

WHAT CONSTITUTES A CRIME?

BY LILLIAN SCOTT TROY.

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Grey wrote: "after careful consideration of the circumstances His Majesty's Government have decided that Baron von Horst's connection with the majority of the agitations *raised of late years* against authority in this country renders it impossible to authorise his release *without risk*."

So the Government considered it a *risk* to release a prisoner whose only "agitation" consisted in assisting in the feeding of one thousand and more children per day during the dock strike of 1912! Surely it was a risk—suppose he actually fed some more hungry children! Such things must be stopped and discouraged, and the feeding of the children of striking fathers should be left to the refinements of hunger—the vulgarity of feeding them is apparent, and a risky thing

for a man or woman to undertake, and especially so if there is likelihood of a war coming along. (It is quite true that this man also stood bail for two sick suffragettes, so he is a double-dyed criminal, and it is a wonder they did not shoot him as they threatened to do for a couple of years.) Crime must be put down. Of course, there are plenty of people who "agitated" for years before the war; but somehow that is not quite so bad as actually feeding children of strikers.

The fathers and mothers of those hungry little children will no doubt be pleased to learn that this prisoner, who, by the way, was Labour candidate for the New York Legislature in the eighties, became paralysed in both legs due to his internment; that when he moves about another old "Hun" prisoner carries him on his back—no stretcher being allowed! Serve him very well right, too, for did not Sir Edward Grey say that he had been connected with "agitation" against authority in this country *before the war*; and isn't it against all law and order to expect the release of a man with such criminal tendencies. Now be sensible for a moment, you working-class people. Just suppose that the Government released this paralysed man, who is carried about on the back of a prisoner—for all the world like a sack of potatoes—suppose they had, and he assisted in feeding 96,000 meals to

hungry children! Think of the *risk* to the Government! Suppose he bailed out some political prisoners! Of course he couldn't do either because he hasn't a penny now—thanks to a benevolent Government; but suppose he could? Don't you shudder to think of the risk of it? And—don't you shudder to think of the Labour "leaders" who took the reply of Sir Edward Grey lying down—if they didn't jolly well agree with it.

Speak softly! Hold your precious breaths! This interned "Hun" who says he is an American citizen—who was labour's candidate for the New York Legislature when he was but twenty-one years old—this "risky" chap is an *honorary member of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers Union*. His address now is The Hospital, Camp One, Douglas, Isle of Man. And—before I say: "Happy New Year to you"—let me tell you that he is not permitted to see a single visitor. The Government takes no risks—but he still lives. And some are waiting to put flowers on his grave!

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QUESTIONS OF THE DAY.

THE DEMOBILISATION MUDDLE.

THE GOVERNMENT IN A CLEFT STICK. EITHER COURSE LEADS TOWARDS REVOLUTION.

The Government is in difficulties. If it demobilises the whole army it cannot crush the Workers' and Soldiers' Council in Russia and Germany. Moreover, if it demobilises the soldiers it will flood the Labour market and cause unemployment; and the workers, with the example before them of how Soviet Russia deals with the problems of reconstruction, must inevitably desire to follow their Russian comrades in abolishing the capitalist system and replacing it by Socialism. Therefore, to demobilise the army is to hasten the Socialist Revolution!

On the other hand, to refuse to demobilise the army is also to produce Revolution. Everywhere the soldiers are protesting against being kept away from their homes now that the war with the old rulers of the Central Empires has come to an end. The soldiers kept in the army against their will, naturally ask why; and discover that they may be ordered to overthrow Socialism in Europe. They do not wish to continue fighting with that object. The soldiers began by protesting, and found that when their protests were made by sufficient numbers, they were as immune from punishment as any body of civilian workers. But the soldiers have done more than protested; they have in some cases actually gone on strike. Moreover, they are forming a union, not of discharged men, but of men still in the army.

When the police went on strike we predicted that a soldiers' strike would probably follow.

THE RAILWAY STRIKE.

The Brighton Railway strike is spreading. The workers are demanding pay for the time spent in travelling from Lancing to Brighton where the works are. The Railway Company declares that such a strike cannot be tolerated, but it is as nothing to the demands that the workers, conscious of their power, will presently make. The workers in the army and navy and in civilian occupations are beginning at last to realise that by their labour and by their numbers, they possess an all compelling power. The workers of Russia first grasped this truth, but the movement is world-wide; a blow for Socialism and liberty in Britain is a blow for those very things in Russia; a blow for Socialism and liberty in Russia is a blow for them in England.

