

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Labour Movement in Russia.

The Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress have decided, by a majority of seven votes to five, that "in view of the satisfactory assurances given by Mr. Bonar Law," they are not justified in calling a Labour Conference to consider future action with regard to their demands for the withdrawal of troops from Russia and the abolition of conscription. In view of this decision, there is only one thing for the revolutionary rank and file to do—namely, to call a Conference themselves for immediate action. Since Great Britain entered the war the Parliamentary Committee have supported the Government through thick and thin, in return for "satisfactory assurances"—which have usually meant well-paid jobs. The Allies are now going to "recognise" that reactionary General Koltchak, who will himself give "satisfactory assurances" in return for men and munitions. The whole procedure is such a palpable trick that no one is deceived by it. The fact is that the capitalists of Europe and America are determined to smash the Russian, German and Hungarian Revolutions as ruthlessly as France suppressed the Commune, and nothing will stop them but Revolution in their own countries. If Labour is really in earnest, immediate action is absolutely imperative.

The "Peace" Terms.

"If Germany wins she will skin us alive. If we win we will skin Germany alive." This prophecy by Bernard Shaw has been fulfilled in the Allies' terms to Germany. Wilson's "fourteen points" having served their purpose as the bait for an armistice are now forgotten, and in their place the "Big Four" have put forward a series of demands which, if literally carried out, would mean starvation for millions of Germans and age-long slavery for the rest. The terms are so outrageous that the Allies dared not print some of them in the official summary issued to their own people, but now the details are leaking out a wave of sympathy for the German people is rising rapidly, and many of the demands will be drastically modified before they are finally settled. The "Big Four" have overreached themselves in their greed, and in their secret deliberations have simply been concerned in satisfying the demands of the hungry capitalists and concession hunters, who flocked to Paris like vultures to feast on the carcase of the German Empire. And now Bonar Law tells the House of Commons that the full terms of the Treaty will not be published until the Germans have signed them. Remember, this war was fought "to make the world safe for democracy." What is democracy?

The Baby Killers.

One of the demands hidden from their peoples by Allied statesmen was that Germany should hand over 140,000 milch cows. This demand is made in spite of the fact that the blockade has reduced hundreds of thousands of German children to mere skeletons owing to the lack of milk and fats. A correspondent of the *Daily Express*, Mr. J. H. Greenwell, says in its issue for May 5: "Thirty per cent. of the German women die in confinement. Thirty per cent. of the children born to married women die, and fifty per cent. of those born to unmarried mothers. I have encountered dozens of children two years of age who have never tasted milk." Although these things are known to the Paris Conference, they demand these 140,000 milch cows! And to prevent this brutality becoming known, the Government prosecute printers and members of the "Fight the Famine" Council for daring to print and publish posters and leaflets showing up these atrocities. It is recognised by very few that at the present time the Allies control the food supplies of about two-thirds of the world, and can starve whole nations to death by preventing food reaching them from outside. And by their control of the Press and the cables they could prevent the rest of the world knowing that they were doing it. That is the League of Nations for which so many simple Socialists and pacifists have been working!

Landlords and Royalties.

The Coal Commission has been doing good work in exposing the flimsy titles by which many landlords hold their lands. Of course, the facts brought before the public were known to all students of the land question, but millions of people now know that, instead of having been bought by their possessors, the great landed estates were in many cases gifts from kings in days gone by for helping them to suppress rebellious subjects, or even in some cases for taking over from gay monarchs the mistresses of whom they had grown tired. But there is a danger that the Coal Commission may lead people to think that private property in land is only harmful because landlords get money out of coal-mining without putting a hand to pick or shovel. As a matter of solid fact, the whole system of exploitation and wage-slavery is based on private ownership of land. If men gain free use of the land from which they can get a living, Capitalism comes to the ground with a crash, for men cannot then be forced to accept wages, which are only a part of what they produce. Men and women have to work for employers because the land has been stolen from them, and, as Henry George pointed out so conclusively in "Progress and Poverty," the man who owns the land owns and controls the lives of all those who have to live on it. Therefore, the first work in a Revolution is to seize the land and burn all title deeds, leases, and other bits of paper which nowadays permit certain persons to levy blackmail on the community and enslave it. The "Land Song" says: "God gave the land to the people." That may or may not be so, but the lord hath taken it away, and until it is retaken by the people they cannot be free.

Those Secret Circulars.

The *Herald* has caused somewhat of a sensation by publishing the secret circulars sent by the War Office to commanding officers, asking them to find out whether the men under their command would act as strike-breakers or go to Russia. But it is only what might be expected. The Government expected—and still expect—trouble, and they wanted to know what regiments they could rely on to act at the word of command. The Army is not kept up to protect the people, but to safeguard the property and privileges of the ruling and wealthy classes. It is called "His Majesty's Army," and officers hold their commissions from the King. Besides, most of the officers belong to the exploiting class, and what more natural than that they should use the soldiers when their interests are in danger. When the publication of this circular causes so much excitement one realises how little the workers understand the situation. This underground work is going on every day, and is part of the ordinary routine of government, which as the executive of the exploiting class is always carrying on war against the workers. The workers are the only ones who do not know it, and get quite angry sometimes with those who tell them the truth.

