

Freedom

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NOTES.

The Great Lock-Out.

The sudden and tremendous reductions made by the mine-owners in the new scale of wages, to take effect on April 1, was regarded by the men as a challenge which they must take up if they were not to be beaten into the dust. Ever since the strike last autumn the mineowners had been laying their plans to break the power of the Miners' Federation, and they found willing allies in the Government, who sought revenge for the occasions during the war when the miners defied their proclamations against striking. It was certain that sooner or later the Government would seek an opportunity to attack the Federation, and through it the Triple Alliance. No Government tolerates a State within the State, and although the Alliance had never done anything more than threaten, the time might come when, owing to a temporary weakness of the Government, it might summon up sufficient courage to fight. Besides, knowing that his war policy and his peace policy combined had shattered Britain's foreign trade, and that this was likely to bring about his downfall unless he could find a scapegoat, Lloyd George decided to force a strike on a national scale and then blame it for the collapse of trade. So far the scheme has worked out very well from his point of view, as he is already hailed as the modern St. George who will save the nation from the terrible dragon of Bolshevism. But the fight has only just begun, and his policy may cause an industrial upheaval which neither he nor his capitalist masters could control, and the whole machinery of government be swept away.

Protecting the Community.

The Government's proclamation of "a state of emergency," which practically means martial law, was declared necessary for the protection of the community from the evil designs of the Triple Alliance. One stands aghast at the audacity of these people. Since 1914 the community has seen its manhood fall on foreign battlefields like corn before the reaper, it has seen its wealth poured out like water to carry on the war, and it has been compelled to suffer repression of speech, press, and movement, in order that the imperialist designs of its rulers could be carried out. We have seen these same people carry fire and sword through Ireland, murdering men, women, and children, destroying towns, villages, factories, and farms, and in other ways bringing death and destruction to that country. This Government has caused the death of many thousands by its blockade of Russia, and has earned the bitter hatred of the people of India by the cold-blooded massacre at Amritsar. Yet with a record like this it dares to stand forward as the protector of the community. Its principal supporters—in fact, its masters—are the "hard-faced men" who made fortunes out of the war, and who are now planning fresh schemes of "protection" for their own industries, by which they will be able to squeeze more profits out of the community. The wolves may protect the sheep until it is time to gobble them up, but we do not think the sheep are under any illusions as to the value of the "protection." But, as Shakespeare puts it, "Caesar would not be a wolf if Romans were not sheep."

The Creeping Paralysis.

The steady decline in Britain's foreign trade which has been going on for some time has now developed into a collapse. Remember that this country has for generations boasted that it was the workshop of the world, and the livelihood of millions of its workers has depended on the manufacture of goods for foreign countries. We have often pointed out the folly of relying on foreign markets for a living, as the stoppage of orders would mean starvation or emigration. Now this danger is staring us in the face. The figures dealing with our foreign

trade which were published on April 1 are startling in their significance, and show that a crisis has been reached in the life of the nation. Our imports for the first three months of this year were only £307,000,000, as compared with £530,000,000 for the first three months of 1920; whilst our exports for the same period were only £53,000,000 as against £159,000,000 for 1920. During the same time our imports of raw materials, on which our manufactures depend, fell from £234,000,000 to £80,000,000. Even after allowing for the drop in prices, these figures mean that there can be no hope of employment in the near future for millions of workers in this country. They also mean that Capitalism has failed hopelessly as a means of providing food for the people, and that unless we soon find a remedy we shall be faced with starvation. The Government knows what has happened, and, using the mining crisis as an excuse, it has called up the Reserves and is enrolling a White Guard, because it fears the wrath of a people clamouring for food. It is not now a question as to the amount of wages the employers will pay, but a question as to whether there will be any work at any wages. There is only one solution—we must have free access to the land of this country to grow our own food, without paying tax or toll to anyone. The necessities of the people are above all the claims of landlordism, which has been the main factor in bringing starvation to our doors.

American Commission on Ireland.

The war which the British Government is waging against the Irish people has been made the subject of an inquiry by an American Commission composed of many well-known men and women. An interim report has just been published here (Harding and Moore, 119 High Holborn, W.C.1, price 1s.). The Commissioners, in their conclusions, amongst other things, say:—

The Imperial British forces in Ireland have indiscriminately killed innocent men, women, and children; have discriminately assassinated persons suspected of being Republicans; have tortured and shot prisoners while in custody, adopting the subterfuges of "refusal to halt" and "attempting to escape"; and have attributed to alleged "Sinn Fein extremists" the British assassination of prominent Irish Republicans.

House-burning and wanton destruction of villages and cities have been countenanced and ordered by officials of the British Government.

But what a howl these scoundrels raised about the flooding of the mines and the sufferings of the poor pit-ponies!

Reaction in Spain and Brazil.

The attack on the Labour movement in this country which is just developing is but a part of the great war on the advanced movement which is taking place almost everywhere. On another page we give details of the struggle for freedom in Italy, and we have received communications telling us of the wholesale brutal repression of the Labour, Socialist, and Anarchist movements now taking place in Spain and Brazil. In Spain a continuous reign of terror is carried on by the Government, and in its appeal to the outside world the National Confederation of Labour says that not a day passes without the assassination of some comrade, and that in the gaols many victims suffer the tortures of the Inquisition, being hung up by their feet and beaten senseless. In Brazil also the repression has been ruthless, ordinary strikes being followed by thousands of arrests and the deportation of many Socialists and Anarchists. Well-known writers have also been thrown into prison, and workers' papers suppressed. We are asked to raise our voices in protest against these brutalities, and for that purpose we publish these facts; but we feel that if our protests have no effect in the case of similar happenings in Ireland, they are not likely to have much effect on events hundreds or thousands of miles away.

