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CIRCULATION
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No Nation Can Be Free Without a Free Press

BY THE FREE PRESS DEFENSE LEAGUE.

IT IS necessary that we who have given of our money and our services in the struggle for the preservation of the free press should from time to time, in order that we may the more readily arouse those who have fallen asleep upon their rights, give reasons for the faith that is in us.

The Free Press Defense League came into being to protect and enhance no dangerous nor worthless right of the American people. It was born to serve no particular class, but all the people who hold dear liberty of speech and thought and action, particularly as these appertain to the press, the schools and the churches.

When the first imprint issued from the first printing press, the genius of civilization turned her face to the East to behold a new dawn. Liberty, that had languished in chains, felt the thrill of the coming day when she should enter into her own.

Among the first fruits of the press, which in spite of indexes and interdictions, inquisitions, racks and fagots, brought knowledge to the masses, was a measure of religious liberty. Until the first press gave forth its first pamphlet, religious liberty was a name uncoined and religious toleration a meaningless combination of syllables.

"The Reformation," exclaims Agnes Strickland, "was cradled in the printing press and established by no other instrument."

For the first time in the history of Christendom, the mass of humanity had seized upon a means by which it could obtain for itself knowledge. With the attainment of knowledge began that age-long warfare in the last engagement of which we stand today—the struggle of a fact-hungry world with the hierarchy of "eternal Rome." In those days, Rome burned libraries, broke up printing presses and sent their owners to the gibbet; today she mobs and murders those who criticize her acts by word of mouth, and seeks to drive from the mails the publications of those editors who have deemed it their privilege and duty to expose the unspeakable practices of the hierarchy.

"Cradle of the Reformation"

"Cradled in the printing press" was the Reformation, and the work begun by the printing press and by Luther comes now in the fullness of time to its fruition, nurtured still by the printing press and by those fearless servants of humanity who exercise our constitutional guaranty of freedom to publish the truth and our convictions concerning any and every institution whatsoever. And arrayed against the free press now, as in the time of Luther, we find a company of oppressors, the tyrants of the earth with the hierarchy of Rome at their head.

Can anyone in this age ask why? "Let it be impressed upon your minds," wrote "Junius," whose letters stirred all England, "let it be instilled in your children that the liberty of the press is the palladium of all civil, political and religious rights."

And as if he had drunk from the same fountain of wisdom, Blackstone, the great legal authority, gave it as his opinion that "the liberty of the press is essential to a free government."

"If there is anything in the universe that cannot stand discussion," cried our own Wendell Phillips, "let it crack!"

And "crack" it will, for among thoughtful men and women there is no more certain indication of flaw or guilt in a public man or institution than that either should clamor for the restriction of the rights of the press.

Is there, then, doubt in the mind of any-

one what weighty and immediate reasons there were for the assembling of the Free Press Defense League? And can there be doubt as to the motives of Rome in demanding the muzzling of the press?

If there is such doubt, it can be removed by these words of Manton Marble:

"Upon public abuses the press turns the collected flames of its stunglass and scorches them to cinders. Against the countless wrongs, the injustice and oppressions of individuals, it wages perpetual war."

Does every word of that utterance seem aimed at Rome? Only because Rome has chosen to be from the beginning and will persist unto the end the chief enemy of freedom of expression, of thought and of action.

What does the free press mean to its possessors? "The press is the steam engine of moral power," says the great Chaffield, "which, directed by the spirit of the age, will eventually crush imposture, superstition and tyranny. The liberty of the press is the true measure of all other liberty. For all freedom without this must be merely nominal. To stifle the nascent thought is a moral infanticide, a treason against human nature. What can a man call his own if his thought does not belong to him?"

Thus speak the champions of liberty in all lands. They who have borne the brunt of the fighting, they who have looked on with intelligent eyes, and they who have by their very opposition to the freedom of the press, given the best proof of the necessity of its existence—all these bear abundant testimony that without a free press, freedom is a mockery and personal liberty less than a name.

