

# Freedom

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## NOTES.

### Brothels for the Army.

In the House of Commons on February 25 Mr. Lees-Smith and other members stated that in certain towns in France occupied by British troops there were a number of licensed regulated brothels patronised by the soldiers. It was stated that the American authorities would not allow their men access to these places but the British military officers refused to put them "out of bounds," and the Dean of Lincoln, in a letter to the *Times*, said that when soldiers were given their leave cards entries were made showing the hours when these brothels were open to them. It seems that some of them are in rather busy streets, and it was very inconvenient to the inhabitants to have brothel queues blocking the streets at the busiest times of the day. So the army officers obligingly give the hours when British soldiers can go there without causing annoyance. This system of providing brothels for the army is a very old one, and although those in France seem to be run by civilians, in India similar establishments are controlled by the army authorities, and in a book published some years ago by some American female missionaries, a facsimile was printed of an official request for more "attractive" women to be sent next time. The British Government, which is giving medals and decorations to women at home for their war work, in France actively assists in their degradation. The *Herald* prints the statement that at one of these French brothels fifteen women receive three hundred and sixty men a day! Do not talk to us about atrocities again!

### Labour Must End the War.

The fight promised against militarism and the annexationist policy of the Government by the Clyde engineers has not materialised. The shop stewards, who now appear in the full guise of respectability and officialdom apparently placed their ban upon it and the whole thing has fizzled out. But though this section has suddenly become discreet there are indications throughout the realm of Labour that the workers intend to take the law into their own hands and they are thus appealing to the workers of the belligerent countries over the heads of their respective Governments. The Labour Party's Conference at Nottingham, and again the Conference of Allied Socialists recently held, showed us an immense advance upon the attitude adopted by Labour in July last, when the discussion over the proposed Stockholm Conference saw the Socialists of the Allied countries hopelessly divided. To-day agreement has been reached, thanks to the turn of events in Russia and internal conditions. The most significant fact appears in the way the ordinary man in the street is looking to Labour to save the country from the insensate slaughter caused by the rivalry of the capitalist empires. The lust for conquest which caused the war still persists, and only Labour united and determined can heal the wounds from which we are suffering.

### Leaders as Lightning Conductors.

Yet the great danger ahead of us is the reliance placed upon official leaders. The accounts of the Austrian and German peace strikes throw much light upon the manner in which the workers' movement in both countries was used by the Socialist politicians. In Austria particularly they appear to have averted a revolution, and thus the claws of the workers were neatly drawn and they were tricked by lying phrases and fine promises. The net result of the intervention of the leaders has been the stiffening of the military backs, and the new peace terms dictated to Russia show us only too plainly that for the present leadership has again been triumphant and our emancipation from the sacred union with capitalism has again been postponed.

### Prussianism at Home.

Those who are in doubt as to the issue of the war should examine some of the recent Acts passed by Parliament. The triumph of Prussianism is manifested everywhere, but nowhere perhaps so much as in the new Registration Act which has just come into force in this country. Provision is made to enable the police to stop any man between 15 and 65 years and ask him to produce his registration certificate. Under pressure the Government was compelled to drop the clause which subjected girls and women to this treatment. The entire Act is, of course, only a further instalment of that regimentation which commenced in this country before the war. So nicely have the people been caught in the Governmental net that few voices have so far been raised against this fresh proof of police inquisition. But the *Nation*, in its issue of February 2nd, says some trite things about it. Thus:

"The main fabric of Prussianism, of which the Bill consists, remains unimpaired. Every male person over 15 and under 65 becomes a ticket-of-leave man, subject at all times and places to police inquiry and supervision. Every discharged soldier and sailor, however mutilated or sick, is put under the same police control. Upon these latter and upon everyone else over 18 savage penalties may fall for any breach of the Act, even though it be but a failure to notify a change of employment."

And so the work of regimentation goes on and the *Nation* is, unfortunately, not a nation but only a voice crying in the wilderness.

### Still Torturing C.O.'s.

At last the public conscience is being touched by the heroism so constantly displayed by the conscientious objector. The case of Emmanuel Ribeiro, of Manchester, exhibits some of the worst features of cruelty we have yet come across. Having been forcibly fed daily for over twelve months his health has given way under the strain, and yet despite his alarming condition, reassuring reports have been issued by the medical board of the war hospital where he is an inmate. The *Manchester Guardian* in commenting on the case does not mince matters, for it reminds the Government "that by this sort of senseless persecution they are doing more perhaps than in any other way to ruin their credit with great numbers of thinking men." That is the verdict given after it has been pointed out that the conscientious objector is no criminal.