OBJECTIONS TO ANARCHISM.

By GEORGE BARRETT.

(Continued from last month.)

No. 16.

Even if you could overthrow the Government to-morrow and establish Anarchism, the same system would soon grow up again.

This objection is quite true, except that we do not propose to overthrow the Government to-morrow. If I (or we as a group of Anarchists) came to the conclusion that I was to be the liberator of humanity, and if by some means I could manage to blow up the King, the Houses of Lords and Commons, the police force, and, in a word, all persons and institutions which make up the Government—if I were successful in all this, and expected to see the people enjoying freedom ever afterwards as a result, then, no doubt, I should find myself greatly mistaken.

The chief results of my action would be to arouse an immense indignation on the part of the majority of the people, and a re-organisation by them of all the forces of government.

The reason why this method would fail is very easy to understand. It is because the strength of the Government rests not with itself, but with the people. A great tyrant may be a fool, and not a superman. His strength lies not in himself, but in the superstition of the people who think that it is right to obey him. So long as that superstition exists it is useless for some liberator to cut off the head of tyranny; the people will create another, for they have grown accustomed to rely on something outside themselves.

Suppose, however, that the people develop, and become strong in their love of liberty, and self-reliant, then the foremost of its rebels will overthrow tyranny, and backed by the general sentiment of their age their action will never be undone. Tyranny will never be raised from the dead. A landmark in the progress of humanity will have been passed and put behind for ever.

So the Anarchist rebel when he strikes his blow at Governments understands that he is no liberator with a divine mission to free humanity, but he is a part of that humanity struggling onwards towards liberty.

If, then, by some external means an Anarchist Revolution could be, so to speak, supplied ready-made and thrust upon the people, it is true that they would reject it and rebuild the old society. If, on the other hand, the people develop their ideas of freedom, and then themselves get rid of the last stronghold of tyranny—the Government—then indeed the Revolution will be permanently accomplished.

No. 17.

If you abolish government, what will you put in its place?

This seems to an Anarchist very much as if a patient asked the doctor, "If you take away my illness, what will you give me in its place?" The Anarchist's argument is that government fulfils no useful purpose. Most of what it does is mischievous, and the rest could be done better without its interference. It is the headquarters of the profit-makers, the rent-takers, and of all those who take from but who do not give to society. When this class is abolished by the people so organising themselves that they will run the factories and use the land for the benefit of their free communities, *i.e.*, for their own benefit, then the Government must also be swept away, since its purpose will be gone. The only thing then that will be put in the place of government will be the free organisations of the workers. When Tyranny is abolished Liberty remains, just as when disease is eradicated health remains.

No. 18.

We cannot all agree and think alike and be perfect, and therefore laws are necessary, or we shall have chaos.

It is because we cannot all agree that Anarchism becomes necessary. If we all thought alike it would not matter in the least if we had one common law to which we must all submit. But as many of us think differently, it becomes absurd to try to force us to act the same by means of the Government which we are silly enough to call representative.

A very important point is touched upon here. It is because Anarchists recognise the absolute necessity of allowing for this difference among men that they are Anarchists. The truth is that all progress is accompanied by a process of differentiation, or of the increasing difference of parts. If we take the most

primitive organism we can find it is simply a tiny globule of plasm, that is, of living substance. It is entirely undifferentiated: that is to say, all its parts are alike. An organism next above this in the evolutionary scale will be found to have developed a nucleus. And now the tiny living thing is composed of two distinctly different parts, the cell-body and its nucleus. If we went on comparing various organisms we should find that all those of a more complex nature were made up of clusters of these tiny organisms or cells. In the most primitive of these clusters there would be very little difference between one cell and another. As we get a little higher we find that certain cells in the clusters have taken upon themselves certain duties, and for this purpose have arranged themselves in special ways. By and by, when we get to the higher animals, we shall find that this process has advanced so far that some cells have grouped together to form the breathing apparatus, that is, the lungs; others are responsible for the circulation of the blood; others make up the nervous tissue; and so on, so that we say they form the various "organs" of the body. The point we have to notice is that the higher we get in the animal or vegetable kingdom, the more difference we find between the tiny units or cells which compose the body or organism. Applying this argument to the social body or organism which we call society, it is clear that the more highly developed that organism becomes, the more different will be the units (*i.e.*, the people) and organs (*i.e.*, institutions and clubs) which compose it.

(For an answer to the argument based on the supposed need of a controlling centre for the "social organism," see Objection No. 21.)

When, therefore, we want progress we must allow people to differ. This is the very essential difference between the Anarchists and the Governmentalists. The Government is always endeavouring to make men uniform. So literally true is this that in most countries it actually forces them into the uniform of the soldier or the convict. Thus Government shows itself as the great reactionary tendency. The Anarchist, on the other hand, would break down this and would allow always for the development of new ideas, new growth, and new institutions; so that society would be responsive always to the influence of its really greatest men, and to the surrounding influences, whatever they may be.

