

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MAY, 1916.

MONTHLY: ONE PENNY.

RAIDED!

At 5 p.m. on Friday, May 5, "Freedom" Office was raided by five detectives, acting under the Defence of the Realm Regulations. A vanload of type, books, pamphlets, etc., was taken away. The type included the four pages of "Freedom" now missing. We hope in these circumstances our readers will excuse our shortcomings.

NOTES.

The Tragedy of Ireland.

The Sinn Fein rising in Ireland has brought home to every one the fact that we have at our own doors one of those "little nations of Europe" the safeguarding of whose independence and right to self-government is supposed to be one of the objects of the war. For seven hundred years Ireland has been under the domination of England, but at no time have the Irish meekly submitted to their conquerors, and as James Connolly says in his splendid little book, "Labour in Irish History," "during the last hundred years every generation in Ireland has witnessed an attempted rebellion against English rule." Every effort made by Irishmen to build up the prosperity of the country has been defeated by their jealous trade competitors in England, who passed laws restricting Irish industries. The fact that the population of Ireland decreased from 8,175,000 in 1841 to 4,381,000 in 1911 is sufficient condemnation of the English Government's methods. Up to the present, the Irish agitations have been political and racial rather than economic. But an Irish Parliament will not mean freedom for the Irish workers any more than an English Parliament has meant freedom for the English workers. We hope that one of the lessons learnt from this ill-starred rising will be the necessity of working on economic lines in future, and that instead of a future rebellion being one of Irishmen against Englishmen it will be fought by a combination of the workers of both countries against their common enemy, Capitalism.

The Friendly Enemies.

The touching spectacle of Sir Edward Carson and Mr. John Redmond being in complete and brotherly accord, again proves that where the economic interests of our politicians are concerned they drop all show of political animosity and combine to suppress any revolt that might jeopardise property. In such a moment the political aspirations of the opposing leaders can be appraised at their true worth, and the people can discern the sort of patriotism that these wolves in sheep's clothing have beguiled them with. This most recent and glaring case should serve to disillusionise those Irish Nationalists who believe that political emancipation through an Irish Parliament will prove the Mecca of their hopes. All true lovers of Irish freedom must view with utter detestation, on the one hand, the rebel Carson fostering sedition in Ulster for purely political purposes (and consequently sowing the seeds of the present revolt), and on the other, the pseudo-champion of Irish liberty uniting with the British Government to crush the aspirations of the Sinn Feiners, who have evidently lost all faith in the efficacy of Parliamentary action to redress their grievances. The incident is certain to have a very damaging effect upon both these gentlemen of different political creeds but identical economic ones.

Labour and Secrecy.

Secret conclaves are all the order of the day since some member of the Government put up an ingenuous Labourite to ask for a secret session of the House. Asquith, as usual, played his part with distinction, saying that it was neither necessary nor practicable. But at a later date it was convenient to discover that the exigencies of the moment demanded it. The popular outcry that followed criticised Parliament's action, whereupon the wooden heads of the Labour Members had to bear the odium which promptly descended upon them. The secret assembly having proved less unanimous than was desirable, it was found necessary to convene a secret conference of Labour representatives at which the Premier, Lord Kitchener, and Mr. Bonar Law were present. Here the conspirators, we conjecture, hatched further plots for the betrayal of Labour. A further instalment of conscription is now found to be vital to the safety of the Empire, and Labour will again be asked to make sacrifices of the manhood of this country. All to glut the military appetite for more and still more young men. How much longer will the people submit to betrayal by their leaders?

Prussianism at Home.

The brutal sentences passed upon John McLean, William Gallacher, Walter Bell, and John W. Muir, together with our own comrade Chris Smith, of Abertillery, for breaches of the Defence of the Realm Act, will have the effect of still further fanning the fire of revolt that is smouldering beneath the surface. The deportation of certain well-known Clyde men under the same Act, and sundry other cases that have occurred throughout the country, all help us to realise that we possess neither economical nor political liberty. The forces of reaction more or less held in check by the spirit of the workers before the war, are now making high holiday. Frequent doses of patriotism and nationalism have for the moment been powerful antidotes against industrial rebellion. But the question is forcing itself more insistently before us daily, how long are we to tolerate the Prussianism made possible by military despotism and the treachery of Labour leaders?

