

Freedom

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NOTES.

Trade with Russia.

The arrival of Krassin, who has come to discuss the resumption of trade relations between Soviet Russia and the rest of Europe, was greeted with groans from the newspapers controlled by Lord Northcliffe, who previous to the Revolution published Russian supplements to the *Times*, which were paid for principally by the Tsar's Government. Apart from Northcliffe, however, the Press generally welcomed Krassin, although they camouflaged his position as the Bolshevik representative, by saying that he was only representing the Co-operative Societies in Russia. In our opinion the main factor influencing the British Government is their present strained relations with the United States. American capitalists are complaining that British capitalists have picked most of the plums in the enemy countries, and left very little for them. So they are talking of "a very vigorous foreign policy" to get their share. As long as this country is dependent on America for a great portion of its food supplies, a war with the United States would be very awkward. But if wheat and a few other necessities can be got from Russia again, this difficulty would be got over. Thus trade with Russia may mean war with America, and then Tommy Atkins will be called away again from desk and factory and farm "to make the world safe" for something or other—perhaps oil-wells. Lloyd George has played such a tricky game with Russia, however, that even now we doubt his sincerity. We should want very solid guarantees if we were Krassin.

"Silent Watchfulness."

On Monday, May 17, Mr. Bonar Law was heckled in the House of Commons regarding the Polish invasion of Russia and the amount of assistance given to the Poles by the Allies in general and Great Britain in particular. Only three or four members were sufficiently interested to put questions, in answering which Mr. Law was forced to admit that the British Government had made a gift of a part of the equipment of the Polish army. One would imagine that the question of taking part in this new attack on Russia was of sufficient importance to have roused the Labour Members to protest against causing more misery and bloodshed in Europe, already stricken with disease and starvation. But we are told by the Parliamentary correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* that "the prevailing mood was one of silent watchfulness." Will nothing stir the blood of these platform heroes? The Labour Party has sent a delegation to Russia to study conditions in that country, and the least they could do would be to demand that the Government of this country should refrain from attacking Russia whilst that delegation is there. We can only conclude that, in spite of all their heroics on Labour platforms and at League of Nations meetings, they are playing the capitalists' game in this matter. Or is it that they are too damned respectable to kick up a row in Parliament?

Munitions for Ireland.

Lloyd George's speech to the railwaymen's deputation on the question of handling munitions for Ireland was the tricky oratory with which he always bamboozles a Labour deputation. He beats them every time. The question really was, whether the railwaymen should help to defeat the Irish people in their struggle for self-government. Lloyd George twisted it round and made it a question as to whether the railwaymen should refuse to handle "a box of revolvers" sent to Ireland so that the police could protect themselves. He said: "The murderers with revolvers in their pockets are carried forwards

and backwards by the railways. I never heard of a strike being organised to stop them." Nobody challenged this twister, and the deputation left with their tails between their legs. On a par with this is the attitude of Labour officialdom. The Irish railwaymen referred the question of handling munitions to their Executive, who passed it on to the Triple Alliance, who passed it on to the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress. And so it goes on. Mr. Thomas, who is a member of the Privy Council, played into Lloyd George's hands before the deputation and on every occasion shows his value to the ruling class. The railwaymen give him a £1,000 a year and the title-deeds of a house as a present. What hope is there for such idiots? The Irish people are too sharp-witted to trust to such men for assistance.

Is a Crash Coming?

"The City is becoming increasingly impressed with the fact that we are at the beginning of a very difficult and even critical period as regards industry and finance." So writes the financial editor of a leading daily paper. "We have reached a stage of monetary tension which needs very delicate handling if a sudden and disastrous collapse is to be averted. . . . As a result of the war we have contracted a habit of economic alcoholism, the stimulant being monetary inflation, and the symptoms a vicious circle of higher prices, higher profits and wages, and more inflation. . . . We must make a determined attempt to escape from the vicious circle and get into a more virtuous one of less credit and currency, lower prices, and lower wages." The writer says nothing about lower profits—those sacred profits. But lower wages, of course. Perhaps he would find it difficult to force wages down. The usual way to cut wages is to raise prices. Anyhow, everything points to a commercial crisis before long, and the worker will see that the addition to the Empire of 1,700,000 square miles of new territory is useless to him when he gets the sack. It is as difficult for him to get a job now as before the war; and if he served in the war, he must have discovered by this time that once again he has been fooled. His masters will not be without luxuries when the crash comes, but he may be tramping the streets in search of food.

Sunday Games in the Parks.

The question as to whether games should be permitted in the public parks on Sundays has again cropped up, and terribly exciting discussions have taken place in the Press and at Council meetings. Of course, the parsons have taken a leading part in these discussions, and they are very much afraid that their small congregations may disappear entirely if cricket and football are allowed on the Sabbath. It seems, however, that there are religious recreations and irreligious recreations. For instance, the London County Council bars football, cricket, tennis, and similar games on Sunday, but you can hire a boat and take your best girl for a row on the lake—after 2 o'clock. Really and truly, what a lot of jelly-fishes the people are to allow these Bible-thumpers to dictate to them in these matters! The parks are maintained at the expense of the general public, who should insist on using them as they see fit. A little direct action would soon settle the matter. Let all those who wish to play decide that on some Sunday they will take their cricket and tennis outfits to the playing spaces and start their games right away. There are not sufficient police or park-keepers to prevent their doing so; and if they persisted Sunday after Sunday, the obnoxious regulations would soon be abolished. Let the parsons go to the hell with which they frighten little children and old women.