Labour in Ireland.

Irishmen are building up a Labour movement which may soon be able to challenge the Sinn Féin movement, which is purely national in its aims, and up to the present has done nothing to help the Irish worker to fight his Irish exploiter. The *Voice of Labour* (published weekly at Liberty Hall, Dublin) is the mouth-piece of the Labour movement, and should be read by all who would keep in touch with Irish affairs. In spite of the Censor, who is more in evidence in Ireland than here, the writers hit very hard at the British garrison and Dublin Castle, but they are also boldly preaching that the goal of Labour is economic rather than political. The strikes at Belfast and Limerick were signs of growing strength, and the May Day strike was an object lesson in its solidarity to the English Labour movement. The Irish workers have learned a lot since the Easter Rebellion of 1916, but there is plenty of room for Communist propaganda amongst them. The Nationalism on which they have been nurtured for many years narrowed their vision, but the *Voice of Labour's* articles on the Revolution on the Continent should broaden their outlook, and should a revolution break out in England we feel sure that Irish workers would soon join us. Every Irishman, we are told, is "agin' the Government," and is therefore a budding Anarchist, though he might indignantly deny it.

PUBLIC SERVICES WITHOUT GOVERNMENT.

The aftermath of the war is still everywhere visible throughout Europe, and despite all the efforts of the international financiers, revolution is spreading. In every country the workers are answering the insistent call of Bolshevism, but in this country we see the interesting spectacle of the workers divided among themselves, dogmatising upon this or that detail of theory and indifferent to the pulsing, fateful time in which we are living. Leadership everywhere stands triumphant and the workers, dumb-driven cattle, do not heed that they stand already at the cross roads.

A writer in the May number of the *Plebs Magazine* declares that "our movement has become a Babel of contending voices and a maze of conflicting roads and paths," and in his analysis of the various Socialist sects tries to show how incapable they all are of pointing the real road to the workers' paradise. The Anarchist Communist, he declares, "would destroy every form of government, even the Socialist kind, but he has not told us how he would run the railways or manage the mercantile marine."

We have no intention in the short space of this article to attempt to show how the important social services will be worked when Anarchist Communism is an accomplished fact, but it is of importance to realise that mere formulas will not in the first place create the revolution, neither will they materially assist when the revolution is an accomplished fact. The great point to remember is that when the economic and social conditions are ripe the revolution will break out, and that the circumstances of the moment will very largely determine how the details of organisation will shape themselves. Socialists have made the very common mistake of placing insistence on centralised authority, whereas recent facts connected with the Russian Revolution have gone to prove that the centralised authority as embodied in Government is quite unnecessary for the purpose of running the railways, post office, mercantile marine, etc.

The point that has to be borne in mind is that these services came into existence in order to satisfy certain human needs; that they have been slowly perfected over a period of years and are now run more or less automatically; and that even if government and every form of centralised authority disappeared they would continue to provide efficient public services. The organisation of the international railway system, the Postal Union, and other matters of an international, as well as large concerns of a national character, have been organised without any direct control from the existing governments. A correspondent writing from Petrograd to one of the capitalist newspapers in London at the beginning of the Bolshevik régime in Russia, expressed his surprise that the ordinary government had nominally ceased to exist, yet public services were being maintained and the ordinary life of the people was normal.

So many well-disposed persons manage to confuse government with organisation; they fail to realise that societies existed long before governments had evolved. They do not see that government performs no single service that the individual or a group of individuals could not perform more efficiently for themselves. They have not followed the history and evolution of societies nor yet of capital, and they overlook entirely the fact that government merely organises society in the interests of one group of exploiters. Therefore let us disabuse our minds of the myth that the absence of government will mean chaos. On the other hand, it may easily mean more perfected and efficient organisation of the public services than those maintained to-day. Present-day society is composed of slaves exploited by an oligarchy of financiers. Services rendered by those slaves at the bidding of their bosses are more or less mechanical. The modern worker is the man *under* the machine, for the machine controls him. "His not to reason why," etc. The Russian Revolution has shown us what intelligent co-operation can achieve. If the various groups of workers in Russia now wish to try some new method they are allowed to try the experiment, and by such experience understand the meaning of and reason for each cog in the public services.

Do not let us worry our limited brain capacity by arguing about running the railways or the mercantile marine under Anarchist Communism. The first essential is to combine for the specific purpose of smashing the capitalist machine with all its hateful institutions. The rest must be left to the circumstances created by a successful revolution and the initiative of the workers, who, despite the capitalist system of repression and standardisation, have not altogether lost the impulse towards self-expression and capacity for real constructive organisation. Such organisation must be the result of mass action by conscious, thinking units, and will only be achieved by the united will of the proletariat. So the curse of leadership and rulers must first be removed before the full, free expansion of the individual mind becomes

possible. Labour leadership especially with its defence of its own vested interests, must be overthrown, the proletariat must learn to trust in its own power of achievement, and then the "seventy jarring sects" will disappear and the workers themselves, instead of theorising, will show in a practical manner how the public services can be run under Anarchist Communism.