### The Danger of Discipline.

Under the heading of "The Danger of Discipline" the *Nation* of February 9th has some frankly Anarchistic things to say. In discussing the military education now in process of being forced upon school children we are told:

"Even in our own country, which has now become the earthly paradise of militarists and bureaucrats, he is almost driven to despair. Even his intimate relations with 'Dora' fail to comfort him at times. His wooden head, with its wooden ideal, turns as its only resource to new regulations, fresh restraints, further registration, more rapidly invented crimes, and increased penalties. Surely, he thinks, there must be some point of suppression at which men and women will abandon their disturbing practice and cease to breathe without order from above."

Passing on to criticise a handbook called "Elements of Military Education," issued from the County of Leicester Education Office, a vision is given us of the outcome of military discipline inculcated under compulsion in English schools:

"You will have produced the worship of uniform, the swaggering officer, the bullying official, the petty regulation, the perpetual inquisition, the government by police, the multitude prone in passive submission. To these conditions our own militarists and bureaucrats are even now bringing us so near that already we are chilled by the breath of that cold-hearted monster the State."

## THE NATURAL ANARCHY OF THE RUSSIAN TEMPERAMENT.

(From "Current Opinion," New York.)

Very few people, according to Hamilton Fyfe, the English writer, understand what is the matter with Russia. Of those who do understand, he continues, the greater number are afraid to speak. It seems to Mr. Fyfe that frankness is better than evasion of the truth. Nothing is gained—rather do we suffer loss—by continuing to believe the thing we should like to be true instead of the thing that is true. And the truth about the Russian people, he writes (in an article in the "Saturday Evening Post"), is not that they are "intoxicated by their first sip of liberty," as Kerensky said; not that they are feeling about for a government which shall suit them; but that they distrust all forms of government and all governing people. They do not want any. "Democracy to them means getting rid of governments altogether."

Nowhere, Mr. Fyfe tells us, has the doctrine that governments exist for the purpose of exploiting the people been more forcibly preached and more willingly listened to than in Russia. Nowhere has the truth of it been driven more steadily home by the behaviour of the governing classes. "Yet it is not only their misgovernment by a bureaucracy established after a German model and the preaching of Tolstoy and his disciples that all authority is wrong that have led so large a proportion of the Russian people to take the view that democracy means getting rid of government. It is a view that suits, nay, springs from, the Russian temperament." Mr. Fyfe proceeds:

"Never have I lived among people who value liberty of individual action, liberty of thought and social custom so highly as the Russians do. Heine said the Englishman loved liberty as a lawful wife; the Frenchman, as a mistress; the German, as his old grandmother. The Russian does not so much love liberty as he finds it necessary to his existence. He must have it, just as he must have air to breathe. He can, upon occasion, do with very little air—in a railroad carriage, for example, or in a street car on a cold day, or in his sleeping apartment all winter.

"So, also, he can, if he is forced to it, manage to put up with a curtailment of his liberty in some directions if he is allowed to practise it in others. But he never accepts shackles, whether they be political or social, as part of the necessary costume of civilised man. He maintains that he is more genuinely civilised than the rest of Europe, and that he proves it by refusing to submit his individuality to any curb which he is strong enough to resist."

Russians argue that we do violence to ourselves and deform our individualities if we resist our impulses. "Do whatever you feel inclined to do. Follow the promptings of your nature. Gratify even your whims and fancies." That is what Russians preach, and practise also. There are no rules among them, Mr. Fyfe says, for the regulation of every-day existence. They get up when they feel like it, and they go to bed at any hour, preferably three or four in the morning. They seldom keep appointments on time; often they forget all about them. They do not have rigidly fixed hours for meals. At dinner parties the guests dress as they please.

Russians appeal to Mr. Fyfe as very pleasant acquaintances, the opposite of those who, living strictly by rule, make themselves offensively self-righteous, punctilious and fussy. He tells us further:

"Discipline of all kinds is disagreeable to them. The rich and comfortable—the Haves—never had any. The Have-nots, since they were released from serfdom, have never found any discipline to take its place. All classes set great store by individual freedom. Sologub, one of the most popular writers, had told them outright that they think too much of their rights and not enough about their duties. I have often heard Russians speak about 'my duty to myself.' That is the kind they know best and value most highly.

"I remember being surprised, when I first travelled widely about Russia, by the number of foreigners living there, Englishmen and Germans especially, who said they could never settle down anywhere else, having once got used to freedom. 'Russia,' they would tell me, 'is the freest country in the world.' This was in such screaming contradiction to the idea generally accepted that I puzzled over it and asked questions. I came at length to understand what they meant.

"Certainly the system of government in Russia was bureaucratic and curtailed liberty. The country was ruled by officials who were always the worst of tyrants, worse even than priests.

"But though this system curtailed liberty at certain points;

though it kept watch upon everybody by means of its gendarmery, its *ochrana*—secret police—its passport system and its host of spies; though it could revenge itself cruelly, with imprisonment and exile inflicted by irresponsible decree, upon those who openly defied it—it did not meddle with either private opinions or private lives. In Russia there prevailed what we are accustomed to call a looseness of living, an absence of moral censure, a following of inclination and an impatience of restraint which made it a pleasanter country of residence for people of—shall we say—highly developed individuality than any other of the European or American States. This was what the foreigners living in Russia meant when they said there was more real liberty there than anywhere else."

