

Freedom

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NOTES.

At the moment of writing the Press announces that the Central Powers and the Turks have sent a Note to President Wilson asking for an armistice to "take in hand the restoration of peace," but judging from the reception given to the proposals put forward in the middle of September there seems little likelihood of the Allies agreeing to this new offer.

That Offensive Peace Note.

On September 16 the Press stated that the Austrian Government had sent a Note to all the belligerent Powers and to all neutral States inviting them to a "confidential non-binding discussion" of terms. After four years of bloodshed, with no military decision in sight, we might have expected that our rulers would have allowed the people mostly concerned time in which to read and consider the Note and pass their judgment upon it. But our "democratic" rulers are so afraid of their subjects' desire for peace that almost before they could read the papers speeches were made and printed the same day, and the Austrian Government's offer refused in scornful and insulting terms. Balfour said that, without consulting his colleagues, and speaking "upon the spur of the moment," he could not see in the proposals "the smallest hope that the goal we all desire to reach can really be obtained." President Wilson, that great fighter for democracy, received the Note at 6-20 and rejected it at 6-45. Clemenceau also rejected it in a similar summary fashion in a speech in the French Senate, a report of which was sent to the Austrian Government as the only reply. This indecent haste shows the utter contempt that these politicians have for the people they rule. Are the workers never to have a voice in questions of peace and war? Wherein is the position of the workers in the Allied countries any better than that of the workers of Germany, Austria, and Turkey? In all countries they have surrendered themselves into the hands of their masters who look upon them as so much cannon fodder to be burnt up in the fire of battle whenever the exploiters quarrel over the wealth which they produce. A League of Nations under these conditions will simply mean a League of Robbers.

Japs. for the Job.

The French and English financiers have called in the Japanese to collect the interest on their Russian loans, but do not put it quite so bluntly as that. Instead, they use their Press to spread broadcast tales of atrocities committed by the Bolsheviks, and then say the Japanese will put an end to these atrocities and bring law and order into Russia. The Japanese know something about atrocities, as will be seen by the following report of a *Times* war correspondent who was present at the capture of Port Arthur in the Chino-Japanese War (*Times*, January 8, 1895):

"Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday were spent by the Japanese soldiery in murder and pillage from dawn to dark, in mutilation, in every conceivable kind of nameless atrocity until the town [Port Arthur] became a ghastly inferno to be remembered with a fearsome shudder until one's dying day. Bodies of men strewed the streets in hundreds, perhaps thousands, for we could not count—some with not a limb unsevered, some with heads hacked and cross-cut and split lengthwise, some ripped open, not by chance, but with careful precision down and across, disembowelled and dismembered, with occasionally a dagger or bayonet thrust in the private parts. I saw groups of prisoners, tied together in a bunch with their hands behind their backs, riddled with bullets for five minutes, and then hewn in pieces. I saw a junk stranded on the beach, filled with fugitives of either sex and of all ages, struck by volley after volley until —. I can say no more."

No Free Press.

The War Cabinet (including the Labour Member) have very peculiar ideas of liberty. In every speech they make we are assured that this war is being fought to free the world from tyranny, but their actions prove them liars. Ever since the war started they have used the Defence of the Realm Act to suppress or per-

secute every outspoken individual or paper. We have given many instances of this treatment of those who wish to put the truth before the people, and last month mentioned the raid on the Socialist Labour Press in Glasgow, which was robbed of its machinery, paper, and much printed literature. In consequence they had to have their paper, the *Socialist*, printed by a private printer, Mr. E. H. Williams, of Bow, in East London, who printed *FREEDOM* when the first raid on our premises took place. The S.L.P. by this means got out the August and September issues successfully, but the military were determined to stop their propaganda, which has been a thorn in their side among the workers on the Clyde. Therefore on September 19 Mr. Williams' premises were raided and the business entirely stopped. The September issue of the *Socialist* contained the full text of the Bolshevik Constitution and the Soviet Government's account of the raid on the British mission in Russia. In publishing the truth about the Bolsheviks the S.L.P. have done much to open the eyes of British workers. Hence this latest outrage on a Press that would be free. When the second raid took place at *FREEDOM* office in 1916 some comrades were arrested and taken to Scotland Yard, where a detective told them that the authorities intended to stop every rebel paper before the war stopped. Will the workers allow them to do so?

Conscription for Ireland.

Everything points to an attempt to enforce conscription in Ireland in the next few weeks. The Government said some time ago that unless 50,000 recruits were obtained by voluntary means by October 1 they would have to get them by compulsion; and as only 10,000 have come forward at present we may be sure the Government will get the others by force if they think it expedient. St. Paul's words might be used as a motto for every Government: "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." The only thing that makes the Cabinet hesitate is the effect such an action might have on the Irish and their sympathisers in America and Australia. No one doubts their power to seize the men required, but they would never get them to fight, and if English soldiers started shooting Irishmen as they did after the rebellion of Easter week there would be a storm of protest from Irish Americans which might upset the "sacred unity" of the Allies. But Irishmen must not trust to anyone but themselves to prevent the intended outrage. Since 1916 there has been a great awakening of the Irish workers, who are beginning to recognise that an Irish employer is just as great a tyrant as an English one, and that a change of Governments will not bring liberty from exploitation. We hope that Irishmen will show more courage and resolution in resisting conscription than was shown by the workers this side of the Irish Channel, who allowed their leaders to lead them to the shambles.