Never yet has law formed a great man; 'tis liberty that breeds giants and heroes.—Schiller.

GOVERNMENT BY THE MAJORITY.

Throughout the centuries that have fled since man crawled forth from his cave an ignorant savage, there has been some form of organised government under which somebody has been oppressed. During all these unknown ages the people have had but little voice in the affairs of nations. For a long time the source of authority was not in this world at all. The king sat on his throne by the will of God, and therefore was not accountable to the people for his acts. He commanded—the people obeyed. He was lord of their bodies, and his partner, the priest, was master of their souls. The government of earth was a duplicate of the “kingdom of heaven.” God was the supreme despot above, the king was his faithful imitator below. Between the heavenly king and the earthly king the people were very much like the fellow who got caught between the devil and the deep sea. That is to say, if they rebelled against the one, they were confronted by the agents of the other, and the argument in both cases was the same—force.

But in the course of human progress the people became more enlightened, and the divinity of kings as the basis of government had to go. But government itself remained, and under it the people were enslaved. But government—this monster of the ages—that has been guilty of every possible crime, has been compelled to change its garb, to put on a new mask, in order to keep the people in subjection, otherwise they would have rid themselves of it long ago. But, while government has changed its garb—its form—it never has changed in principle, because, like the Christian God, government is the same in principle yesterday, to-morrow and for ever.

There are but two theories upon which government can be based. One is the divine right of kings, the other is the natural right of majority rule. In this country, at least, no one will maintain the divine right of kings. So we have only to notice the majority rule fallacy.

Admitting that the will of the majority does, in some mysterious way, prevail (which is not true), the question arises, by what right does it rule? When two men meet one man on the highway, have they, because of their superior number, the right to dispose of his life or his property? If A. has no right to control B. when acting as a single individual, does he acquire this right by combining with C.? Let those who advocate government meet this question fairly. Let them candidly admit that ten men when combined possess rights which belong to none of them as individuals. That is the logic of majority rule. Let them deny *this* proposition, and their whole case is gone “like the baseless fabric of a schoolboy’s dream.”

We have had coercion enough. For ages man has ruled with sword and bayonet, with bars and chains. For many centuries the strong hand of power has crushed the liberties of the people, has soaked the soil with human blood, has cast the sable shadow of oppression over the earth, and now are we not civilised enough to dispense with it for ever? What blessings does government confer?

Has it not ever been an engine of oppression in the hands of the few? Is it not in its very nature antagonistic to freedom, and can we expect it to defend that which it destroys? For many centuries government has held sway, and liberty has been driven from among men. Let us give liberty control.

Liberty does not bring confusion, it brings peace. Under government the nations are armed constantly for war. The State thrives on war and bloodshed. Its chief prop is the sword. It lives only by violence. Take from it the power of its arms, and it will die a natural death.

The government of man by man is essentially tyrannical. It is this infernal doctrine that has painted on the sable canvas of the past the wildest scenes of rapine and murder. Let us away with it.

ROSS WINN.

A Letter from New Zealand.

In New Zealand we are just beginning to feel the real pinch—the cost of living is beyond all expectations, and is going to make itself felt still more before this year dies. Boots in 1914 costing 25s. now cost 70s.; suits, tailor-made, 90s., are now 260s.; and bread is up to 1s per loaf. Compared with the cost of living in Europe, this is low. Still, New Zealand is a young country, with only a population of one and a quarter million; but on the head of everyone of us is a debt of £250. Just think of it, New Zealand is larger than the British Isles, and every bit as rich in mines and soil; and yet its small population have their noses to the emery stone. Potatoes are 1d. each, tomatoes 2d. each, apples 1½d., oranges 6d.; and thousands of tons go to waste every season. Wool buyers from all countries are here snapping up the wool, and the meat goes out in shiploads. Wages go up, and higher still is the demand; but the workers do not see yet that they cannot catch up to the cost of living.

The railwaymen have asked for 5s. increase per day, and the Government consent to give them 1s.; but the men, I believe, will stand firm. They have been loyal jingoes all through the war. From the beginning they allowed themselves to be decoyed by the press and

pulpit, and remained fast asleep to the truth even when it was told to them, at a risk to the speaker; the war with its blood, maggots and blow-flies, and even the noise of the guns, did not awaken them; but when they endeavour to find what they have won, they awaken. Our Labour unionism is the next big bluff. Its leaders draw £5 and over per week and make no endeavour whatever to fight for anything except political power and a few more shillings. As a body Labour men in New Zealand are impossible from an Anarchist point of view. They won't read, and they won't think or look beyond their noses; they allow their children to be captured by the parson and their little minds warped beyond repair.