Relations between men and women, we learn, are arranged upon what are often described as natural lines. In cities it is common enough to hear: "No, we are not married. We decided to live together without a ceremony." If a husband and wife cease to find each other's society congenial, and if each takes another mate, no comment is offered. Mr. Fyfe cites the case of a prominent Englishman in Petrograd who lives in "free union" with a lady of irreproachable reputation and of that quick intelligence which gives Russian women their charm. "They are each distinguished in their careers. All doors are gladly opened to them. No one dreams of criticising their arrangement."

Given a people thus impatient of restraint, and given a system of government utterly alien to their temperament and character which forcibly dragooned them for two hundred years, inevitably when that system is thrown off there is bound to be some throwing of caps over windmills. But the tumult in the soul of Russia just now, Mr. Fyfe writes, is not solely effervescence of feeling due to the casting off, more by accident than by design, of the system of government they detested but had not the energy to destroy. The iron of that system entered into Russia's soul so deep as to make vast numbers of her people fear all systems. What is the difference, they ask, between being exploited by bureaucrats and being exploited by bourgeois? "Under the old régime," they say, "we were dragooned by Von Plehve, and Shteglovitoff, and Stolypin, and the Grand Duke Serge; under the new régime Kerensky has threatened us with blood and iron. All governments are alike. We want none of them."

It is not only the ignorant who argue thus. Many educated and cultivated Russians, many holding high positions, take a similar attitude. One of these put the case to Mr. Fyfe in the following terms:

"The Germans," he said, "are an obedient, docile race. They cannot be happy unless they are under strict discipline. They like to be told what to do. They have no confidence in themselves as individuals. That is why they have erected an abstraction called the State. This State is, in their eyes, above all morality. Its value is infinitely higher than that of the individuals who compose it. It demands unquestioning worship and sacrifice.

"Of course in practice, as we see in Germany, and as we saw here in Russia, the State means a few individuals who prey upon the rest. These few individuals use the mass of people as pawns are used on a chessboard; as food for cannon; as hewers of wood and drawers of water. These few make themselves important by exercising authority. The extension of the boundaries of the State means that they shall have more power. Increasing the influence of the State means increasing their influence. Nowhere does the mass of the people gain anything by a State's advance in power. The gain is reserved for the few who wield that power, who become more important, and are enabled thereby to fasten their yoke upon the people's neck.

"The Russian nature is the opposite of the German. We value individuality. We resent authority, even when we submit to it. We have no use for the State. We do not want to see a powerful government in Russia, for we know this would mean heavy taxation and severe military service, and the mass of the people in subjection to a host of officials. As a nation we have no ambition. We are not covetous of the lands of others. Why should we impose our rule upon any one? It is hard enough for each individual to rule himself. We want to see all the world at peace, and everyone quietly minding his own business. We oppose ourselves to the theory that the individual must be subordinated and sacrificed to the State."

All modes of government are failures. Despotism is unjust to everybody, including the despot, who was probably made for better things.—Oscar Wilde.

Every idea gained is a hundred years of slavery remitted.—Richard Jefferies.

**"MURDER MOST FOUL!"**

With the above title a pamphlet is being issued broadcast with a lurid black cover, the lettering being in red. There is no definite name of publisher, but the author is given as "Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, an American observer on the Western front." The printers are Hayman, Christy, and Lilly, of London, E.C. 1. It is obviously printed from American stereotypes, and the press matter is written in what is termed "popular language."

The matter need not be detailed here, as it is merely a re-hash of the "atrocities" stories, which have been latterly issued by Arnold Toynbee in "The German Terror in France." Some of the titles and sub-headings may be given, however; they are of this kind: "The Kaiser branded his people as Huns," "The International Burglar's Excuse," "What the Hideous Hun has done," "A thousand individual atrocities," etc., etc.

Whilst we have each our opinion on the alleged "atrocities" in Belgium and France, we know atrocities are inseparable from warfare, and the term, "International Burglars," can be applied equally without discrimination to all the belligerents. But with regard to this particular pamphlet a single extract will serve to show the kind of trash that is served up to the British public by the War Aims and Propaganda Committees:

In the next village stood the ruined square belfry into which the Germans had lifted machine guns, then forced every woman and child—275 in number—into the little church, and notified the French soldiers that if they fired upon the machine guns they would kill their own women and children. After several days' hunger and thirst, at midnight these brave women slipped a little boy through the church window and bade their husbands fire upon the Germans in the belfry, saying they preferred death to the indignities they were suffering. And so these Frenchmen turned their guns, and in blowing that machine gun out of the belfry killed twenty of their own wives and children. In a hundred years of history where shall you find a record of any other race who call themselves civilised who are such sneaking cowards that they could not fight like men or play the game fairly, but in their chattering terror put women and little children before them as a shield?

