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and THE DRESDEN DAILY.

THE FIRST DAILY PAPER IN ENGLISH PUBLISHED IN GERMANY.

No 1,157.

DRESDEN, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 1909.

10 PFENNIGS.

The Daily Record is delivered by hand in Dresden, and may be ordered at any Post Office throughout the German Empire. It is published daily, excepting Mondays and days following legal holidays in Dresden.

Monthly Subscription Rates: For Dresden, mark 1.—; for the rest of Germany and Austria, mark 1.20. For other countries, marks 2.50.

THE PARTY SPIRIT.

(FROM OUR LONDON CORRESPONDENT.)

Never has party spirit been so apparent, and never have national exigencies been more callously subordinated to selfish partisan interests than today. The simple village folk, labourers on the soil and in the workshop, are once more being spoon-fed with wonderful promises, with money, and with newspapers. As individuals the electors are intelligent and suspicious. They manage their own little affairs very well, and are rarely taken in. In the mass they are credulous and heedless. The spell of the Socialist orator carries them away. Hundreds of thousands of people in the British Isles really believe that a golden time is coming when there will be no rich and no poor; when equality will reign and plenty be provided for all—especially for soft-handed shirkers with political ability. When the "little people" are not drugged by Party they do not care a straw under what form of Government they live so long as work is regular and meat cheap. On the Continent the artisan and the peasant, owing to centuries of jeopardy pressing from outside, see a little farther. In addition to regular work and bountiful crops they desire earnestly that there should be no war. The People's Candidate is as common in France as in England, but the lives of poor folk throughout democratic Christendom run on in the same groove notwithstanding the constant changes of Ministers and Deputies. At each successive General Election they are all sanguine that high pay, little work, and divided wealth are coming their way. They are disappointed always.

Few Members of Parliament or their professional supporters in the Press have a just notion of the indifference of the majority to the most exciting political events. Helped by the annihilation of distance, the Party system has diminished the relative importance of the House of Commons to such a point that public interest in its proceedings is now less than in football or in murder. The House of Commons is neither loved and respected, nor is the House of Lords hated and despised as the Government Press have us believe. The Editor of the *Daily News*, when not withering under a dose of Party toxin, is as good a patriot as the average Conservative, nevertheless he instructs his leader-writer to say that the tongue of the English peer "is the vernacular of the stable-yard, that his appetites are sharp and coarse, his temper ragged, his language shrill, his venom ugly." "Charity," according to the *Daily News*, is to "dry up and the poor are to go hungry" because the peerage is taxed and the State "is to be launched into chaos and civil strife so that he (the peer) may remain exempt from the demands made upon his fellows." This is how we fight our Constitutional battle in 1909.

Nobody would gather from this diatribe that the middle-classes who pay Income Tax (out of a population which to the end of last year stood at 44,538,718) amounts to less than two and a half per cent. of the population; that the claims of direct taxation falling almost exclusively upon them, their interests and the interests of the handful of peers who are described as "Tammany bosses" are substantially identical. Three-sevenths of the whole of the national revenue is provided by one twenty-second of the population—almost totally by the middle-classes. More than 42,000,000 people are immune from direct taxation because the Party politician profits by promising 42,000,000 people benefits towards the cost of which they will not be called to contribute. A man with £400 a year—probably an average income for the middle-classes—is charged six times as much as a man with £200 a year; but a man with £800 a year does not pay six times as much as a man with an income of £400, but less than double, and a man with £4,000 a year pays at no higher rate than one with £2,000. This is our taxing system. What can be said of the plan that trebles the burden on a small income when an income ten times as great pays at the same rate as an income of half the amount? The burden on the middle-classes is intolerable. They are practically unrepresented in the House of Commons, because if a middle-class man is chosen by a caucus and returned to Parliament, as a rule he either seeks to obtain value for his expenditure by ascent into a caste in which he was not born, or as delegate of a needy proletariat he "voices" a demand that the State shall insure against the results of impro-

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The spectacle of the Thames Embankment at night, which the *Daily Telegraph* sensibly demands shall be abolished, is a microcosm of the complicated problem before the coming Parliament. Nobody wants these poor nomads to starve, but hitherto public opinion has not been ripe for the only measure that can end once for all the scandal of congested vagrancy in the richest city in the world. The compulsory restraint of vagrants and their employment in labour colonies is a measure far more essential to the welfare of Britain than the abolition of the Lords' veto. Centuries of whipping, the stocks, the pillory, branding, mutilation, hanging, imprisonment, and charity have all failed either to reform or to abolish the unemployable vagrant. The only plan that remains to be tried is to teach him that his comfort in life shall depend on the productiveness of his labour. Advertised cadging on the Thames Embankment absorbs charity urgently required by families too proud to thrust their need upon the public and prevents the application of the one effective remedy for unemployment. The unemployables must first be cleared away if Tariff Reform is to provide employment for those who can work and wish to do so. The Party system cultivates and cringes to the unemployable.