No Peace Meetings.

Prussian Junkerism and Russian tyranny have together succeeded in stamping out our few liberties. Under the plea that a "stop the war" meeting on Easter Sunday in Trafalgar Square would be profoundly unpatriotic and most mischievous, the Home Secretary intimated to the House his intention of forbidding it. But he made haste to add that "he would not be prepared to lay down the doctrine that no public meetings should be held in opposition to the policy of the Government even in time of war." Oh dear no, the meeting was disallowed in the interests of law and order and to protect the misguided promoters. No wonder we have earned that delightful sobriquet "Perfidious Albion."

The Governing Caste.

The passing of Sir John Gorst recalls some interesting facts about his long political career. His organising ability saved the Conservative Party from a condition of suspended animation, but, despite his great services, he was merely allowed to pull the political chestnuts out of the fire. The *Daily Chronicle*, in a short *résumé* of his life and activities, declares that the Conservative Party "had no abler man in its ranks since the beginning of the nineteenth century; but as he did not belong to any of the great governing families he was never allowed to take that position which his abilities warranted. Yet to no man did the party owe more." Convincing testimony this to the fact that feudalism still survives, and that an oligarchy of the elect controls our destinies.

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COMPULSION FOR ALL.

The introduction of Conscription for married men necessarily follows Conscription for the single. If it is once agreed that the Government may force single men into the Army, there is no logical argument against them forcing the married men also. The trick by which one lot were played off against the other worked admirably, and the married men have fallen into the trap set for them by the Artful Dodgers of Downing Street. The result is that all men between the ages of 18 and 41 are to be compelled to join the Army, youths also being liable in future as they reach the age of 18. Thus ends an agitation which has been carried on by means of the most abominable lies and trickery of which any Government could be capable. Yet the members of this Government still proclaim to the world that they went into the war to safeguard the honour and liberties of this country. They do not know what honour is, and the only liberty they are fighting for is the liberty to exploit the workers of the British Empire or to send them to their death on the battlefields of the world.

And the workers! What are they going to do? Will they accept compulsion for all without resistance, or will they now see what a terrible blunder they made when they allowed the single men to be sacrificed? We know that the pledges given by Asquith, Balfour, and Kitchener against any extension of compulsion led many of the workers to agree to the first Military Service Act; but those pledges have now proved to be mere "scraps of paper," to be torn up when they have served their purpose. Compulsion for all is now to be made the law of the land. But even when the Act is passed it will not be too late to organise resistance, and if all those affected were to refuse to obey military orders, the Government would be helpless. The conscientious objectors, comparatively few in number as they may be, are causing the military authorities so much trouble, and are producing so much sympathy on their behalf, that the prospects of an enormous increase in their numbers might well cause the Government to stay its hand.

The growing power of militarism in this country must be checked before it overwhelms us. The raid on the FREEDOM office is but one instance out of many of the way in which that power has been exercised since the war began, and will be followed by similar outrages unless a strong protest is made. The insolent attitude of the military representatives at the Tribunals is sufficient testimony to the spirit in which they regard their victims. If these officers will show such a bullying temper in a public court, one can imagine the tyrannical methods they will use in barracks. The attempt to force men into the Army, where they will be at the mercy of such tyrants, must be resisted. The military caste is a danger in every country, and its methods are always the same. The success of militarism here means its success in Germany and other countries; its defeat here means its defeat abroad.

I never could believe that Providence had sent a few men into the world, ready booted and spurred to ride, and millions ready saddled and bridled to be ridden.—Richard Rumbold, when on the scaffold (1685).

NOTICE.—Owing to the seizure of the great bulk of our type, we are unable to produce more than four pages. Several articles, including one on Ireland, have had to be held over.

SECTION 51.