It would be easier to get at this argument from a simpler standpoint. It is really quite clear that if we were all agreed, or if we were all forced to act as if we did agree, we could not have any progress whatever. Change can take place only when someone disagrees with what is, and with the help of a small minority succeeds in putting that disagreement into practice. No Government makes allowance for this fact, and consequently all progress which is made has to come in spite of Governments, not by their agency.

I am tempted to touch upon yet another argument here, although I have already given this question too much space. Let me add just one example of the findings of modern science. Everyone knows that there is sex relationship and sex romance in the plant life just as there is in the animal world, and it is the hasty conclusion with most of us that sex has been evolved for the purposes of reproduction of the species. A study of the subject, however, proves that plants were amply provided with the means of reproduction before the first signs of sex appeared. Science then has had to ask itself: what was the utility of sex evolution? The answer to this conundrum it has been found lies in the fact that "the sexual method of reproduction multiplies variation as no other method of reproduction can."*

If I have over-elaborated this answer it is because I have wished to interest (but by no means to satisfy) anyone who may see the importance of the subject. A useful work is waiting to be accomplished by some enthusiast who will study differentiation scientifically, and show the bearing of the facts on the organisation of human society.

No. 19.

If you abolish government, you will do away with the marriage laws.

We shall.

(To be continued next month.)

* "The Evolution of Sex in Plants," by Professor J. Merle Coulter. It is interesting to add that he closes his book with these words: "Its [sexuality's] significance lies in the fact that it makes organic evolution more rapid and far more varied."

INDIVIDUALISM VERSUS ORGANISATION.

As a result of the development of the individualistic ideal, it is not surprising to find a number of advanced people whose cardinal virtue is that they do not "join anything"; and the propagandist who is less a partisan than an idealist—a truthseeker, willing to revise his principles continually by the light of accumulated experience—is compelled to pause and weigh the advantages of organisation and the co-operative methods he recommends. The disadvantages have been glaringly obvious to many minds, and the contemplation of them has given rise to the present reaction. The domination of the weak by the strong, or by those ambitious of power; the modification of individual differences in conformity with a stereotyped "constitution"; the tendency to mental inertia, the society becoming a prop instead of a stimulus to self-reliance; the possibility of prolonged, half-hearted adherence, from force of habit or difficulty of secession;—these, and such as these, are serious obstacles to the growth of individuality. On the other hand, we are beset by the importunities of people possessed by the club mania, with an exaggerated estimate of the strength of union regardless of compatibility, who feel that the efforts of two or three, "gathered together," are necessarily a blessing to the world.

Hence, with a lively sense of the pros and cons, we press for an answer to the question, Why should one join anything? Why should not one concentrate one's efforts on the enhancement of the brilliancy of one's own individual light, in order to become "a lantern of strength to men," separate and distinct, and irrespective of other orbs greater or less? The idea appeals to me. With Whitman, I shout, "Yourself, yourself, yourself, forever and ever"—but he does not stop there; neither do I. When I come to consider how one may best enhance this brilliancy, I find that sympathy, co-operation, reciprocity, fellowship, solidarity, are most potent aids, that the individual self and the social self are one and indivisible, and that he who would be completely rounded must disown neither. In organised association the larger self may find satisfaction and contribute to the growth of the lesser self. It has been maintained that self-development and self-devotion are very nearly the same thing, since "we can only develop ourselves by devoting ourselves to objective ends"; while "the only valuable kind of self-denial is that for the sake of objective interests, by devotion to which we are developed." Thus, it may be inferred that individualism and organisation are not inherently antagonistic; by deeper analysis the reconciliation is established, and they take their places side by side, with no interposing "versus" as above.

In estimating the important results of association, its value emotionally and in the evolution of sympathy must not be ignored. The mere "intellectual all-in-all" gives little and receives little. Furthermore, the unrestricted change of thought is a powerful aid to the attainment of definiteness and a clearer conception of practical possibilities. The more extensive the stores of experience contributing to the elucidation of life's problems the better.

The prejudice against any system of organised effort is chiefly due to confusion of thought in regard to the actual source of danger. It is not that organisation is in itself inimical to individual development; it is only so when it takes the compulsory form. The voluntary principle in organisation is the safeguard of individual liberty.

Some people guard their freedom so jealously that they love only themselves. Their social development has not kept pace with their personal development. "To walk free and own no superior" is a brave ideal, but not to be misapplied into the repudiation of equals. The basic difficulty which has been lost sight of in recent periods of reaction (first, in the reaction from the extreme of self-seeking and greed, and next, in the reaction from the extreme of majority control and State regulation) is the maintenance of a just balance between egoism and altruism, between the centripetal and centrifugal, between isolation and fusion, between identity and totality. We see things one at a time, and thus the two-sidedness of the laws of being eludes us.

Intense individualism, expressing itself in the passionate yearning for freedom, is not adventitious in origin. External freedom symbolises the freedom of the soul. The soul of man defies coercion and brooks no artificial limits to the experience which its evolution demands. Of equally profound import is the social passion so powerfully manifesting itself to-day in the most varied forms. It is based on the essential oneness of all life, which makes brotherhood not a mere sentiment, but an inherent fact, pointing to ultimate harmony.