Disregarding the chattering terror of the author's grammar in the above extract, and without going so far back as a hundred years, we may quote the following official document which made its appearance during the last South African War:

V.R.—PUBLIC NOTICE.

It is hereby notified for information that unless the men at present on commando belonging to families in the town and district of Krugersdorp surrender themselves and hand in their arms to the Imperial Authorities by July 20, the whole of their property will be confiscated and their families turned out destitute and homeless.—By order,

G. M. M. RITCHIE, K. Horse.

The military in all countries have not much to learn from the Germans when it comes to "methods of barbarism."

L.A.M.

**VISION.**

Out of abysmal darkness,  
Out of the festering slums,  
The snarl of men in torment  
Leaps to the dawn that comes:  
Forth from the tortured toilers,  
In night that knows no moon,  
A bitter cry that will not die  
Leaps to the flaming noon.

They ask for bread, not pity,  
They ask for a better life,  
They call a halt to carnage,  
An end to senseless strife:  
They glimpse a golden dawning  
Amidst their agonies;  
But they cry in vain amid their pain,  
The great night mocks their cries.

Out of abysmal darkness  
Slowly but surely they come;  
They are weary of life-long torment,  
They have cried till their voice is dumb:  
They leap with hate-lit torches,  
They leap with scythes of fire  
To light their way to the bursting day  
And the State's grim funeral pyre.

L.A.M.

**WILL NOT BEND—MUST BE BROKEN.**

We have received from a comrade the following particulars of the brutal treatment and death of another conscientious objector. The War Cabinet are directly responsible for his death as they persistently refuse to allow any modification of the treatment of C.O.'s, and the doctors act according to the instructions of the Home Office. Many cases similar to this have occurred, and will occur, and we print these details to prove how inhuman the State is in its dealings with those who refuse to bend the knee to it.

Henry William Firth is now with us no longer. Like many another he could not live if life could only be prolonged by taking or assisting in taking the lives of his comrades across the seas. Recognising, so far as circumstances would allow, nothing but the laws of nature, he refused to obey the Military Service Act, was "handed over" in the early part of last year, and sentenced to six months' hard labour, which term he completed in Wormwood Scrubbs. Declining the Home Office scheme he was sentenced to a further term of two years' hard labour. Never physically strong his health gave way, and he applied for Home Office work, and was released on December 31. Broken in health and disturbed in mind he was sent to Dartmoor under the Home Office Scheme.

On January 3 Firth was put to work with the heavy quarry party. On the 4th he complained of the cold and went to the hospital. The doctor sent him back to the quarry. From that period he was either working at the quarry or on the night white-washing party (hours 7-30 p.m. to 5-30 a.m.) until he was admitted to the hospital on January 30. He sank steadily and died on February 6. An inquest was held, but was so unsatisfactory that a demand has been made for a re-opening of the inquest. As a protest against the general treatment of C.O.'s 700 of the members of Dartmoor Settlement ceased work on February 8 from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., and when their dead comrade's body was taken to the station the whole of the Settlement followed in procession.

So far as his family and personal friends are concerned, Henry Firth bore his suffering in silence, never writing them of his condition for fear of causing them anxiety; but on January 17, in reply to inquiries, he wrote:—

"I have been feeling very ill for this last three months. I have been gradually getting weaker and weaker, and at last I got so weak that I felt I could not stop in prison any longer, so I made an application on November 21 for the H.O. scheme, as I thought that by getting out of prison was my only chance of recovery. I was given the scheme, and released on December 31. I might say I was continually going to the doctor, but this is of no use since he cannot cure a man of disease that is caused by the prison.

"It seems to me that all the organs of my body got so thoroughly weak that they refused to do their work, so for a long time they have been working by the aid of drugs, which have no doubt ruined my stomach and bowels. I knew I was weak, for I could hardly do the 40 minutes' exercise, nor could I walk straight or stoop without dizziness; but being accustomed to the narrow circle of prison life, and its lack of need for physical activity on the part of the prisoner, I have found that now I am out and in a broader field where more activity is required I am much weaker than I thought, and cannot eat the food here without violent pains of the stomach, and after such I can scarcely walk. I have been to the doctor here, but he tells me that I am all right, and persistently sends me to work with a quarry party. As a matter of fact I ought to be put on special diet, and allowed to have a few weeks' rest, as I am nothing but a case of bones. I was shocked when I looked at myself in the mirror to see such a change in a few months: I not only suffered physically, but I found that my mind was going wrong, for my thoughts became quite confused, and my mind quite worried."

On January 29 he was charged with "Idling away time in the closet for 25 minutes while employed at the quarry." His reply was: "Sir, being a sufferer from constipation, it naturally takes me a long time to go in the closet. I assure you I was not aware I was away so long as that. I hope it will not occur again." The manager's decision was: "First report—cautioned."