The State and the Workers.

Slowly but surely State control of the workers is becoming an accomplished fact. And in asking the State to fix wages and hours of labour, and the prices of the necessities of life, the workers are helping to forge chains which will be very hard to break. The strange thing is that they hope in this way to escape from the tyranny of the capitalists. But they will find they have jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire. The State is an organisation formed by the ruling class to protect their interests. Every law passed by Parliament was passed for the same purpose, and has always fastened the chains still firmer on the necks of the workers. The history of the so-called Labour legislation proves this. Health insurance, unemployment insurance, the munitions Acts, and other legislation have been used to pry into the affairs of the workers, until now the history of each individual can be traced by his or her employer, and woe betide the man or woman who shows an independent spirit. The fact is, the workers are so intent on killing Germans that they do not notice the strong entrenchments which Capitalism is building at home. "The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth," and this applies largely to the Labour movement in this and other countries.

IN REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA.

If the cries "Fighting for Freedom," "The Right of Nations to Govern Themselves," "To Make the World Safe for Democracy," etc., etc., were anything other than mere pretences we should by now have had the country ringing from one end to the other with the splendid achievements that already stand to the credit of Russian Revolutionists; and we should have heard from platform, press and congresses enthusiastic accounts of all the important things they are steadily working at day by day, in spite of the immense difficulties that the ignorant and the hostile sections of the world are placing in their path; and all groups of genuinely progressive men and women everywhere would be taking heart to go and do likewise, or better.

Instead, we get the speeches of politicians, and the columns of newspapers filled with the most preposterous lies and wicked misrepresentations of the real facts. Even Labour Congresses and half-International Socialist Congresses spend their time in discussing all sorts of antediluvian and trivial proposals; either lacking the knowledge that some hundreds of miles to the east of them a country, many times larger than Great Britain, inhabited by a population three times as large, including a number of different races in various stages of development, has already far outgrown all the items on their agendas; or else lacking the imagination, intelligence, or sincerity, as well as the courage and will-power, to face squarely the facts of the case and realise what period in the world's history it is in which they are living.

What are English-speaking Revolutionists doing to arouse interest in all these wonderful events that are taking place in Russia, and that are developing day by day along lines that should be of immense concern to all of us, and what are they doing to prevent the capitalist Governments of the world from crushing out the Russian Revolution by violence, and re-establishing Capitalism?

In Russia the Soviets have recently been occupying themselves with Constitution-making. But they have not followed precedents in this any more than in other directions. Holding fairly definite ideas on the subject, they found little difficulty in expressing them in intelligible language, and instead of the usual interminable discussions, they decided without much delay on their formal Constitution. Those who are interested in these things will find few or no novelties in the principles involved, except in the statement of objects, and in details like the franchise regulations, whilst the sticklers for "democratic" principles will be hard put to it to find points for attack.

Contrary to earlier expectations, they have reverted to a representative political system based on geographical constituencies, instead of an administration of public affairs based on the representation of industries, or, what would have been better, a network of free voluntary associations. However, it is admittedly transitional in its character, and is sufficiently free to allow for continuous development, and of easy changes to any other types that may be thought more desirable.

On July 10, 1918, the fifth All-Russia Soviet Congress passed a Decree declaring Russia a Federation of Soviet Republics—the Soviets being composed of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies.

The unit of organisation is the local Soviet (Soviet means Council), or in country districts, where possible, direct action by a general meeting of the electors of the locality (the old Mir) without electing representatives. These bodies meet twice weekly in the country, and once weekly in the towns, and have control over all local affairs cultural or economic. The Soviets are composed of delegates who are elected for three months, but the electors have at all times the right to recall their elected delegate and to carry out another election. The delegates are elected in the proportion of 1 per 1,000 inhabitants in the towns, and 1 per 100 inhabitants in the country. In towns, the Soviet consists of not less than 50 or more than 1,000 members; in the country, of not less than 3 or more than 50 members.

The delegates are elected by all workers of both sexes who are 18 years old or over and who earn their living by productive work of social usefulness or of national importance, or are engaged in domestic work enabling others to do productive work; by soldiers and sailors, and by workers who have become incapacitated for work. Workers of non-Russian nationality have equal rights with natives, or if they prefer it they can become naturalised without any troublesome formalities. The age limit can be reduced by local Soviets if they obtain the sanction of the central authority, and the local Soviets decide on the participation of Trade Unions and other labour organisations in the elections. Those who can neither vote for nor be elected to Soviets, or hold any office of power, or of executive and administrative responsibility, are: Persons employing hired labour for profit, living on

unearned incomes, private traders and commercial agents, monks and clergy of all sects, officials and agents of the late police force, the secret police or the special corps of gendarmerie, members of the Russian Dynasty, lunatics, and persons sentenced by the courts.