Contributing both to individual and collective ends, social effort becomes, somewhat as love is, its own justification. It is an expressible delight to "throb with currents of attempt," heedless of results. But let it not be forgotten that the importance to the evolution of the unit of non-interference in personal concerns is a primary lesson in sociology. The cause of freedom suffers if any individual be restrained against his will, on any pretext.

The remedy for organisation in which the old coercive spirit still lingers is to be found in association so infused with the free spirit that opinions of assent and dissent are treated with equal respect, in which individual variation and unconventionality in word and act meet with frank, unreserved welcome.

HELENA BORN.

(From "Whitman's Ideal Democracy," Boston, Mass., 1902.)

ANOTHER CRITICISM OF "FREEDOM."

(To the Editor of FREEDOM)

DEAR EDITOR,—There is a growing feeling in society to-day that great changes are coming. This opinion is universal amongst the masses in all lands. The man in the street is thinking about fundamental questions and is rapidly becoming in sympathy with revolutionary alterations. The above, no doubt, seems an unduly optimistic summing up of the mentality of the public, but examination will produce its justification. Amongst the masses of workers in Britain a section stands out and forms a party; in accordance with conventional points of view, so the party is given a name—yesterday Social Democrat, to-day a Communist Party. The historic difference between the pioneer and the politician is here clearly demonstrated. Let the international aspect be without promise, the policy of such a party is modified to the uses of Parliament for legal reform; but let international events quicken hopes, then the thunder of the ultra-revolutionary is borrowed, and clear-cut advocacy of a total change in society's structure looms in the forefront. This change of policy is necessary for the survival of parties, and brings very true the contention of Anarchists that parties of all characters merely apply their policy to suit popular prejudice and whims. We thus come to the question of modern events and the necessary attitude to adopt towards the latest party, the Communist Party.

Readers of FREEDOM are conversant with the discussion waged in the Anarchist press on this question, and before offering a personal point of view I want to protest against an order of mind unfortunately existing amongst writers in FREEDOM, an evil, destructive mode of reasoning, no less evil because it is sincere. People who hold this order of mind subordinate their actions to a theory, and proceed to define their opinions upon current topics in due accord with what they please to term "consistency." Thus we are told, "We are opposed to all authority because we are Anarchists, and cannot support a dictatorship." So the point is demonstrated that the poor blind followers of a Socialist deity, Marx, are kept company by the equally blind followers of something termed "a consistent Anarchist position." Both are slaves to a special hard and fast conception, and fail to see any reason to support anything against private idealism.

FREEDOM says that the Communist Party of Great Britain desires to rule the masses and subject them to a centralised authority. Such a procedure, it is urged, would be a negation of a true "dictatorship" of the workers. With this many true Socialists would agree; in fact, I would go further and insist that such a happening would spell failure to the Revolution. But this does not dispense with the problematical need of a real domination of the workers by an authoritarian dictatorship. The power which a few rabid Marxians in King Street, Covent Garden, drunk with Russian promises and impressions, exercise over the real workers must be fought; but yet the question remains, power and organisation may still be necessary to meet our enemies. Anarchism demands the liberty of the individual, yet during the stress of revolutionary days the weapons of militarism may need to be employed, industries developed along capitalist lines will have to be run by workers' committees; and can we satisfy ourselves that the non-authoritarian principle of Anarchism could be used effectively to secure our ends during times of abnormality? I ask these questions, as a soldier of the revolution, in order that I may benefit from those who enslave their mind to a creed.

I have no ambition to be a functionary, the front line trench will suit very well, but I want the dream of the pioneers to be realised, and fail to see how the workers can surmount their difficulties without the employment of authoritarian methods, not through some party, but by the technical and industrial organisation of useful labour.

Let those who love liberty carry on the propaganda amongst the workers, in order that we may have in Britain true domination of the workers through their economic organisations, free from the baneful influence of parties, and thus avoid in our coming social upheaval the tragic blunders of the Russian Revolution and the unnecessary restrictions of a Communist Party.—Yours truly,

FRED TYLER.

[Let us explain the Anarchist position, which our friend Tyler seems unable to grasp. We hold that the workers are oppressed by their rulers because they are ignorant, and that their rulers keep them in ignorance for that purpose. We also hold that when the workers gain the land and their freedom they will be able to manage their own affairs better and more happily than under even the most benevolent of Governments. They will make many mistakes—just like dictators—but in freedom they will learn from experience. Thus the Anarchist position is in direct opposition to that of our critic, who holds that the workers are ignorant, therefore it will be necessary to use "authoritarian methods." We say that people cannot learn to swim until they go into the water; Tyler and other authoritarians say they must not go into the water until they have learnt to swim. The authoritarians' dilemma is that if the people learn to swim, their instructors will be out of a job.—ED. FREEDOM.]

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“No Longer a Question of Wages.”

During a discussion on the coal crisis Lloyd George said that the miners' demands showed that it was “no longer a question of wages,” and we agree with him. More important questions than wages have come up for solution to-day.

Now that the lock-out of the miners seems almost certain to develop into a pitched battle between Capital and Labour, we hope that the workers will challenge the basic stronghold of Capitalism, which is the monopoly of the land of this country. Lloyd George also said that the mines were “the property of the nation,” and again we agree with him. It is absurd that a small group of men should claim the right to deal with the land and the minerals beneath it as though they were their own private property. But Lloyd George was not honest in his statement, because just previously his Government had decontrolled the mines and handed them over to the mineowners, who were then free to close them entirely if they could not make a profit out of them. They promptly issued a new scale of wages, which in some districts showed great reductions that it could have been issued for no other reason but to force a fight with the Miners' Federation.