So our comrade was cautioned for being slow in obeying Nature's call on January 29. What will he receive for obeying Nature's last call on February 6?

C.H.H.

High hopes were once formed of democracy; but democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people, by the people, for the people. It has been found out.—Oscar Wilde.

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## ALLIED LABOUR'S WAR AIMS.

The Inter-Allied Labour and Socialist Conference, which ended its sittings in London on February 23, agreed unanimously, we are told, upon a Memorandum of War Aims. This Memorandum has been published in the Press, and is just what might have been expected from a Conference composed mostly of men who have supported their Governments in carrying on the war. From beginning to end it deals only with the drawing of new boundaries, instead of sweeping them away. These Labour men and Socialists show us in this precious Memorandum that they have approached the question from the same standpoint as a Conference of capitalists would have done. Even the supreme tragedy of this war has not opened their eyes to the outstanding fact that boundaries are artificial, and have been drawn and re-drawn from time to time by rulers or capitalist groups to mark out the areas to be exploited by them. For many years Labour and Socialist manifestoes have borne Karl Marx's famous battle-cry: "Workers of the world, unite!" And yet after three and a half years of bloodshed, with the workers of Europe divided into two great groups of munition makers and fighters, this fatuous Socialist and Labour Conference spends several days drawing fresh boundaries to keep the workers apart!

Take a map of Europe—or any other part of the world—and then think to yourself how the boundaries of the various countries have been drawn. In every instance it has been done with a sword dipped in the blood of the common people. Where a boundary line has been moved you can say: "It took the blood of fifty thousand workers to make that alteration." Or in another case you could say: "A hundred thousand men died to protect that boundary line for the tyrant who ruled them." The men on either side of the boundary had no quarrel, but their rulers had. They wanted to get more territory, to exploit more workers, and to gain more wealth. And the same reasons caused the present war, except that instead of individual monarchs being responsible, it was the rivalry and greed of powerful financial and commercial groups, who wanted to open up new lands for exploitation, and could not agree as to their respective shares. They threw the workers into the battle line to decide the question. Everyone present at the above Conference knew that, but instead of trying to find out how to free the workers from the baneful influence of these groups, they occupied their time in deciding under whose influence the workers were to be placed. "Self-determination" to these Socialists and Labour men simply means that the workers will be allowed a vote in deciding the question.

In reading the Memorandum we look in vain for any sign that capitalism and the Governments it controls are responsible for all wars. Surely one would expect that to be pointed out by a Socialist and Labour Conference. But all through they dealt only with effects and not causes. So many of the delegates have been working side by side with the capitalists in the war that they evidently felt it would make things very unpleasant if they told their new friends that they were responsible.

Labour's real war aims are something entirely different to those expounded in the Memorandum. At present, in all the countries at war, Labour has proclaimed a truce in its fight with Capital. But there are many signs that this truce will soon be broken, and then the fight will be resumed with greater bitterness than ever. But the first thing for Labour to do is to think out clearly what it is fighting for, as unless it does so it will always be led astray by the unprincipled scoundrels who live on its back.

Above all things the free use of the land is the all-important object. It is impossible for a people to be free unless they have

free access to the land. That is the reason why the two great parties in Parliament have combined in resisting all attempts to throw open the land. The Enclosure Acts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries destroyed the last shred of freedom in this country, as they took away from the people the only land to which they had free access, and in consequence they were forced to go into the towns and work in the factories which were then springing up all over the country.

Let there be no mistake, however, as to what this conquest of the land really means. It means the death blow to capitalism. It means the abolition of exploitation and robbery under the guise of rent, interest, and profit. With those evils also will go the State and all the swarm of parasites which has sprung up in recent years in those departments of Social Reform which delight in numbering and classing us from the cradle to the grave. The Russian peasants who seized the land when the revolution broke out may not have been animated by any very high principles, but the instinct at the bottom of it was sound. It meant bread and liberty, and with these at their command a people can be trusted to work out their destiny in their own way. Without the land there can be no freedom. The workers of this and other countries must grasp this fact, and then they will cease to fight over questions of hours of labour and wages, and gird up their loins for the great struggle which will bring them freedom from wars and all the oppression they suffer under Capitalism and Governments. Many sops will be offered them from "control of industry" to Labour Governments, but if they concentrate their whole force on regaining the land nothing can prevent them attaining their object. Let the cry go forth then in all countries: "Land and Liberty!"

## WE WANT YOUR HELP!

We are urgently in need of financial support, and ask our readers to give as freely and as steadily as their circumstances will permit. The Freedom Press is now practically the only Anarchist publishing office in these islands, therefore those who wish to see our literature kept in a flourishing condition will realise how much depends on their assistance. For some time FREEDOM has been maintained by the sale of books and pamphlets, but now our stocks are getting low, and we must reprint several of those most in demand. When orders come in we frequently have to say, "Out of print," and with the demand for Anarchist literature increasing as it does it will be a great misfortune if it cannot be met promptly. Speaking of a pamphlet now almost out of print, a comrade said recently: "We can do with a thousand of those as soon as the fine weather allows of outdoor meetings." Is he to have those thousand pamphlets, and are other comrades willing to sell to have their orders supplied? The answer rests with our readers.