"What then remains?" says John B. Curran, "The Liberty of the press only—that sacred palladium which no influence, no power, no minister, no government, which nothing but the depravity or folly or corruption of a jury can ever destroy. But the facts are too recent in your mind not to show you that the liberty of the press and the liberty of the people sink and rise together; that the liberty of speaking and the liberty of acting have shared exactly the same fate."

Do your eyes deceive you? Does this printed page fade away, and do you now see the editors of The Menace indicted upon technicalities, charging the publication of obscenity; do you now see the editors of other fearless publications who have dared utter the truth concerning Rome—do you see these arraigned before a federal tribunal and do you hear the voice of the eminent John B. Curran thundering at court and accuser the warning that has come down to us since Rome broke the first press it could seize and killed the first printer it could apprehend? Do you even now hear that warning: "The liberty of the press and the liberty of the people sink and rise together, the liberty of speaking and the liberty of acting have shared exactly the same fate?"

"Free Press, Free Country"

If there be those who do not even yet understand how precious a thing to a people is the freedom of its press, hear the voice of Sheridan, declaiming in the House of Commons:

"Give me but the liberty of the press and I will give the minister a venal house of peers, I will give him a corrupt and servile house of commons—I will give him the full sway of the patronage of office—I will give him the whole host of ministerial influence—I will give him all the power the place can confer upon him to purchase up submission and overawe resistance—and yet, armed with the liberty of the press, I will go forth to meet him undismayed—I will attack the mighty fabric he has reared with a mightier engine—I will shake down from its height corruption and bury it in the ruins of the abuses it was meant to shelter."

Who can doubt the motive of Rome in marshalling its hosts, assembling its resources and making one last stand for the abolition of the free press of America!

These words of Gordon may shed further light: "To do public mischief without the hearing of it is the prerogative and the felicity of tyranny. Whoever would overturn the liberty of the nation must begin by subduing freedom of speech."

Do these utterances take on ominous significance when you think of the Roman

program of suppression—first the press, then the school, then the church?

But let us hear Thomson, bosom friend and commentator upon the works of John Milton, whose inspired pen gave us "Paradise Lost."

"A free Protestant country without the liberty of the press is a contradiction in terms; it is free slavery or enchained liberty. Light and darkness are not more opposite than liberty and the deprivation of the means of being rational."

This man knew of the struggle of learning, of liberty and the freedom of the press, which was nurse and foster mother to both, against the papacy from the beginning. He knew the disposition and the ways of "unchanging, infallible Rome."

It was the poet Milton* himself, who, in pleading for the freedom of the press, called attention to the fact that **THE PAPACY, UPON THE PLEA OF OBSCENITY, FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS SUPPRESSED THE BIBLE ITSELF.**

With this same plea, couched in the form of a federal indictment, it today seeks to silence its critics who dare in not too thoroughly emasculated English, give public information as to the practices of its hierarchy.

"The right to think, to know, to utter," said Milton, "is the dearest of all liberties." And Wendell Phillips added: "Without this right there can be no liberty to any people; with it, there can be no slavery."

As if with prophetic voice, Thomas Jefferson, to whom more than to any other we are indebted for those principles which found their expression in the declaration of independence, uttered these words:

"All eyes are opening to the rights of man. The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their back nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God. I am really mortified to be told that, in the United States of America, a fact like this can become the subject of inquiry, and criminal inquiry too, as an offense against religion; that the question of the sale of a book can be carried before a civil magistrate. * * * It would show to what they wish to reduce the liberty for which one generation has sacrificed life and happiness. It would present our boasted freedom of religion as a thing of theory only, not of practice."

"The Pope and the Press"

Only a free press can serve a free people. For the preservation of a free press, no sacrifice is too great. That in the welfare of the press, in its freedom and in its fidelity to the interests it serves is bound up the welfare of those whose organ it is, is realized no less by the papacy than by those who have stood in the trenches to battle for liberty.