As everyone knows, the miners accepted the challenge, and as a result of their refusal to accept the new scale of wages they were locked out of every mine in the country. Their Federation called on the Triple Alliance, who at once promised joint action. Then the Government proclaimed “a state of emergency” and threw the whole of the forces of the State into the conflict on the side of the mineowners, whose cause Lloyd George supported in the subsequent conferences. As the men's demand for a national settlement and a national pool of profits was refused, the conferences failed, and a big struggle now appears inevitable, other Unions now recognising that defeat for the miners means defeat for the men also.

The weakness of the miners' position is the weakness of the workers' position in all wage disputes: even if a scale of wages is agreed on, the miners have no guarantee that the owners will employ them. The fact that the miners agree to the wage system shows that they admit the owners' claim to the mines. That ownership has never been seriously challenged, although they have disputed the landlords' right to royalties. This right of ownership must be challenged in the present struggle.

With this question of land ownership is bound up the whole question of the monopoly of the means of life. Millions of men and women who boast of their citizenship of this great Empire live from hand to mouth, their next week's meals depending on the willingness of an employer to give them a job. It is humiliating to think that the 6,500,000 members of the Trade Unions are still content to beg permission to work instead of agitating incessantly for the abolition of the wage system. Sending men to Parliament to show the capitalists how to run the system, or to pass Acts which never act, is child's play. We have to strike hard at the root of the system which enables a comparatively small class to control and exploit the rest of the community.

As we go to press a strike of the Triple Alliance seems almost certain. If the great struggle takes place, it should be the work of every earnest man and woman to inspire the workers with a higher aim than the mere question of national wage agreements. The wage system is wage slavery, and the workers can never hope for a free and happy life whilst it continues. Let us urge them to make the issue the abolition of monopoly of the means of life. Let us urge them to free the land of landlordism and special privilege, which bring fabulous wealth to an idle class and poverty and anxiety to the producers. Let this fight be a fight for something that is worth fighting for, something that will

abolish the unemployment now widespread in the land, and give hope of a higher and worthier life for every man, woman, and child.

If this struggle does not abolish the wage system, it will be a victory for our masters. Then let the battle-cry be: “Down with the wage system! Land and Freedom for all!”

KROPOTKIN'S FUNERAL.

The Bolsheviks and the Anarchist Prisoners.

We have received from Moscow a complete statement of the work of the Kropotkin Funeral Commission, addressed to “the Anarchist and Anarcho-Syndicalist Press of the World,” with a covering letter signed by Alexander Berkman and A. Shapiro. It is too long for us to print in full, the report of Kropotkin's death and funeral having already appeared in our last issue; but we print below some very interesting details showing the relations between the Anarchists and the Bolsheviks in Russia.

Our comrades first of all contradict the reports that Kropotkin had been living in semi-starvation. Though his food-supply two years ago left much to be desired, it had greatly improved during recent months, thanks to assistance given by comrades and also owing to the scientist's ration which he was receiving. With regard to the question of a passport to leave Russia, as he had never asked for one he could not have received a refusal. What actually occurred was that the League for the Protection of the Children of Russia intended to send abroad a commission, with Vera Figner, Korolenko, the well-known author, and Kropotkin as members; but the mission did not meet with the approval of the Government.

When the first news of Kropotkin's illness was brought to Lenin's notice, a special train with five of the best doctors, nurses, and medicals was immediately dispatched to Dmitroff, where Kropotkin had lived for two years. At first hopes were raised of a complete recovery, but a second attack resulted in temporary paralysis of the brain. Nevertheless he remained fully conscious and was able to recognise friends about him almost to the very last. He even exchanged jocose remarks with those at his bedside within two hours of the end.

Immediately after his death his friends and comrades decided that the Anarchist organisations should have exclusive charge of the funeral, and that it should take place at Moscow. An Anarchist Funeral Commission was formed in that city. One of its first acts was to wire to Lenin asking him to order the release of all imprisoned Anarchists for participation in the funeral. “Owing to the nationalisation of all public conveyances, printing houses, material, etc., the Anarchist Funeral Commission necessarily had to apply to the Moscow Soviet to enable it to carry out successfully the funeral programme.” The artists of Moscow offered their time and talents freely, working day and night on the necessary decorations.

“Deprived of its own press, the Anarchist movement of Russia and of Moscow in particular was compelled to apply to the authorities for the publication of the matter necessary in connection with the funeral arrangements. After considerable discussion and delay, permission was secured for the issue of two leaflets and of a one-day four-page paper in memoriam of our great dead. The A.F.C. asked that the memoriam paper be issued without censorship, indicating that the reading matter would consist of appreciations of our dead comrade, exclusive of all polemical questions. This request was categorically refused. The anxiety of the Commission to issue the memorial, and the absence of any other means, compelled it to submit, and the manuscripts were sent in for censorship. . . . To forestall the possibility of remaining without any memorial or leaflets, because of the protracted negotiations with the authorities, the A.F.C. resolved to open an Anarchist printing office that had been sealed by the Government, and to assume responsibility for its action. This printing office issued two leaflets.”