Sir Robert Perks's defection from the Liberal Party emphasises the fact that the coming struggle will be largely decided by Nonconformists, who will have to make up their minds whether they hate Free Love, Communism, and Atheism more than they hate the Church of England and the House of Lords. All of us are apt to be governed more by antipathies than by sympathies, and avert our minds from those considerations which tell against the position we have already taken up. Notwithstanding the rancour, cant, and hypocrisy visible to all, there is still a vast amount of holy living and dying in Britain today. The Light of the World is still a reality to men of action and to the suffering and obscure. The coming struggle of which the Budget is the outward and visible sign is no less a struggle against Materialism than against theft.

Mr. Robert Blatchford, an honest man who has made Socialists by the hundred thousand, writes:

Let the holy have their Heaven... I oppose Christianity because it is not true... I deny that the love or the help of

the intercession of Christ, or Buddha, or Mahomet, or the Virgin Mary is of any use to any man. I do not believe there is any Heaven, and I scorn the idea of Hell.

Mr. Blatchford is not a poseur; we believe in his integrity while disagreeing with his Socialism. Mr. Bernard Shaw, a different kind of man, writes in his preface to "Major Barbara":

Popular Christianity has for its emblem a gibbet; for its chief sensation a sanguinary execution after torture; for its central mystery an insane vengeance bought off by a trumpety explanation.

Marx was an avowed Atheist, and Marx is the greatest and most influential name in the history of Socialism. Mr. Belfort Bax says that Socialism "utterly despises the 'other world' with all its stage properties—that is, the present objects of religion." Materialism is the gospel of Socialism. When the hope of another world no longer consoles a sufferer from the miseries of life the desire to obtain comforts and luxuries attains a cyclonic force. As Mahomet won power by the promise of a sensual paradise hereafter, the Socialists behind the Budget seek to obtain their ends by promising paradise on earth. As to Christian Socialism, that which is Socialist is not Christian, and that which is Christian is not Socialist. "Socialism," asserts Mr. Hyndman, "is the only religion left. Christianity is practically a dead creed." Under Social Democracy religious life must be denied freedom. It is the deadly foe of the Christian Church—not merely of sacerdotalism but of charity. It is a raid not only against priestly arrogance but against pure religion and undefiled.

NEWS OF THE WORLD.

(From our correspondent) LONDON, Thursday.—Apparently we are not to know the fate of the Budget before next Tuesday, because a number of peers have suddenly remembered that this debate will go down to posterity as an epoch in English history, and they cannot afford to lose a chance of such immortality as may accrue to all taking part in it. The past four days have thrown out one fact in sharp relief—namely, the serious split in the ranks of the peers. Speaker after speaker, all men of influence and weight, have got up to explain why they are adopting a neutral attitude. Lord Cromer, from whom the anti-Budgeteers expected great things, has retired gracefully from the fray. Lord Rosebery is another leading neutral. Lord Balfour of Burleigh this afternoon gave his reasons for sitting on the fence, and he will be followed by dozens of other peers. Lord Lansdowne, in fact, is in danger of waging his fight in a position of splendid isolation. All these defections are hailed with noisy jubilation on the part of Ministerialists in whose ranks, at least, there is no symptom of split. Today's debate had no features of particular interest excepting the impressive speech of Lord Balfour. He criticised many of the Budget's clauses in detail, but did not hesitate to deliver an emphatic warning to Lord Lansdowne and his adherents against taking false steps. The Government's fuglemen have seized the opportunity presented by all this indecision and have promptly founded an "Anti-House of Lords League," which organisation commenced its activities this evening by arranging a series of disgraceful scenes outside St. Stephen's. When the sitting concluded and the peers commenced to stream out, they found themselves compelled to pass through lines of hooting, whistling, and jeering men. They bore the ordeal with such equanimity that the demonstrators became irritated and threatened resort to more violent expressions of disapproval. So serious did the disturbance become that the police had to disperse the mob, which is said to have numbered 6000. Tactics such as these cannot but discredit the party having recourse to them. The Government's plan of campaign, indeed, is strongly criticised as partaking of the character of a class war. Responsible Ministers are not hesitating to inflame popular passions to a dangerous pitch. Several passages in recent speeches could easily be construed as a direct incitement to violence. At Portsmouth the other day there arrived a special train from London packed with an army of roughs who at once set about breaking-up the Unionist meetings. You will recollect that in a recent despatch I drew attention to the forged cards of

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