The Soviets can impose taxation and make levies solely for local requirements, and the total amount must be expended on these local objects. Matters of national importance are provided for from national funds. One source of income is a tax of 5 per cent. on all retail sales. Yearly and half-yearly estimates and reports of Soviet income and expenditure have to be presented to and ratified by Soviet Congresses. The Soviets elect an Executive Committee of not more than 5 in the country, or 15 in towns—10 in Moscow and Petrograd. They can also organise parts of their work in departments and put competent persons in charge.

Above the Soviets are a series of Congresses of Soviets—Communal, meeting monthly; County and District, each meeting every three months; Regional, meeting twice yearly; and the All-Russia Congress, meeting twice yearly. Each of these Congresses can be summoned more frequently if desired, either by the local Executive Committee, or on the request of a certain proportion of the local Soviets. Each of these Congresses elects an Executive Committee to act between the meetings of the Congresses. The number of members in the Executive Committees is not to exceed for the All-Russia Executive Committee 200 members, the Regional 25 members, County 25, District 20, Communal 10. These Congresses are composed of delegates from the local Soviets and from the smaller Congresses in certain definite proportions to their number of electors.

The highest authority in the Republic is the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and between its meetings the Executive Committee appointed by it. This committee organises the Soviet of Peoples' Commissaries, which at present consists of 18 departments. These include departments for Labour, Social Welfare, Education, Agriculture, Commerce and Industries, Supply, State Control, Supreme Soviet of National Economy, Health, besides the usual ones for Army, Navy, Finance, Foreign Affairs, etc. Each Department has a special Departmental Committee to control its operations.

The Russian Soviet flag is declared to be bright red, in upper left hand corner, in golden letters, "Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic," or the initial letters, "R.S.F.S.R." (of course, in Russian).

The official seal adopted by the Soviet Congress for the Republic is a golden sickle and hammer with handles crossed, rays of the sun showing through, on a red background, the whole entwined with ears of corn, and bearing the inscription "Workers of the World Unite," together with the name of the "Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic."

The first part of the Constitution contains a Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People. The objects which it is declared the Soviet Republic aims at are extremely important, and include the following:—

(3) The Congress of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies considers it to be its fundamental duty to abolish all exploitation of one set of human beings by another, and the division of society into classes; to suppress summarily all exploiters; to establish a Socialist organisation of society, and the victory of Socialism in all countries. Decrees—

(a) In order to establish the Socialisation of land, private property in land is abolished, and all land is declared to be the common property of the people and is handed over to the workers without compensation to the previous private owners, on the basis of equal rights to the common use of the land.

(b) All forests, mines and waters belonging to the State, as well as live stock and fixtures, model estates and all agricultural undertakings are declared to be the property of the nation.

(c) As a first step towards the complete possession by the Soviet Republic of Workers and Peasants of all factories, works, mines, railways, and other means of production and transport, the Soviet law, concerning control by the workers and the Supreme Soviet of National Economy is ratified in order to ensure the power of the workers over the exploiters.

(d) As a first blow to the international capitalist banking and financial system, the third Congress of Soviets discusses the Soviet law concerning the repudiation of loans contracted by the Government of the Tsar, the landowners and the bourgeoisie, and confidently declares that the Soviet Power will firmly tread the path which will lead to the complete victory of the International Revolution against the yoke of Capitalism.

(e) The nationalisation of all banks is confirmed as one of the means for the emancipation of the toiling masses from the yoke of Capitalism.

(f) In order to abolish all parasitic sections of society and to organise social life, universal conscription is introduced.

(g) In order to secure full power to the workers, and prevent the possibility of a re-establishment of the power of the exploiters, it is decreed that all workers be armed, a Socialist Red Army of workers and peasants be organised, and the propertied classes be disarmed.

(4) Expressing its determination to free humanity from the grip of financial Capitalism and Imperialism, which have plunged nearly the whole world into the most criminal of wars, the third Congress of Soviets wholeheartedly endorses the Soviet Power's policy of the repudiation of Secret Treaties, the organisation on the widest scale of fraternisation with the workers and peasants of the armies which at present are fighting each other, and the realisation by revolutionary means of a democratic peace of the workers, without annexations and penal indemnities, on the basis of the free self-determination of all nations.

(5) For the same reason, the third Congress of Soviets insists on the complete repudiation of the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilisation, which has built up the well-being of the exploiters of a few privileged nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of toilers in Asia, in the Colonies, and in small countries.

(8) While endeavouring to create a truly free and voluntary, and consequently completely stable union of the working classes of all the nationalities in Russia, the third Congress of Soviets limits itself to the establishment of a basis for the federation of Soviet Republics of Russia, leaving it to the workers and peasants of each nationality to come to an independent decision at its Plenipotentiary Soviet Congress, as to its participation and the terms thereof in the Federal Government and in the other federal Soviet institutions.