In answer to the wire that was sent to Lenin, the All-Russian Central Executive of the Soviets resolved “to propose to the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission to release, according to its judgment, the imprisoned Anarchists for participation in the funeral of P. A. Kropotkin.” The delegates sent to the Extraordinary Commission were asked whether the Funeral Commission would guarantee the return of the prisoners. They said the question had not been discussed. The Extraordinary Commission thereupon refused to release the prisoners. The A.F.C. immediately agreed to guarantee their return after the funeral, but the final reply was as follows: “Upon inquiry regarding the release of Anarchist comrades for to-morrow's funeral, Comrade Xenofontoff replied that they cannot be released in view of the fact that there are no such Anarchists that could be released.” On the morning of the funeral the A.F.C. decided to inform the assembled people of the absence of our comrades, and to withdraw from the hall and grave all the wreaths presented by the official Bolshevik bodies. To avoid such a scandal, the representative of the Moscow Soviet definitely promised that all the imprisoned Anarchists in Moscow would be immediately released to attend the funeral.

But this promise was broken, as only seven of our comrades were released, all from the Special Department of the Extraordinary Commission; the other Anarchists, over twenty in number, incarcerated in the Bootirky Prison, were not released.

After the funeral the A.F.C. had a meeting, at which steps were taken for the commemoration of Kropotkin. These included the renaming of appropriate Moscow and Petrograd streets and the founding of a Peter Kropotkin museum in the house in Moscow in which our comrade was born and reared as a youth. The Moscow Soviet has agreed to these suggestions. The immediate publication of Kropotkin's complete works was taken in hand by the A.F.C. The Moscow Soviet also resolved to ask the Government Publishing Department to publish his most important works, but the A.F.C., in the name of the family and of all Anarchists of Russia, strenuously objects to any Government doing this, the Soviet Government included.

In concluding this statement the A.F.C. says:—"We are sure that you will entirely agree with us regarding the necessity of perpetuating the memory of the great teacher of mutual aid and Anarchist Communism in an adequate manner. A Kropotkin Memorial Committee has been organised for this purpose, and it hopes for the co-operation of all. In the near future this Committee will get in touch with Europe and America. Communications may be addressed to the temporary headquarters: Kropotkin Memorial Committee, Miliutinsky Pereulok 8, Moscow." The names of the seventeen members of the Funeral Commission are appended, with the titles of the organisations to which they belong.

We can see from the above statement how all-embracing is the power of the State in Russia under the Bolsheviks, and the fanatical repression our comrades have to contend with in carrying on their propaganda. We heartily wish them success in their efforts to spread Anarchist ideas amongst the people, which is the most practical and most enduring way to perpetuate the memory of our comrade Peter Kropotkin.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

France.

We knew that Sebastien Faure had been arrested once again, but why it seemed impossible to learn. Looking through *Le Liberaire* a week or two later, an article of exceptional merit riveted our attention. Dealing primarily with the occupation of the Rhine provinces by the Allies, and pointing out that the Powers were now steering wildly between the Scylla of bankruptcy and the Charybdis of revolution, it concluded that the ruling classes would at this moment gladly resort to war but for the exhaustion of their finances and dread of the popular upheavals that would result. A masterly article, and we wondered who the author was. Then we saw the signature, "Sebastien Faure." We had picked up accidentally a number dated just prior to his arrest, and the action taken by the authorities explained itself.

From Russia to the United States every Government, without exception, is to-day the prey of a cowardice that seems to us beneath contempt. Just as the chief stipulations in the treaty made recently between Russia and Great Britain are those which pledge both parties to abstain from propaganda, so in France also the one person most dreaded at this moment is he who has the honesty and courage to speak out. Our French exchanges swarm with notices of the arrest of Anarchist comrades, alike in Paris and the provinces, whose only crime is that they are endeavouring to educate the mass. At Roubaix two devoted comrades, Hoche Meurant and Brugon, attend a Bolshevik meeting to protest against the militarism now running riot. They distribute anti-military tracts, and the police, who evidently cannot count a sense of humour as among their virtues, promptly arrest them. Carbon, Cordailat, and Grandjean attempt a tour of the smaller country towns—always the most difficult to handle—and they are thrown into jail. Content has been in prison four months and is still awaiting trial as supposedly responsible for an article written by Loreal, who is now serving a year's sentence as its author. We select only a few samples from the general lump, and express our admiration for the courage with which our French comrades keep up their outspoken propaganda. In the final reckoning every word of it will tell.

As everywhere, and especially in the Trade Union, Syndicalist, and Socialist movements, which worship unity and are blind to the revolutionary importance of individual freedom, there are violent differences of opinion and loud complaints of the dictatorial methods of those at the head of the Moscow and Amsterdam Internationals. Expulsions for holding memberships in rival organisations are frequent; and *Germinal*, in a leading article which pulls aside the curtain and reveals a miserable clash of conflicting interests and ambitions, rightly blames the leaders, who will not tolerate any independent criticism that seems likely to endanger their thrones. It writes: "We claim that every Syndicalist should be free to hold what opinions he chooses, and join the First, the Second, the Tenth, or whatever International suits him best."

