

Freedom

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

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MONTHLY: ONE PENNY.

MAY-DAY BEFORE THE WAR.



Are we not stronger than the rich and the
wronger when day breaks over dreams & sleep?
Come, shoulder to shoulder ere the earth grows older,
help lies in nought but you & me & hope lies be-
fore us, the long years that bore us bore leaders
more than men may be & & & & w:morris

NOTES.

Devonport's Failure.

When in autumn last the movement against the continued rise in food prices led to the creation of the Food Controller's Department we were assured that a sovereign remedy had been found. Less than six months after the appointment of Lord Devonport we are faced by a more serious state of things than ever before. It is a most significant fact that the prices of all essential articles of food have since risen by anything from 50 to 100 per cent. No sooner has the price of one commodity been fixed than others have soared upwards. The modern mania for treating a manifestation of poverty and profiteering, by means of the creation of a State department, ostensibly for the purpose of checking profits and eliminating waste, has and must inevitably lead to waste and confusion. We are certainly approximating very closely to that Mecca of Social Democrats, a land entirely controlled by State officials, and yet economic salvation remains afar off. It is in vain that fresh powers are granted to the Food Controller to take possession of any factory, workshop, or premises engaged in the manufacture of food. The only result to the people accruing from the appointment of the retired grocer, Lord Devonport, has been, and will be, the extra cost consequent upon the creation of an expensive State department with all its useless staff of non-producing officials.

M.P.s and Finance.

The craze for fresh Departments of State has at last even provoked some private Members of Parliament to protest. In a letter to the *Daily Chronicle* of April 18 they express concern for the National Debt of £4,000,000,000 with its yearly interest of £300,000,000, and refer to the expenditure of £7,000,000 per day. In denouncing the waste in administration, they declare:

The new national luxury of Government State departments will, if it continues, smother the State; their number grows fast, and the cost comes out of the pockets of the taxpayers. . . . Ministers in the late and in this Government paid and pay lip-service to economy. In reality few care. Control over expenditure by the House of Commons has practically gone. The House of Commons at present is helpless. The Government have decided to rule without the House of Commons. The Treasury has waived its control; most departments are a law unto themselves, and no one interposes to check their expenditure. . . . The Government of the day does not require to raise by taxation the necessary revenue; instead, the money is borrowed.

The ultimate burden of their cry is: "Are we getting value for our colossal expenditure?" And, as usual, they suggest the fashionable remedy—the appointment of a Committee of the House to review all national expenditure. This, they think, will serve as a check upon the present gigantic waste. Though we have always insisted upon the wastefulness of bureaucracy, contrary to the representatives at Westminster, we have contended that the former was a natural symptom of the latter which no amount of supervision could cure. The anxious Members may or may not try their pet remedy; it is very certain that the waste will continue until the workers cry "Halt!" Meanwhile it may be interesting to remember that the small investor in 1916 entrusted to the State the enormous sum of £118,179,000, and again during the first two months of this year handed over £40,000,000. We have never suffered the delusion of thinking that the bulk of the people cared for or demanded their liberty; but it is possible that it may one day dawn upon them that even with 5½ per cent. interest they are certainly not getting anything like value for their money. But only a revolution will finally clear away the weeds of bureaucracy and its wastefulness.

Anarchists and the Russian Revolution.

The Petrograd correspondent of the *Sunday Times* during the past twelve months has shown that he understands the situation in Russia, and in several letters foretold the revolution. On April 15 he says: "It cannot be denied that everybody in Russia wants peace. The majority, moreover, want peace without annexation." But the most interesting paragraph in the same letter is where he says:

"The average Russian is an Anarchist, not of the type which throws bombs in the streets, but one who defies all authority, and likes best to be left in peace and to himself. It is significant that Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Leo Tolstoy, the greatest expounders of Anarchist thought, were all products of the Russian soil and of the Russian spirit."