The detective-inspector in charge of the party of legalised thieves who took away our goods on May 5 informed us that he was acting under Section 51 of the Defence of the Realm Regulations. We reprint it for the benefit of our readers:—

"The competent naval or military authority, or any person duly authorised by him or any police constable may, if he has reason to suspect that any house, building, land, vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other premises or any things therein are being or have been constructed used or kept for any purpose or in any way prejudicial to the public safety or the defence of the Realm, or that an offence against these regulations is being or has been committed thereon or therein, enter, if need be by force, the house, building, land, vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or premises at any time of the day or night, and examine, search, and inspect the same or any part thereof, and may seize anything found therein which he has reason to suspect is being used or intended to be used for any such purpose as aforesaid, or is being kept or used in contravention of these regulations (including, where a report or statement in contravention of Regulation 27 has appeared in any newspaper or other printed publication, any type or other plant used or capable of being used for the printing or production of the newspaper or other publication), and the competent naval or military authority may order anything so seized to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of."

Translated into ordinary language, this would read: "The competent naval or military authority may do as he damn well pleases." And he acts accordingly.

"DEFENDING THE REALM."

Our comrade Chris Smith, whose arrest and prosecution was reported in last month's FREEDOM, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment. A second charge—distributing leaflets advocating a strike against Conscription—was brought against him. His imprisonment has not quenched his fighting spirit, as will be seen by the following letter addressed to us, which he wrote whilst awaiting removal to the gaol. The local comrades and miners among whom he worked are helping his wife and family, and we shall be pleased to receive and forward any money that comrades may send us for that purpose:—

DEAR COMRADE,—I was arrested by the police on March 22 on a charge of writing a letter, with a view to publication, prejudicing recruiting, remanded for seven days, then again remanded till April 12, waiting charge from military who perused the contents of my library. Appeared April 12 at Abertillery. The military preferred two charges against me under the Defence of the Realm Regulations. I allowed the Summary Court to deal with the case. The Public Prosecutor put the case against me very forcibly. The solicitor of the local No-Conscription Fellowship Branch defended me. I asked for and desired no legal aid, but was persuaded in the end to say I would not obstruct the solicitor watching the case in my behalf. Having no legal knowledge, I did not know this would prevent me from having my full say. I admitted writing letter and distribution of leaflets, and emphatically told the Bench that I believed in a "Down-Tools" policy against Conscription, that being the only power we workers had. What little I said was spoken in no carping spirit. I refused to take the oath, but affirmed. I denied that I directly asked men not to join the Army, but put my philosophy against that of anyone else and left it to the individual to decide. I admitted that the effect of my arguments might be to influence a weaker intelligence, but said I left the individual to finally decide. It was clearly seen that I was fearless and impenitent. I said very little, feeling it was useless, for, as a prison official said when I told him who was chairman of the Bench, "What! that damned fool! Why he isn't fit to judge a pig, let alone you." The Bench retired twice for a few brief moments, and then said: "We have considered your case fully—six months' imprisonment." My answer to the Bench was: "Gentlemen, I receive your sentence in the historic spirit," meaning, of course, "Your fear in sentencing me is greater than mine in receiving it."

Three weeks' imprisonment before trial and then six months' only intensifies my hatred against militarism, and convinces me of the truth of the faith that I hold. My prison experience, little as it is, proves the truth of Shelley's words, "Power pollutes whatever it touches. Virtuous souls command not nor obey." I am in good spirits, my wife and five children being my only concern. I shall do the time in true, manly spirit. It was clearly seen that the Bench was prejudiced against me and gave me the full sentence. Long live FREEDOM! long live VOICE OF LABOUR! Go ahead, comrades.—Yours fraternally,

C. J. SMITH.

Treason doth never prosper, what's the reason?
Why, if it prosper, none dare call it treason.

—Sir John Harrington.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

Spain.

For the present, the strikes have ceased in Cataluna, the workers having obtained a rise of wages. The workers have fought with great energy, but they were not united. The different trades each fought on their own account instead of acting together, so that the struggle lasted longer than it need have done. Many were arrested on the charge of preventing freedom of work. The Trade Unions ought to have insisted on their liberation before returning to work, and their failure to do so has been censured by *Solidaridad Obrera*, the Trade Union organ.

