

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM.

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MONTHLY: ONE PENNY.

NOTES.

Police to Enter Private Meetings.

The octopus which has gripped us for so long a period of time—we refer to the Defence of the Realm Act—has thrown out yet one more tentacle in the form of a new Order just issued, giving to the police the right to be present at private meetings. This regulation provides that where a competent naval or military authority, or any superior officer of police (rank above sergeant) is of opinion that a meeting or assembly is being or about to be held of such a character that it may constitute a menace to the realm, such officer may authorise the police to enter the place of meeting and remain there during its continuance. In this new Order we see the iron heel of Prussianism which has been treading us under foot ever since the British Government started out on its holy crusade of crushing Prussian militarism. During the progress of this "war of liberation" we have thus been obliged to witness the slow strangulation of the people of this country. Each week has seen some fresh addition to that mighty monument of governmental power typified in the Defence of the Realm Act; each week has seen us become the more helpless slaves of the ideal State, until liberty and all our traditions of liberty have become unfamiliar things to us.

"Co-operating with the State."

Every person who has taken the trouble to analyse the State and its function has seen that in its development, and in order to defend its existence, it is bound, sooner or later, to be repressive in its acts. The State and freedom are quite incompatible. It is this central fact that the worker entirely fails to grasp, and that is why he allows himself to be hoodwinked with the notion that the nation has become a "vast co-operative concern." He still hugs the delusion that the interests of the State and of the individual are one. That is one reason why he has been so ready to part with his money to float the new War Loan, especially when it carried with it a high rate of interest. But if he imagines for one moment that by thus taking shares in this "vast co-operative concern" he has purchased the right to dictate the future policy of the Government, he is doomed to disappointment. The whole machinery of Government has been by far too craftily welded for the worker to leave any impression upon it, even when he may in his wisdom deem it advisable to attack it with his very amateurish artillery. He has certainly loaned money to the State, but not only will he be excluded from the councils of that body, but he will be forced by means of additional speeding up to earn the rate of interest on the very money he has invested, and will be left with less freedom, power, time, or money than he has ever possessed.

Ireland Still Unpacified.

The strength which the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland has assumed since the attempt to strangle it, made last Easter by the military, is evidenced by the election of Count Plunkett. The incident is the more significant in that the Count will not sit in the British House of Commons, this being in accordance with the Sinn Fein contempt for that institution. It will be remembered that the Count took some part in the late rebellion, and was in consequence deported to Oxford until recently, when as an act of grace he was allowed to return to Ireland. His election by a large majority over both the Nationalist and Independent candidates is some indication that the tide of feeling has set in against the political Nationalist movement and towards a united Ireland. The fact that recently in Dublin men were court-martialled for the heinous crime of singing Irish rebel songs and reciting a parody of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol," together with the news just received that many prominent professional men have been arrested, goes to prove that the present position in Ireland is, from the Government's point of view, a difficult one. That is why no attempt has been made to apply either military or industrial conscription to the country. Well may the

Telegraph, in an inspired leader, deplore this waste of manpower, and urge the Government to invite Irishmen to come to England in order to work on the land at a liberal wage, giving guarantees that no compulsion of any kind shall be used against them. We have some recollection, however, of what happened in August last, when Irishmen, having been induced to go to work in Glasgow, were arrested by the authorities and handed over to the military. The Irishman may be long-suffering, but his memory is good, and he is not likely to accept any undertakings an English Government may give.

Punishment no Remedy.