Nowhere has credit been given to the Anarchists for their share in the dangerous propaganda work which made the Revolu-

tion possible. The *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian* said that the Anarchists had no influence and no followers in Russia, and at the Albert Hall meeting, when a speaker gave a list of the various schools of political thought that had contributed to the Revolution, he conveniently forgot to mention the Anarchists. The correspondent quoted above is more honest in giving credit to the Anarchist pioneers.

The Government's Errand Boys.

The "Labour" delegation sent by the British Government to Russia, to convey fraternal greetings to the Workers' Conference in Petrograd, appears to have enjoyed the usual junketings inseparable from all official conferences. One reads with poignant emotion of Will Thorne's impression that "It was the most historical thing I've ever been at in my life." That, of course, is the sort of thing that the Government paid him to say to the staid, moderate, Social Democratic audience he addressed. In striking contrast to all the vapid, insincere verbiage of the selected trio is the report that it was the workers and the soldiers who took all the stupendous risk of armed rebellion and dared to strike a blow, as they thought, for liberty. These were the men and women of courage and determination who made the revolution possible, while the leaders and the orators were probably still passing resolutions, and will, as usual, use the proletariat as catspaws. In this game the Social Democrats are playing a leading part, and that Social Democracy has become a fashionable political creed is evidenced in the prominence given in the daily press to the utterances of prominent men and women in the movement.

As in Belgium.

The following Exchange telegram from Athens appeared in the press on March 28:

"General Sarraïl issues the following communiqué: In the convent of Zidavriou a French detachment demanded the delivery of arms under penalty of death. A hunting rifle was handed over, but a search revealed the existence of other weapons in the shape of revolvers, 800 cartridges, including many dum-dums, and a Greek officer's uniform. The officer to whom the uniform belonged and a Bulgarian priest were shot at Arppi. Two armed comitadjis were also shot. Others were able to escape. At Diminitza some armed comitadjis were arrested, six of whom will be shot. I have given orders to shoot all irregulars. This order has been carried out, and I am maintaining it. I cannot allow these bands to remain in existence, as it is a question of the security of the Eastern Army.—SARRAIL."

The French and their Allies are in Greece to protect the Greeks from the Huns! Military necessity seems the same all the world over.

Another Fairy Tale.

The *Daily News* of April 14 published the following item, which shows that the editor has not a very high opinion of the intelligence of his readers:

"Forty Russian revolutionists belonging to the Anarchist Association, Nemin, have accepted the proposal of Germany to return to Petrograd through Germany and Sweden. They left Zurich on Thursday, and entered Germany via Schaffhausen. Each member of the party had to sign a pledge to use every effort to force Russia to conclude an immediate peace at any price."

As there are only 170,000,000 people in Russia, those forty members of the "Anarchist Association" have got a soft job, and we may expect Russia to be forced very shortly "to conclude an immediate peace at any price." Really, Mr. Gardiner, it's hardly playing the game to serve up such drivel to your readers—although the *News* is still sold at a halfpenny.

The Law and the Lights.

In view of the many and excited appeals to the British workers to exercise economy, it is the grimmest of irony to read of the incessant waste that goes on. Individual thrift and economy is insisted on, yet Government departments are permitted the luxury of gigantic extravagance. A case recently reported of the man who was summoned for riding without a light well illustrates our point. The transgressor received two lengthy verbose documents—one for the absence of the front light and one for the back. The powers that be, delighting in all the intricate processes of their particular departments, rely upon the general lack of intelligence among the people to go on preaching that which they do not practise.

THE BOMB MAKERS.

There are two amusing books, now unfortunately out of print, that would be of interest to the movement at large. These are "Confessions of an Anarchist" and "A Girl among the Anarchists." They are both written by individuals who worked at the offices of this paper, the first by "W.C.H." who contributed to and helped as a compositor with the *Alarm, Torch*, and other papers. The second by one of the Misses Rossetti, who worked in a similar capacity, but at a different period.