At present the politicians have gone on a joy stunt to Samoa to satisfy themselves that this little island, once Germany's, is a good asset to New Zealand and worth the sacrifice of some 13,000 odd men in the late war. This joy stunt is going to cost at least £40,000, and is the ripest bit of tomfoolery and waste we have had to contend with; and Joe Ward and Massey, along with Hughes of Australia, take some beating. Labour put in one or two men at the last election here; but they soon change their coats and it is difficult to pick one from another. They are all away on the joy trip and drinking every dinner-time the health of the King. The workers will learn yet that the political dope is in the sky.

Some real good fighters in Australia still cling to political action. I cannot for the life of me understand them. They go into prison over and over again for Labour's cause and for the Red Flag, but cling like a drowning man to political action. In spite of all I have said about the cost of living, I believe New Zealand workers are better off than the workers in other lands, and that accounts for them being so lukewarm.

BERT OLDS.

CHURCH AND STATE.

That God gave priests the right to teach and kings the right to rule, is the hoary lie that runs the people. It has kept back thought and deluged the earth with human blood. Every new idea has had to fight it; every thinker has felt its paralysing touch. The people have grovelled before it, and progress has stopped. If there be a god who runs the universe by law, is it likely that he would give men powers to develop, and then allow them to be set at naught by priests and kings? If the people are not to do their own thinking, why have brains, and why the desire to use them? This hoary lie, basis of Church and State, dies at last, but it dies hard.

A red Indian tried to sell his furs to a white trader, but could not get him to come to his price. The white trader left the Indian and went into his mission church to worship. The Indian hung about until he came forth and then accepted his price. But now the white man refused and offered him a much lower price for the furs. The Indian shook his head and turned away disgusted. Some time later the missionary came across the Indian and invited him to come to his church. “Oh, no,” replied the Indian; “I keep away from those places. That is where the white man goes to learn how to do the Indian out of his skins.” This Indian's instinct was a lot better guide than the white wage-slave's so-called education. This one can be cajoled by priest and politician from everlasting to everlasting.

Churches are the hothouses of capitalism, where the capitalists are warmed up on Sunday to exploit their fellow-man during the week. The Church is the handmaid of the State; behind the throne is the altar. The Church says to the State: “I give you divine right from God to rule the people.” And the State says: “Thank you. I will give you a palace, robes, and a good fat salary; and arm in arm together we will subdue and rob the people.” How did this unholy alliance arise? At the beginning man was ignorant of natural laws. He believed that all phenomena were operated by gods and devils, who did everything through malice toward him. The thunder roared to frighten him; the lightning flashed to strike him. The cataracts foamed, the storms beat, and the volcanoes threw out their lava to punish him. The mass of men went stark, staring mad. But a few of the crafty ones saw that in this fear and terror was a weapon which they might use to bend men to their wills, and make them grovel with terror at their feet. Here was the golden recipe to keep them humble and obedient, and then rob them.

One night a few old greybeards retired to rest and in their sleep dreamed that they saw the almighty despot upon his throne and all his angels about him. And he said to them: “You must rule the people. Tell them I've told you so. And you are to have all the fat of the land for doing it. You are to have the best of everything. And you are to have the power to bind and loose, and all the people shall obey you and do you reverence.” And when the old men awoke they went and told their dream to the tribe. And the warriors winked at them and at each other, and said: “It is true. The people shall obey you, and if any refuse we will crack their skulls with our battle-axes.” Something like that was the first unholy alliance between Church and State.

J. T.

Although I am not a fanatic for liberty . . . yet I do think that it is far better to let every man do as he likes.—Huxley.

MARX AND BAKUNIN.

[The following letter was sent to the *Call*, but the Editor declined to publish it, on the ground that it "might possibly lead to confusion in the minds of people who are little acquainted with the work either of Marx or Bakunin."]

DEAR COMRADE,—If Marx was the revolutionary force that Comrade Lenin and other comrades would have us believe, and if his writings are still revolutionary, there are a few points upon which many of us would like more information. Many of us have now reached the point when we are ready to take help from any man's thought, but refuse to have our own thought dominated by any man. In the writings of our comrade Lenin there is just a little too much of "Marx says it, therefore it must be all right." The points I would have us discuss are these.

1. If Marx was the revolutionary force some maintain, how was it that he and Engels gave their weight to the German manhood suffrage movement, which Michael Bakunin denounced right off as reactionary, and which soon proved itself to be so?

2. Why did Marx and Engels help to build up the German political Socialist Party, with its members in the capitalist Reichstag?

3. Why at the first thump of the capitalist war drum did the whole lot of this Second International do a stampede to the side of the capitalists and help them to cut the throats and blow out the brains of the working class?

4. May not a thinker be judged by the kind of followers he turns out?

5. Why did Marx and Engels try to ignore the work of Bakunin and the Anarchists, and why have the political Socialists boycotted Bakunin from their bookstalls?