A CONTENTED PORTER.

A railway porter writing in *The Observer* explains that his wages have gradually risen from 17s. a week in 1913 to £2 13s. 8d. at the present time. The cost of living has also risen. His hours of labour were 84 per week in 1913; they are now 66. He says:—

"From Sunday, December 30, 1917, up to and including Saturday, December 28th, 1918, the following is my year's record of work and play:—

"Number of week days worked	277
"Number of Sundays worked	26
"Total days worked	303
"Number of Sundays off duty	26
"Number of days sick and unable to work ..	20
"Number of days laid up with accident ..	6
"Number of holidays	9

"Grand Total 364
"I submit that the above is not a bad record for a man in his sixtieth year."

We do not find much "play" about this record. It is probable that if the porter had had 29 days holiday, instead of 9, he would not have been at home ill as he was on 20 days. A railway director would consider 29 days' holiday in a year quite an impossibly small allowance. Our porter friend says:—

"My duties are by no means light. They consist of sweeping the station platforms, washing and cleaning every morning the gentlemen's lavatory, burnishing the brasswork, loading and unloading heavy churns of milk, loading sides of beef, carcasses of sheep and heavy boxes of fish, attending to the trains, sometimes coupling up, and hauling luggage about. Frequently on arrival home I go straight to bed, being thoroughly tired out."

Yet our friend is apparently satisfied! Ah, well! he belongs to a generation of workers that is almost past and we expect that very soon he will witness changes that will greatly surprise him. We expect he will be a Bolshevik with his workmates, when the Social Revolution comes.

THE INTERNATIONAL.

The International Labour and Socialist Conference which is arranged for Lausanne on January 13th, unless it is prevented from meeting by the world capitalists, will serve at least one useful purpose: it will show us how many of those who have hitherto been recognised as the leaders of Socialism in the various countries are really Socialists at all. Mr. Henderson has stated that the mission of the International Conference is to draw up a programme of International Labour Legislation. Is it his desire to divert the attention of the

delegates from anything that may be controversial and, above all, from the delicate question of peace terms? But International Labour Legislation is a subject which Mr. Henderson is likely to find by no means non-controversial. The American Federation of Labour is already protesting against Mr. Henderson's proposal for an International Tribunal to adjust Labour conditions, on the ground that it might tend to reduce wages in the U.S.A. to the European level. But, surely, some genuine Socialist voices will be raised against the Lloyd Georgist reformism, with which Mr. Henderson desires to replace the ideal of the world for the workers and an international federation of workers' republics.

MARSHAL FOCH'S THREAT.

The Daily News of January 2nd published the following paragraph:—

COPENHAGEN, Wednesday.—A report from Berlin to the "Politiken" states that Marshal Foch's representative at the Armistice Commission declared that if the Radical elements in Germany took over power, for instance, the Independents, the Allies would break off all negotiations and consider the preliminary peace at an end.—Exchange.

The Independents do not go so far as the Bolsheviks. The Allies have therefore taken a stand against even a comparatively mild form of Socialism being established in Germany.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE.

At the Peace Conference Great Britain is to be represented by "the Old Gang." We borrow the phrase from Mr. Lloyd George's party, since it aptly describes the situation. Lloyd George, Balfour and Bonar Law have received no instructions from the British people as to how they shall act; they refused to allow Parliament to discuss the peace terms with them. They may, however, have received very definite instructions from the great capitalists.

MOROCCO.

The Times referring to the French campaigns against the people of Morocco says:—

"France will yet have to undertake minor campaigns in order to occupy the remote parts of the Middle Atlas Range, but serious, united resistance of the tribes is a thing of the past, and already negotiations are on foot for many tribal submissions.... The French perfectly understand the attitude of independence of these Atlas tribes, and treat them, as they deserve to be treated, as worthy enemies. They have defended their independence, though their independence only means the continuance of the misery in which they have always existed...."

Where is the new spirit that we are told has arisen in European politics?

Mr. Cathal Brugha, the Sinn Fein M.P. for Waterford, was arrested on January 3rd, no charge being stated.

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