In addition to the formation of free clinics, a Bill for the amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act has been introduced by Sir George Cave. This contains stringent provisions regarding the spread of venereal disease and aims at strengthening the law relating to disorderly houses. Chief among the clauses is that which makes it a punishable offence for any person who is aware of the presence of the disease to have sexual intercourse with any other person, or who shall solicit or invite any other person to have such intercourse. The penalty provided is two years' imprisonment, with or without hard labour. The whole tenor of the Bill is thus in conformity with the orthodox idea of punishment. No thought is given to the stages from childhood upward through which one has to pass failing to learn—thanks to our pernicious system of education—the importance of a real and not a sham morality. The vengeance upon the afflicted which the adoption of this Bill will make possible will fail in its object, for it leaves untouched—like most other things in our legislative enactments—the real heart of the problem. The whole matter must be dealt with in a much more drastic fashion if good is to result. Punishment alone is the coward's way of grappling with it—a wider view must be taken, and one not founded upon our precious bourgeois morality. We must start with the children themselves—teaching them sexual hygiene, and the necessity for living clean, healthy lives. But obviously this alone is insufficient. The roots of the disease are so embedded in the very structure of our social life that we can only cut out the cancer finally by making prostitution an impossibility. Where there is no inducement or necessity for the sale of sex, prostitution must die out. One fact must, however, be remembered. Wherever modern economic conditions prevail, monogamy is the system of marriage sanctioned by the State, and there always prostitution, like a baneful shadow, exists side by side with the sanctified and respectable marriage form. The whole condition of the sex relationship is thus artificial and unhealthy, and as such will disappear in a society founded upon economic and sexual freedom.

Venereal Disease.

The question of public morals has again been engaging the attention of those physicians and others who realise that venereal disease is a menace not only to this generation, but to the unborn millions. Sir Malcolm Morris, formerly a member of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, is reported in the *Daily Telegraph* of February 15 to have stated that "much of the physical, mental, and moral wastage and misery from which the community as a whole is now suffering, is directly attributable to the inadequate efforts put forth in the past to combat the evil." Thus at last the necessity for free and scientific treatment has been realised and clinics established by the county and borough councils. With something like 3,000,000 people afflicted with syphilis in the United Kingdom, to say nothing of the other forms of venereal disease, it is certainly time that serious efforts were made to combat this very highly contagious disease. Perhaps one reason for the awakened conscience of the Government in this direction is the recognition of the fact that syphilis alone is responsible for a very high rate of infant mortality. In an age when human life is being wasted on a colossal scale it is from their point of view imperative to prevent this infantile wastage.

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THE WAR OFFICE AND "FREEDOM."

Following the two raids on FREEDOM Office, the War Office have taken another step towards putting a stop to our activities. We have received from them the following letter, addressed to the Editor of FREEDOM:

19860 (M.I.9a).

War Office, London, S.W., 5th February, 1917.

Sir,—I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that they consider it undesirable that your periodical, FREEDOM, should be any longer exported to countries outside the United Kingdom, and that instructions have been issued to stop any copies despatched either by you or by a newsagent.

It has been observed that some of the articles which have recently appeared would be of considerable assistance to German propaganda.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
(Signed) R. H. BRADE.

Of course, the excuse put forward for stopping the foreign sales of FREEDOM is one which will appeal to the ignorant dupes who are supporting the war. Call a man a pro-German and you can hang him if you feel so inclined. The War Office know the British public, and act accordingly. But let us examine the charge.

Since the beginning we have opposed the war, and have said that militarism is practically the same in every modern State, and that if they thought it necessary the British military authorities would adopt the same methods and prove as great a curse as the German military caste. Examine the files of this paper, and it will be found that we have denounced everything which the German military caste stands for, especially conscription and its demand for blind obedience on the part of its victims. Surely that cannot be said to be of "considerable assistance to German propaganda." We have warned our fellow-countrymen that the very evils they are supposed to be fighting against were being adopted here step by step, and we have denounced it as "Prussianism." This proves that the War Office charge is false—as they knew when they made it.