M.B.H.

AUTHORITY IS ROBBERY.

It is the purpose of Anarchism to gather together a company of men and women who will resist—not necessarily with violence—authority and the power of Government. These things, it is true, are mere myths; they exist only in as far as they are accepted and believed in by the commonality of folk. They will cease to exist at the precise moment the common belief in their existence is extinguished.

The vast organisation which exists for the assertion of authority has at its head those whose profession it is—clerics, parsons, missionaries, etc.—to interpret to their fellows what they imagine to be the laws of God. At its tail is the public hangman. In between come judges, magistrates, lawyers and "clerks of the peace"; soldiers, captains, generals, constables, warders, police; agents, spies and tax-gatherers; detectives, commissioners, militia, naval seamen and marines; mayors, aldermen and councillors; statesmen, cabinet ministers and professional politicians. All these are parts of a monstrous machine which exists—so we are taught—for the detection and punishment of offenders against the laws, and for the prevention of crime.

But crime is not prevented, nor are offenders really brought to punishment. The innocent man or woman of whom the machine gets a hold suffers much more horribly than one who is actually guilty. There are in English prisons at the present time some 8,000 prisoners. Had each of them stolen a hundred pounds worth of value, the total amount involved (£800,000) would not represent one-fiftieth part of the sum abstracted from the productive workers of the country for the maintenance of the machine of authority.

The *power of government*—sometimes called "the State"—comes entirely out of the existence of such a machine. Destroy the machine—this as individuals you can do most effectually by refusing to become parts of it—and the power of government will exist no longer.

The interference of authority, with its schemes of social reform and of government, with its laws and taxes, between the workers and the products their industry and skill and expended energy have created, is an immoral interference. Justice demands, surely, that a man shall be the owner of the thing he makes; but authority and government, under various specious pretexts—social reform, national defence, law, order and so on—purloin more than one-half of the value of whatever may have been produced. Protest is met with imprisonment and death. For it must be always remembered, *the primary business of government is to maintain its own existence.*

The right of any individual to own more land than he can cultivate is disputed by Anarchism. The idea of rent is entirely absurd and illogical. Rent is paid by the common people of the country simply because they are compelled to its payment by the machine of authority which landlords have at their disposal. During the war, when the country was faced with starvation, not a rood of land could be brought under cultivation until agreements for the payment of rent had been entered into with its (supposed) owners. "Before you may be permitted to live," said they, "you must guarantee to us a proportion of the results of your industry and knowledge!" It says much for the stupidity of English people that they consented to such a preposterous demand. At a time when every ounce of food was required to maintain the workers and fighters of the country these idlers demanded the first and most generous helping. In no community based upon reason would such demands be tolerated at any time. *Anarchism stands for the total abolition of landlordism!*

On its constructive side *Anarchism advocates Liberty*. The Liberty of a man—or woman—to resist intrusion into his personal concerns; the Liberty to own the product of his labours in peace and to dispose of it as he will; the Liberty to do his own business in his own way. In short, *Anarchism stands for self-ownership*: the man shall own himself and the woman herself.

What new social arrangements will spring into being through the influence of Anarchist thought and teaching no one can tell. We exist, not to sketch Utopias and heavenly cities, but to *assert the immanence of the great principle of Liberty*. By its touch we may all be healed.

JOHN WAKEMAN.

COMMUNIST LEAGUE.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

DEAR COMRADE,—Having read of the formation of "The Communist League" and that a paper was to be published on its principles, I, together with many others, awaited the first issue with much eagerness, but having read the *Communist* I must confess that I am very much disappointed. My experience of the Socialist and Anarchist movement has taught me that progress is only brought about by criticism and comparison of principles and I should very much like to criticise in detail the platform of the Communist League contained in the first issue of its official organ, but space forbids. Therefore I can only sum up my general conclusions.

Honesty of purpose is a necessary condition of sincerity of action. The individual who unites these in the revolutionary field attempts to throw off all the petty prejudices and jealousies which are engendered by our vicious and unwholesome environment. Capitalism teaches one to aspire to become a somebody, to be important, to rise above other people. Because we live so much at home with our own thoughts, actions, ideas and personality and because we are so divorced from these in other people we are apt to overrate our own cleverness. In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, we often become so obsessed by our own individuality as to think our particular ideas are the only sensible ones and that the ideas of other individuals are purile or foolish. Thus arises intolerance and bigotry, and that most impudent of all egotisms, the assumption that certain individuals know what is better for other individuals than they can possibly know themselves. Anarchists deny this egotistical assumption. Many others who are not Anarchists deny it in principle but not in practice.

The official manifesto of the Communist League is a mass of contradictions. While it states it would destroy all classes, it advocates the control of industry by "the Pyramid of Tyranny" of local councils linked up with a Central Administrative Council. How much benefit are we going to get by destroying one class and erecting another? This administrative body would formulate demands. Naturally; they all do. That is why the Anarchist objects. An administrative body without power would be a laughable farce. All industry is to be controlled by and on behalf of the *whole* people by the votes of the adult members. How the adult members come to be the whole of the people passes comprehension.