(9) The principal task of the present transitory period of the constitution of the Russian Socialist Federal Republic consists in the establishment of the dictatorship of the town and country proletariat and the poorest peasantry in the form of a powerful All-Russia Soviet Government for the complete suppression of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of exploitation of one human being by another, and the establishment of Socialism, under which division into classes and Government power will not exist.

(10) The Russian Republic is a free Socialist community of all the workers of Russia.

(11) The Soviets in those regions which bear a special national character may form autonomous regional unions.

These autonomous regional unions enter on the federal basis into the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic.

(13) In order to ensure to the workers true freedom of conscience, the Church is disestablished in the State and in the school, and freedom of religious and anti-religious propaganda is granted to all citizens.

(14) In order to ensure to the workers true freedom of expression of opinions, the R.S.F.S.R. abolishes the press subsidised by Capitalism, and puts at the disposal of the working class and the poor peasantry all technical and material means for the publication of newspapers, books, pamphlets, and all other printed matter, and guarantees their free circulation throughout the country.

(15) In order to ensure to the workers true freedom of place of meeting, the R.S.F.S.R., recognising the right of the citizens of the Soviet Republic to organise assemblies, meetings, processions, etc., puts at the disposal of the working class and the poor peasantry all premises, inclusive of furniture, lighting and heating convenient for the convening of public meetings.

(16) In order to ensure to the workers freedom of association, the R.S.F.S.R., having broken the economic and political power of the propertied classes, and having thus removed all obstacles which, in a bourgeois society, prevented the workers and poorest peasants from enjoying freedom of association and action, is offering to the workers and peasants all manner of material and other co-operation, in order to organise and to unite them.

(17) In order to ensure to the workers access to knowledge, the R.S.F.S.R. considers it to be its duty to provide for the workers and peasants a liberal free education.

(18) The R.S.F.S.R. considers it the duty of every citizen of the Republic to work, and its watchword is: "Who does not work shall not eat."

(19) In order to safeguard the conquests of the great Workers' and Peasants' Revolution, the R.S.F.S.R. considers

it the duty of all citizens of the Republic to defend the Socialist Fatherland, and establishes a universal obligatory military service. The privilege of armed defence of the Revolution is reserved to the workers only, while the leisured sections of the community are entrusted with other military duties.

(20) In view of the solidarity of the workers of all nations, the R.S.F.S.R. grants equal political citizen rights to foreigners settled in Russia with the purpose of doing useful work and belonging to the working-class, or to the peasant class which does not employ paid labour, and further authorises the local Soviets to grant to such foreigners, without any annoying formalities, the rights of Russian citizenship.

(21) The R.S.F.S.R. confers the right of asylum on all foreigners persecuted for political and religious offences.

(22) The R.S.F.S.R., recognising equality of citizen rights, regardless of racial and national distinctions, declares the conferring of any privileges whatever on those grounds to be against the fundamental laws of the Republic, and likewise any persecution of national minorities or the limitation of their citizen rights.

(79) The financial policy of the R.S.F.S.R., in the present transitory period of the dictatorship of the workers, is in accordance with the fundamental policy of the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and of the inauguration of conditions favourable to complete equality of the citizens of the Republic in the domain of production and distribution of wealth. With these objects it undertakes to put at the disposal of the organs of the Soviet Power all necessary means for the satisfaction of all local and national requirements of the Soviet Republic, not shrinking before the necessity of interfering with the rights of private property.

Of these clauses (9) and (79) might be interpreted as implying Free Communism; clauses (3) (f) and (18) give their view on Industrial Conscription; (8), (11) and (22) Home Rule; (4) the war; (5) Colonies and India; (13), (14), (17) Church and Educational questions; (15), (16), Free Speech and Association; (20), (21) Aliens.

This fifth All-Russia Soviet Congress was attended by 1035 voting delegates, of whom 678 were Bolsheviks, and 269 Social Revolutionaries of the Left, a party in alliance with the Bolsheviks.

If one compares any of these points or this statement in general, which is only one of the many remarkable things we owe to the Russian Revolution, with the current discussions in political and official Labour circles here, one will realise how timid and blind and out-of-date all these "leaders" and party programmes are. It should also be remembered that this has been accepted and is being officially carried out by the Government of the largest European nation, a Government based on a far wider franchise, and one over which their electors can exert more direct and immediate control, than is the case with any other existing Government in the world; in fact, none of the capitalist Governments can in any way compare with the Russian Bolshevik Government in these respects. A Government that has had to carry on in face of a situation at home full of immense difficulties and with superhuman efforts being made by its opponents, with the active help of the whole capitalist world during the last eleven months, to overthrow it. That it has survived all this and seems likely to come out of the struggle victoriously, the pioneer of similar or better institutions throughout all other parts of the world, affords striking evidence, not only of the hold these ideas take of intelligent men and women when once they are fairly understood, but of how eminently practical and common sense they are, and how well adapted they are in their main lines to the stage of evolution at which the whole race had now arrived, not only in western industrial countries, but in eastern agricultural countries too.