No, it is not FREEDOM, but the War Office itself that is really guilty of the charge of being of "considerable assistance to German propaganda." Just imagine for yourself the German Government sending out the following wireless message to the neutral world:

"The shameless hypocrisy of our British enemies is now exposed to the whole world. Times without number they have said they are only fighting to destroy German militarism, the evils of which they paint in the blackest of colours. As a matter of fact, instead of shunning the so-called evils of German militarism, they have steadily set themselves out to copy every feature of that system. Beginning with the conscription of the single men, they have gradually forced every man of military age into the army, where our system of rigid obedience is copied to the letter. Their Tribunals tried to resist the claims of the military, but were always overruled. Now that the food question is acute, the civilian element in Britain wish to retain their skilled farm labourers, but the War Office ignore the claim, and takes thirty thousand of them away at the critical moment. Every class is now crying out against the tyranny of the military machine. Thus is the hypocrisy of our enemies proved up to the hilt."

If the German Government sent out that message they would be saying what many people in this country are beginning to recognise as true. And the War Office, in copying the worst features of German militarism, are rendering "considerable assistance to German propaganda," and it is because we continue to expose its methods that the War Office continues to attack FREEDOM.

BUYING LABOUR LEADERS.

High official rank in the Trade Union movement seems nowadays to be simply a stepping-stone to Government favour and Government jobs. There were always, of course, isolated cases of men in the Labour movement accepting situations as Government servants in return for services rendered to the capitalists, but the present tendency may be said to date from the time when John Burns took office as President of the Local Government Board in Campbell-Bannerman's Government. The salary of £2,000 (afterwards raised to £5,000) attached to the office made Trade Union leaders' mouths water, and since then the supply of Labour men willing to sell themselves to the capitalists has exceeded the demand. The Labour legislation of recent years has created numerous offices with salaries ranging from £200 to £1,000 a year, Labour Exchanges and the National Health Insurance Acts providing many soft jobs for minor Trade Union officials.

It is, however, amongst the head officials of the larger Labour organisations that the tendency to take office is most noticeable. The inside knowledge of the Labour movement makes these men particularly valuable to the capitalists, and it is only a matter of time before they step out of the workers' movement into the ranks of the workers' enemies. Since its formation, each secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions has eventually taken a Government job—Mitchell, Cummings, and just recently Appleton. The Labour Party has also had its share, Shackleton and Henderson, both chairmen of the Party, being the principal instances. Bell, secretary of the Railwaymen's Union, got a job under the Insurance Act, and was the official responsible for the decision that men on strike were not entitled to the unemployment benefits of the Act.

But the war has provided the great opportunity for jobs, and there are very few Trade Union officials of any prominence who have not had a finger in the pie. The tyrannies of the Munitions Act, the Defence of the Realm Act, and the Conscription Acts could not possibly have been enforced against the workers but for the support given to all of them by the leading officials in the Labour movement. Under the cloak of patriotism these men have hoodwinked the workers and led them into all the traps and ambushes set for them by the politicians. Pledges given one day have been broken the next, and they have used lying and trickery in the most unblushing manner in order to earn their pay and persuade the workers to support the war. At the present moment some of them are openly advocating industrial conscription, although a few months back they said they would oppose it to the death. But a lot of money has passed through the Government's hands since then.

The most disheartening feature of this business is that very few of the workers see these things which are happening under their very noses. Even those who do see it think it is all necessary in the great effort the nation has to put forth to "smash the Huns." They still retain their faith in their leaders, and have a hazy idea that after the war things will return automatically to pre-war conditions. We think, however, that there will be a rude awakening for some of them. All the waste and destruction wrought by the war will have to be made good by the workers, and this will be accomplished by retaining the present speeding-up methods. For this purpose a campaign has been started in favour of an industrial truce after the war, during which truce Labour and Capital will join hands in fighting an economic war with the enemy. There can never be a real truce between Capital and Labour. The men may leave off the struggle for a time, but the capitalists will never do so. They will utilise the truce to secretly strengthen their position, and when the truce is ended they will be able to attack the workers more favourably. In this the capitalists are being assisted, consciously or unconsciously, by the men's leaders.