We know that the cost of living is a strain on the resources of everyone nowadays, but yet our enemies manage to find funds for their evil work somehow or other, and if we are to push Anarchist ideas in a steady and successful manner we must be supplied with the necessary cash. The cost of paper and printing has mounted by leaps and bounds, and unless our friends rally to our support the work will be crippled. In these circumstances we hope for a hearty response to this appeal.

Cheques, money orders, and postal orders should be made payable to "Freedom Press," and sent to the Manager, Freedom Press, 127, Ossulston Street, London, N.W. 1. All sums received will be acknowledged in FREEDOM.

## LONDON COMRADES IN PRISON.

Our comrade Meachem has been removed from Winchester to Pentonville Prison, where he was visited recently by several comrades. He was very cheerful, and pleased to know that our papers were still being published. He is allowed several privileges recently instituted for C.O.'s by the Home Office.

Our comrade Alfred Corum has kept his word to strike against prison work, and has consequently been under a régime of periodical punishments of bread and water and solitary confinement. No visits or letters are allowed, but word reaches us that he is looking fairly well and cheerful, and is composing poetry and committing it to memory. He asked for paper and writing materials for musical composition, but was told he must resume work and be a good boy first of all. He declined with thanks.

## VICTORIOUS RUSSIA.

The recent re-invasion of Russia by Germany on the pretext of restoring law and order in that stricken country again demonstrates the solidarity of the possessing class. For Germany is going to the relief of the defeated bourgeoisie and to crush the revolutionary spirit which has seriously commenced infecting her own troops.

As events stand to-day the outlook for Russia appears tragic in the extreme. Menaced with famine, she is yet called upon to fight the invader and keep alight the torch of revolution which she alone of the European races has succeeded in kindling. Whatever the issue one momentous fact emerges—the forceful new ideas—ideas redolent of a new creed, of a clear vision and a great humanity which she has given to the whole world, and which will go on penetrating into the hearts and minds of peoples until, whether Russia collapses temporarily under the strain or not, will become as beacons of light that cannot again be extinguished. For Shelley, with rare insight, realised this when he wrote: "He never fails who dies in a great cause," and though German militarism may spread its meshes eastward yet the implacable hatred of a people who see their promised land snatched from them will be the inevitable portion of the German rulers until sooner or later German militarism, in common with the other European despotisms, will fall before the onslaught of the outraged peoples. For capitalism and its inherent militarism cannot last for ever; just like any bodily disease, it has developed, reached a crisis, and must henceforth be cured or else destroy the whole social structure infected by it. But it will mean a world fight, for it is cosmopolitan in its character, and has been slowly developing ever since the sixteenth century when, capital having been concentrated in the hands of the few, exploitation of the weak and the propertyless became the corner stone of its success.

Thus, if we trace the onward march of history we shall see that from the time when the seeds of the present empires were planted and the centralisation of governments began with their annexation of small States, their repressive measures to keep the oppressed people servile in their habits, until the present day, we find always the same influence at work—the use of force to crush the aspirations of the exploited people. But heroic acts stand out as landmarks through the ages. In the sixteenth century it was the Dutch who, single-handed, dared oppose the tyrannous hand of Spain, then the most powerful empire in the world. In the eighteenth century the French peasants and workers tried to hitch their waggon to a star, and startled the world out of its respectability by declaring for "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

Still, in spite of popular upheavals, capitalism strode on, preaching from the seventeenth century and onwards its political dictum of the balance of power. The balance of power being political child to its capitalist mother, naturally enough always aimed at keeping a rival capitalist country as impotent as possible. Thus we see the jealous eye which each European Empire kept upon the almost sole remaining group of small States situated in the south-east of Europe. Germany must be kept from her coveted designs of an all-German route to Persia and Turkey. Likewise, according to Germany, British rule of the seas and Colonial supremacy must be restricted. France and Italy in turn each declared for their spheres of influence, always at the expense of neighbouring States, and Tsarist Russia must also take her share of the booty. In such circumstances a rupture was bound to come sooner or later, and a movement start among the nations towards "self-determination." How far this movement has a chance of development the next few months will probably decide. Whether the Imperialist annexationist Governments will find it expedient to heal their quarrel over their respective spheres of influence in order more readily to unite in crushing "Bolshevism" remains to be seen. It is impossible to forget that Lloyd George in his speech on War Aims practically left Germany a free hand in Russia, and the present military expedition into that country may be partly the result of this policy.