In Miss Rossetti's book an interesting account is given of the taking of the present FREEDOM offices. It should be remarked that she uses disguised names all through, thus "Lisson Grove" is Ossulston Street. The account is as follows, and is subsequent to the raid on the office of the *Bomb* (the *Commonweal*), which was situated in one of the mews in the West Central district of London:

"Little McDermott, who evidently did not much relish Short's company, armed himself with leaflets and set off on a propagandising expedition, and Kosinski and I wended our way in search of the office. At last we stopped in front of a little greengrocer's shop in a side street off the Hampstead Road. 'The place I mean is behind here,' explained Kosinski, 'the woman in the shop lets it; we will go in and speak with her.' Kosinski stepped inside and addressed a voluminous lady who emerged from the back shop. 'Oh, good day, Mr. Cousins,' she exclaimed, a broad smile overspreading her face; 'what can I do for you?' Kosinski explained our errand, and the good lady preceded us up a narrow yard, which led to the workshop in question. She showed us over a damp, ill-lighted basement shop in a corner of which was a ladder leading to a large light shop, which seemed well suited to our purpose, meanwhile expatiating on its excellences. I was satisfied with it, and would have settled everything in a few minutes, but Mrs. Wattles was not to be done out of her jaw."

Miss Rossetti refers to meeting Kropotkin ("Voratin"), and her ideas of Anarchism can be gauged from her own words: "I revered him as only a youthful disciple can reverence a great leader." As events turned out, and these are represented in a more or less truthful fashion in the book, she grew wiser. There are references also to Malatesta ("Bonafede"), and an exciting incident is chronicled in connection with him in the chapter, "The Dynamitard's Escape."

Amongst "Some Anarchist Personalities" who frequented the offices the "Bleeding Lamb" is perhaps the most amusing, but other characters are drawn to good effect. Of these latter, Miss Rossetti paints well one Giannoli, who is made to describe the opening of his eyes to Anarchism and freedom of love. The passages, presumably taken from real life, are well worth reproducing in another issue. Other parts of the book are equally well written, although it is not free from misrepresentation. Finally, as she describes it in the last chapter of the book, after another police raid at the office, she walked out of the movement altogether. Apparently, she was embittered on account of an unrequited love, and, considering the individual came before the cause, shook herself free.

The other book, "Confessions of an Anarchist," is nothing short of calculated misrepresentation. The popular idea of Anarchists as a lot of immoral and bloodthirsty rogues is fully pandered to. The author opens the book with a deliberate sneer: "Association with Anarchists is not calculated to inspire one with feelings of love for such people. Rather the contrary." How this admirable and virtuous man managed to tolerate the company of those with whom he worked for so long is quite a story in itself, and he succeeds in making it extremely amusing, albeit unconsciously. His satire, generally, serves only to recoil on himself. Having described in the opening chapters how he failed to find in the "companions" the stained-glass angels his youthful fervour had made them out to be, he pats himself on the back at having escaped the contagion, and concludes the chapter with a quotation from FREEDOM: "Anarchy is a negation of both morals and principles." The implication is that Anarchists are naturally immoral and thorough blackguards, generally, whereas the author —

"I think," he proceeds—for he apparently does some thinking, if not of a very clear kind, sometimes—"I think sufficient evidence has been adduced to warrant the assertion that a belief in Anarchism must tend to corrupt rather than to elevate those who embrace its doctrines. Thus it comes about that the logical Anarchist is often a person of shady reputation."

After having convinced himself of the terribly dishonest proclivities of the average Anarchist, this able writer proceeds to prove it by a new kind of deductive logic. His next sentence runs: "Will anyone be surprised to learn that the Anarchist has strong objections to hard work?" Ah! so there you are! Q.E.D. If the reader has any objection to hard work, let him know then

that he is an extremely dishonest person without morals or principles. Let him repent ere it is too late, and produce two shoddy suits where he only produced one before. Thus will morality be vindicated.

What kind of logic is this that asserts blue and red make green and proves it by concocting a pigment that turns out to be a weird purple? "Criminals abound in the party." Of course! Are not Dartmoor and Wakefield and Warwick full to overflowing with the scum from Wormwood Scrubs, who refuse to learn to shoot and kill?