There is but one remedy. The workers must do their own thinking and refuse to give leaders the power to sell them like cattle to their enemies, the capitalists. The huge Trade Unions with their benefit funds are a hindrance rather than a help, the officials necessary to run them gradually forming a clique who consider everything from the point of view of their own interests. Besides, Trade Unions only help to make wage-slavery tolerable. When the workers really strike a blow for liberty, they must smash the wage system entirely; and the sooner they recognise this, the sooner will they rid themselves of leaders and all other official tyrants.

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AGAINST WORLD-DOMINION—BY GERMANY.

Amongst the many moral reasons put forward for our entry into the war, one was that we must resist Germany's ambition to dominate the world. That one nation should dominate so many others would be intolerable. In FREEDOM some months back we pointed out that by the addition of territory acquired by various means since the war started the British Empire now covered about a quarter of the landed surface of the globe, besides "ruling the waves." Now Harold Cox gives away the game in the *Sunday Times* of February 25, in which he says:

"The war will end with a great expansion of the British Empire. Already, indeed, since the war began England has specifically annexed the island of Cyprus, and proclaimed a protectorate over Egypt, thus definitely joining these territories to the British Empire. We shall also certainly annex German South-West Africa, a portion of German West Africa, and the greater part of German East Africa. In effect, we have already annexed to the Empire Samoa and German New Guinea. We are in process of acquiring new Asiatic territory in Mesopotamia. By these annexations, as well as by its previous possessions, the British Empire will command a monopoly of many of the most important raw materials that the world produces. It will control an enormous proportion of the world's population. We began the war to resist Germany's ambitions to dominate the world. It would be a hideous comment upon our professions of disinterestedness if we ended the war with a vastly increased Empire locked and barred against other peoples."

This reminds us of the Boer War, when Lord Salisbury said, "We seek no goldfields, we seek no territory"; but at the finish the two South African Republics—and their goldfields—were added to the British Empire. It's very funny how these things will occur.

OUR FRIENDLY ALIENS.

The decision of the Government that the friendly aliens in this country must join the British army or be deported to their native land is a concession to that evil monster, the Russian Government. While it will affect many others, the decision is aimed at the Russian Jews, a great number of whom are political refugees who fled to this country to escape imprisonment and perhaps death at the hands of their despotic ruler. They had been told that England was the land of freedom, and that, no matter what demands the Russian Government might make for their arrest and deportation, the British Government would never surrender them. But the Alliance is too strong for them, and the new-found friendliness for the Tsar and his Black Hundreds demands the sacrifice of these victims. We are not believers in "rights," but the loss of the so-called "right of asylum" is another step in the degradation of this country since the war started. Englishmen, however, have accepted the loss of their own liberties so lightly that it is hardly to be expected that they will stand up for those of the "friendly aliens." What we would like to know is, have the Government enough shipping space to spare to send all the Russian subjects back if they refuse to join the army? We hope a strong protest against the new order will be made by every lover of liberty. We are pleased to see that the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News* have protested against this break with the traditional English policy of shielding political refugees.

MINERS RESIST CONSCRIPTION.

The Welsh miners have shown once again that the Defence of the Realm Act has no terrors for them. Early in January notices were sent out by the military authorities to the effect that the miners would have to submit themselves for medical examination in order to ascertain their fitness for the army. As the miners have been exempt from compulsory service so far, they naturally resented these notices, and called meetings to discuss the question. At a meeting of the Western Valleys Miners' Council, held on February 1 at the Tillery Institute, Abertillery, delegates representing 10,000 miners decided by an overwhelming majority to refuse to submit to the medical

examination, and in the event of any miner being compelled to join the army to down tools on his behalf. Some of the speakers said this action of the military authorities was intended to pave the way for black and women labour for the pits. This "down tools" threat has been effective, for a few days afterwards the Press announced that the notices have been withdrawn.