As here in England, French organised Labour is convinced that the employers are attacking it all along the line, striking now at the textile industry in the North, now at the metal and building trades in

the neighbourhood of Amiens, and wherever the defence seems weakest. Apparently the power of resistance is lessened most seriously by the internal dissensions dictatorship always begets, and by the economic crisis through which France is passing. Too many men are out of work. The present condition of French finances amply accounts for that, and explains the desperate determination that, somehow or other, Germany shall be made to pay, and immediately. On March 22 the French budget was discussed, and it came out that the country's indebtedness had increased from 27 to 302 milliards of francs. The expenditure for 1921 was estimated at 58 milliards and the revenue at only 20 milliards. In other words, Imperialism and Capitalism have brought France to the very edge of ruin, and the ordinary bourgeois finds himself facing bankruptcy. Naturally the workers, having even less power of resistance, suffer most of all.

Italy.

The events of the past few months have been, in *Le Reveil's* phrase, as heart-breaking as they should be instructive. The War had handed down a vast legacy of discontent, alike among the peasantry and city workers; and the first successes of the Russian Revolution filled the masses with a gigantic hope. The revolution was to be short and sharp, and both Socialists and Syndicalists came out flat-footedly for violence. One finds the Socialist Party declaring officially:—"It is impossible to believe, or even to imagine, that the bourgeoisie will allow itself to be overthrown and expropriated unless the proletariat resorts to violence. Any evangelical renunciation of violent measures by the proletariat, therefore, will serve only to reinforce bourgeois and capitalistic privileges." Unfortunately, the new-fledged revolutionists did not stop at that. With the zeal habitual to neophytes, they made a god of terrorism. To the proletariat, when once in power, everything was to be permitted, and the bourgeoisie were to be regarded as beyond the pale. Inasmuch as forewarned is forearmed, the ruling class naturally took all precautions, and the proletariat only talked. Very quickly one found *Avanti*, the leading organ of the Socialist Party, steering the entire movement into political channels, and the revolutionary fire that had sprung up so rapidly began to die away. However, the metal workers, having been locked out, took possession of the factories. What happened then? The situation was essentially a revolutionary one, but the handling of it was along the lines of mere reform. The workers should have been urged to take possession of the land and all the machinery of production—the Anarchists did urge this step—but they confined their demands to increases of wages and minor concessions from the employers and the Government. The concessions demanded were, at that moment, impossible to grant, for the country was in the throes of a most serious economic crisis, due to the War. Disillusionments came thick and fast, and the upheaval that had seemed so full of promise subsided into nothingness.

Perceiving that the proletariat was incapable of ushering in a new order, the Government devoted itself to strengthening the old régime. Its first step was the arrest of Malatesta. Only in a very few places was any serious protest made, and one finds *Avanti* publishing, in large type, the following: "We beg our working comrades most earnestly to pay no attention to any appeals for action until such appeals shall have been duly passed upon by the Party's central organs and by the economic organisations competent to deal with them." Naturally the force of a protest depends on its being made spontaneously and immediately. To wait on orders is to kill it, and once again the unhappy experience of the Paris Commune repeats itself.

Having discovered that the arrest of so noted a leader as Malatesta gave rise to no great disturbance, the Government launched forth with an extensive campaign of repression. Imprisonment multiplied; the Fascisti, whose previous operations had been of small account, developed great activity; police, carabinieri, and royal guards were all set in motion as against the working man. Meanwhile the Socialist leaders counselled "watching and preparing," that "the traps laid by the enemy might be avoided." The party won a number of municipal elections, and meanwhile its publishing houses, together with those of the Syndicalists, its workshops, its libraries, and its local meeting places went up in flames. "Then came," writes Bertoni in *Le Reveil*, "personal assaults, often ending in assassination. Municipal councillors, provincial mayors, deputies, presidents, secretaries, members of Syndicalist, Co-operative, and Socialist groups are beaten mercilessly, and if they offer the least resistance, wounded or shot to death." In a word, and as always, the State, true to all military precepts, said little but acted much. The avowedly militant proletariat did exactly the reverse.

Our latest information is that Malatesta and his companions, who have lain in jail for months without any definite charges having been brought against them, will soon be brought to trial. To wring even that much from the Government they had to enter on a hunger strike. On March 24 a bomb was thrown into a theatre in Milan. The Fascisti immediately made this an excuse for an attack on the offices of the Anarchist daily paper, *Umanità Nova*, which they burnt out. Since that date no issues of the paper have reached us.

Nothing is more odious than the majority, for it consists of a few powerful leaders, a certain number of accommodating scoundrels and submissive weaklings, and a mass of men who trudge after them without thinking or knowing their own minds.—*Goethe*.

FOREIGN VIEWS OF BOLSHEVISM.

In *Ce qu'il faut dire* (What must be said), under date of November 17, 1917, Boris Souvarine wrote:—"It is to be feared that, for Lenin and his friends, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat will inevitably become the Dictatorship of the Bolsheviks and their chief. This would be a misfortune for Russia's working class, and, consequently, for the proletariat of all the world. Lenin's dictatorship could be maintained only by a fierce and unflagging energy, and would require the support of a permanent revolutionary army. There is no reason for supposing that revolutionary militarism will be preferable to the militarism that now exists." The translation is from *Le Libertaire*, which published the extract on December 31, 1920. Souvarine was not an Anarchist but an orthodox Bolshevik.