Many comrades must be as delighted as I am to be alive at a period of time which sees these results gained. We now know that Capitalism, and Militarism, and Governmental Authority are doomed to what in the historical sense will be a relatively speedy disappearance, whatever ups and downs may lie before us in the immediate future.

An interesting sidelight was thrown on Bolshevik activities the other day, when it was announced that Gorki, who has been suppressed, and imprisoned, and massacred several times over according to capitalist papers, had joined the literary department of the Government, which was busily engaged in publishing huge cheap editions of Russian classics, which are being distributed throughout the country at practically cost price. F.C.C.

[Of course, it will be understood that, as Anarchists, we do not agree with any form of Government; but this article is interesting as showing how even a Marxian Government has been compelled by events to adopt many ideas previously put forward by Anarchists.—ED., FREEDOM.]

Freedom

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DEMOCRACY OR FREEDOM?

The "intellectuals" of the Allied Labour and Socialist parties have met in solemn conclave and passed, with the spice of their usual verbiage, the usual compromising, facing-both-ways type of resolutions.

After wading through the speeches and noting the result of their pious deliberations, we are struck by the absolute lack of proportion from which they are suffering. The detached view they take of the real economic position of the peoples of Europe as reflected in their "statesmanlike" resolutions, reminds us very forcibly of Nero, fiddling while Rome was burning, or the late Tsar of Russia, engaged with his Court favourites while the Russian nation was starving and slowly preparing to fling aside its fetters. Thus Kerensky's speech made strange reading, when he argued the necessity for Allied intervention, displaying, as he did, an absolute disregard of the wishes of the great mass of the Russian people, who somehow or other had to be saved in spite of themselves, in order that the Allies might present them with that delectable gift—democracy.

The whole attitude of the delegates to the conference discloses the wide breach existing between the rank and file of the workers and their "accredited" leaders. Parliament again exhibits the same features of modern political development. The natural evolution of representative government has led to this inevitable result. The chosen leaders, politicians and statesmen always in the end represent solely their own interests. Upon matters most vitally concerning the people's welfare they disclose a most astonishing ignorance, and legislate and act as though the mere mass of the people are incapable of thinking and acting for themselves. Being divorced from all the vital facts of life, they show a superb ignorance of all those human tendencies which really make for progress. Thus do we see their one great achievement during this war—the development of a glorified bureaucracy—confronting us at every turn. We are strangled by it—it fetters us, gags us, robs us, and then whips us on to produce more—earn more wealth in order to pay for its own preposterous extravagances. The impudence of it astonishes us, and its costliness appals; but still, with sublime patience, we go on bowing to its decrees, as to some idol of old, producing more in order that it might continue its hateful existence. Its canker is in our veins—the mind is poisoned and we do not think clearly. Perhaps that is why Kerensky and the crowd of Labour and Socialist leaders were able to obtain a hearing at all at the conference in question. They may have been really genuine in their expressed belief that they were the fit and proper persons to give democracy to the starving outraged European peoples. The one great vital force that has emerged from the whole welter of war—the Russian Revolution and the decentralisation of the Russian Government—they were pleased to ignore, or looked upon it as something perhaps a little more vicious than the regime it has superseded. Because they had had no hand in its making, because the revolution and the establishment of the Soviet Councils were the work of the mass of the people, then it becomes something that must be stamped out at all costs, and their own political creed forced upon the people willy-nilly.

The case for these fine apostles of democracy was almost too honestly expressed by J. H. Thomas, the railwaymen's boss, when he declared that the working-classes of this country "differentiate between democracy and autocracy. They believe that democracy is a form of Government in which free people are allowed not only to elect their rulers, but to make their rulers responsible men." Now, our friend Thomas very palpably held his tongue in his cheek when he gave utterance to such sheer nonsense. He, more than most men, knows what sort of freedom to the worker representative Government gives. He has

a long record of Trade Union Congress and Parliamentary Committee meetings behind him, and he knows the wangling, the chicanery, the wire-pulling which is the order of the day wherever brother politician meets brother. No person can remain honest once he takes the fatal step, accepts office of any kind, and henceforth becomes part of the Governmental machine.

But we are grateful to Mr. Thomas for his nice definition of the worker's aspirations. In his statement that we, as free people, are "allowed" to elect our rulers, he gives his whole case away. Free people neither *allow* nor yet elect "rulers." Having taken their freedom as a matter of course, they do not compromise that freedom by immediately electing rulers over them. That is the difference between democracy and freedom. By the practise of self-discipline and self-government, we can obviate any so-called need for external rulers or governors. But Mr. Thomas's reasoning, or lack of reasoning, is typical of the type of the political Moses that during the war has been so busy acting as policeman for the Government, and forcing the workers to remain quietly in their slave compound.