"I would make any sacrifice," wrote Pope Pius X, "even to the pawning of my ring, pectoral cross and soutane, in order to support a Catholic newspaper."

If the preservation of a press that gives voice to the will of the Catholic hierarchy is so precious in the sight of the pontiff that he would part with the "sacred fisherman's ring," the cross that is the badge of his office and the garment that it is sacrilege for another to touch—if it were worth this upon the part of the pope to preserve the Catholic press, what is it not worth to American freemen to preserve the freedom and the existence of those fearless publications which dare to tell the truth concerning Rome?

The Roman hierarchy, admittedly the most capable political organization that ever existed, knows full well the value and power of the press. It is because of that knowledge that this same hierarchy, its hand sheathed in a federal indictment, now reaches forth to destroy The Menace. It is because of that knowledge that Pope Pius wrote to Catholic editors that he would willingly have parted with the "priceless and sacred" insignia of his office rather than see the Catholic press perish. The welfare of a nation and its insti-

tutions is bound up in the freedom and the fidelity of its press. Realizing this fact, and knowing further, that in the indictment of The Menace upon a technical charge of publishing obscene matter, the Roman hierarchy had but begun a new attack in its nationwide campaign to destroy those newspapers and magazines which dare to criticize it, men of courage and devotion organized The Free Press Defense League.

Objects of the League

Wilbur F. Phelps, founder of The Menace, was made president. Jacob I. Sheppard, of Ft. Scott, Kas., an attorney of national reputation and upon more than one occasion the successful defender of the freedom of the press in court, volunteered his services as chief counsel and organizer of the league. Mr. Sheppard agreed to serve without pay, thereby relinquishing a fee that would have amounted approximately to \$25,000.

The Free Press Defense League, born in a crisis and devoted to the common good, was dedicated to these purposes:

To protect the freedom of the press, whenever and wherever assailed—in court, in legislature, by mob or by murder.

To free the schools from all sectarian domination whatsoever and to give legal aid those who have need of it because of their services in this direction.

To oppose at any and all times any encroachment of one sect or denomination upon the rights or privileges of any other, to the end that Protestant and Catholic, Jew and Gentile should find our constitutional guaranty of freedom of religious opinion a reality rather than a theory.

The immediate task of the Free Press Defense League is to defend the editors and publishers of The Menace against the indictment of nine counts now pending against them in the federal court at Joplin, Mo. What its next task shall be must be determined by the action of the enemy. The League is a nationwide organization formed to meet the enemy upon its own ground, whatever that ground may be.

And for this purpose, The League has issued a call for 1,000,000 volunteers—men and women who are willing to contribute of their substance for the preservation of the freedom of the press. These volunteers are of two classes—those who merely contribute and those who in addition to their contributions give of their services. A contribution and an application for membership do not bind a volunteer to any further duties, nor do they lay him liable to assessment. Membership is non-assessable. But the opportunity of further service is open to each of the volunteers. He can, if he will, act as recruiting officer and bring into the army of the common good, such of his friends as wish to have part in this campaign for the preservation of the free press.

*See Areopagitica.

(Cut out and mail this coupon with your contribution TODAY)

THE FREE PRESS DEFENSE LEAGUE

FT. SCOTT, KANSAS

WILBUR F. PHELPS, President J. I. SHEPPARD, Secretary

I hereby make application for membership in The Free Press Defense League and I enclose \$..... as my contribution for the purposes of the League.

I understand that in consideration of this contribution, I am to receive a receipt and membership card. Also that after the first year I am to have a voice in the management of the organization and in the election of officers.

Name

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State

(Send all contributions intended for The Free Press Defense League to that organization at Ft. Scott, Kas., J. I. Sheppard, Secretary, and not to THE MENACE.)