On March 22 last the Georgian Legation in London issued an appeal, which runs, in part, as follows:—"The Soviet Government in Russia have at last thrown off the mask of Socialism and shown themselves as unmerciful conquerors. They have flung their masses against Georgia, firstly on the Armenian and Aserbajian sides, and afterwards on the Russian frontier. They did this without any pretext, without any declaration of war, and without the slightest warning. . . . In the eyes of the civilised peoples the Red Imperialists are annihilating the most democratic State that ever existed, a State governed by Socialists."

On March 23 full details were published of a meeting in Moscow of the Military Revolutionary Council of the Russian Soviet Republic. The names of those present were given, and Trotsky was in the chair. It was decided to stop immediately the demobilisation of the army, and to increase its strength to 4,000,000. The General Staff was instructed to prepare maps of the Caucasus and the Western front, and to elaborate a plan for the transport of the Red Army and its concentration on the Roumanian, Polish, and Caucasian fronts.

One distrusts, and with much reason, the reports on Russia that appear in the capitalist press. But one must discriminate. One must consider that, after all, great papers have at stake their reputations as news-gatherers, and that they employ largely, on a mission so important, correspondents whose record for reliability has been established. It was my good fortune, nearly a year ago, to talk intimately with two such men, both of whom are well-known authors of international and at least semi-revolutionary repute. To each I expressed the opinion that the so-called Soviet Republic would develop into a military Empire. Each thought it highly probable. Add to such testimony—and one could multiply it almost indefinitely—that of Michael Farbman, perhaps the most penetrating, reliable, and sympathetic of all the Russian correspondents. On March 13, the fourth anniversary of the Revolution that overthrew the Tsar, he contributed to the *Observer* a long article on the Communist régime, in which he made it clear that the left wing of the party, at any rate, is anxious for war, as a relief from its domestic difficulties, and would have welcomed further hostilities against Poland. "I personally was staggered," he writes, "when, last autumn, I listened to arguments by leading Communists that, in view of the threatened famine," new military enterprises should be launched.

No Anarchist, no friend of humanity, is justified in shutting his eyes to such facts as I have cited. When doubts arise they must be faced. When it is difficult to get at the truth one must work all the harder to dig it out, and in this case it is all the more necessary because we face a fanaticism which is afraid to give criticism a hearing, and have also to grapple with the fact that both sides are spending money freely for the purpose of deceiving the public. Nothing can be worse than that. It is poisoning the entire Labour and Revolutionary propaganda, and I find myself to-day reading papers and listening to popular orators whose statements I find it impossible to credit because, to all intents and purposes, I know that they are prostituted hirelings, bought at a price. We talk about the solidarity of Labour. If there is one thing more than any other that shatters solidarity it is the purchased lie.

Every sincere Anarchist is a revolutionist, and therefore, of necessity, in profound sympathy with the Russian and all other revolutions—for revolutions are merely the masses rousing themselves from their ages-long slumber and waking into life. In my opinion, the proof of sincerity is that one tries earnestly to get at the actual truth; and I know that I myself, from the very outbreak of the Russian Revolution four years ago, have studied constantly and conscientiously everything that appeared worth reading upon that all-important subject. In particular I have watched the foreign press, following more especially the French, Spanish, and Italian papers, and trying to digest the views expressed by such men as Sebastien Faure, Jean Grave, Kropotkin, Malatesta, and Berton. These men matured their judgments slowly, for they were evidently conscious of their reputations as teachers and felt the weight of their responsibility. I propose, therefore, to give in *FREEDOM*, with the editor's permission, a resumé of the conclusions they have reached, and of the general stand taken by the papers with which they are connected. I shall begin with *Le Libertaire*, an influential Paris weekly, to which Sebastien Faure is a constant contributor. He is speaking out with singular clarity, and the long letters by Vilkins, descriptive of his experiences in Russia, including lengthy interviews with Lenin and Kropotkin, are full of interest.

This preliminary article, as it seems to me, may appropriately

conclude with a brief statement of the conclusions to which Vilkins—a Syndicalist and, when he went to Russia, an ardent Marxist—found himself forced. Briefly, they are as follows:—(1) Whatever may have been the case at the outset, the Bolsheviks and the Revolution cannot now be regarded as one and the same thing. (2) The Communist Party is rapidly establishing a special class whose interests are directly opposed to those of the revolutionary mass. (3) The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is an instrument of oppression in the hands of that class. (4) The terrorism it has resorted to surpasses that of the Tsars, and necessarily so, because the masses, having passed through the experience of a revolution, are not cowed so easily. (5) The Bolsheviks, while aiming at the overthrow of Capitalism, seek to impose on the masses the even heavier yoke of a bureaucratic State. (6) For this purpose they have recruited a huge army, which is no longer a revolutionary army and is full of peril for the future. (7) The workers have no control over the industries in which they are employed. (8) Prostitution, robbery, favoritism, and mendicancy are to-day more rampant in Russia than in the countries dominated by the bourgeoisie. (9) The boasted reforms are either on paper or of a superficial, philanthropic type. (10) The Allies' blockade and their support of various military adventurers have played directly into the hands of Russia's present rulers, by enabling them to rally the masses to their support as against the foreign invader.

In the next number of *FREEDOM* I propose to give a full summary of Vilkins's interviews with Lenin and Kropotkin. Each is most instructive and interesting.

WM. C. OWEN.

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