At Valencia and Logrono there have been sanguinary strikes. In both cities workers have been killed and wounded by the Guardia Civil, and many comrades were arrested. In Logrono a dozen have been in prison for a year, in consequence of a strike among the farmers of Cenicero. Without reason, they were insulted by the president of the employers' association, and trampled on by the Guardia Civil. The farmers defended themselves with knives and sticks, and a Guardia Civil was killed and one wounded. The military tribunal that is trying them will certainly condemn them to death. This must be prevented, as in the case of those sentenced at Cullera in 1911.

The Spanish police have invented two new methods of persecuting Anarchists. Our comrade D'Lom was arrested in Madrid on the pretext that he was mad. His comrades held a meeting of protest, and he was liberated. The Guardia Civil arrested him next at Venta de Banos, and when they had to set him free they excused themselves on the ground that they took him for a pickpocket. That was impossible, as D'Lom was kept under police surveillance.

The review to be published at Gijon, as announced in last month's FREEDOM, is entitled *Renovacion*, and will uphold the war opinions of Kropotkin, Malato, and Grave. For that reason it will have a short life, as was the case with *Accion Libertaria*, which it replaces. In Spain, the idea of taking part in this war is not held by half-a-dozen Anarchists.

The elections in Spain demonstrate no opinion, and the majority is for the Government, who employ the dirtiest ways to win them. Many of their enemies have not the right to vote, many who are dead have it; and not only do the dead vote for the Government, but those alive who go a little late find that others have voted in their name. The majority of workers who vote do so for money or because they are forced. Though the Deputies in Spain are not paid, some of them spend thousands of pounds to get elected. V. G.

Italy.

An Italian comrade sends us the following statement made by a friend of his who went from London to join the Italian Army and has just returned:—

After I passed the doctor in London, I was ordered to present myself to the military authority in Italy not later than December 31. So I started from here with one of the last groups, forty of us in all. All went well until we got to the Italian frontier, when the military authority took charge of us, and we were marched off to a rest camp near by, with twenty soldiers with fixed bayonets on each side of us, as though we were spies or prisoners. I asked the nearest soldier why they did so, and he said we were a lot of fools to return, and that we would not be allowed to see our parents until we were ready for the butcher. That is what they have done to every one that has returned, and yet, to believe the papers, one would think the country was raving for the war. Then we proceeded to our recruiting quarters, and on our way we had to stop at Chivasso, the so-called war junction, where all the soldiers from Western Italy go to the war zone. As we were waiting there, two trains came in full of soldiers, all destined for the front. There were present a good many officers, ranging from general to lieutenant; and when the soldiers saw them they shouted: "We want the war stopped! Murderers, are you not ashamed of yourselves? Stop sending us to the slaughterhouse like lambs! Down with the war! Down with the murderers!" I noticed the soldiers had no rifles, and I heard later they would not have any until they were in the war zone.

While I was in Bologna I met an old chum that I used to work with. He has been at the front from the very beginning, and he said that on many occasions the soldiers refused to go to the attack, and the officers forced them forward by ordering the artillery to fire from behind, so if they did not go forward they would be killed by their own artillery. This has been confirmed by many other soldiers I met. These methods have been used a great deal in France also. I was told by a soldier who was wounded in one of the latest fights on the Western Front, they had more casualties from their own guns than from those of the enemy. Believe me, I shall never return to Italy while the war is on, as you are never sure from one day to another when you may be called up to serve, even if you are a cripple. There is no enthusiasm for the war and there never has been any, with a few exceptions; and it would not surprise me if a revolution was to break out at any time. But there are only old folk and women at home. Who, then, will make the revolution if not the soldiers themselves. Let us hope that they will soon set an example that will be followed by other countries.

LIBERTY'S LEGION.

(Dedicated to all those who are refusing to become Conscripts.)

The drums of Armageddon roll
To lure men forth to maim and kill;
But deep within the human soul
The fire of Freedom smoulders still,
And Freedom's voice, half-strangled, cries:

"Renounce your mutual fears and hates,
Ye slaves of every land! Arise!
Resist the foe within your gates
Who battens on your slavery,
Usurping all the means of life;
Who sends you forth to fight and die,
And reaps red gold from seeded strife!