Lenin may go down in history as our greatest master of revolutionary tactics, but some of us very much question whether it will decide that he got his wisdom from Marx. Lenin is a Marxian, and would have us see the whole wisdom of the universe in Marx. It is a trick of the hero-worshipper always to find more in his hero than was ever there. This to many of us seems another instance. Up to the present our side looks upon Karl Marx as being not so much a revolutionary as a social pathologist, who, very much as a doctor puts a carcase on the table and cuts it up, cut up Capitalism. But a man who spends his life in cutting up a body has not much life left to get rid of the dirty mess. All honour and glory to Marx for the work he did, and did well; but let us be accurate about it. We have no heroes to worship, but if we are asked to pick the revolutionary of Marx's time, we say not Marx but Bakunin. The power of Marx was static, the other was the dynamic force of Revolution.—Yours fraternally,

JOHN TAMLYN.

THE LAND HE FOUGHT FOR.

The following letter from the *Middlesbrough Gazette* shows how a soldier had his eyes opened to the value of the speeches of the politicians who told him he was fighting to defend "his" country:—

Mr. Geo. Smith, of Blue Hall Cottages, writes: "If 'Ex-Sapper' is under the impression that he will ever get a piece of land from the North Riding County Council for a small holding, he is living in a fool's paradise. Working men and small holders are hated by the Council. Take my experience. For over 25 years I tried for a piece of land. I explained to the Council the land could be anywhere within a radius of 40 miles of Middlesbrough. It could be all stones, or bricks, a duck pond, the top of a hill, or the middle of the moors, or covered with trees. I only wanted the bare, stark, bald, naked land, from one to five acres, and would build my own house. Returning from France about two years ago, I made another attempt and failed. I wrote to Mr. Lloyd George a full history of my case, and after delay was referred to the Ministry of Reconstruction; another few weeks' delay and I was referred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries; another long delay and I was referred to the Town Clerk of Middlesbrough and the North Riding County Council. For over 12 solid months I wrote week after week, and finally they made an appointment as follows: 'Meet me near the Middlesbrough Town Hall at 12.' I got this letter of appointment the day after the date named. In any case, I did not know who I was going to meet, or what corner of the Town Hall to meet them. I then received a letter to say: 'Seeing that you failed to keep the appointment our Mr. Huss will meet you at 6 p.m. in the Scotch Café for an interview.' I was a bit eager to see this man, so I attended at the Scotch Café three-quarters of an hour before time and stayed until three-quarters of an hour after time. I also questioned every person in the café, and came away disappointed. I then received a letter saying: 'This is the second time you have failed us. Please meet me in the Middlesbrough Railway Station,' at a certain date and time. I almost got arrested for asking likely-looking people if they were from the North Riding County Council, but finally found my man who, after asking me a few silly questions, had to run for his train. I received various letters after this. Some to say: 'Your case is having the attention of our committee,' and others to say:

'Your application has not yet been before our committee, but will be placed before them at an early date.' And, finally, I received a letter referring me to the Town Clerk of Middlesbrough for an allotment. I did not trouble the Town Clerk for fear of being referred back to the Ministry of Lunacy for having the impudence to ask for a piece of land for a small holding from the North Riding County Council. I only have one wish in this world, and that is, if revolution does come to this country, it will come during my lifetime. The North Riding County Council will get a quick shift."

TWO BOOKS ON RUSSIA.

A British Nurse in Bolshevik Russia. The Narrative of Margaret H. Barber; April, 1916—December, 1919. 1s. 6d. net. London: A. C. Fifield.

Miss Barber, a daughter of a clergyman of the Church of England, of her own free will remained in Russia during the rise and progress of Bolshevism down to last December. Her work as a nurse took her to many cities in Russia, including Petrograd, Moscow, Samara, and Astrakan; at the last-named place she was in a Soviet hospital. But her description of Russian village life, with its many religious festivals, is the most interesting part of the book. "The peasantry in many ways showed quite a Communistic spirit. They came and went freely into one another's houses. There was no knocking, and no one was ever refused admittance. They came in and asked for anything they wanted, and beggars always received at least a piece of bread from the poorest of the peasants.... They helped one another freely with hospitality, care of children, loan of horses, implements or food, and always combined in their labour in the fields and in the making of fuel." She was at this village (Buzuluk, in Samara) when the first Revolution came. "The Revolution affected us very little. We were simply told by the peasants one morning at our dispensary that there was no Tsar, and this was afterwards corroborated by the local paper. The returning soldiers held meetings on the market place, assuring us that the millenium had come, and that we were now all free."

Miss Barber travelled by train many hundreds of miles without any other protection than one or two Red Guards, and was always treated as one of the people, and her experiences made her sympathetic to the Bolshevik rule. "Bolshevism certainly has an ideal side, which its present system of education is fostering. Bolshevik Russia may be the most barbarous country to-day, but her children are having the best opportunity to prove her the most enlightened country of to-morrow." This friendliness to the Bolsheviks terminated her stay in Russia. As one of a deputation from Astrakan to the Whites to arrange for the return of refugees to Baku, she went on a battleship at the invitation of the Russian commander. He was seriously alarmed when she informed him that she had seen no Bolshevik atrocities, and after an interview with a British officer she was practically made prisoner and forced to return to England. "It is sad to think of those banished Armenians in Astrakan still longing to return to their homes, and wondering why I have not kept my promise to come back to them. This I am prevented from doing; nor can I send them a message. I fear their faith in the British must be shaken." From Miss Barber's story it is only too evident that the truth was not wanted by the British authorities.