In the Communist society majority rule, that "hobgoblin of small minds," is to be retained; the minority must be sat on. While centralisation is condemned nothing but centralisation is preached. While Comrade Rose scathingly condemns other Socialist bodies for leading the workers to the "Servile State," the manifesto upholds what he condemns. Even Comrade Motler cannot guarantee that exactly the same conversation which he depicts would not take place under the Communism that is here preached.

The elected workshop committee will dictate the conditions of labour. And the Central Administrative Council will dictate also. Cloak and disguise it by sophisms as they may, the Communism here advanced is nothing but bureaucracy and the Servile State. There is but one hope for the workers, and that is Anarchist Communism. The Communist League is nothing but an old party with a new name. The alteration of name cannot revolutionise the party. Oh, suffering humanity, when shall we be free from these egotistical world-saviours, who, under the guise of doing good for other people would like to impose their petty ideas and personalities upon other people. Is there no hope for humanity beyond the pettifogging schemes of social manipulation that are constantly being fostered upon us as the petted, spoilt and cherished darlings of their very brainy fathers? When, oh when shall we be free? You may have any mortal thing on earth done for you so long as you will have something done. But when you wearily express a desire to be free—good God, how impossible!

As an Anarchist, I want no administrators, legislators, or governors. I want neither foolish or sensible schemes slung round my neck. I only want those schemes that I choose by mutual agreement with my fellow-man and I must be free to withdraw from them when I wish. I want the words "obey" and "command" to be for ever expunged from human conduct. I wish to command no one and I wish no one to command me. This idiotic distrust of the other man and this apotheosis of self, under the mistaken impression that it is possible for one person to know what is best for another, is the root of most trouble, which is, of course, only dangerous when backed by force. To some people the overthrow of the capitalist system is the only end in view. Personally, I am not concerned about the capitalist system because it is a capitalist system, but because, being oppres-

sive, it is the negation of my freedom. And if Communism should oppress me as does capitalism, then I am going to cry out, "To hell with Communism!" or any other "ism" that affects me similarly. I don't object to being taught; I hate being compelled. Mankind has become enslaved by submitting to force. Let us, therefore, determine to obey no one unless we so choose. Let political theorists with a taste for bullying and commanding go in for dog farming, where they may possibly be obeyed; but we Anarchists who believe in real Freedom must refuse to act as the dogs either for our own or any other class.

WILLIAM F. HOPKINS,
Stockport Workers' Anarchist Group.

[We are open to print letters dealing with this subject, but they must be brief and to the point.—ED. FREEDOM.]

"I KNOW THE SLAVE."

I know the slave-driver, and I know the slave; and I mean to say that the slave-driver, selfish as he is, is a gentleman in comparison with the slave.

There is nothing in all the world so ignoble as the slave.

He is in his true position as a slave so long as he bears his servitude.

He is fit for nothing else.

Why should I care that his back is bent under the burdens of another?

Why should I be distressed at his wrongs? His wrongs are his just due so long as he bears them in tame and cowardly submission. What would be the wrongs of a free man are for him his just deserts.

I have coddled the slave, and have called him a man, when I knew there was no manhood in him. I will do so no longer.

On the contrary, hereafter I mean to assert everywhere, and on all proper occasions, that he who wears a fetter needs it, and he who bears a kick deserves it.

I wash my hands of the spirits that are so mean and slavish as to take part in the injustice that is crushing them down.

Moreover, I say that the bent back of the toiler, the horny hands, the coarse and distorted features, and the general ugliness that marks him, are a confession of his own sins in abetting the sins of his master.

I desire to speak face to face with you, the slaves of the nineteenth century; to tell you how I have seen every effort made by philanthropists for your benefit fall fruitless to the ground, because your own base influence was against it.

I have seen more and worse than this—that you have no respect for any man but the one that kicks you, and no regard for any power but that which tramples you down.

You are the obstacle—the only obstacle—in the way of race emancipation.—HELEN WILLIAMS (in *Irish World*).

"NO STRIKES," SAYS PLUMER.

The proclamations of General Plumer at Cologne in reference to threatened strikes in the British occupied zone should be carefully noted: "In accordance with the law all disputes and differences are to be brought for settlement before the existing German Courts of Arbitration. In the event of a settlement not being reached by these means, the case will be brought before the British military authorities, who, after hearing both sides with sympathy and impartiality, will make a decision which will be binding for both parties. I warn all that severe measures will be taken against any person who, in defiance of this proclamation acts in any way contrary to these orders or subversive of their intention."

If the military are allowed to break strikes in Germany, they will consider they have a right to break strikes also in this country. The military do not worry about the language spoken by strikers.

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PEACE!

The terms imposed on Germany can have astonished those only who do not understand the world in which they live. Such persons, shutting their eyes to facts, imagine fondly that society's normal condition is one of peace. It is nothing of the kind. "Get out, that I may have your place!" shouts the land-grabber. "Go under, that I may get your business!" shouts the profitmonger. "Hands off my job!" yells the wage-worker. These are the cries to which modern activity responds, and they are battle-cries.