"In 'Christian England' can it be
That those proud souls who scorn to fight,
To crush the sons of Germany
And aid the despot Muscovite,
Because the lives of humankind
Are more to them than greed of gold
And place and power, that make men blind
To suffering and to shame untold—
Shall find within the gaol or grave
(The death-in-life or death indeed)
The martyr-guerdon of the brave
Whose will it is that none should bleed;
No mother mourn her murdered boy,
No maid her sweetheart sacrificed;
For sterile 'Victory' to cloy
These 'Christian' ghouls who spurn their Christ?

"Ye hero-lads, who will not yield
To Mammon's tinselled trull—THE LAW,
The only weapon you may wield,
The spirit-sword I bade you draw:
It well may hap that some of you
(Opposing War 'for conscience' sake)
Have builded better than ye knew;
That deep within your souls shall wake
The flame that fires my Children's eyes,
The love that links their souls like steel,
The age-long Dream that never dies—
That yet shall prove itself more real
Than Slavedom now in all the world,
Whose bloody reign shall cease to be
When Labour's arms upbear unfurled
The tribeless flag of ANARCHY!

T. S.

NEW CHAINS FOR OLD.

A law in force in Colorado makes it illegal for a strike to take place until after the expiration of thirty days' notice to the Industrial Commission. Recently several hundred smeltermen at Leadville struck in defiance of this law, and at once the entire machinery of the State was put in motion to enforce it. The strikers were mostly foreigners, and it was thought that ignorance of the language was the cause of their violation of the Act, but after the Austrian Consul had explained it to them, the report says, "to the amazement of all, knowledge of the law met with an insulting and defiant refusal to obey it." The result of their "present criminal conduct," as the Governor of the State calls it, is uncertain; but we know that no good will be achieved unless they do defy the law. The Journeymen Tailors' Union of the same State gave notice last November, and the Industrial Commission investigated their claims. It has now decided they are just. This does not mean that their claims will be satisfied, but that they can strike if they are not. The organiser of the Union said:—"This new law and the Industrial Commission of the State have stood like a stone wall against the journeymen tailors' chance to better their conditions. No injunction, re-enforced by militia, could so effectually paralyse our efforts as has this new weapon. . . . If the merchant tailors had made the law and the Commission themselves, they could not have done it much better." But why is this organiser surprised? All legislation is designed to protect the interests of the employers. The workers' obedience to the law is its sole strength; when they defy it, it loses its force. There does not seem much difference between this law of Colorado and the Munitions Act in this country.

OUR ANNUAL POW-WOW.

A very successful Anarchist conference was held on Easter Monday at Marsh House, the comrades attending coming with few exceptions from the London district. The lack of railway facilities and other considerations prevented most of the provincial comrades from attending, but comrades from Birmingham, Bristol, and Southend were present. There was a very good attendance, and one was glad to note many old and well-known comrades among the number.

Tom Keell opened the proceedings with a survey of past work and an outline of future propaganda. He was optimistic, realising an inevitable strengthening of the movement in the near future as a result of the Governmental repression, one good sign being an increase in the circulation of *FREEDOM*. He referred to the arrest of comrade Smith at Abertillery and his subsequent sentence of six months' imprisonment for the heinous crime of distributing leaflets among the miners. All expressed their sympathy and detestation of the Government's methods.

George Davison insisted upon the necessity for action as well as discussion—co-operative and other experiments should be made by the workers themselves. Ernest Watson thought the suggested formation of an Anarchist colony in Western Australia was a step in this direction; but it was generally felt that vigorous propaganda should go on side by side with any Communal effort, which, after all, although it would give the members a greater opportunity of free expression, could never be true Communism whilst Capitalism remained, and the fact that a social revolution was our avowed objective must not be overlooked.

Lilian Woolf, speaking on the financial position of the *VOICE OF LABOUR*, said funds were in a fairly satisfactory position. We were making much headway and the financial support was good.