There are similar deliberate mis-statements and half truths running through the whole of the book that carry their own contradiction. It is hoped to present an article touching these in a future issue of FREEDOM.

AS THE WORLD WAGS.

Our patriotic screed-writers still have their eyes piously turned Rhinewards in the hope that the Russian Revolution may bear good fruit—in Berlin. The latest communiques seem to indicate the industrial unrest in Germany is drawing to a head, as the food question grows more acute. We have yet to be convinced, however, that the recent retirement along the Western Front can much influence this, or sweep the previously patriotic jingoes into the arms of the extremists who are credited with a desire to overthrow the Hohenzollern dynasty. It is not to be supposed that it is anything more than a craving for King Stork in place of King Log at the best. Strikes and rumours of strikes in the Fatherland have appeared intermittently in the press the last two years, together with the "Austria's Last Loaf" stunt; so such accounts must be taken with a good sprinkling of salt.

It is certain that the cry of the enemy at the gates would, as in Russia, only unite the hunger-maddened workers in a more desperate defence. Man values freedom—even fancied freedom—above bread, and in the Paris Commune it threw the Radicals into the arms of the original Communards. It is more than likely that if the Allies continue to press on the Western front, the German move towards Petrograd may be abandoned. Whether the Russians will then take the opportunity to put forward proposals to stop the war, or launch a new offensive, remains to be seen. We have, unfortunately, no trustworthy news of the rumoured pourparlers in Stockholm between the German, Austrian, and Russian Socialists.

Coincident with America's entry into the war, the food question has temporarily been thrust into the background. No authentic news is available as to how far the world-famine is affecting Uncle Sam, athirst for battle. Possibly America may have found it easier to distract the workers from domestic questions that were getting too acute by crying, "Wolf!" Diplomacy is a Trade Union of keen-witted rogues that has saved many a tottering monarchy—and republic. Wilson, with all his transparent dishonesty, is no different from the statesmen of the "effete" monarchists of the Old World. The Statue of Liberty is chiselled from the same stuff that has built Whitehall, Wilhelmstrasse, and the Quai d'Orsay.

News from Europe consists mainly of small items largely over-shadowed by the Russian Revolution. The vibration seems to be still felt, and there is much hazarding as to what effect it may have on the development of Peace Negotiations. The neutral countries, now deserted by America, and affected by the submarine menace, certainly wish for peace, but are not in a position to act in concert. The workers, having been programmed and manifested by the Socialists on the wickedness of war, do not know what to do now that these teachers and leaders are nibbling at what the French call the butter-dish—otherwise soft jobs in the Government. This blind faith in leaders has merely resulted in the most transparent trickery, the most shamefaced betrayal of working-class interests. The Anarchist position alone is logical, that it is no use looking for a man, and the only remedy is for the workers to blast away the obstacles on the road to freedom themselves. The lesson of May Day is a lesson of unity and solidarity and self-reliance. Only by our own efforts, in concert with our comrades of other lands, shall we achieve the Anarchist Revolution.

ANARCHIST MORALITY.

BY PETER KROPOTKIN.

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THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

The news from Russia is evidently heavily censored at each end, but sufficient comes through to show that there is mutual suspicion and distrust between the Provisional Government and the Committee of Delegates of Workmen and Soldiers, on which the Government is dependent for support. The Committee, which represents the more revolutionary section, wants reforms now, with an early peace; while the Government, a number of whom are landowners, say that reforms must wait until after the war, and peace cannot be concluded without agreement between the Allies. Although at present the revolutionary leaders are not pressing their demands, their followers are not in the mood to wait, the workmen in the factories having little spirit to continue under the old conditions, while the peasants are already taking matters into their own hands. In many districts they have seized the land and are cutting down the forests belonging to the landowners, who have in some cases signed documents giving up their land to the peasants. If they do not take it now, it is certain they will not get it after the war, when the Government will be in a stronger position to deal with the internal situation. Besides, the peasants might learn a lesson from the French Revolution. All the land seizures which took place during the Revolution were subsequently legalised by the Government. Governments always legalise what they cannot prevent.

