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"After the War"---Another Aspect.

Last January Mr. Schlesinger, chairman of the African Theatres Trust, promised Comrades W.H. Andrews, S.M. Pettersen and myself the use of the Tivoli Theatre for the Johannesburg I.S.L. meetings on Sunday nights, as soon as the then occupants (some spiritualists) should cease to meet there. When they did cease, the S.A. Labour Party stepped in to the exclusion of the I.S.L.

A few weeks ago the Labour Party meetings fizzled out. The coast being then clear, I saw Mr. Schlesinger again, and claimed fulfilment of his promise, to which he replied that he had no objection, and I had better make arrangements with his manager. As a result the theatre was point blank refused to us. "We did not mind the Labour Party's milk and water (which however the public did not want) but we are afraid of you, even though you could pack the hall twice over. AFTER THE WAR you may hold meetings to your hearts content, but not now"

Some of our own propagandists have sometimes dropped into the same strain. "We may be unpopular now" they say, "but our time is coming. After the war there will be a big revulsion in our favour. We shall capture seats and ride on the crest of the wave to victory."

There is danger in the coincidence of these anticipations. If after the war our propaganda is going to be such as the Trust will view with equanimity, then look out. The Trust lives on the "bobs" of the public; but suppose the public took a really Socialist turn, what would the Trust's attitude to it be then? Does anyone think it would dare to side with the public and defy the top capitalist power to which every such corporation is more beholden even than to the public? That is not our experience of Beelzebub.

Evidently that manager conceives that all our ginger is just War-on-War pacifism which we shall have to drop when peace is signed, to relapse into "asses-milk-cum-water." Please god he is wrong, but let us beware of imagining the same vain thing, or even part of it, ourselves.

What effect the war will ultimately have on the mind of the workingclass none can say: but we can say that the Labour movement will be as futile as in the past unless it becomes unblushingly class conscious, revolutionary, and also organised to the teeth, as it never dreamt of being before. To expect any good merely from 'as in 1913-14, only better' is to ignore the stupendous lesson of the war. Our strikes certainly did open men's eyes in South Africa three years ago, but not wide enough. Had they then grasped the full truth, this war would have multiplied the advance then made by as much as its 20,000,000 victims exceed the 200 of July 5, for the force at work was the same. But instead, eyes have been closed again, and the revulsion will, in the nature of things, not be phenomenal, or if it is, it will consist once more of just a sentimental aimless protest, sure to weaken rather than strengthen the movement by a fallacious sense of power. Indignation there will be, a huge barricading mob perhaps; but it will be our ruin if we are content to ride on it instead of educating and organising it on unflinching, uncompromising Socialist lines, teeth clenched,—and *irrespective of race, creed or colour.*

The capitalist class will not sit still and trust to weathering the revulsion; it will be unprecedently busy side-tracking it. Our career must be one of eternal opposition, endless battle, perpetual 'unpopularity' as the word is now used, i.e. hostility, and distastefulness, to the ruling class with all its vast following. We shall not get the Tivoli nor romp into Parliament, nor pal up again with the S.A.L.P., "after the war." If we do, it will be at our peril, for it will mean glozing over the virile, trenchant, transcendent, and still generally unfamiliar truths and principles more brutally unmasked, more imperatively forced on the workingclass by this war, than ever before; and of such glozing is *not* the Socialist Revolution. Let us expect not peace but a sword "after the war."

S.P.B.

Five Souls.

W. N. EWER. Reprinted in The Labour Leader.

First Soul.

I was a peasant of the Polish plain;
I left my plough because the message ran:—
Russia, in danger, needed every man
To save her from the Teuton; and was slain.
I gave my life for freedom—This I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Second Soul.

I was a Tyrolese, a mountaineer;
I gladly left my mountain home to fight
Against the brutal, treacherous Muscovite;
And died in Poland on a Cossack spear.
I gave my life for freedom—This I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Third Soul.

I worked in Lyons at my weaver's loom,
When suddenly the Prussian despot hurled
His felon blow at France and at the world;
Then went I forth to Belgium and my doom.
I gave my life for freedom—This I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Fourth Soul.

I owned a vineyard by the wooded Main,
Until the Fatherland, begirt by foes
Lusting her downfall, called me, and I rose
Swift to the call—and died in fair Lorraine.
I gave my life for freedom—This I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Fifth Soul.

I worked in a great shipyard by the Clyde,
There came a sudden word of wars declared,
Of Belgium, peaceful, helpless, unprepared,
Asking our aid, I joined the ranks, and died.
I gave my life for freedom—This I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.