Miss Barber's delightfully simple narrative is one of the most interesting books we have read on the subject.

Russia: Before and After the Revolution. By S. Carlyle Potter. 1s. net. London: C. W. Daniel.

This little book is useful in helping one to an understanding of Russia before and after the Revolution. By extracts from the writings and speeches of journalists and politicians, the author shows that when they were not deliberately lying they were crassly ignorant. As he says, the revolting picture of Soviet Russia which we find in the Press "not only clashes too violently with what we know of the Russian character, but with common sense. An entirely new social and political organisation could not grow out of the chaos left by Tsardom, last two years and withstand the hostility of capitalist Europe, without the acquiescence of the masses." The journalists do not believe their own tales; they write them for others to believe, and incidentally as a means of earning a living.

Freedom Group Outing.

On Sunday, June 13, we are having a day on the beautiful Shirley Hills, near Croydon, and we invite all comrades and friends to join us. Book to Woodside Station, from Charing Cross or London Bridge (South-Eastern and Chatham Rly.). For times of trains and others particulars see advertisement on back page. Tickets for tea (adults 2s., children 1s.) can be obtained from FREEDOM Office and comrades, and will also be on sale outside Woodside Station. Tickets are selling well, and we expect a good muster. Don't forget to bring your lunch for the picnic in the pine woods.

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Our Special Niche.

Along the line of straight propaganda we may, if we choose, make rapid progress. There the spirit of the age is with us, and vast forces, at present dormant, will wheel spontaneously into action the moment issues become clear. As yet they are befogged. It is, therefore, imperative to clarify them.

In our opinion, there is nothing in those hit-or-miss tactics apparently so popular to-day; nothing in the helter-skelter sacrifice of anything and everything for the sake of some momentary advantage which cannot be utilised when gained. We face facts as hard as granite, which are themselves the natural outcome of conditions. We must stop bluffing ourselves with the delusion that We are the People, or that with us all power, intelligence, and virtue rest.

At present we cannot induce even the Labour Movement to study our publications, although the men and women in that movement are, as a whole, far more open to new and revolutionary ideas than is the general public. We could not elect, if we wanted to, even a County Councillor. It should be self-evident, therefore, that action is not, as yet, our proper sphere. We have not the pieces requisite for such attacks, and we know well by experience that whenever the law thinks it desirable to scoop us into its net, into that net we have to go, practically without a struggle. It is humiliating but terribly true, and to accept truth frankly is the mark not of cowardice but of common sense.

We have before us an enormous amount of urgent work, and only a small and inadequate force with which to do it. Even in propaganda we can hope to occupy only a very small portion of the field; for, championing Freedom as against Authority, our lines are always over-extended and we can man them, at best, but thinly. The more reason, therefore, for economising our forces and placing every piece where it can do the most effective work; for doing things thoroughly; for ploughing deep and passing on immediately to other untilled soil. There is nothing in making ourselves a peculiar people, or flocking in a corner by ourselves, in obedience to that herd instinct which permeates the Socialist movement. A real propagandist should be able to stand alone, and carry on his war inside the enemy's camp.

If the foregoing positions are correct, it follows that our literature should belong to one or other of two distinct classes: either it should be such as appeals to the masses by its simple explanation of familiar facts, or such as will train the student, with a view to making him a more perfect master of the weapons with which, as a propagandist, he has to fight. In either case clarity and simplicity must be the aim; but it appears to us that whenever we try to mix these two classes we come to grief. How stupid, for example, to attempt the spicing of economics with sensational matter, as do some Labour papers! At that game the capitalist press always beats them hollow. Our propaganda is necessarily for serious people in their most serious moods. If it is merely glanced through casually and cast carelessly aside, like the ordinary daily paper, nothing is accomplished.

We have hardly any literature that takes every-day facts for its themes and explains them clearly. The social problems now confusing the public mind are by no means so simple as some Anarchists seem to think them, and it is utterly useless to say, "Make Everything Common Property," and let it go at that. The Man in the Street needs to be shown, quite clearly, how land monopoly, for example, robs him, and how that robbery can be stopped. We have to show him quite simply—and simplicity is always the most difficult of arts—why the mere raising of his wages cannot benefit him ultimately, and so forth. It is unnecessary to go into further details here.

Our present pamphlets and journals either state, without any adequate explanation, what is happening to-day, or lose themselves in the speculations of well-known Anarchists who wrote half a century or more ago. Such men did work well suited to their particular age, which was an age of abstract reasoning. The great economic and political problems now facing us had not developed in their day; and Kropotkin himself has told us that all modern literature will have to be re-written. He never uttered a truer word. Every generation has to tackle its own difficulties and produce the literature that reflects and ministers to its own thought and needs.