Such people, on their own showing, have no time in which to understand the wants of the people, nor yet grasp the meaning of that much-abused word "freedom." They remain either efficient sheep-dogs at a certain price, or else aspire to become the political saviours of the people they help to keep in bondage. These are international traits, well indicated in all the members of the political fraternity at the farcical Inter-Allied Conference. They dutifully echoed the patriotic clap-trap of the Government and were thus allowed to assemble. They exhibited neither vision nor forethought, nor yet understanding of the needs of the people they were supposed to represent. But, luckily for humanity, it will be saved, in spite of Governments and Labour politicians. Governments may continue to betray their subjects and the Labour official continue to betray his class, but the great mass of the people are, though often blindly and unconsciously, moving on towards the day of reckoning when the canker of government and bureaucracy shall disappear. M.B.H.

IN DEMOCRATIC AMERICA.

The case of Tom Mooney, whose death sentence has caused much agitation in countries outside of America, is still being debated in the Courts. His execution was originally fixed for August 23, but has been postponed till December 13. Since his trial the principal witnesses have been proved guilty of wholesale and deliberate perjury, but in spite of that the Courts have refused a new trial on the ground that the laws of California do not allow the judges to go outside the records of the trial. So if the lying can be concealed until after the trial a man must be hung, although subsequently proved innocent. But the agitation in Labour circles is so intense that the lawyers will have to find a way out. Mooney's defence committee have published broadcast the facts of the case and exposed the unscrupulous bribery of the Merchant and Manufacturers' Association, which has found the Courts and judges willing tools in the fight against the Trade Unions.

The trial of over a hundred I.W.W. members ended with sentences ranging from 20 years' imprisonment downwards. They were charged with conspiring to hinder the prosecution of the war, but although many of them were anti-war, their crime really was inciting men to strike to remedy grievances. Urged on by the capitalist press, which made out that every I.W.W. member was a German agent, the Government had no difficulty in getting the men convicted and put away for the duration of the war, under the Espionage Act, which is the American equivalent for "Dora."

Under the same Act Eugene Debs, several times Socialist candidate for the Presidency, has been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment on a charge of hindering the prosecution of the war. This is a charge that can be made to cover almost any utterance that is not in favour of the war. If you say you doubt England's love for democracy because she refuses self-government to Ireland and India, you are liable to at least 10 years' hard labour.

In Los Angeles three men were fined \$1,200 each and imprisoned for six months for holding a meeting, in which it was stated that Christ would not have used a bayonet. The judge in passing the sentence said: "Duty to country is a duty to God. For country exists by natural divine right. Its authority to command is divine." We thought divine right fell to the ground with King Charles's head, but we are learning a lot during the war. When Americans can believe this stuff we are not surprised to hear that some of their soldiers believe that the Bolsheviks are Germans, and that Americans are a free people.

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WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

If ever there was any need for the toilers of all lands to unite in one common effort it is now. For a new foe has arisen; a foe greater than any against whom you have so bravely contended these last four years; an enemy more dangerous and terrible even than Germany. Aye, than Germany. Pray do not stare so. I am fully conscious, I assure you, of the seriousness of the menace with which you are threatened by the Kaiser and his criminal accomplices. Am well aware of the great issues at stake, of the high aims and ideals which the Allied statesmen have set themselves to attain, but which, out of modesty (as becomes true champions of Right and Justice), they intended to keep secret. Yes, I know all that, and know with what perverse fury our enemies, in the depth of their wickedness, are opposed to the realisation of those aims which, now that they are disclosed to the whole world, should thrill with enthusiasm every lover of freedom and humanity.

Yet, what the Russians intend to do, nay, are doing, is a thousand times worse. Those benighted peasants and ignorant workmen have dared to lay their rough and unhallowed hands upon the most sacred institutions of the land. Tsarism, that benevolent system of government so long honoured and respected by the rulers of all nations, they have swept away at a single blow. Princes and Grand Dukes they have treated as if they were ordinary common members of the community. The gallows—the symbol of civilisation, the highest product of an age-long moral evolution—they have most wantonly done away with. And they have deliberately opened the doors of the prisons to the most dangerous elements, to poets, professors, teachers, scholars—to all those that have proved themselves, by their suffering and self-sacrifice, to be the greatest enemies of the people.

But that is not all. Deplorable as these things are, they are the natural products of revolution, excesses common to all social upheavals. We, too, had our revolutions. We executed kings and banished princes. We changed rulers, effected reforms, substituted one system of government for another. Some countries, like France, went even further. They abolished the monarchy, established a Republic, made changes in the laws of the land. But more than that they did not do. Neither they nor we ever dared to interfere with the fundamental basis of society.

It is this which constitutes the great crime of the Russian people. They touched the basis. They seek to destroy that beautiful structure, that ideal system which, with its division into two main classes, each engaged in its multifarious activities (the one of production, the other of consumption), represents what the warring nations have repeatedly declared they are determined to save, namely, Civilisation.

Was humanity ever faced with a greater crisis, a more frightful calamity? Just think what that means. It means, to put it briefly, the doing away with everything that renders our existence beautiful and interesting. For there is no interest or beauty without variety, and in Russia they strive to establish a state of absolute equality; equal freedom, equal opportunity, equal chance for all to live, to work, to enjoy, to develop. It is easy to imagine what the world would look like, if established on those lines. Why, the mere thought of that is enough to make one's blood boil!