It is good to find the Welsh miners so determined; but we feel that had this policy been adopted by them when the Military Service Bill was first introduced, the country might have been saved from conscription. The exemption granted to them bought off their opposition, so the Act was forced on the rest of their fellow-workers. The Government (and especially Lloyd George) have never forgiven them for defying the Munitions Act proclamation, and we would advise them to keep their powder dry.

NEWS FROM ABROAD.

Alexander Berkman's paper, *The Blast*, published in California, has once again been raided. It may be mentioned that the paper itself has not yet suspended publication, the raid being probably directed with a view to securing evidence in connection with the bomb-throwing episode at the "preparedness parade" of last summer. The authorities seem bent upon drawing the Pacific Coast Anarchists into their net. A Pinkerton, owned by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, and two official detectives, in company of a District Attorney, made the "Daylight Burglary," which is graphically described by Eleanor Fitzgerald in the January 1st issue of *The Blast*. The police seem only to have succeeded in delaying the issue of the paper, but they took away some "copy," amongst which was an article relating "the story of the slugging by the police of an investigator for the San Francisco Labour defendants, by two uniformed policemen in the city prison. This was done in vengeance for his having turned up the police-kidnapping of a witness."

In the same issue of the above paper Robert Minor contributes an excellent and striking cartoon, and an article on the European peace haggling. In the course of his article, he says, concerning the King's speech, "which was to practically voice the reply of one-half the world to the other half on the world's most important question—Peace":—"But the speech comes from the King for the sake of the impression that will be made on the biggest fools in the empire. Then another speech comes from Lloyd George for the next biggest fools. Those who are neither the biggest fools, nor the next biggest fools, can be shot when they refuse to take the excuses and insist upon the acceptance of peace."

Besides the recent hunger-riots in New York, at which many Anarchists and Socialists appear to have been arrested, there have been similar scenes in Holland. Speeches by our Dictators at home give us the idea that, so far as food is concerned, the British Empire is also in a tight corner. It is no consolation to us to know that the Central Powers are equally hard-driven, for both blockades are not only reciprocally reacting on themselves, but are diminishing the food supplies of the whole world. It is possible that when famine comes home to roost, the people may be driven by desperation to overthrow their rulers, whose brilliant "directive ability" has refused us peace without asking our opinion or consulting the men in the trenches. The neutral Governments, like ours, being financed by the profit pirates, have not dreamt of making any protest, except in the case of America, whose lucrative munition trade with the Allies was seriously threatened. If the peoples are not given food they will take it.

We have frequently read that at the food-riots in "enemy" countries the military have posted mitrailleuses at the street corners, and that the "mob" was charged with either bayonets or swords. Our press has taken these things as an omen that the authorities over there are getting desperate, but we know that it is the same with all Governments in peace or war. At the Hague, for instance (echoes of the Palace of Peace!) Hussars charged the crowd, and in New York, and nearer home—in Ireland—the police used their "more civilised" weapons. A Government cannot make laws unless it has force to back it up, thus proving that laws are invariably against the majority of the people, and on this count alone the idea of government stands damned.

L.A.M.

PROPOSED CO-OPERATIVE COLONY.

Although the people of this country have at last awakened to the importance of agriculture, with their usual faith in Government they are likely to allow that body to dabble in mere land reform for some time to come. The point that is rarely grasped is, that no amount of mere organisation of agriculture on bureaucratic lines, or the passing of enactments aiming at the production of more food, will ever release the workers, either agricultural or industrial, from the grip of the exploiter. Salvation can only be found in one way, and though it is true that this cannot be guaranteed as a sure road to heaven, yet the adoption of the principles of co-operation or free association is much more likely to give us economic liberty than anything yet devised by imperfect man.

A useful little pamphlet dealing with this subject has just reached us. It suggests the formation of co-operative colonies, based on Anarchist Communism. It urges that "practical demonstrations are far more convincing than mere theorising," and that "every individual must endeavour to live and act up to his ideals as much as is humanly possible." Referring to the failures of previous colony schemes, it claims that these have been caused by the existence of only one group, or a more or less authoritarian system within the colony. For "where there is authority there is always revolt. One can only avoid the presence of the latter by ensuring the absence of the former."