Those who suffer themselves to be beguiled by President Wilson's eloquence have not reflected that back of him is a plutocracy to which "Business is Business." Those who yield to Mr. Lloyd George's rhetoric apparently forget that back of him is a landed and moneyed aristocracy, which, as the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain boasted openly, has succeeded in putting its fences round most of the desirable territory this planet offers for our race's use.

Meanwhile, a new battler, Labour, is struggling to his knees; blindly, because for centuries untold his eyes were bandaged; disturbingly, because his bulk is huge. The upheaval of so vast a body does not lead to peace, but war, because those whom its emergence is upsetting strive desperately to keep it down. Hence, troops and policemen; strikes and machine guns; bayonets in Ireland, bayonets in Egypt, India, and all our dependencies; bayonets, above all, in Russia, and wherever Russian revolutionary influences assert themselves.

The master class of this island controls its natural resources, and the industries those resources render possible, by force. Its monopoly is maintained by force, and defended ruthlessly by force. Let a starving outcast poach on the squire's preserves or help himself to a turnip from some farmer's field, and he will discover instantly the truth of this most truthful statement.

Maintaining this monopoly by force, our master class is able to hold down the masses; for it can starve them into submission precisely as we, cutting off supplies by our blockade, starved Germany. For example, the Coal Commission enquiry has just reminded us that a late Duke of Buccleuch threatened to shut down his collieries if Mr. Gladstone was elected. The Duke made good his threat, shut down his collieries and dismantled the cottages in which his miners lived. Such outrages our law upholds; and it does not uphold them with mere words, but with the stern realities of policemen, judges, gaols and, in the last resort, the entire armed forces of the British Empire.

Thus the masses are compelled by force to do their masters' bidding, live on the terms dictated by their masters, and work at the tasks selected by the masters as best ministering to their own happiness and profit. Such a condition is not one of freedom. Such a society is not based on free and mutual consent, which is the principle of peace, but on force, which is the principle of war.

On similar terms, under similar economic institutions and by similar resort to violence at the first sign of revolt, our master class to-day holds the inhabitants of about a quarter of the globe in thrall. Its rule imposes on all those countless millions a slavery identical in its essentials with that from which the masses of this island suffer. The native of India, the native of Egypt, and of all our dependencies, including Ireland, conducts his life not as he wishes, but as his British master orders; pays for the use of his country whatever rent his foreign master chooses to demand; pays whatever taxes that master chooses to exact, and

obeys, or disobeys at his peril, the laws imposed on him. It is preposterous to describe such a condition as being one of Freedom, and it is obvious that such a condition can be maintained only by force—that is to say, by the methods and implements of War.

When we speak, therefore, of the "Social War" we are not stating a theory, but pointing out the basic fact on which our social structure rests. Such is the world in which we live, and those who expected that the terms of peace imposed on Germany would be other than those invariably imposed on the vanquished by the victor, do not understand this present world. They are not realists; they are dreamers.

Our own attitude towards the peace terms, therefore, explains itself. How much the conquering Allies will get no one at present knows, but that it will be the utmost obtainable is certain. Mr. Wilson's philosophising have never yet stopped the American monopolist from charging all the traffic will bear, and neither our own moneyed aristocracy nor France's financiers, headed by the Rothschilds, will depart from their habitual business principle—"Take all you can get!" Cold calculation will decide; greed tempered only by fear of revolt and world-wide revolution. There, however, is the uncertain factor. The war against Germany is over, but its influence on that immeasurably greater conflict, the Social War, endures—a huge unknown quantity, incalculably alarming, impossible to assess.

The terms laid down are war terms, imply the continued use of armies of occupation, and thereby render Conscription during an indefinite period inevitable. The ruling class, to secure its privileges, falls back on Militarism.

Power becomes even more concentrated, and this is fatal to the freedom of the masses. The governing class in Great Britain and the United States emerges, for the time being, supreme. It dominates the natural resources, and consequently the industry and commerce of the world. To perpetuate that domination it must command the seas, and it means to command them.

Germany and German industrial activity are to be confined, as far as possible, within her own diminished territorial borders. She will be compelled to stay at home and live mainly by the cultivation of her own soil. This involves the extinction of her feudal aristocracy, for she will have to give her masses access to the land.

Obviously she will be forced into closer alliance with her great neighbour, Russia. The existing bonds of sympathy between the two countries are strengthened incalculably, for each is barred from oceanic commerce, and thereby handicapped most heavily. Russians and Germans, therefore, will be compelled to exchange their surplus products and co-operate by land. Poland is resuscitated, that she may keep them apart. Unhappy Poland!

See how pregnant with great social changes are these "Peace" propositions when one but glances at their most salient features! They stampede vast masses over bridges which hitherto only a daring few had dreamed of crossing. They goad us at the sharp point of necessity into hurrying through a transition stage over which, in our mental indolence and lack of initiative, we had been lingering too long. They line up sharply on their respective sides, all the great forces that spur mankind to action. Economic lordship is arrayed against that passion for economic independence which is ineradicable in human nature, since it is part of the instinct of self-preservation. Authoritarianism confronts the Spirit of Revolt, never so strong and general as it is to-day. Monopoly, scornful of Equality, faces Democracy, pledged to equal opportunities for each. All the great battle-calls are sounded. All the great issues that most fire men's blood are elbowed to the front. Neutrality becomes impossible, and what labels itself "Peace" is but the opening of another chapter in the ponderous volume of the Social War.