The chief subject of discussion was our future means of propaganda. It was suggested this should be of an anti-militarist and anti-nationalist character, and we should advocate birth control among the workers, the agitation in favour of all three to be carried on simultaneously. E. Watson thought any literature on this subject should be quite simple; he contended that many of our pamphlets and leaflets were too academic. A very interesting discussion followed, centreing mainly around the question of the usefulness or otherwise of the Trade Unions, in which to propagate our revolutionary ideals.

Mabel Hope vigorously attacked the present craft Unions on the ground that they had fostered the "aristocracy of labour" fiction, and had thus tended to divide the skilled and unskilled workers. The old craft Unions, because of their reactionary character, must be replaced, and a Unionism advocated that should include all workers and have an international basis. E. Watson thought that the only useful purpose served by membership of the present Unions was that it gave one an excellent opportunity of propaganda. Comrade Ploschansky advocated the formation of small groups inside the Unions; there was a real danger in isolation. Tom Keell said that the spread of revolutionary ideas was more important than the form of organisation. Max White was of opinion that our discussion on the Trade Union question was quite inconclusive. He held we could not serve two masters and be both Trade Unionist and Anarchist.

A. Schapiro urged that we should differentiate between the English Trade Union movement and the Continental, and cited the case of the Spanish Trade Union movement, where there was very little officialism, no politics, and a universal belief in the usefulness of direct action. Anarchists predominated there. But we must guard against reaction when working in the Trade Union. He did not wish to see our most useful and promising comrades caught in the net of officialism and so lost to the movement. Compromises might have to be made, but were we not making daily compromises? He was convinced that it was our greatest chance of educating the workers in Anarchism. We must study methods for the destruction of Capitalism.

A spirited discussion took place over these assertions, G. Davison saying that to take up such an attitude as Schapiro's was to overlook the fundamental principle of Anarchism—only expediency justified countenance of the Unions. The only effective propaganda was that performed in the factory or the mine.

Comrade Ploschansky thought we would be working against our own class if we opposed the Unions. Mrs. Ruderman objected that we had been merely walking round in a circle;

she thought we had to remember that we were not merely Anarchists, but human beings. We could not lay down hard-and-fast rules as to the forms our propaganda should take. Malatesta referred to his work among Italian Trade Unions, where he had successfully advocated Anarchism. We were against the Trade Union officials and the forms of Trade Unionism, but he believed they could become a power. We must urge the people to unite. Growth would not come by way of isolation, though we must vigorously combat the dominating influence in the Unions. Summing up the discussion, there was a general consensus of opinion that the Anarchists could more readily approach the workers from within the Trade Unions, but it was felt that there was also a large scope outside them.

Lilian Woolf thought too little had been said on the question of anti-nationalism—it was the rock upon which Socialists had split since the war, and was of paramount importance. Nationalism had been used to inflame the passions of the people, and must be vigorously opposed.

Mabel Hope brought up the matter of the victimisation of comrades owing to the Military Service Act, and suggested that we should link up with other bodies for the purpose of emphasising our hostility to its operation. Leaflets setting forth specific cases might be issued, demonstrations held, and the authorities defied wherever possible. A group was formed to undertake this work, and names of comrades willing to assist were requested.

Millie Rocker was of opinion that while we were so isolated little practical good could be done. It was useless for us to keep our convictions in our pocket, we must organise and federate with other organisations. Comrade Ploschansky was anxious that we should assist those Russian comrades of military age who in a few weeks would be forced into the Army. We must oppose this fresh Governmental tyranny.

The seriousness of the times in which we were living was fully realised by all the comrades present, who thought that our immediate work should consist of combatting the growing Prussianism of the British Junkers who were busy leg-ironing Labour in Britain, whilst preaching the justice of their "war of liberty." Such work successfully performed could well prepare the ground for the spread of Anarchist ideas later. Mere academic theorising was useless—the time for serious action had come if we were to uphold our ideals and win back the liberties lost since the commencement of the war.

The tone of the conference throughout was one of earnestness and a determination to "win through."

The lighter side of the programme—a social and dance—followed in the evening, where young and old made merry and demonstrated their right to the gaiety of life. Revolutionary songs and "Auld Lang Syne" (new version) brought a very successful day to a close.

ANARCHY.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal.—*Century Dictionary*.

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