Having stated the case for co-operative effort along non-authoritarian lines, it deals in a convincing way with the objections to Communism in general, and the proposed scheme in particular, answering those oft-repeated queries, "How shall we live without law courts and police?" and "How can a workshop or factory be run without authority?" Passing on to more fully describing the aims and methods of the prospective Communists, it shows the necessity for securing the land in such a way that the landlord cannot evict the colonists when they become either undesirable from his point of view, or too powerful.

The author claims that it is possible to unite Anarchist propaganda with the successful maintenance of an agricultural and industrial colony. That in such a colony, even though rough times may be faced, it will be possible to have a far greater measure of individual liberty, together with the assured production of the necessities of life, than is at all possible under our capitalistic régime. Joy in work should be the aim of all, and it is contended that this should be easily realised when voluntary effort alone is responsible for all that is produced.

This inspiring little pamphlet may well be studied to advantage by all those who cannot yet free their minds from the tyranny of old traditions of authority and Government, and by those who are tired of the grinding monotony of life under capitalism. It dares to suggest a community that shall have no centralised organisation, and shows the possibilities of intelligent co-operation, not for mere profit and dividend hunters, but in order to secure the best dividend obtainable in life—that of a free, healthy, happy existence for man, woman, and child.

Copies can be obtained upon application to M. B. Hope, FREEDOM Press, but stamps to cover postage should be enclosed.

IMPERIAL SECURITY.

It is astounding to note that most of the Irish prisoners released last Christmas from Frongoch have been re-arrested. These measures, we are told, have been taken under that section of D.O.R.A. which authorises the military and police to arrest those people suspected to act, or to be about to act, in contravention thereof, and so forth. Other people not previously connected with the Easter rising have suffered a like fate, and later news tells us that they are to be deported. They are to be given the option of living anywhere they like—in England, such is our sense of the proportion of things. It is now nearly a year since the Dublin rebels were "crushed," but our authorities are blind to the fact that just as the Prussian method failed at Zabern, so it will fail elsewhere. The Irish people are not to be so easily repressed, and those loud-mouthed patriots who talk of "crushing" the Central Powers should take note.

The Empire is not only menaced in Ireland, but in India also. There we understand several "plots" have been unearthed by the police, and those found "guilty" executed. There have been three trials, and in the last two no less than eleven were sentenced to be executed and fifty to transportation or imprisonment for life. Such are the methods by which we rule our "loyal and beloved" Indian Empire, and all this after some hundred years or so. The example of the Roman and other empires, which proved such ghastly failures, has evidently lost its effect on our purblind rulers.

NOTICES.

FREEDOM Office, 127, Ossulston Street, Somers Town, is open every Saturday from 2 p.m. till 6 o'clock. Comrades are heartily invited to call.

GLASGOW ANARCHIST GROUP.—Rooms, 10, Windsor Street (off New City Road).

Sunday, March 11, 7 p.m. Subject: "James C. Welsh: Miner, Rebel, Poet." Speaker: J. Harrison Maxwell, M.A.

Sunday, March 18, 7 p.m. Subject: "The Ego and Freedom." Speaker: Joseph Linden.

Sunday, March 25, 7 p.m. Subject: "Woman: Her Possibilities in the Near Future." Speaker: Miss Freda Cohen.

Sunday, April 1, 7 p.m. Subject: "William Morris." Speaker: Mrs. Dunn.

THE SECULAR FELLOWSHIP, 5, Brunswick Place, East Road, N.—Open Forum for Secularists, Socialists, Anarchists, etc. Open every evening. Discussions every Sunday night. All are welcome, especially those willing to open up discussions or debates. No charge for admission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

(Jan. 28—Feb. 28.)

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