we are looking to and depending upon to do the world's work. It doesn't take a prophet to understand that if heed is not given to the things irritating them and a remedy is not found for the irritation, serious trouble will follow. While war is hell, it has at least the restraint of discipline. A revolution growing out of unrest would mean mob madness, terrorism, fanatical, brutal, cruel and merciless. Once started, it would spread like wildfire. The world would be swept from its senses. The fire would run its course until stopped because there was nothing left to burn. Who dares picture the state in which it would leave the world? In this day, when the nerves of the world are on edge, when cold and hunger irritate, one shudders when he thinks of the fate of civilization if unrest is not checked before it explodes in passion and wrath.

Unrest existed before the war. It was an acorn then, it is an oak now. Before the war men were complaining, and justly complaining, about their lot. The difference now is that four years in the trenches have caused them to stop complaining and act. Soldiering taught them much. They learned of the greatness of force.

Back of their present tendency to act is the growth of grievance and the war lesson. Before the war they complained; today they demand. It is interesting to examine unrest in the complaint stage, as these men knew it before 1914.

These plain, ordinary average men have always been intensely human. They loved their wives and children, they lived for their homes, they felt keenly their responsibility for the happiness of their loved ones. They have but one thing to give. Before the war they gave it unsparingly—it was their labor. Their one source of income was the pay envelope. With their wages they had to buy shoes, clothes, food, and provide shelter for the lives they brought into the world, and for the women they had chosen to be the mothers of those children.

"Home" Before All.

"Home, Sweet Home" is the international anthem. It is the heart song of the average man. The club plays no part in his life. From his home he goes to work, and from work he goes home. Shanties and tenements are not homes. These men have always protested against the ugly shacks in which they were compelled to house their loved ones. They bit their lips in jobless days when their children went to bed hungry. Resentment grew in their hearts when they saw how poorly dressed their wives and children were. They muttered curses when their children were forced to go to work. They wanted to give their children a better education than they had had, a better chance in life, and they laughed at laws prohibiting child labor, while conditions compelled chil-

dren to work or starve. As these men grew older their families grew in size and demand, while their ability to earn decreased. The tragedy registered in their pay envelopes. They were being ground between growing needs and diminishing wages. The grinding not only hurt their bodies, it furrowed their brain.

They lived in dread of poverty. It had been their nurse, they feared it would be their pallbearer. Poverty had taken its revenge upon them. They were resolving that if they could help it it would not put its lash upon their children. They knew poverty intimately. It wasn't a word, a name, it was a living hateful, cruel companion. It was the devil that recruited the Marys of Scarlet Hall, the Magdalens of the slums, and always the army was mobilized from the shanties of the poor. Children who had been robbed of their youth, who had never owned a flower, poorly fed and miserably clad, dragged out of bed by alarm clocks, sounding the call to toil, when they should have been answering the school bell, children physically unfit for the breadwinner's struggle, children without the moral endurance necessary for the fight, were driven into No Woman's land, the rotten scum under the world.

Light in Education.

Before the war men were brooding on these things, papers, books, magazines mirroring life, pictured these horrors. They were the subject of public discussion and debate. Men returning from a hard day's work talked these things over with their wives after the children had gone to bed, and many a man left his supper table to peek through the half-closed door into the room where his kiddies were sleeping, tiptoeing back, only to look into the eyes of a mother, and see reflected there the fears he felt.

The invention of the typesetting machine, the cheap manufacture of paper, the growth of public school systems, and public libraries, brought light to the dark minds of the workmen. In that light they saw more clearly their needs and more completely realized their rights. It is the natural ambition of man to climb. He wants to get on and up. Ignorance had kept him from climbing. Ignorance is darkness. Men stumble when they try to go forward in the dark. Education is the light in the road. They sought to make haste, to make up for the lost time. Education taught them to want things for themselves and their families that their fathers and mothers never thought of wanting. The homes which satisfied their parents depressed and irritated them. The bathtub and tooth brush are acquired habits. The desire to straighten the back that has been bent in toil too long, is put there by education.

One thing stood in the way—it obstructed the path upward to decent living. They saw the barrier clearly and distinctly—poverty. They saw this impassable obstacle was made out of poor wages. They saw more. They saw that poor wages built the poorhouses and filled them, organized the bread lines, introduced the soup house. Out of their thoughts, in their experience, they carved a truth. "As long as some people have more than they can possibly use, while others through no fault of their own have less than they absolutely need, something is wrong," and when the call to arms came these thoughts were living in the mass mind of the world. Many not concerned with the problem of the other seven-eighths, knowing nothing of what was happening in the minds of the men and women of toil, and caring less, they did not know that these men were uniting and planning to tear down the wall of poverty.

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Contradiction in Berlin.

Fats, oils, clothes, milk for babies and other necessities are scarce in Berlin, and so high-priced that the poorer people can hardly afford them at all; yet the shop windows along Unter den Linden are full of beautiful goods.

Housing conditions pinch despite the fact that Berlin and other cities have less population than before the war.

Every candy store window in Berlin has a crowd before it all day long. Adults, as well as children, stand and stare at the displays of sweets.

Movies—most of them immoral—are always crowded. Twelve new moving picture houses are to be erected. The most popular firms are those "on the ragged edge."

Theaters are crowded, and so is the opera, as a rule.

"Old Timers" on Rhine Again.

Quite a number of regular "old timers" who marched to the Rhine with the American army of occupation in December, 1918, and who have been to the United States and discharged and enlisted again, go to make up the Fifth and Fiftieth infantry regiments which arrived recently in the vicinity of Coblenz to await possible dispatch in the near future to Upper Silesia to supervise the plebiscite.

Some of them saw ten and twelve months' service in France and Belgium before the armistice.

Russ Loses 35,000,000.

The Polish professor, A. A. Ossendoffsky, chief of the intelligence department of the all-Russian government, estimates that the world war, bolshevism, Civil war, starvation and disease has cost Russia a total of 35,000,000 lives. He places the cost of bolshevism at 12,280,000 lives. Professor Ossendoffsky says that formerly the Russian population increased at the rate of four persons a minute. Today it is decreasing at the rate of twelve to thirteen a minute.

Horse That Keeps His Head.

When a horse suddenly finds a sled with four children on it in collision with him, rears up, comes down with one foot well out in front of the children and holds up the other till they scramble to safety, he literally gallops into everybody's heart. That's what a horse did recently in a Massachusetts town.—Our Dumb Animals.

Headache Cure.

A teaspoonful of charcoal powder in half a glass of water, is a cure for sick headache, and relieves heartburn. The powder is difficult to mix with water; it assimilates better with milk, so that the quantity named should be worked to paste with a small quantity of milk; sufficient water to make the draught being added.

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