The Social War is the natural fruit of the tree of Slavery, the roots of which are those artificial inequalities devised and maintained by the few to secure their dominance over the many. Until those roots have been destroyed there can be no Social Peace. There should not be.

No Revolution ever rises above the intellectual level of those who make it, and little is gained when one false notion supplants another. But we must some day, at last and for ever, cross the line between Nonsense and Common Sense. And on that day we shall pass from Class Paternalism, originally derived from fetish fiction in times of universal ignorance, to Human Brotherhood in accordance with the nature of things and our growing knowledge of it; from Political Government to Industrial Administration; from Competition in Individualism to Individuality in Co-operation; from War and Despotism, in any form, to Peace and Liberty.—*Carlyle*.

RUSSIA'S AGONY.

The news from Russia—such as we are allowed to get—shows that with the coming of spring the Allies are pressing their attacks on the Bolsheviks from all sides. Rifles, machine-guns, ammunition, aeroplanes, armoured cars, poison gas—in fact, all the weapons manufactured for use against the Germans—are now being supplied in unlimited quantities to every scoundrel whom they can bribe to fight on behalf of Capitalism against the Soviet Government. All the financial vultures are waiting to pounce on the prostrate body of Russia to grab “concessions” promised them by the various so-called “Governments” of North Russia, Siberia, and other sections of that harassed country. British warships are operating in the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland, and Finnish troops are pressing forward to Petrograd, urged on by General Mannerheim, whose “White Terror” in Finland makes him a suitable tool for the Allies. British troops have landed at Luga Bay, seventy-five miles west of Petrograd, and it is probable that with their superior equipment in the way of guns and other war material, the Allied forces will be able to capture Petrograd from the Bolsheviks. All the humbug about “rescuing” the men at Archangel is now thrown aside, and we hear that the American Government is calling for volunteers for North Russia, and is preparing to take their share of the plunder.

And whilst the forces of Capitalism are busy, the Socialists of Europe are discussing pious resolutions against intervention or shaking their heads dolefully at the “undemocratic” methods of the Bolsheviks, who, instead of acting in the Parliamentary way beloved of the fossilised Labour and Socialist M.P.s, struck out in the most practical manner to hand and then legalised their own actions. Now the Jeremiahs of the Labour and Socialist parties of Europe are holding up their hands and saying how happy they would be to help them if they would only allow them to say how the Revolution should be carried through. As though revolutions were ever made legally. Revolutions make their own laws.

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What has become of the complaint against Commander Sweeney, of the U.S. Navy, lodged with the Naval Secretary, Mr. Daniels, by Congressman Clyde Kelly, of Pennsylvania? This Commander Sweeney boasted openly, in an interview at Philadelphia, says *La Populaire*, that he and a British officer had put themselves at the head of an Archangel revolution against the local Soviet. He explained that they had printed large issues of forged rouble notes, which they had distributed among the peasantry, to win their support. United States Senators Kenyon, Hiram Johnson and La Follette were to have taken up the matter.

* * * * *

M. Mergo Slonim, a member of the Russian Constituent Assembly, arrived in France recently by way of Japan and the United States. His account of the fate that befell the Government which, in the name of pure Democracy, ousted Bolshevik rule in Siberia, makes terrible reading. The military element, working for the restoration of Monarchy, quickly became supreme. Political adversaries were assassinated and executed ruthlessly, and three rebellions against Koltchak were repressed with merciless severity. As is well known, Mme. Breschko-Breschkovska, the “grandmother” of the Russian Revolution, has been a severe critic of Bolshevism. M. Slonim, however, quotes her as saying to him: “No sincere Democrat will ever be able to support the Koltchak dictatorship.” This same venerable revolutionist, in her evidence before the Overman Committee, appointed by the U.S.A. Government, said that in little more than one year of Bolshevik rule “there had been twice as many men, women and children killed by the Bolsheviks as there were soldiers killed at the front during the almost three years that Russia was actively in the war.” To show how ridiculous that statement is we have but to remember that, according to official figures, 1,700,000 Russian soldiers were killed or died of wounds during those three years. Mme. Breschkovska surely does not mean that the Bolsheviks have killed 3,400,000 men, women and children! But why make such a stupid statement?

A LETTER FROM ODESSA.

The following letter is from the correspondent whose interesting letters from Russia appeared in previous issues of *FREEDOM* (September, 1918, and January of this year):

ODESSA, February 25, 1919.