Everything points to the fact that the Socialists worked for the Revolution because they wanted peace—not because they wanted a more vigorous prosecution of the war, as our Press would have us believe. They have forced the Provisional Government to issue a manifesto declaring that "free Russia does not aim at the domination of other nations, at depriving them of their national patrimony, or at occupying by force foreign territories." This means that they renounce the idea of occupying Constantinople, which declaration has sent a cold shiver down the spine of some of our Jingoists, who looked forward to the Russians fighting until that prize was obtained. Since this manifesto was issued, Miliukoff, the Russian Foreign Minister, has stated that Russia "must insist on the right to close the Straits to foreign warships, and this is not possible unless she possesses the Straits and fortifies them." This is probably bluff. If the Russians, however, act simply on the defensive, then the desire of the Germans and Austrians for peace could be easily satisfied by Russia. Of course, the Allies are very nervous about the new situation, which may have a great influence on the course of the war.

The members of the commercial and industrial classes now in power will do all they can to check the demands of the workers, whose assistance was welcomed in getting rid of the Tsar and his gang of courtiers, but whose urgent requests for reforms are looked upon as exorbitant now that the Revolution has been accomplished. Gratitude is unknown to the ruling class, and in a manifesto issued by the Russian Socialist Party they say:

Workers, you it is who have brought the Russian Revolution to pass. Your blood has flown in streams in order that the oppressors of the people should be killed and imprisoned. And now you have been deceived once more. You want bread, freedom, and peace. You see less bread than before; peace has been thrown back into the furthest distance; freedom is based on vague promises. Workers, do not believe the promises of the bourgeoisie, who hope to make their own use of the victory won with your blood.

From this it is quite evident that the workers have nothing to hope for from the Provisional Government, and that unless they seize the land and organise communes to work it and share the

produce, their new masters will simply turn Russia into an up-to-date industrial Republic, where huge fortunes for the land-lords and capitalists will be wrung out of the wage-slaves. Many so-called Socialists outside Russia have appointed themselves teachers of the Russian workers, and are deprecating extreme action as being likely to endanger the Revolution. Why do these people poke their noses in where they are not wanted? Their only idea of a Social Revolution is a nice soft seat in Parliament. Let them stop there, and leave the Russian people to settle their old score with their oppressors, many of whom are posing as Revolutionists for the time being, so as to draw the people off on to the wrong track. The Russian peasants may be simple folk, but they know that if the Revolution does not give them back the land it will have failed. "Land and Liberty!" should be their cry, and to those who are now patting the Russians on the back for bringing about the Revolution we would say, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

A THREATENING DANGER.

It is to be feared that the promise of victory, oft repeated and never fulfilled, is beginning to wear out the patience of the people, and is tending to awaken, in many uninformed quarters, a deep sense of disappointment with, and distrust of the Government. Nay, more. Some are even beginning to doubt the wisdom of placing implicit confidence in rulers and leaders generally, and have conceived the dangerous idea—dangerous at any time, and more so in war time—of thinking for themselves, and deciding what is good and what is bad for them.

This is unfortunate. It reveals a most deplorable state of things among the masses, which calls for still further legislation and greater restrictions, and shows the need of introducing the most drastic reforms in our system of education and discipline.

But these reforms are a question of the future, and will no doubt be effectively carried out by those that have the public welfare at heart as soon as peace is declared. It is obvious, however, that something must be done now, at once, in order to avert the threatening danger. For, once people begin to think, and doubt, and question, there is no knowing where they will stop or how it may end. History does repeat itself—sometimes.

Fortunately, the Government have not been slow to act, and have issued certain decrees, chiefly relating to the food question, which are sure to regain for them the absolute confidence of the people, silence all malcontents, and vindicate before the whole world their unquestioned superiority and wisdom. The injunction to eat less has not only proved the need and advisability of leaving everything to those destined to rule and lead us, but it is calculated to increase enormously our strength and bring victory immediately nearer.