Like all Imperialist Governments bent on conquest, a lie has to be manufactured in order to induce the German soldiers to march against Socialist Russia. Shades of our own war with the Boers arise before us when we read of Germany's message to her soldiers that they are being marched against the peaceful demobilised Russians in order to liberate German barons in Esthonia!—Will the lie, like so many used to gain similar Imperialist ends, serve in this case, or will the German soldiers realise their crime in fighting the Russian Socialist workers and peasants? The key to the future lies very much in the hands of the German workers and soldiers. On them depends the immediate issue whether Revolution or Capitalism shall emerge triumphant from this war. Once previously in history the fate of revolutionary Europe depended upon the German people, who

have been described as the most patient and contemplative nation on earth. How they played their part up to a point in the abortive revolution of March, 1848, is well known to us. Then as now Europe was in a ferment, and the seeds of revolution had spread eastwards from France. But with characteristic shortsightedness the people thought that in gaining political concessions they had won everything. That was before capitalist exploitation and working-class solidarity had made internationalism among the workers possible.

How far are the German workers and soldiers prepared to support their Government in its imperialist policy? That is the crucial question. Are they conscious of the part they could play in assisting the liberation of the workers in all countries, or will they blindly, unconsciously continue to be used as puppets by the political factions that control them? For by their action now the revolution will either be retarded or hastened. But whatever be the outcome of the German invasion of Russia one fact remains—that the gulf between the European Imperialist Governments and the people they govern has widened, men's minds have become receptive to new ideas and internationalism has taken an immense leap forward.

So whether the heroic Russian Bolsheviks are apparently crushed by Germany or any other force or not, their ideals remain a living force among the peoples of Europe, and germination, though slow, is actually taking place. The future is with the revolutionists of Europe now more than ever in this hour of darkness which veils our eyes just before the dawn of the days that may well bring us the long-desired peace.

M.B.H.

## ANOTHER POLICE RAID.

Scotland Yard has again honoured us with a visit. On February 14, armed with a warrant, they raided the rooms of our comrade Motler, editor of *Satire*, but came away with empty hands. A comrade who was there when they called was asked for the keys of FREEDOM Office, which he told them he did not hold. He came on and informed me that a raid was to take place, so I hastened to the office, and got there in time to find five burly detectives coming downstairs. The inspector in charge read out a warrant from the "competent military authority," giving him power to search for and take away and, if necessary, destroy anything likely to cause disaffection among the civil population. He said he had found nothing upstairs, and after a short examination of the lower store room said there was nothing to take away. Before leaving the inspector said: "I suppose you know what we are looking for?" But I assured him I had not the slightest idea what they were after. Since then, however, it has occurred to me that perhaps they were looking for copies of the leaflet printed by the I.W.W., for which four of their members were recently sent to prison. The spy in the I.W.W. whose information led to their arrest and the seizure of leaflets evidently put them on a false scent as far as we are concerned.

This raid shows that the Prussians at the War Office have a perfect contempt for the liberty of the citizen. Acting on the slightest information, or perhaps no information, they raid rooms and offices, smash locks to pieces, tear open parcels, and generally behave like hooligans. Then when they find they have made a mistake they walk off without any apology, and leave the unfortunate victims to repair the damage at their own expense. In our case the irony of the affair is that we could not have printed the leaflet because the military seized the essential parts of our machines and press when they raided us in July, 1916.

Evidently the motto of the "competent military authority" is, "When in doubt, raid FREEDOM Office." But it really is getting beyond a joke.

T.H.K.

## NEWS FROM FRANCE.

The position of the movement here is not brilliant, and its prospects are difficult to foresee. Governmental repression is the order of the day. Meetings and even excursions are prohibited, journals suspended, news censored. *Le Libéraire* has succumbed. Lecoin and Constant and other comrades concerned in its production are still in jail, Lecoin for six years. *Ce qu'il faut dire* is suspended indefinitely, but am glad to announce that it will soon be replaced by *La Plebe*. You are probably aware that Sebastien Faure is now in jail through some dastardly Jesuistic machination of the clerical and imperialist cliques, on a charge of "offence against public morals." His reputation as well as liberty have been aimed at. Helen Biron, secretary of the School

Teachers' Union, is now serving a sentence on a charge of seditious propaganda, the same as the family Mayoux, teachers, and many other militants.

While all this is depressing, on the other hand the imbecile blunders of our enemy the Government give us hope and encouragement. Germany's barbarism and atrocities being somewhat played out, the press and public attention have been focussed lately on treason scandals. Almereyda was "suppressed" in his prison because he knew too much, and now Bolo Pasha and M. Caillaux. The hounds (or perhaps better, jackals) that have been employed in the pursuit of these victims are Leon Daudet, of *L'action Francaise*, and his royalist cubs—*camelots du roy*. Up to about 18 months ago no level-headed person attached any importance to the Orleanist and Buonapartist Monarchist Parties; they were regarded as "children at play." But of late, as a result of some reactionary financial movement which has not yet been revealed, these relics of antique tyranny have come into the limelight. Daudet has developed a hypersensitive nose for sniffing out treason, and has made a dominant topic of these scandals. The engineers of this movement are doubtlessly the armament makers, who wish to throw dust in the eyes of the public to hide the dastardly plunder which they have pocketed, aided by those responsible for the Russian Treaty and the financiers of the Russian loan of 18,000,000,000 francs for the hangman of the Russians, which the Bolsheviks have the disgusting impudence to repudiate.