In the second of the two classes named **FREEDOM** tries to fill its niche. It avoids the sensational and devotes itself largely to the discussion of principles, because it recognises that bottom principles are at once most essential and difficult to grasp. Raise at any Labour meeting some petty point of order, and a dozen men will wrangle over it for hours. Invite them, on the other hand, to debate some far-reaching principle, and not one will venture to his feet. It is so in Parliament, it is so everywhere, because understanding of the principles underlying great movements is hard and rare.

As it appears to us, neither the Trade Union nor the Socialist movement has shown, as yet, any real insight into the true meaning and logical development of the profound Revolution in the midst of which we now are living. For example, as we see it, if Russia is to remain self-governing, as all Anarchists must hope, she must be ultimately such a country as the Russian peasantry desire, and not such a country as Karl Marx, writing half a century ago, imagined she ought to be. So it must be also with Mexico, and with every other country now passing through the revolutionary vortex. The inhabitants of these countries wish to live in freedom; that is to say, they wish to make and enjoy the kind of life best suited to them. With that attitude our sympathy, as Anarchists, should be profound. We are not doctrinaires, nailed to a crucifix of dogma. We are advocates of freedom. We believe that Life's natural impulses make for good, and that it should be lived as the living wish to live it.

ANARCHISTS ARE OUTLAWS.

That Anarchists are outlaws—persons excluded from the benefit of the law—was the decision of judge and jury in a case tried at the Old Bailey on May 13.

On April 10 our comrade Sidney Hanson spoke at an open-air meeting at Hammersmith. While walking home afterwards a man named Lark stabbed him in the back of the neck with an ice-pick, inflicting a dangerous wound which still causes him serious trouble. The police arrested Lark and charged him with attempted murder. At the police court the magistrate committed him for trial, and on May 13 the case was tried at the High Court of Justice, previously known as the "Old Bailey." Hanson did not prosecute; the police prosecuted, as they were bound to do by law. But as soon as the trial commenced it was seen that their counsel was really acting as counsel for the defence; and instead of Lark being tried for attempted murder, Hanson was tried for his Anarchist opinions.

In opening the case, the counsel for the prosecution said that if the prisoner had punched Hanson's head instead of stabbing him, most people would have approved of it, and he (counsel) would certainly not have appeared to prosecute. The prisoner made a lot of foolish statements about mysterious strikes and Bolshevik gold, and told deliberate lies as to what was said at the Hammersmith meeting. Comrades were present as witnesses to contradict these statements, but the police counsel would not call them. In fact, the dice were loaded against Hanson from the start to the finish. Lark, who gloried in his attack on our comrade, asked the jury to say that he had only done what the Government ought to have done long ago.

In summing up, the judge said that men who preached Anarchism and Communism were "pestilent individuals," and if they really engaged in engineering revolution they would get very much worse than ice-picks in their necks. He said that when Hanson, an Anarchist, was struck, he called out for the police. Our comrade denied this, and was thrown out of court by the police, leaving the judge to finish his summing up in prisoner's favour. The jury found the prisoner guilty of unlawful wounding and recommended him to mercy. Surely they should have given him an O.B.E. The judge, much against his will, sentenced prisoner to one month's imprisonment in the second division. Lark thanked the judge and jury for their kindness to him, and must feel encouraged in his efforts to suppress Anarchist ideas.

The case is only one more instance of the class bias of courts of justice. Malatesta's trial at the same court a few years ago showed to what abominable lengths judges and police will go to inflict injustice on an Anarchist; and his appeal before Justice Darling was a perfect farce. Hanson's experience should be a warning to all revolutionary propagandists to be prepared for similar attacks in future. If they are outside the capitalist law, then they must remember the first law of Nature—self-preservation.

"There have always been wars," said Mr. Hennessy. "An' fools," said Mr. Dooley.

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INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

Although the capitalist press has made a blood-curdling sensation out of the recent strikes, claiming to have discovered that there are about 60,000 French "Soviets" (*sic*) and that it was proposed to start the Revolution under instructions from Moscow, the fact remains that the strikes have collapsed. By the big majority of 96 votes to 11 the National Federal Committee of the General Confederation of Labour (C.G.T.) decided, May 21, that work should be resumed. The telegram sent to Millerand by the National Syndicalist Federation, protesting against his threat to dissolve the C.G.T., will weigh little against that fact. For our part, we should say that there appear to have been too many Federations and Confederations, too much strike paraphernalia, and too few determined strikers.

This view is in accord with the criticisms on the entire strike now finding expression in the revolutionary press. *Le Réveil* prints a powerful editorial on this subject, in which it contrasts the partial and the general strike. The former, in its opinion, merely accentuates the subjection of the wage-worker, for suspension of work by a few thousand corporation employees causes no general economic disturbance, and is ignored by the public. The latter it considers worse than useless when it is merely a case of standing with arms crossed and abstaining from work. Only when the workers take possession of the machinery of production and use it, in accordance with equalitarian principles, for the supply of their own wants, can success result. In *Umanità Nova* Malatesta calls strongly for spontaneous revolutionary action. He regrets deeply that the opportunity afforded by the agitation against high prices was wasted, owing to power of initiative being left to leaders, and scoffs at "disciplined" Revolutions. They were among the illusions of the old Mazzini conspirators, and of ourselves; for we also used to believe, and not so long ago, in a central committee which should appoint sub-committees, collect funds, procure and distribute the wherewithal, formulate a plan, fix the day, send out orders, and—accomplish nothing. Then someone gave the whole scheme away and the result was a fiasco; heroic perhaps, but a fiasco all the same. He points out that, if this method rarely succeeded in the past, it has even less chance to-day, for the means of suppression possessed by modern Governments are vastly greater.