For the principal cause of all our failures was undoubtedly the fact that we ate too much. Another most serious cause, it appears, was that the rich have sometimes ventured to deviate from their natural and proper diet, and contented themselves with eating the poorer fare. This was to many a great surprise. It was unpardonable, unpatriotic. Happily this misdemeanour was brought to light in good time. What the Government intends to do is not yet known; but many are in favour of issuing immediately urgent appeals that the rich and well-to-do should not commit the criminal act of consuming the food of the people, but must, in the cause of justice and patriotism, continue, as usual, to eat the costly and more luxurious foods, and leave the poorer stuff to the people, to those on whose labour the safety of the State depends.

S.

The results of the New York food riots suggest that women do not need the vote if they get hungry enough.—*Savannah News*.

Wall Street is worried to death lest peace break out at almost any minute.—*Los Angeles Times*.

We all believe enthusiastically in freedom as against the Germans, but we do not trust freedom enough among ourselves.—*Manchester Guardian*.

The receipt of a free copy of this paper is an invitation to subscribe—1s. 6d. per annum.

TORTURING ANTI-CONSCRIPTIONISTS

The Harmsworth Press has been printing absurd and misleading statements about the luxurious life of the men who are resisting military service, but it has never published particulars of the brutal treatment to which many of these men were subjected before they accepted "alternative service." To show how the Government is trying to break those who will not sacrifice their principles we give the following extracts from a letter written to his mother by our Comrade Evans, who consistently has refused to obey the orders of the prison and military authorities even in the smallest details:

Now to tell the news. Craske and I were taken up to Wormwood Scrubs on October 28th by two men and the sergeant of military police—a difficult person to deal with—and we did not get the opportunity to break the journey. After the business of "Reception" we were placed in "B" hall—the best of the four halls. At various times I occupied cells on all four floors, or "wards," in this hall. On 31st October I was punished for refusing to wear my cap at exercise: three days' bread and water in close confinement. On 3rd November, for the same offence, ten days' No. 2 punishment diet. This diet consists of bread and water for breakfast and supper, and bread and potatoes or porridge for dinner. On 10th November this punishment was interrupted; I was sentenced by the Visiting Committee, on the double charge of refusing to work and refusing to wear my cap, to fourteen days' No. 1 diet in close confinement. No. 1 diet consists of three days' bread and water and three days' "B" diet (the ordinary prison diet for the first four months) alternately.

From November 27 to January 22 he was kept in close confinement on No. 1 or No. 2 diet, and had to sleep without a mattress during all that cold weather. On January 22, with our Comrade Corum, he was removed to Wandsworth Prison, and on the 29th, for refusing to work, he was sentenced to forty-two days' close confinement on No. 2 diet (fourteen days of which were bread and water only). On March 14 the Visiting Magistrates sentenced him to another forty-two days on No. 2 diet. This outrage called forth further resistance on his part. He writes:—

On March 15th I started hunger, thirst, sleep, etc., strike, refusing to dress or undress or move about or do anything at all. At night they took off my outer clothes, threatening me with the strait jacket and padded cell, and I lay all night in my underclothes. On March 16th they wrapped me in blanket and took me off to the Hospital. There they dressed me in this stiff canvas suit I told you of, only removing it when I was released from prison. They offered me no dinner on Friday, but bread and cocoa for supper, which I refused; bread and porridge for breakfast, hot milk for dinner on Saturday, all of which I refused. All the time they threatened me with forcible feeding. Just after dinner on Saturday Corum and I were released, as I have already told you. There was nothing to eat when we reached camp, but Corum treated me to four hot rissole sandwiches from the canteen for supper. This morning, after breakfast, we were ordered to go on parade, and refused. We are now in the big detention room in the Guard-room. There are other prisoners here, including two C.O.'s—Messrs. Wilson and Cole—in civil clothes, who have just had their court-martial a day or two ago. . . . My release is fortunate, as I said in my last letter, for this reason: The warders told me as I was being released that the doctor intended to get me sent away to an asylum, and that the canvas suit was the usual preliminary to this. One does not come out of an asylum without great difficulty, so be prepared to raise hell if I should get into such a position again.