“Through the kindness of a friend I am able to let you have a few words telling you how things are going with me at present. The Bolsheviks have not yet taken this town, but from what I can judge the majority would welcome them, as everything is becoming dearer and dearer, and there is no end to it. In this town food was always cheaper than in most other towns of Russia;

when bread was ten roubles a pound in Moscow, here it only cost half a rouble, and white at that. Now it is nearly the reverse. In Moscow things are becoming plentiful and cheap; it was really the shortage of food which made me leave Moscow, as I found it impossible to continue at work on the food obtainable. Otherwise, I would rather prefer Moscow to any other place in Russia. Finally, I must add that I found Moscow very interesting, and I was able to observe the Bolsheviks at work for over a year, and I came to the conclusion they were wonderful people and organisers—of course, I mean the leaders and genuine Bolsheviks. I was able to observe the genuine Socialistic ideal put into practice. What they did in one year would take evolution a hundred years to accomplish—to put it in a nutshell, “He that does not work neither shall he eat.” This they accomplished in the space of one year. There is no middle or upper class in Russia wherever the Bolsheviks are in power. As to other things they have done no doubt you get some idea from the newspapers, although the majority of newspapers I have seen do everything to discredit them. Most of the stuff you can take with a grain of salt.

“I am pleased to say that all of us are in good health; business is not bad, but work is scarce owing to the lack of raw material and coal—especially coal. Well, to sum up. I have never seen a town is such a hopeless muddle as this town. Owing to British warships being stationed in the harbour I was able to enjoy many privileges, obtaining many provisions which I had not seen since leaving England, also continually being invited to dinner and other functions; but best of all was spending Christmas on board, for which I must thank them very much. I ought to mention that Odessa, or at least Russia, did not appeal to them very much; their hope was to get home as quickly as possible. This is the feeling of all the foreign troops on Russian soil; they do not know what they are doing here, and they do not care a rap for Russia or what happens to her.”

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

FRANCE.

The Brest Committee of Social Defence has issued on behalf of four civilians and seven sailors in the navy who were arrested on charges of “anti-militarism, anarchism, sovietism, organisation of and participation in a seditious group,” etc. Their crime is reported as being co-operation in the purchase and sale of *La Vague* (The Wave)—a Syndicalist paper. One should not read. One should not discuss. One should be a good citizen and obey unquestioningly.

On the eve of May Day *La Vie Ouvrière*, suppressed at the beginning of the war, appeared once more. Naturally parts have been censored, but even at that the articles are exceptionally strong. The reactionaries of the French trade union movement, still maundering about an eight-hour law and fiddling away their time on revisions of the constitution, are handled without gloves, as are also the academic revolutionists of the National Socialist Congress. The articles on the situation in Russia, Spain and Hungary seem to us excellent, and the part now being played by Roumania, as the cat's-paw of the great capitalist Powers, is well exposed. Front-page space is given to a letter by Tom Mann, who says bluntly that “Bolshevism is our movement, Spartacism is equally our movement, and Syndicalism is also our movement, each of these being virtually the same since they all seek the destruction of our enemy. We should be prepared to say this and to act accordingly.” His assurance that the English Trade Union is rapidly becoming permeated with this conviction may or may not be true. We trust it is. *La Vie Ouvrière* has been a great seed-sower in the past. May it live long to reap its full proportion of the harvest now coming to maturity!

SPAIN.

The general strike in Barcelona, of which we spoke in our May issue as having been caused by the Captain-General's refusal to liberate the mobilised workers who refused to betray the strike, had also a secondary cause. The Captain-General was working out a plot of the Catalonian bourgeoisie, who pretended to exterminate the rebel workers and at the same time wished to leave the Government, which had “lowered” itself to negotiate with the prisoners, in a bad position.

The repression has been so barbarous that, according to *Humanité* of May 20, there are over 4,000 workers imprisoned in Barcelona, amongst them being six solicitors who had defended the workers in court. Of these two are still in prison, although they will not be tried. According to *El Sol* of April 29, in one prison alone there are over 1,000 prisoners, and the special correspondent of the *Heraldo de Madrid*, who has visited them, says that they publish a daily newspaper, all done by hand, called *El Bol-*

chevique, the only paper published in Spain without being censored.

Pestaña has been condemned to four years' imprisonment for an article published in *Solidaridad Obrera*, and they are also going to try him on another charge. His wife, who has three young children, is also imprisoned.

The Catalonian bourgeoisie thought that Syndicalism was crushed, so they announced that their factories were open once more and the workers would be admitted under whatever terms pleased the employers; but the same day the carmen went out on strike, refusing to work with non-union men. The Captain-General declared the workers' Unions outlawed. But whether outside the law or inside the law, they continue their work and are preparing new battles that will no doubt soon break out in Andalusia.

Elections in Spain have no importance, and as this year, by all appearances, they will take place under martial law, they will have still less value. Many enemies of the Government have no vote, but others who died ten and fifteen years ago still vote. These dead ones always vote for the Government. We must mention one exception though. The Socialists of Bilbao learned this game so well that, not only did they rob the Government of these dead men's votes for their personal benefit, but they also registered the votes of those who felt inclined to sleep on voting day.