And can you, workers of Western Europe and America, you who have had the good fortune to taste to the full the joys and delights of our present system, this our modern civilisation, can you look on indifferently while those crude Russians are playing havoc with it, are fast demolishing its very basis and foundation? Can you remain unmoved at such criminal proceedings? Let no one say that it is no concern of his to meddle in the affairs of another nation. It is your concern. Although the Russians are committing all these felonies in their own country, yet their baneful influence cannot but be felt in other lands too, and sooner or later must affect your own thoughts, your ideas, your actions, your whole outlook upon life and society.

And herein lies the generosity, the unselfishness, the disinterestedness of your masters who, seeing the danger you are in (for they know the highly contagious character of such happenings as are now taking place in Russia), are ready to do all—to sacrifice your lives, your homes, the welfare and happiness of your families—everything, in order to save you.

We hope, therefore, that, being class-conscious workers (of which you have given undoubted proof by your courageous refusal to render the Russian rebels any assistance), you will readily respond to your masters' call, and rally in your thousands to combat the common danger. And to those who hesitate and

lag behind, we say: In the name of private property, in the name of economic slavery, in the name of the chains you cherish, of the exploitation so dear to you—in the name of all those things that make your life so pleasant and enjoyable, do not tarry, but go forth and join in the holy crusade against the Russian people; put forth your full strength and power; let there be no bounds to your hatred and indignation; strike hard; strike with might and main; and do not cease till those wretched criminals receive their due punishment; till they are laid low, bent to the ground, crushed, oppressed, subdued, and the yoke they dared to shake off is fastened again upon their necks—and the world made safe for democracy. S.

PERPETUAL IMPRISONMENT FOR C.O.'S.

Guy A. Aldred (editor of the *Spur*), Fred H. Sellars, and R. E. Morris were court-martialled at Farnborough early in September for refusing to obey military orders, and each of them was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. The fact that this is Aldred's fourth term of imprisonment, and that he has already been in prison two years and four months should be sufficient proof of a conscientious objection to military service. Fred Sellars has been in prison since August, 1916, when he was arrested during a raid on FREEDOM office. He had served a term of imprisonment in New Zealand prior to the war for refusing to obey military orders. R. E. Morris has also served over two years already. These two men, therefore, have also proved the genuineness of their objection to military service, and under the Act as passed by Parliament all three are entitled to be released. But the tribunals and the Home Secretaries have persistently refused to release others, and unless the agitation for the release of C.O.s becomes more virile it is almost hopeless to expect any change. The Glasgow Anarchist Group are circularising the Press and Labour organisations about the case of Guy Aldred who, they state, is in a condition of mental relapse, due to his continued imprisonment.

No Government—whether Monarchist, Republican, or Socialist—will willingly admit the right of individuals to refuse military service. At bottom all Governments rest on force—brutal naked force; and if a Government allowed individuals to refuse military service it would mean its downfall sooner or later. The new Russian Republic refuses to let certain classes bear arms, but compels the workers to do so as a "privilege." Whether compelled as a duty or as a privilege, it comes to the same thing in the end. The Labour Party and the I.L.P. have condemned the brutal treatment of C.O.s by the civil and military authorities. But we would like to ask them a plain question: If and when they form a Government in this country, will they allow Anarchists or other individuals to refuse all military service, and to refuse to be taxed to support the Army, Navy, and police?

TO OUR READERS.

Voluntary co-operation is the basis of Anarchism, and voluntary co-operation is the basis of an Anarchist journal. Some co-operate by writing for the paper, some by helping in the publishing and dispatching, and some by distributing the paper. These latter are mostly on the spot. But many who live outside of London and cannot write or sell the paper can help us considerably by their financial support. Printers have to be paid, postage has to be paid, rent (unfortunately) has to be paid, besides many other items which are connected with the publication of a paper. This is where you, gentle reader, can help. At the present moment we are in a tight corner, and we feel sure you would be pleased to get us out of it. We do not ask you to "feed us with War Bonds," but you can send us money orders, postal orders, Bradburys, stamps, or anything in that line. We are doing our utmost to point the way to a new form of society where the atrocities of the present one will be looked back upon as a hideous nightmare. If you appreciate our work, you will send us as much cash as you can spare now, and continue to do so at regular intervals, so as to save us from the worry and anxiety which an empty purse brings.

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BINDING THE BABIES' HEADS.

Underlying the belief in compulsory or State education is the delusion that into each child must be poured the same quantity and quality of knowledge. True, the children of the rich are not given precisely the same education as the children of the poor. But the delusion is there, even though the standards may differ. Two educational machines are at work—driven, I amuse myself by thinking, from the same gas-engine—but the product of the one machine conforms to type, as does the other. Alec Waugh, whose novel, "The Loom of Youth," is a scathing exposure of modern public school life, makes his hero to say: "Masters try to make you imitate, and not think for yourself. Mould your Latin verses on Virgil, your Greek prose on Thucydides, your English on Matthew Arnold, but don't think for yourself. Don't be original." On the other hand, all public elementary schools are governed by the "Code." Teachers, it is true, may sometimes defy the code, but they may not do so with impunity; it is the business of the school inspector to see that it is rigorously abided by.