What our comrade terms his "release" is merely being sent back to the military authorities for further punishment. His letter was written from Hazeley Down Camp, Winchester. In a covering letter, his mother says:—

Since writing that letter he has again hunger-struck, going for eleven days without food or drink. During the latter part of the time he was taken to hospital, and on the eleventh day I was telegraphed for, as his condition was considered serious. Happily, he had begun to take nourishment before I arrived on the scene. I was enabled to spend a week-end with him in the hospital, and he made such a rapid recovery that last Monday (after sixteen days in hospital) he was returned to camp, and is now presumably awaiting another court-martial. He says he has been

quite happy throughout, and I can well believe it, judging from the cheery letters he has written. He also told me, speaking about the authorities, that, "They can't beat me, and they know it—only they dare not admit it."

Our Comrade Evans has shown such splendid courage under this inhuman torture, a courage shown by many others resisting military service, that the Government may well feel chary of introducing industrial conscription ("National Service"), which would bring them up against many more cases of a similar kind. We would ask our readers to remember that this system of torture is carried out by the British Government, the members of which are continually telling the world that "this war is a war for civilisation and to protect our liberties."

Out of the Night.

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

W. E. Henley.

A SPANISH TRAGEDY.

"The Truth on the March" is the title of a pamphlet published recently by the Committee for the Release of Castellir, of Barcelona, whose case has excited much sympathy in Spain.

Who is Castellir? An innocent prisoner in Santona, who has suffered twenty-three years' imprisonment because the Cacique of his village, Cristobal Morato, of Beceite, wished it so. Castellir was a rival of Morato as a buyer of grains and cattle, so the latter did his best to get rid of a business rival. He bribed the Guardia Civil, who annoyed Castellir several times, and then, with a Lieutenant Bacelga faked a robbery from Morato. They employed two witnesses, who accused Castellir of having committed the robbery; but in the trial they declared that they had accused Castellir by order of the lieutenant.

Now the Marquis of Lema, son-in-law of the Minister Sanchez Coca, wanted to be elected deputy for Beceite, but he had a rival, and the Cacique also was against him. The Government suppressed the rival by nominating the Marquis as a Senator; but he still had the Cacique against him. To bribe him he had to fulfil his desire: get rid of Castellir. The latter was absolved by the court, but the Government's representative was not satisfied, and asked for a new trial, which was granted, and Castellir was eventually condemned.

There are few Spaniards who doubt Castellir's innocence, but to liberate him it would be necessary to proceed against Bacelga, now a captain in the Guardia Civil, and against the Marquis of Lema and his father-in-law, who would be put in a bad position. That is why Castellir, although innocent, is kept wasting away in a prison cell.

V.G.

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INDIVIDUALITY AND THE STATE.

In studying the rights of the social conscience, we have been struck with certain issues that are worth setting out for careful consideration. The first point is that the present anti-militarist fight for freedom of conscience is part of the age-long struggle for liberty to be one's self and nobody else.

It does not matter whether the basis of the claim for personal liberty assumes a social, a moral, or an intellectual form. In each case the claim is valid. And it is at bottom the same, namely, the right to be honest. Those of us who have seen our comrades pass, one by one, through the farce of judgment by Tribunal, have learned how shallow are these differentiations of conscience into types worthy of sufferance, and those that are not. One anti-militarist comrade, whom we supported at his Tribunal-baiting, put forward as part of his statement that he was a Communist, and that to kill a comrade of any "country" was to wrong the community, as he, after many years of study, understood it. He was tripped up over the word "Communist," was labelled political and therefore clearly had no conscience, according to the political standards of the Tribunes. Morley puts it mildly when he says that "The political spirit throws love of truth and accurate reasoning into a secondary place."