The reason for Caillaux's arrest under the pretext of communicating with the enemy is that he possessed the evidence and particulars necessary for accusing Poincaré, Delcassé, Barthou, and the rest of the gang of politicians and financiers who engineered the Russian treaty and loan, of their responsibility for dragging France into this war, also for the Balkan and Serbian treaties, which, by closing Germany's last outlet to the Bagdad Railway, provoked the explosion of 1914. The decision of the Chamber to pay the interest of the Russian loan is a proof of the dominance of the interests of this party in the councils of the Government. The *Republique Francaise* to pay the Tsar's debts! and it has passed with scarcely a word of protest and almost unnoticed; thus they pile up debts and expenses! What about the liquidation? Will the bourgeois régime survive this strain? Here there is hope for us.

This Spring, as a safeguard against the threatened great German attack, agricultural permissions will be suspended at a critical moment. We are already faced with a shortage of almost all necessities, and limited in consumption by bread and coal cards, official permits, etc., etc. Again, added to this is the constant influx of refugees, which the authorities in their wisdom send as consumers into the towns, instead of as producers to the country. Considering thus the situation, it is difficult to see how this can last. A crash seems inevitable before many months.

Propaganda goes on in spite of repression. Last Sunday week a meeting in defence of International Socialism, held in spite of police prohibition at St. Denis Town Hall, protested against the imprisonment of comrades. Many uncensored pamphlets were distributed. The meeting was a great success, and ended with the singing of the "Internationale" and cries of "A bas la guerre!"

Paris, February 15.

## NOTES OF THE MOVEMENT.

**COWDENBEATH.**—It will be welcome news to all readers of *FREEDOM* that the movement in Scotland is growing. Aided in every possible manner by our comrades in Glasgow, the Cowdenbeath Group have arranged a series of meetings. Comrade Kennedy, of Glasgow, at our meeting on February 24 gave a lucid demonstration of "What Anarchism Really Means." To a responsive and understanding audience he showed clearly the difference between "natural" and "civil" law, "free" and "coercive" organisation. He proved convincingly how immensely superior to present-day societies and organisations were societies or organisations the units of which submitted only to natural laws and had economic freedom. The nature of the discussion was stimulating to the Group, for it testified that a knowledge of and agreement with the lofty ideal of Anarchism was widespread in this industrial district. The industrial, housing, and general social conditions in this black spot on the map, are so "materialising, vulgarising and brutalising," that the tolerant, unconventional, and studious disposition displayed by the members of this audience made one realise that there is every possibility of future historians summing up the Great War epoch in the phrase: The ruling class proposed but the working class disposed.

We hope that pessimistic comrades will come to our meetings and regain their optimism, and aid us in acquiring the literature dépôt we intend to open in Cowdenbeath. That there is a demand for our literature is shown by the sales at Sunday's meeting, which amounted to 32s., despite the short working-time experienced by the toilers recently in this district. The literature sold must inevitably have an influence on future events. R.S.

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

## NEWS WITHOUT COMMENT.

Indictment on which men are being put on trial in Fresno, California:—

"The defendants are charged with having conspired to injure, oppress, threaten and intimidate certain citizens of the United States in the free exercise and enjoyment by them respectively of certain rights and privileges secured to them by the constitution and laws of the United States by demanding stated wages and certain terms from the employers of labour throughout the United States, and unless the employers of labour agree to pay the stated wages, and agree to the certain terms demanded, the said defendants and the said persons with whom said defendants conspired would refuse to work for or give their services to the said employers, and would engage in what is known in every day parlance as a STRIKE."—*Industrial Worker* (Seattle).

Two clauses of an Act recently passed by New Zealand's Parliament:—

"For requiring any person or persons, whether aliens or not, who are not employed in some industry deemed to be essential or partially essential for the public welfare, to become so employed, or to take reasonable steps to become so employed, or to show cause before a Stipendiary Magistrate why they should not be required to become so employed.

"For authorising the employment, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed, of women or girls in any capacity in any industry or occupation in lieu of men, notwithstanding anything in any Act to the contrary, if, in the opinion of the Governor-General-in-Council, such employment of women and girls in lieu of men will not be a source of danger to the safety of any person or persons."—*New Zealand Times*.

New York, Sunday.—Captain David A. Henkes, of the 16th Infantry, of German descent, has been dismissed from the army and sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment with hard labour for tendering his resignation, stating he could not force himself to the conviction that he was capable of making war on his kindred upon their soil in a manner that would become his duty and station.—*Reuter*.

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