In a similar vein *Le Libertaire* criticises bitterly "the sleepers and incapables of the Railway Federation" who, in their anxiety for their own safety, compromised with company directors and robbed the movement of all its revolutionary fervour. "The railwaymen have resumed work," it writes, "with anger in their hearts, legitimate anger against the felons who have betrayed them." So also *Germinal* starts its leading article with the remark that "the Labour organisations are weary of struggling for increased wages," and calls for a general strike that shall rid the country of profiteers, and of the Millerands, Daudets, and other politicians who are their mouthpieces. *Le Réveil Ouvrier* takes a similar stand. In all these papers, as in others to hand, the tone is most bitter. Naturally the ever-rising prices and the frightful condition of French finance are rendering the general public highly susceptible to such propaganda. Hence the Government's alarm.

French employers are determined to show no mercy to their workmen beaten in the recent strikes. Pitiless dismissals of men absent are announced daily, and, as one example, the Paris-Orleans Railway Company has shut down its workshops, giving notice that henceforth it will rely on independent contractors. This action, on this one line, renders 10,000 workless. The company does not conceal the fact that it intends to punish its old employees, and terrorise those whom in the future it may engage. More grist for Revolution's mill.

The *Nation* (New York), under date of April 10, published a remarkable article entitled "Millerand and the Politicians," which pointed out that "the characteristic feature of French society at the moment is the tendency toward professional, industrial, and financial combination and association." It considers the formation of the Millerand Ministry a most noteworthy sign of the times, because it "emphasises the passing of Parliamentarism and the rise to power of the economic unit in government." This, it adds, will not diminish the struggle between Labour and Capital, but will make it clearer and bring it more into the open. The Cabinet is composed of a number of financiers and financial experts, but also includes a former labourer who became president of the Federation of Railway Engineers and is influential in Trade Union and Co-operative circles. No wonder Lloyd George and Millerand understand one another so easily. Each understands the game.

Germany.

Berlin reports a great increase of unemployment. Factory after factory is shutting down, the purchasing power of the country being apparently exhausted. This is not to be wondered at when one considers that it costs nearly three months' work to buy a suit of clothes, and anything up to a month's wages for a pair of boots. This will react on the situation in France, which has been banking on the

receipt of a huge indemnity and looking to a speedy development of trade. It will strengthen the hands of the military party, already, as Maximilian Harden points out, growing rapidly in Prussia and Southern Germany. Conversely it spells the doom of the half-hearted Ebert Government. Why should the workers support that sham? It has muddled the economic situation. It has not laid a finger on the Junker conspirators who drove it into headlong flight. On the other hand, it shot down and imprisoned hundreds of the very workers who rescued it from the Lüttwitz buccaneers. July 10 is the date set for a substantial reduction of the Reichswehr forces. We shall believe that when we see it, it being far more likely that the military will put up a fight and refuse to be disarmed. Like their French brothers, the German workers are getting a costly but much-needed lesson in the stern realities of Revolution. The day of bands, banners, and processions is passing rapidly.

Italy.

Ferrero, the historian, writes that Italy has been wasting her time at the Peace Councils, for "the civil war has begun. He is blind who does not perceive this." He explains that the present struggle is unlike the wars and revolutions of the nineteenth century, which were decided in a few hours or days; for now the fight goes on with skirmishes in countless villages and towns, and may last for several years. His regret is that the masses apparently have no aim but revenge for ill-defined wrongs, and he fears that Italy may fall into chronic "anarchy," or under some ignoble and ferocious despotism.

The truth, of course, is that here, as everywhere, the real revolutionary factor is the economic crisis to which the war has led. This, and not the rise or fall of any group of politicians, affects the masses, and the capitalist press is pointing out, with undisguised alarm, that production is now insufficient for the supply of the country's bare necessities. It is significant that Nitti himself has given out an interview in which he said: "The whole world is sick of the Supreme Council, and so am I." He insisted that immediate peace with both Germany and Russia was imperative. "The trouble," he added, "with the world to-day is that it has forgotten how to smile."

Russia.

Two out of every three trees in Europe stand in Russia. Formerly she led the world in the production of wheat and cereals, 35 per cent. of which she exported to feed Europe. In Siberia she has the largest coalfield in the world, and in the Donetz Basin the richest in Europe, the anthracite reserves being estimated at twice those of the United States and three times those of Great Britain. She supplied more than a fifth of the world's cotton, stood second in the production of oil—invaluable oil—and beet sugar, and in flax, wool, hides, minerals, and a long line of those natural products on which our entire civilisation is based, occupied a pre-eminent position. Her supply of sturdy white man-power is unequalled.