Another comrade stated that he could not swear away under the military oath his right to judge, on its own merits, any situation or problem of conduct that might arise. This dear pal was trampled out as an Intellectual. Intellect, to his inquisitors, again by their own standards, is as foul a thing as politics—a mere juggling with the wits. And yet what true man would not grant that the attitude of these two comrades was sound and within the official definitions of soundness?

Our latest and most fashionable philosopher, Bergson, has taught us that we err in these divisions into categories, by thinking that the "slice of reality" we take for our purpose has the "thickness of infinity." We isolate one aspect of conscience, and call that one aspect conscience. But conscience is an attitude to life, with an unlimited number of aspects. Conscience is just being straight within-doors over any issue that arises in the inner man, where there are none to see but we ourselves. A conscientious objector is thus a man who cannot conform without sacrificing his honour; without renouncing his individuality. And to renounce one's individuality is to renounce life itself.

Was not the struggle against compulsory vaccination another aspect of the fight for individuality? Are we not now agreed that it is an insufferable outrage to doctor a man's body against his private judgment? (Although a wounded soldier who refuses to be hacked about by a saw-bones is imprisoned for "self-mutilation"!)

In the ages of direct religious coercion each prince imposed belief by statute: Calvinist, Lutheran, Catholic, or what not. Locke pointed out that on these lines all believers were wrong except those of one State. We can now add complacently that all, without exception, were wrong. But are we not, to-day, in precisely the same fix with the anti-militarist? For every potentate imposes his version of the social chaos, through the censorship, the Defence of the Realm Acts, and, above all, through conscription. Like the Protestant who was punished for not believing that which he could not accept, the anti-militarist is dragooned, imprisoned, or put to death for not doing what he believes immoral. It is a legal crime merely to have in one's possession literature that expresses one's view. Nay, a comrade, a public official, was tried the other day by the authorities who employ him on the preposterous charge of holding anti-war views privately. Amongst the evil aspects of the State, is there any more hideous than this, where the State turns upon the finest men in the country, and tortures or murders them for being true to their manhood?

It is on the lines indicated to us by the anti-militarists that our deliverance lies. Only in so far as men stand or fall by their personal sense of life shall we be freed from the curse of authority. Yesterday it was the right to our creed or to our Unions. To-day it is the right to our social conscience. To-morrow, who knows? In any case there will be no tolerable state of society until it is not only a right, but a virtue to be one's self. As Tolstoy said, "Individuality is the rock on which the State must split."

JOHN BROWNE.

NOTICES.

FREEDOM Office, 127, Ossulston Street, Somers Town, is open every Saturday from 2-30 p.m. till 6 o'clock. Comrades are heartily invited to call.

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

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.

Death of Dr. Zamenhof.

We note with regret the passing of an Internationalist in the person of Dr. Ludovic L. Zamenhof, the inventor of Esperanto, the auxiliary language. He was an oculist of Warsaw who conceived the dream of uniting mankind in one brotherhood by means of an international language. He took no account of the economic question, and his dream could never have been fully realised by means of a common vehicle of speech alone. Men do not live on language, but on bread and butter, and without economic freedom there must always be two nations within each nation—the oppressors and the oppressed—even if the oppression is tempered by a bourgeois sentimentality. We welcome, however, the idea of a common language which would unite the workers of the world and knit them closer by breaking down the barriers of speech. It cannot be denied that the necessary translating of speeches at congresses of comrades of various tongues entails a great deal of time and labour that might be better utilised. Diplomacy has its medium in French, but the workers have no time to go into the intricacies of the French idiom, let alone the irregular verbs.

It should be understood that Esperanto is not a universal language to replace national languages, but has always been put forward as a second language to facilitate international relations. It is to be learnt in addition to one's mother tongue, is easily mastered, and has no irregular exceptions or saving clauses. An excellent pamphlet on the subject, "Anarchists and Esperanto," can be obtained from Freedom Office, price three-halfpence, post free.

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