And there are those—it is fashionable to style them "educational reformers"—who would have one machine instead of two. They want a "highway" from the elementary school to the university, which highway will in the end turn out to be a very narrow pathway after all, and which "few will walk therein." (It really seems as if our quondam friend Centralisation was adopting a fresh disguise.) Is it seriously proposed to open the universities—as once they were open—to all comers? Not a bit of it! Certain children are to be selected—not at all on account of their originality of mind or their powers of perception, but because their brains are more sponge-like—to enjoy the advantages of a "higher education." Why, the thing is merely a sop thrown to Demos. Thrown by those whose manifest interest it is that the present unwholesome condition of things shall continue!

And behind it all is the tyrant compulsion. Why, if education, i.e., instruction, be a good thing, is it necessary to compel it? If my child does not want to learn how to read and write—both artificial acquirements—why should it be compelled to do so? As I ask the question, there rises to my mind in answer: the "Markets of the World."

(In parenthesis, be it remarked that the writer has one test by which he judges any proposal that may be made: Is its application to be voluntary, or is it to be enforced? It is a test that has not failed him yet.)

Our comrade and ally, Francisco Ferrer, founded his "Modern School" in that least free of all countries, Spain. The children who gathered to his school were taught to distinguish between knowledge and superstition; a weapon was put into their hands with which they might batter down the obsolete and tyrannous dogmas of the Roman Church; they were taught to honour their own bodies and to survey the wonders of the universe with intelligent eyes and minds. Of his intentions he himself said: "I am not a speaker, not a propagandist, not a fighter. I am a teacher: I love children above everything. I think I understand them. I want my contribution to the cause of liberty to be a young generation ready to meet a new era."

Many years ago, in Russia, Tolstoy opened a school. The children assembled at an early hour in the morning and remained until the evening. He describes the noise and confusion that prevailed until the teacher began to read to the scholars. Then there came silence and the most earnest and intense attention. The children listened with open eyes and rapt faces to the story. Yet all the time they were free to do what they wanted to do. In practice, Tolstoy's theory of education worked perfectly.

The modern teacher complains of the restrictions and disabilities imposed upon him by the "Code." If his class does not reach a uniform level he is cashiered and often enough removed from his position. Headmasters and teachers alike are in the grip of something which strangulates their best efforts. Eventually their profession becomes to them not the art of teaching, but an affair of bread and butter. Who will dare throw a stone at them?

Some few of us are greatly concerned about the entrance of militarism into the "State" Schools. A school mistress at Sheffield discovered a new game, which she proceeded to teach to the infants under her charge; she called it "Killing Germans." The pacifist parents of a boy were greatly distressed because their son—a lad of fifteen—was induced to join a training corps attached to the school he was attending. And in another instance it has been only the earnest entreaties of his mother that kept her son out of the Boy Scout movement, into which he was being literally compelled by his schoolfellows and teachers. Yet the teaching of militarism in the schools is an inevitable thing, despite all Mr. Fisher's amendments and promises. There are few boys

(in comparison) heroic enough to stand out against it. We can hardly expect our children to be more courageous than we are. And there is always the argument that because my boy is willing to learn soldiering, your boy must be compelled to be willing.

I would quote our friend Ferrer again: "We can destroy," he says, "all which in the present school answers to the organisation of constraint, the artificial surroundings by which children are separated from nature and life, the intellectual and moral discipline made use of to impose ready-made ideas upon them, beliefs which deprave and annihilate natural bent. Without fear of deceiving ourselves, we can restore the child to the environment of nature in which he will be in contact with all that he loves, and in which impressions of life will replace fastidious booklearning. If we did no more than that, we should already have prepared in great part the deliverance of the child."

These words, spoken by a man who practised what he preached, are a veritable inspiration to us. "We can destroy!" "How?" asks the impatient reader. By first destroying in ourselves the idols we have served so long, and afterwards by attacking them in the world which lies outside us. We ought not to be primarily concerned with schemes and plans; the work we are called to is the work of destruction. Get in with your thinking and your speaking and your writing at the idea of compulsion. Nothing can be good for anyone that he or she is compelled to do. Even though the "Markets of the World" should totter on their foundations; though "Commercial Supremacy" should fall in ruined fragments round our heads; though "Empire" should become a shame and a reproach to us, we must keep on. If those things—and really they are only the semblances of things—will not stand the touch of Liberty, then for us they are only deceit and lies, and all falseness.

I have read somewhere of a race of savages who bind the heads of their babies. It would appear that our educational authorities are their lineal descendants. And when we see clearly for what purpose all this is intended—that the commodities produced by the labours of the many may be controlled and enjoyed by the few—we shall wield our weapons with no tardy hand.

"Lay spears about the running ox!"

The days of old are o'er." JOHN WAKEMAN.

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