These are the things that decide a nation's fate. The question of who gets actual possession or control of these resources—whether it be a State Socialist dictatorship, foreign capitalists, or the men who themselves work the natural resources—is the real question at issue. The United States, for example, has become the power she is, not because Patrick Henry made a great oration ending in "Give me Liberty or give me Death!" but because she had the resources, developed them, and kept tight hold of them. Every Western settler knows this instinctively. As he would put it: "The thing is, somehow or other, to get hold of the stuff."

On the Polish invasion it seems needless to say more than that its inevitable tendency must be to kindle patriotism and knit Russia into a more closely-woven Nationalist whole. That makes for power, but the question is into whose hands that power will fall, and how it will be used. If it falls into the hands of a dictatorship, Socialist or otherwise, one set of results will follow. If it becomes lodged with the peasants, the actual tillers of the soil, very different consequences will ensue.

It is impossible, within our limited space, to discuss in detail so vast a subject. Perhaps, however, it may not be out of place to remark that the present writer recently had a long discussion on these points with two Englishmen, both of whom had been in Russia for some considerable time, were exceptionally intelligent, had enjoyed exceptional facilities for observation, and were in profound sympathy with Russia's struggle for freedom. To them finally he put this question: "Two theories prevail. One, common in the ultra-revolutionary press, is that Lenin has run the revolution into a State Socialist dictatorship mould, which will lead ultimately to reaction. The other, voiced by the capitalist press, is that Lenin is a militant revolutionist, who seeks to overthrow Capitalism throughout the world, and is aiming specially at Great Britain, and her Asiatic dependencies, as the centre of the target. Which theory is, in your judgment, correct?"

One of these men had been the special correspondent of a well-known daily. The other had been the business representative of a large corporation, and in close touch with the Co-operative movement, Litvinoff, and others at the head of industrial affairs. Both gave, and with hardly any hesitation, the same answer; namely, that both

theories are correct. "On the one hand," they said, "Lenin is unquestionably a sincere international Socialist, eager for the triumph everywhere of the Revolution, as he understands it. On the other hand, Lenin is actually bringing about that of which Stolypin dreamed, for the result of his movement is that all power is passing into the hands of the peasantry. As a result, Russia will become at once the most stable and conservative of countries." The business representative called special attention to the fact that, in the face of peasant opposition, Lenin had been compelled to abandon Communism so far as the country districts are concerned—and Russia is almost entirely country. He added the opinion that her few great cities might not improbably disappear. Lincoln Steffens, who has made a special study of this subject, has expressed a similar opinion.

Mexico.

Carranza, who succeeded finally in killing Zapata, has been killed. Apparently his death was due to his anxiety to save the national treasure-chest, with which he had escaped to the mountains. Zapata, who represented "Indianismo"—the desire of the native population to get back to the land and resume its simple life—cared nothing for this. He had no ambition to govern others, and repeatedly refused to seize Mexico City when it lay within his grasp. Only once did he occupy it for the briefest time, and then he proved himself the only leader whose men did not loot, and were kept in perfect order. In fact, the conspicuous honesty of his followers astounded the city.

Carranza, like Alvarado in Yucatan, one of the Southern States, sought to establish a semi-Socialist Government, and for that he was eulogised endlessly by various United States organisations that consider themselves radical and advanced. Among the Mexicans themselves, on the other hand, both men quickly grew to be hated, for, like all State Socialists, they found themselves compelled to maintain their authority despotically and by the sword.

William Gates, whose writings on Mexican archaeology are regarded as authoritative, is probably one of the few white men who know Mexico thoroughly and really understand her people; for he has travelled the country many years, and made recently a trip of fifteen hundred miles on horseback, with the express purpose of getting at the truth by personal contact with noted revolutionary leaders. His articles in the *World's Work*, published last year, were most instructive, and he states that he went to Mexico "with a distinct prepossession in favour of the Carranza administration." He became a great admirer of Zapata, whom he describes as having "sought an agricultural social fact," Zapatismo meaning "the real desire of the real and native Americans for that freedom from conquest which since that day [the Spanish invasion] they have never had. Or, to put it still more frankly, the right to be a man and not an animal." In April, 1919, he wrote that Carranza's fall was inevitable.

In the opinion of the present writer, study of the Russian and Mexican Revolutions shows indisputably: (1) The paramount importance of the Land Question; (2) the paramount rôle played, of necessity, everywhere by the actual cultivators of the soil, the peasantry; (3) the utter impossibility of reconciling that individual self-ownership for which Anarchism stands with any form of State Socialism, however disguised or labelled.

Anarchism and Bolshevism.

(To the Editor of FREEDOM.)

Dear Editor,—Let me say once more that I absolutely agree with our comrade Stanley Cooper in all but one thing. I hold the individuality of every person sacred, and have always been most careful not to coerce anyone by brute force; but if brute force, which knows no reason or sympathy or right, comes up against me, then I shall use my brute force to defend my individuality. It is no use reasoning with the brute, or the man in the brute stage. You must meet him on his own. If the workers united would meet the brute classes, there would be no fight. Mass action would settle them without a blow.—Yours fraternally,

JOHN TAMLYN.

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