PROPAGANDA COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The first meeting of the above committee was held on May 3, and from the suggestions received to date it would appear that not only is much expected from the work of this body, but that the future is likely to entail far more labour and possibilities than was at first contemplated by many. Some admirable proposals comprised the following, viz.: a touring van to sell literature, similar to the Bolsheviks' "Red Literature" train; another was for the setting up of a library in London, where books that are rare and costly, and dealing with various vital subjects such as sex questions, etc., should be available for use of comrades all over the country. In this connection it would be necessary to have a librarian, for the work that appears in view would impose too much upon the secretary, and in order to provide for future possibilities the financial responsibility has already been handed over to a Treasurer.

The committee also hope to become a sort of bureau whereby all loose groups and individuals may be brought into contact, to co-ordinate the work and efforts of all; further, that this shall evolve into an international bureau to collect and distribute information useful to the movement.

Besides the drawing up of leaflets and pamphlets, etc., it is also the work of the committee to stimulate local and provincial groups, to aid them and new groups in formation by help with literature, and where possible with financial aid. Thus it is obvious that a big task is before them, and all comrades are asked to give their moral and financial support to help forward this work that holds such great possibilities. The committee also hope to help FREEDOM financially, or to start a weekly periodical; but this is a rather premature moment to write about such an idea—all depends upon the currency available, and we shall, in this connection, "wait and see."

As a first step a manifesto is to be drawn up for distribution, which, on completion, will be circulated to groups. With a view to helping the committee, individuals and groups are asked to send any suggestions, criticisms, orders for manifestos, and their spare cash to the Secretary, c/o. Manager, FREEDOM Office. Reports of meetings and decisions reached will appear periodically in this paper, and all remittances will be duly acknowledged.

Comrades who could write up leaflets on current topics (or pamphlets), which would be suitable for publication, are asked to do so, and the cost of production will be borne by the committee.

MORE MONEY IS NEEDED.

Our appeal for funds has met with a better response this month, but it is not nearly as much as we want. Prices of paper and printing are fearfully high, and if you want to see Bakunin's "God and State" in print again, just send along a postal order for as much as you can spare. Get one at the post office to-day. The following amounts have been received up to May 27: Crown Hall Social (to date), £8 1s. 2d.; E.M., 6s.; Flying Corps, 1s.; E.C.R., 2s.; H.G.R., 4s. 6d.; Belgian Comrade, 2s.; T. Foxall, 1s. 7d.; T.S., 1s. 9d.; E. W. Lynch, 1s. 6d.; B.L., 10s.; J.B., 1s.; F. Goulding, 6d.; A. Smith, 1s. 6d.; G. Marin, 2s.; J. Davidson, 1s.; C. Moxon, 7s. 6d.; M.B.H., 5s.; Halls, 2s. 6d.; H. Oak, 2s. 6d.; F. Bosazza, 2s. 6d.; A. D. Moore, 2s.

"God and State" Fund.—B.L. 10s.

TO HELP "FREEDOM."

You can help our propaganda by selling FREEDOM at the demonstrations and public meetings now being held all over the country. We are printing extra copies for this purpose, and we will send bundles post free to any part of the British Isles on receipt of cash. Terms: 1s. 6d. for 13 copies; 3s. for 26 copies. As the post is rather slow just now, orders should be sent as early as possible.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The Chief Task of Our Times and The Political Forces and Currents Facing the Russian Revolution. By Vladimir Oulianoff (Lenin). Price 3d. Published by the Workers' Socialist Federation, 400, Old Ford Road, London, E. 3. Two speeches by Lenin in March and May, 1918. The first explains why the Bolsheviks signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk; in the second speech Lenin urges the necessity of State Socialism, and says that only by organisation and discipline can the Soviet Republic be built up.

Soviets or Parliament? By Bukharin (Russian People's Commissary). Price 1d. Same publishers as above.

The German Revolution: I., The Documentary History of the German Revolution; II., Manifesto of the Spartacus Group; III., What Should be Changed in Germany, by Charuequey, et al. Published by the Association for International Conciliation, 407, West 117th Street, New York City.

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NOTICES.

"FREEDOM" OFFICE is open for sale of books and pamphlets every Saturday afternoon from 3 to 5-30.

"FREEDOM" can be obtained (wholesale and retail) at National Labour Press, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.; also at Henderson's, 66, Charing Cross Road, W.C. Anarchist books and pamphlets are on sale at the latter bookshop.

COWDENBEATH.—"FREEDOM" and Anarchist books and pamphlets can be obtained at the Communist Literature Depot, 128, Perth Road, Cowdenbeath.

CARDIFF.—"FREEDOM," books, and pamphlets can be had from A. Banks, 1, Carmarthen Street, off Market Road, Canton, Cardiff. Call and have a chat. Group being formed.

RHONDDA VALLEY.—Would anyone in the Rhondda Valley like to start a Group or a Sunday School, based on showing how happily we could live without Government? If so, write or call. We have a speaker—A. Banks, 1, Carmarthen Street, off Market Road, Canton, Cardiff.

WILLESDEN "FREEDOM" LEAGUE.—Discussions on Political and Social questions are held every Sunday evening (7-30) at Hamilton Hall, High Road (close to Pound Lane 'bus terminus).

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